

## 1. From History to Confession

He calls for repentance and, indeed, proclaims a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

## 2. From Confession to Proclamation

He also precedes, prepares the way for, and foretells the coming of the Messiah, the one who is the salvation of Israel.

John's preaching of the coming of the Lord is a key theme of the Advent season. What is that to us?

As John's message prepared the way for Jesus, we too are called to prepare ourselves for Jesus' coming. We respond to John's message by repentance and reform of our lives. We are also called to be prophets of Christ, who announce by our lives the coming of the Lord, as John did.

John's preaching will "give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death and guide our feet into the way of peace" (1:79).

### Prayer

Lord, I'm humbled to think that you might be able to use my strangeness for your own purposes. But you've made me the way I am, and you've got a plan. I repent of my wilful, self-directed ways. I desperately need your cutting and filling, straightening and smoothing in my life. Help me to be courageous to speak the truth as your Holy Spirit direct me to anyone who needs correction. Please forgive my sins and cleanse me for your service. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen

## Sermon Outline: 9th December, 2018

### Prepare the Way

Malachi 3. 1- 4  
Philippians 1. 3-11  
Luke 3. 1-6



The evangelist Luke is the author of the Gospel that bears his name, and he also wrote the Acts of the Apostles as a continuation of the story of Jesus and the Church. In these two works, Luke's sense of time and history emerges. He identifies three epochs of salvation history: the time before Christ, the time of Christ, and the time of the Church and the Holy Spirit..

This week and next, our Gospel readings invite us to consider John the Baptist and his relationship to Jesus. John the Baptist appears in the tradition of the great prophets, preaching repentance and reform to the people of Israel. To affirm this, Luke quotes at length from the prophet Isaiah. John baptizes for repentance and for forgiveness of sins, preparing the way for God's salvation.

Luke lists the political and religious leaders at the time of John's appearance in the desert. Salvation is understood as God's breaking into this political and social history.