

Sunday 16th December 2018 .St Johns 9am
Christ The King 10.30 a m .3rd Sunday of
Advent .

May I speak from the heart and may the holy
spirit guide me . Amen

Today's readings are all quite short and very
different or are they ?

The first reading from Zephania tells of the
Jews being punished by God and taken into
exile by the Babylonians .But it finishes with
God forgiving them and the promise to bring
them all back together as one nation again .

The second reading is a letter to the
philippinians from Paul ,who is at this time is in
prison .Paul tells them to rejoice in the Lord
always ,even in the bad times have faith and
praise the lord.

By sharing what you have with your
neighbour ,you are showing them that Gods
love is for them as well , trust in the Lord
always and his peace will be upon each one of
you .

The Gospel reading is from Luke and is about John the Baptist , it is different from Mathews version ,because Mathew preaches to Sadducees and the Pharises ,where as Luke preaches to the crowds. The crowds are made up of the undesirables of society ,the poor and lame , the tax collectors and the soldiers .

John the Baptist refers to them as a brood of Vipers , he calls them to change their ways .They ask him "tells us what to do?"

He tells the poor to share what they have with each other and calls to the tax collectors to collect only what they are supposed to collect and not to cheat any one out of more ,to the soldiers he tells do not set out false accusations and abuse people to extort more money from them , be happy with the wages paid to you .

It is surprising that John didn't tell them to quit their jobs as tax collectors and the soldiers to become like pacifists ,instead he told to do what is right in the positions they were in .That redemption is for everyone ,look around you see who is in need and look after

them .He also tells them that someone greater than himself is coming , I can only baptise you with water but the one following me will not only cleanse you with water but also with the fire of the holy spirit .

I do find these readings about John the Baptist during Advent a little strange as we are approaching the nativity and Baby Jesus they seem kind of out of sequence Yet if we rewind we will remember how John as a baby leapt in his mother 's womb when Mary approached her ,he knew then that she was carrying the christ child .John and Jesus are thought to be cousins . So as the word Advent means that something or someone is coming then John is not only preparing people for Jesus arrival it is also a reminder to us that some one is coming to us also .

So how do we prepare for people to come to our homes over christmas ? I expect we give our homes a top to bottom clean , prepare lots of moorish food ,as we dont want our guests to go hungry , we bring out a nice bottle of wine or two , we hug and kiss under mistletoe , maybe sing carols or watch a film ,play some

games , listen to the Queens speech , and last of all nod off in a warm sitting room . All very cosy and lovely .

But how do we prepare our selves ? do we just race about gathering up our gifts , never stopping to pause to have a chat with the old man who looks a little unkempt and maybe in need of just someone to give him a hug and exchange a few moments chat ? yes lots of people out collecting for the various charitys so do we just chuck a handful of change into a bucket not even aware of where the money is going too . That might be enough for you and I am sure its ok as the charity will do the rest .

You may participate in a carol concert or prehaps join in a song heralding all about christmas in the shops as you go about your present hunting ,

Have we taken the time to go and speak to the family who have just recently lost a loved one , they are finding this ,all to much this year , Prehaps just to sit and listen to them is all they need right now ,maybe a prayer said for them will mean more than " have a happy

christmas" card shoved through their door .

To prepare our hearts for christmas means confessing our failure to notice the lonely ,the sick ,the bereaved , and asking to be forgiven , going back out their and try again .

But even more than this it means opening up your hearts and allowing Jesus in.

Throw open the door of your home and invite Jesus into it , He is ready and waiting for you to do so . so will you invite him in to your lives right here right now ? if so shout out now with me Yes come lord Jesus come .altogether now Yes come Lord Jesus come .

I want to share with you something that I did with the sunday school children at christmas time a few years ago , We broke the word christmas down to read like this

C is for carols everyone enjoys

H is for the Heralding of good news

R is for Redemption of sin

I is for the Inn keeper who gave them a stable

S is for silence of the christchilds birth

T is for three wise men who travelled a far

M is for Mary the mother of all

A is for Angels watching over the shepherds

S is for our Saviour so little so small.

If you put it all together then the celebrations
can begin .

I have held on to this as the group ages were
from 5 yrs upto 15 yrs and not one mentioned
santa or reindeers . I felt those children had
really understood the importance of this tiny
baby and the true meaning of Christmas .

so todays reading are not that different in the
sense that god forgives wants you to be open
to him and rejoice with each other look out for
the sad and share what you have .Amen .

