

ST. BARNABAS CHURCH, SWANLAND
'Sharing Christ through friendship' - SMALL GROUPS NOTES

Wk/beg 13 December 2015. Bible passages: Isaiah 11:1-5, Matthew 11:2-11

Advent 3 – John the Baptist/Love

Welcome/ icebreaker	Think about how ways of communicating have changed over the years. Time yourselves for one minute. How many different ways of communication can you come up with?
Worship	Choose songs/hymns that focus on the love of God. Suggestions: Love without measure, Love divine, He is good and his love endures forever, A new commandment.
Word (refs.↓)	<i>NB Sermon, hopefully, is available to listen to on www.stbchurch.org.uk (click on the 'downloads' tab).</i>
	The third Sunday of Advent focuses on John the Baptist who prepared the way for the coming of Jesus. You may like to spend a few minutes sharing what you remember about who he was and what he did. (Luke1:5-23,57-66,3:3-19 might help) Read also, John1:6-9
Isaiah 11:1-5	Who was Jesse - and who will be the "shoot"? (See 1 Sam 16:10-13) How does this connect with John the Baptist?
Mt11:2-11	Consider John's situation. Consider his questions. Why do you think he needed to ask them at this time, after his confident ministry of proclamation?
v11	Consider Archbishop Justin Welby's recent admission that he questioned where God was in the horror of the Paris attacks. Is it good or appropriate ever to ask questions of God? Consider Matthew 27:46.
Reflect	What do you think Jesus meant by this? Reflect on the purpose of John – to point to Jesus and to make it easy for others to come to him - and reflect, in thankfulness, on the Love that God communicated by Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. Jesus came as a human being not to <i>bring</i> a message, but to <i>be</i> the message and to make it possible for us to communicate with God through the Holy Spirit living in us.
Pray	Following that time of reflection, invite the Holy Spirit to come, lead and inspire a time of listening to God, prayer and ministry to each other.
Witness	Are there ways we might make it easy for others to come to Jesus this Advent and Christmas? Are we prepared to be witnesses, like John - to tell our stories of what God has done in our lives, when God gives us opportunities? Who might we invite to share in our Advent and Christmas celebrations? Mothers Union Carol Service on 16 Dec, 2pm– everyone is welcome, Mistletoe and Wine 20 Dec 6.30pm, Carols round the Crib 24 Dec, 3pm, Carols by the Pond 24 Dec 6.45pm and of course the Christmas Day services.

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