



Figure 1 *Where is the Messiah*

03B ADVENT 3B ONLINE LITURGY

Where is the Messiah

Abstract

“I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.”
This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing

John 1:26-28

Revised Common Lectionary. (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

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03B Advent 3B Online Liturgy

Where is the Messiah

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2020 | ADVENT | THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT | YEAR B

<i>Old Testament</i>	Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11
<i>Psalm</i>	Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b–55
<i>New Testament</i>	1 Thessalonians 5:16–24
<i>Gospel</i>	John 1:6–8, 19–28 ⁱ

John 1.6-8,19-28

Religious leaders are dispatched to question John the Baptist as to his identity, wondering if he might be the Messiah. John repeatedly answers in the negative but leaves them with an intriguing possibility that the Messiah is among them – but they don't realise it yet.

This week's resources explore: searching for the Messiah only to discover he is among you.

	Pre-Service
	<p style="text-align: center;">Greeting</p> <p>May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all and also with us</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">We Gather</p> <p>Bring your busyness and your worries; bring your doubts and your desires; bring your fears and your failures; bring your hopes and your passions; bring all that you are to the one who knows you through and through, and loves you.ⁱⁱ</p> <p>Acknowledgements Candle lighting</p> <p><i>Let us pray</i> Living God, we light these three candles in the name of Jesus, the light of the world: make straight our paths, enlighten our hearts and our minds.</p> <p>Bless us on our Advent journey; and may your kingdom come.</p> <p>Amen.</p>

Hymn/song

Peter, Paul and Mary - Light One Candle

"Light One Candle" is a song by the folk group Peter, Paul and Mary. It is a popular Chanukah song. Peter, Paul, and Mary performed the song in concerts starting in 1982, before recording it for their 1986 studio album *No Easy Walk to Freedom*.

The lyrics commemorate the war of national liberation fought by the Maccabees against a Greek empire from 140 to 63 BCE,

In 1983, when the trio performed the song at an outdoor concert in Jerusalem, Israel, a country torn over the Lebanon War, they added lyrics to address the political complexities faced by their audience: "Light one candle for the strength that we need to never become our own foe. Light one candle for those who are suffering, pain we learned so long ago. Light one candle for all we believe in, let anger not tear us apart. Light one candle to bind us together with peace as the song in our heart..." When they repeated the chorus "Don't let the light go out, It's lasted for so many years. Don't let the light go out, Let it shine through our love and our tears," the politically mixed audience cheered.ⁱⁱⁱ

Light one candle for the Maccabee children
 With thanks their light didn't die;
 Light one candle for the pain they endured
 When their right to exist was denied;
 Light one candle for the terrible sacrifice
 Justice and freedom demand;
 And light one candle for the wisdom to know
 That the peacemaker's time is at hand!

Chorus:

Don't let the light go out,
 It's lasted for so many years!
 Don't let the light go out!
 Let it shine through our love and our tears!

Light one candle for the strength that we need
 To never become our own foe;
 Light one candle for those who are suff'ring
 A pain they learned so long ago;
 Light one candle for all we believe in,
 That anger not tear us apart;
 And light one candle to bind us together
 With peace as the song in our heart!

(chorus)

What is the memory that's valued so highly
 That we keep it alive in that flame?
 What's the commitment to those who have died?
 We cry out "they've not died in vain,"
 We have come this far, always believing
 That justice will somehow prevail;

	<p>This is the burden, This is the promise, This is why we will not fail!</p>
	<p>Welcome Isaiah brought us a word from an anointed one; the psalm, from an intercessor; Paul brought a gracious invitation and John a word from a messenger. In each of the readings, we are presented with opportunities and choices for change and transformation. We are even given information about the one who would deliver this change. The Gospel reading tells us of the mystery of the Messiah or 'Anointed One'. It could draw us into choices about how to treat those among us with all the respect due to the Messiah. <i>Let us pray</i> Some of us are weary or downhearted. Still we say: let our hearts be glad, God is always here. Let us approach God with confidence, because God has always been with us. Let our hearts be glad! Amen</p>
	<p>Readings Isaiah 61.1-4,8-11 Psalm 126 1 Thessalonians 5.16-24 John 1.6-8,19-28 Old Testament <i>Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11 (NIV)</i> 61 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim 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, ² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, ³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord</p>

for the display of his splendor.

⁴ They will rebuild the ancient ruins
and restore the places long devastated;
they will renew the ruined cities
that have been devastated for generations.

⁸ "For I, the Lord, love justice;
I hate robbery and wrongdoing.
In my faithfulness I will reward my people
and make an everlasting covenant with them.

⁹ Their descendants will be known among the nations
and their offspring among the peoples.
All who see them will acknowledge
that they are a people the Lord has blessed."

¹⁰ I delight greatly in the Lord;
my soul rejoices in my God.
For he has clothed me with garments of salvation
and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
¹¹ For as the soil makes the sprout come up
and a garden causes seeds to grow,
so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness
and praise spring up before all nations.

Psalm

Psalm 126 Video^{iv}

New Testament

1 Thessalonians 5:16–24 (NIV)

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is
God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt ²¹ but test
them all; hold on to what is good, ²² reject every kind of evil.

²³ May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your
whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus
Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

Gospel

John 1:1-18 (NIV)

Lumo Gospel of John Video^{vvi}

respond

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Hymn/song/video

We say Sorry

God, you hovered over chaos,
like a brooding hen, bringing order over chaos.

But we – through thought, deed, misdeed and omission –
 have quenched the spirit of life that you give us.
 We have turned our faces away.

And now, we turn our faces back to you,
 light of all light,
 God of all gods,
 and ask for the light of your life to lift us again.
 Bring us out of chaos into the order of creation,
 for your name's sake,
 and for the sake of your goodness among us.
 Amen.

Hymn/Song

Make way Kendrick

Response

Mystery of the Messiah
 John 1.1-18

Does everyone remember the Where's Wally books?
 They are a British series of children's puzzle books
 created by English illustrator Martin Handford.
 The books consist of a series of detailed double-page spread illustrations
 depicting dozens or more people
 doing a variety of amusing things at a given location.
 Readers are challenged to find a character named Wally hidden in the group.

Wally is identified by his red-and-white-striped shirt,
 bobble hat, and glasses,
 but many illustrations contain red herrings
 involving deceptive use of red-and-white striped objects.
 Later entries in the long-running book series added other targets
 for readers to find in each illustration.

Today we have a picture
 Not a Where's Wally, but where's Jesus.

Jesus can be seen in our everyday lives
 as he leaves his 'fingerprints' all over our messy lives.
 Do we recognise him?

There used to be a tv program called Undercover Boss.
 Each week an owner or manager
 (The first Australian episode was of the owner
 of a major Domino's Pizza franchise)
 goes in, professionally disguised as a trainee.

This gives them the opportunity to see how things are working at 'ground level',
 to experience life as a trainee,
 and to get to know a few of their employees
 – how committed they are in their work,

and the pressure they face in their home lives too.

Later, those individuals are invited to HQ in order, so they are told,
to give feedback on the new employee/trainee.

When they get there, the boss is revealed
and dedicated and hard-working employees are rewarded
– sometimes a lot of money!
Others are not!

How would you feel if you discovered that your boss was in disguise,
working alongside you?

Would that affect your behaviour in any way?

But what if it was more than ‘just’ your boss/a teacher.

What if it was Jesus himself who was – to paraphrase John –
walking alongside you,
but you just hadn’t noticed, or realised, or worked it out?

How might – or, indeed, how should
– knowing that anyone you come into contact with
could be ‘God among us’
(or the son/daughter of God, if you prefer),
change your attitude towards all people around you?

Among you stands one you do not know.

Just outside ‘arrivals’ at an airport,
greeters hold signs of welcome
to those passengers they are there to collect.

They know the person’s name,
but usually have no idea what they look like.

Can you imagine standing there,
gazing at all the passengers walking through the arrival gates
– wondering: is this the one?

Yet, barring the occasional travel mishap,
the one they look for is among them.

The Messiah was expected.

The prophets foretold his coming.
He was among them,
though they did not know it yet.
But the time was drawing close when he would finally be revealed.

William Barclay is convinced that John wrote the fourth gospel
for the sake of this fourteenth verse.

Early in the first chapter John talked about the Word:
the creative and dynamic word.

The Word was the agent bringing about creation.

In the beginning it was this directing, controlling Word
which put order in the universe and mind in women and men.

John states an incredible, startling fact unheard of in his first century world:
 the Word, the power, the dynamic,
 the reason that orders and controls the world
 "has become flesh and dwells among us." ^{vii}

John goes on to say that "we have seen with our eyes . . .
 and touched with our hands . . . the word of life" (1 John 1:1-2).
 John's message is that this Word has come to the earth in human form.
 God, who was so distant, is now near.

John is saying that if you want to see what this creating Word,
 this dynamic power, this controlling reason looks like
 -- look at Jesus of Nazareth. "
 ... In him was life, and the life was the light of all people" (John 1:4).

A mother was putting her little daughter to bed in the midst of a thunderstorm.
 She told her daughter that she did not need to be frightened,
 that her mother and father were close by in the living room.
 The girl replied to her mother,
 "Mummy, but when it thunders like this,
 I want somebody who has skin on." ^{viii}

This simple, plain story, in essence,
 is the essential truth of our text.
 The invisible spirit of God did clothe himself in skin, flesh, and blood
 and came to dwell among us with grace and truth.

God has Put on Flesh

The Word of God became flesh in Jesus Christ!
 This fact is driven home to us as we take the bread and the cup
 at the Lord's table.
 In this mystery of holy communion
 the love of Christ seeks to become flesh in us.
 There are within this text of John 1:14
 subtle tones of a sacramental theology
 that give meaning to this Gospel of the incarnation.
 The English poet John Betman is helpful to us when he writes:

No love that in a family dwells,
 No caroling in frosty air,
 Nor all the steeple-shaking bells,
 Can with this simple Truth compare.
 That God was Man in Palestine
 And lives today in bread and wine.

When things in this world appear out of control,
 when disappointment and despair grip your heart,
 when friends let you down and circumstances appear overwhelming,
 remember:
 "The Word of God has become flesh and lives among us full of grace and truth."

	Amen
	Hymn/song TIS 680/SCE 37 Beauty for brokenness Kendrick
	Offering
	Notices
	<p>Prayers for all people</p> <p><i>In the Gospel passage, we read that when people were praying for the Messiah to come, the Messiah was already among them. We never need to look for God, as if God is not already here. We need to turn to God who is always here, always ready, always listening.</i></p> <p><i>Take time to listen to the breath, to the heart that is always beating, knowing that as surely as the heart beats, God is always with us.</i></p> <p>In our moments of weariness, or meekness, or pressure, We know God is here.</p> <p>In our moments of pride, We know God is here.</p> <p>In our moments of demand, We know God is here.</p> <p>God is here, always, already, at once. Holding, sustaining and creating a new creation, in us, in all.</p> <p>We pray today for all who are downtrodden, all who are oppressed, all who know the heavy hand of marginalisation on them.</p> <p>God, we turn to you, remembering the words of Mary, praying that you will lift up the lowly, you will raise the voice of justice, and you will scatter oppression. May all who are oppressed be set free. We ask this, in joy and gratitude. In your name we pray.</p> <p>We pray that we might find rhythms of life that sustain us here. Rhythms for cultivating and renewing the earth; human community; jus-tice; and creativity. We ask this, in joy and gratitude. In your name we pray. Amen</p>

	<p>Lord's Prayer</p> <p>Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.</p> <p>AMEN^{ix}</p>
	<p>Hymn/song</p> <p>TIS 679 Jesus put this song into our hearts Kendrick</p>
	<p>We are sent out</p> <p>Gathered in, Lord, we have been nurtured by your Spirit of Life. Now, sent out, we go in the assurance that your Word lasts for ever, and your promises are true. Let the lowly be lifted up. Let the hungry be fed. Let the mighty listen: God, who is merciful, hears all. Come, let us go in the blessed joy of God's kindness. Amen, Amen, Amen.</p> <p>May the Lord bless us and keep us May His face shine upon us and be gracious to us May he lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace</p>
	<p>Benediction</p>
	<p>Thank you</p>

ⁱ Revised Common Lectionary. (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

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- ^v Lumo Gospel of John <https://youtu.be/G2qjPdtQnk4?list=PLcJVluhI8isK1RYcLxY0L929cnN3vALi8>
The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011.
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- ^{vi} Revised Common Lectionary. (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.
- ^{vii} John A. Stroman “**God Is Down To Earth**”
- ^{viii} Leonard Griffith, Toronto
- ^{ix} English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988