

# The Diocesan Sunday School Teacher



## Third Sunday of Advent: Year C December 12, 2021 Volume 2: Issue 3

### Welcome

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Greetings My Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Our theme for this week is: Rejoice in the Lord Always

Our readings today proclaim a message of rejoicing. As we listen to the prophet Zephaniah, we hear the message of hope that was sent to the Israelites who were in exile. In the midst of their troubles, God had a word of hope that they would be restored and freed, and they were encouraged to rejoice in the knowledge of all that God promised them.

That promise was being fulfilled in the gospel lesson in St. Luke, where John the Baptist encouraged the people to live new lives. Their Messiah was coming, but they needed to do their part, to repent, be baptized and live lives that reflect the life of God.

We who have already received Jesus Christ and who are now awaiting his second coming, have the same hope that was proclaimed by the prophets, that our Lord is coming to restore and free us from the troubles that beset us. Therefore, we too can rejoice and give God thanks in all things, because we are certain that God will do as God has promised.

Let us prepare ourselves as John the Baptist instructed, so that in the end, we too will be prepared to rejoice in the Lord always.

Blessings,  
The Sunday School Team



#### Memory Verse:

Philippians 4: 4

Rejoice in the Lord  
always; again I will say,  
Rejoice.

#### Collect & Readings

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18

Canticle 9: The First  
Song of Isaiah

## The First Lesson: Zephaniah 3:14-20



Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more.

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

The prophet announces that the people are to rejoice. Their time of punishment has come to an end. Their fortunes are about to change. God is preparing to restore His people to full health and to their land. They will enjoy peace and the respect of their neighbours once more.

### Questions:

Is it easy to be joyful when we are going through hard times?

What situation did the Israelites face?

What situations are we facing today that are overwhelming us?

What was God about to do for the Israelites?

If we had the hope that God was about to transform our situation, could we follow the prophet's advice and rejoice?

Do we trust God to help us?

### Bible Study: Zephaniah 3:14-20

The prophet anticipated the renewal and restoration of Israel. He encouraged the people of Israel to sing and shout with joy because God was about to pardon and release them, and bring them victory and peace.

God was about to remove their oppressors and cast away their fear. God was about to save them, renew them with his love and to be joyful over them.

They were going to return home from exile.

God would transform their national shame of exile into rejoicing.

### Activity:

#### Thanksgiving Ornaments

Cut out coloured cardboard circles.

Punch a hole near one edge.

Write on the names and things you want to give God thanks for.

Decorate with crayons and glitter.

Use a string to tie them on to your Christmas Tree or to hang them on your wall.

## Canticle 9 : The First Song of Isaiah

(Isaiah 12:2-6)



Surely, it is God who saves me; \* I will trust in him and not be afraid.

For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, \* and he will be my Savior.

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing \* from the springs of salvation.

And on that day you shall say, \* Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;

Make his deeds known among the peoples; \* see that they remember that his Name is exalted.

Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things, \* and this is known in all the world.

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy, \* for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \* as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.

The Prophet proclaims that it is God who saves us.

We can place our trust in God and have no fear.

We can rejoice and give thanks.

We are compelled to joyfully shout out God's Name, and to tell others of God's saving work.

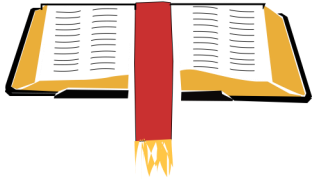


# The Second Lesson: Philippians 4:4-7

Paul's last word to the Christians at Philippi was that they should rejoice in the Lord always. Paul encouraged them to have the attitude of gratitude in all things.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.



**Questions:**

Do we feel joyful when we say goodbye to friends?

What were some of the instructions that Paul gave the Christians at Philippi?

How can we feel God's peace and share it with our friends?

### Bible Study: Philippians 4:4-7

Paul was saying farewell to the Christians at Philippi. He used the Greek word **ΧΑΙΡΕΤΕ** (Chairete) which means both 'greetings' and 'rejoice'. This farewell was not one of sadness, but of great rejoicing in all circumstances.

The Christians at Philippi were surrounded by unbelievers, and Paul invited them to let all know of their fair-mindedness, and their patience even when they were misunderstood.

They were not to become anxious, instead, they were to place all their concerns before God in prayer. But even as they awaited the coming of Christ, they were to have an attitude of gratitude, that is, to be always thankful for all that God had already given them, and for all that God would do or give as it is God's will to do so.

God's peace, which was greater than anything they could ever imagine would rest upon them, and guard them, and they would have nothing to fear. Therefore, they could rejoice in the Lord, always.

**Activity:**

Make a Gratitude List giving God thanks for all that you have.

Sing together the chorus  
Rejoice in the Lord  
Always

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqooawtPhcI>

# St. Luke 3:7-18



John the Baptist warned his listeners to bear fruits worthy of repentance. He exhorted them to adopt kingdom values of honesty and integrity in their personal and professional lives. John warned, that the Messiah was coming to baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.



## Bible Study: Luke 3:7-18

People were very interested in John the Baptist. They travelled out to the wilderness to listen to him and to be baptized. But John wanted them to do more than just a ritual baptism. John wanted the people to live as children of God. That meant that they could not go back to their old ways of disobeying God and dishonesty.

As each person asked John what they needed to do to be saved, John gave them instructions to live with integrity – they should not extort money, they should not abuse others, and they should share with those who are in need.

Many persons were very impressed with John, they wondered if he could be the Messiah. But John was very clear, he was not the Messiah. He told them that he had a humble role to prepare the way for the Messiah. He was only offering a baptism of repentance, but the Messiah would baptize them with the Holy Spirit, and will also be their judge.



### Activity: Word Search Luke 3:7-18

C	O	N	F	I	L	O	D	O	D	O	C	Y
B	S	A	R	X	A	J	E	O	O	Z	O	O
A	A	L	U	T	E	C	H	R	O	L	L	U
P	N	P	I	L	L	O	C	A	K	F	C	N
T	D	O	T	X	E	R	A	H	S	E	T	G
I	A	W	A	I	T	E	E	D	E	Z	S	A
U	L	T	A	W	Z	I	R	E	P	D	N	N
R	S	Y	H	S	R	E	P	I	V	E	O	D
E	I	T	P	A	B	U	D	A	S	H	I	L
H	S	W	E	N	D	O	O	G	O	C	T	O
C	C	A	R	W	O	N	D	A	L	A	A	O
A	I	T	H	R	O	S	O	L	D	E	T	K
E	N	E	B	A	E	P	I	V	I	R	R	P
T	U	R	I	T	N	O	S	R	E	P	O	E
E	T	I	N	H	O	J	O	D	R	O	H	O
A	T	H	A	R	C	H	R	I	S	T	X	P
N	O	W	S	E	S	R	O	H	X	E	E	L

Christ Sandals Food Teacher John Good News  
 Water Soldiers Share Tunics Preached Fruit  
 Collect Baptized Brood Wrath Vipers Exhortations

### Questions:

What were the instructions that John gave to each group that asked how they were to behave?

What are some of the actions that we should do when we are at school or at home to show that we are God's children?

### Activity:

#### John The Baptist Colouring Pages 2:

<http://www.anglicandioceseja.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/John-the-Baptist-Colouring-Pages-2-3rd-Sunday-of-Advent.pdf>

We hope you found this newsletter informative and useful.

Please feel free to share it with others.

We extend our thanks to all the persons who assisted in the preparation of this newsletter.

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