



Open to God
Metropolitan Community Church
of Northern Virginia - Advent 2020

Advent 2

Advent Candle of Peace

Open Your Ears - Listen

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Preaching

December 6, 2020

First Reading ~from *Mark 1:1-8*

Here begins the good news of Jesus Christ. As it was written in Isaiah the prophet: "I send my messenger before you to prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Make ready the way of our God, clear a level path.'"

And so John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And the people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to John, and were baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, and wore a leather belt around his waist, and ate nothing but locusts, grasshoppers, and wild honey. John proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not fit to stoop and untie his sandal strap. I have baptized you with water; but the one who comes after me will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Second Reading ~ *adapted from Margaret Wheatley*

What if we were to be together and listen to each other's comments with a willingness to expose rather than to confirm our own beliefs and opinions? What if we were to willingly listen to one another with the awareness that we each see the world in unique ways? And with the expectation that I could learn something new if I listen for the **differences** rather than the similarities?

We have this opportunity many times in a day, every day. What might we learn, what might we create together, if we become this kind of listener, one who enjoys the differences and welcomes disturbance? I know we would be delightfully startled by how much difference there is. And then we would be wonderfully comforted by how much closer we became, because every time we listen well, we move towards each other. From our new thoughts and our new companions, we would all become wiser.

Third Reading ~ *from Parker Palmer*

Avoid the bad habit of domesticating the prophet of your choice, turning the prophet into a cheerleader for your way of thinking and way of life. Remember that all the great prophets were courageous and courageous folks who railed against the powers-that-be, challenged self-satisfied piosity, threatened the prevailing social order, and would find you falling short in some significant ways.