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WEEKLY LETTER – 4 DECEMBER 2022



Matthew 3.1-12

Repent, for the Kingdom of God is near.

By all accounts John the Baptist was the loudest and most famous prophet in Israel during 28-30 AD. He tore at the guts of those who soaked themselves in luxury and bathed themselves in every form of denial and delusion.

Fellow Jews could see that John was authentic, and that his message was from God. But, who wants to be told to repent? Who wants to open their lives up and have to search deep into the souls? Who wants to enter into a world of uncertainty, especially when you have spent so much of your life thinking that life is ticking along rather well?

John like Jesus is saying, you enjoy feeling you have the power to judge others, and so make yourself feel good and at times superior. You believe that you are living by a higher standard, especially when you are frustrated with other people. You enjoy enforcing your rules on others.

Both John, and later on Jesus show through their lives and in what they say, “Rules cannot bring freedom. They only have the power to accuse”.

To repent is a truly demanding choice. Repentance suggests that you know yourself well, and that you are willing to embrace genuine self-knowledge. For we know we are not perfect, and I increasingly think that a truly confident person is one who is also vulnerable – open to God’s spirit, and with a genuine desire to improve. In other words, repentance may be demanding, but it is a corner stone of Christ’s heart felt message to us all.

Stephen

**Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom, at 10.30 am will be led by Rev Dr Noel Davies
We will celebrate Communion.**

Bible Readings: Acts 2.42-47: Revelation 22.16-21

Cycle of Prayer in the Swansea Region – we will pray for Uniting Church, Sketty.

Church Meeting - after Worship on 4th December - to come to a decision on future Ministry.

Tea and Chat – 2 pm - Tuesday – 6th December at Christ Well.

Advent Bible Study on Zoom 2022

This year there will only be one Bible Study session. It will be held on Zoom at 7 pm on Tuesday, 13th December. It will be led by Noel Davies. The theme will be “Come, Lord Jesus, Come”, and it will use words and images to explore this Advent theme.

Printed copies will be available from 4th December. The Zoom link will be the normal Sunday link.

God, or “Religion”? (Lectionary readings: Isaiah 11.1-10: Psalm 72.1-7, 18-19: Romans 15.4-13: Matthew 3.1-12)

If someone loves you, God
truly loves you
 with heart and soul and mind and strength
if they seek to do right
 by you and by all people
if they set their hearts and actions to walking justly
and their lives to bearing good fruit.

if they welcome others –
 especially in your name
and live peaceably with both friend and stranger

would you reject them because they did not
 declare Jesus as Lord ...
 because they did not say the “right words”
 or believe in the “right way”?

Surely you long for all your people to live in harmony –
 whichever name we call you
 however you are made known to us –
and for our voices to be joined in glory
 to the one God for all?

Thank you, God, that you are God –
 and don’t let us put “religion” in your place.

Karen Campbell (URC Prayer Handbook 2022)



PLEASE NOTE:
There will be no letter delivery next week due to holidays.