

Third Sunday of Advent – December 15, 2019, Year A

St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Douglas GA

The Rev. Fr. John E. Commins+ Rector

Scripture: Various

“Prophecies Fulfilled”

We are so very blessed today by the marvelous presentation by these young people, and of course our narrator – Grant, our organist - Anne, all of your voices – which I think rocked the heavens this morning, and the efforts of those who helped put this together: Alissa Evans, Holly Lott, Amy Carson, Cady Adams, and Dr. Anne Vickers. Your efforts have given us a reminder of what truly Christmas is all about. Thank you!

All of the readings today from the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, paint the vision of Jesus' birth – coming to take on life as a baby boy – for one specific reason of rescuing us from our sins – and bringing to us the promise of eternal life. The reading that we didn't hear today that is usually read on the Third Sunday of Advent, reminds us of the many promises that God made to His people about the Messiah that He would send – as a rescuer – a Savior. John the Baptist, during this reading, was in prison because he told the truth to the king about his behavior. While in prison he asked some of his followers to see what Jesus was doing. They reported back to him that Jesus was the One sent by God and that He was doing all of the things that Isaiah had prophesied in Isaiah 61:1-2, Isaiah wrote this 600 years before Jesus was born, *“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn.”* Jesus was doing exactly what He was sent here to do. The baby in the manger had grown into the Man who as Isaiah said in 35:5-6, *“then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.”*

Jesus then addressed the crowd, telling them that God used the Prophets to speak to His people up until Malachi, but then there was silence – until John the Baptist was sent to tell everyone that everything the prophets said was now coming true – right in front of them – before their very eyes. God used Malachi to say, *“See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.* (Malachi 3:1) And then again in Malachi 4:5 *“See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes.”* It will only be dreadful for the ones who don't believe. John the Baptist would see and proclaim Jesus as the one who would save God's people when he said, *“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29) Jesus, the Lamb of God, is the fulfillment of over 300 prophecies as well as the Law that was given to Moses.

This Christmas - it is my hope that we will all thank God that the plan that He has for all believers is fulfilled by the vision that we saw today, portrayed by these wonderful young people, their faces were filled with real smiles. The shepherds were glad to be here, and the

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angels looked heavenly, and Mary and Joseph – they were awesome too. We heard the Word of God, and the Hymns and Carols that we sang truly touched us – and we know that Jesus, the Messiah came to save us – and we are so blessed and grateful for Him. Remember the words from the Prophet Isaiah “*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*” (Isaiah 7:14)