

Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 18, 2022, Year A

St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Douglas GA

The Rev. Fr. John E. Commins+ Rector

Scripture: Various

“Navigation”

I am so grateful to see our children blessing us with the Christmas Pageant - and the well-read Nativity story. A big “Thank You” to our director, assistant directors, the cast, and of course the parents for allowing us to see the talents of these incredible young people. Thank you so much!

While it is great fun for them, and for us, I think it makes the story of Jesus coming to earth more real for them, and for us as well. What we just saw here makes us all the more familiar with, and making all the more real to us that Jesus came to earth – and He came to earth for one reason – for us. While we enjoyed all of the blessings of Christmas today, we need to remember that we are not there yet. We are still on the Fourth Sunday of Advent today – the center white candle will not be lit until Saturday Night. We are preparing for the coming King. So if we can – let us get back into that preparatory mode.

I want you to imagine that you are driving on a long trip and your navigation system keeps talking to you. Do you ever ignore the voice in the little box – or coming from your in-dash navigation system? Sometimes it takes a delay before it tells you when to turn and where? You know that you need to make a left-hand turn – but when? Finally you get there and it says, “make left-hand turn” and you just missed it. It is frustrating. It is going to tell you what to do next to get you back on the quickest route to your destination. You really could use a little help telling you what you need to do next. That is what our co-navigator sitting next to us are for. John the Baptist was the navigation for Israel, trying to tell them what they needed to do to get back on the track that God wanted them to be on. They kept ignoring his message of “repent” which sort of like saying “recalculating.” Did you notice that the newer navigation systems don’t say that anymore. Maybe because too many people got upset with that term and they may have shot their navigation system in essence John was telling them to “turn around” or “turn away from your current behavior” and get on the right track that God wants you to be on. They did not want to hear his “redirecting” message.

When it comes to “warning messages” they don’t come any clearer or stronger than the Apostle Peter’s in 2 Peter 3:3-18. His “redirecting” message was more of “look out!” than “redirecting.” He warns of scoffers who follow their own evil desires. He warns of destruction, but gives us the message that we are to live “*holy and godly lives.*” (2 Peter 3:11) In other words turn away from unholy or ungodly behavior – and follow Biblical, holy lives.

So how do we do that? May I suggest to you that one way that we can live more godly lives is to be reading the Holy Bible – everyday. When Jesus spoke many would listen, but then many would turn away too. Jesus wants to speak to you today – but in order to hear Him – we need to read His Holy Word – the Bible. He can then speak to you and direct your life, guiding your steps and your behavior. Let Jesus – the Word of God, and His written Word be your navigation – to keep you on course – and remind you when you need to adjust your course!

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Your ultimate destination is not Douglas, GA, or somewhere in Coffee County. Your ultimate destination is in heaven, with Him. And that is truly Holy Navigation.