



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT & OFFICERS/LEADERS SUNDAY

Sunday, December 11, 2011

Guest Writer for This Unit: Elvin J. Parker III is a fourth-generation preacher for over 35 years living in Fort Pierce, Florida.

The unit you are viewing, [Third Sunday of Advent & Officers/Leaders Sunday](#), is a compact unit. This means that it does not have a supporting cultural resource unit and worship unit. Instead, to enliven the imagination of preachers and teachers, we have provided scriptural text(s) that we suggest for this moment on the calendar along with a sermonic outline, suggested links, books, articles, songs, and videos. For additional information, see [Third Sunday of Advent & Officers/Leaders Sunday](#) in the archives of the Lectionary. In some years the Third Sunday of Advent is celebrated separately from Officers/Leaders Sunday. 2011 is the first year that the African American Lectionary has posted compact units for moments on its liturgical calendar.

I. Description of the Liturgical Moment

Tyrone McGowan wrote in this year's Second Sunday of Advent compact unit:

Our English word for advent comes from the Latin term “adventus” or “coming.” Traditionally Advent is a period of four Sundays from the final Sunday in November to Christmas Eve. Advent is the first season of the Christian liturgical calendar. Advent represents a time of hope and expectancy as the global community awaits the birth of Jesus Christ into the world. In addition to the birth of Christ, we look forward to the continued presence and power of Christ entering our existential reality, renewing us and reviving us for the challenges that confront us on our journey. The season of Advent encourages us to continue to live faithful lives as we patiently await Christ to radically enter our particular situations. In contemporary culture where one's disposition can change depending upon the latest trending topic on Twitter, many are no longer conditioned to wait for anything or anyone. We seem to live in a time without pauses. Advent comes to remind us that pauses are necessary and beneficial.

With this material as our backdrop, we provide a sermon outline for the Third Sunday of Advent.

II. Third Sunday of Advent: Sermonic Outline

A. Sermon Focus Text(s): Luke 1:67-79 (New Revised Standard Version)

(v. 67) Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy: (v. 68) ‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. (v. 69) He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, (v. 70) as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, (v. 71) that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. (v. 72) Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, (v. 73) the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us (v. 74) that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, (v. 75) in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. (v. 76) And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, (v. 77) to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. (v. 78) By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, (v. 79) to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.’

B. Possible Titles

- i. We Too Are Way-makers!
- ii. God's Gift of Leadership
- iii. Leadership: A Labor of Love

C. Point of Exegetical Inquiry

The Word of God is a dynamic force that speaks not only to its immediate audience “way back when” but also contemporaneously to God’s Church “here and now.” This passage is an example of the ever-unfolding revelation of God to God’s people. Sermonically, this passage is intended to be forward-looking but does not go beyond the Advent Season as we await the birth of Christ.

III. Introduction

On this the Third Sunday of Advent, and as we celebrate church officers and leaders, our text comes to us from one of a trilogy of songs found in the Gospel of Luke. In this great proclamation of “Good News” bearing the name of the physician-turned-evangelist, Luke, we hear the *Magnificat*, the Song or Canticle of Mary; the *Nunc Dimittis*, the Song or Canticle of Simeon; and the passage from which our sermonic enterprise is drawn, that great prophetic utterance inspired by the Holy Spirit, the *Benedictus*, the Song or Canticle of Zechariah. Zechariah, heretofore a muted priest in Jerusalem, whose his lips have been touched with burning coals from the altar of Grace, now sings as his heart is blessed and burdened with this divinely inspired Word from on High. “Benedictus esto Dominus Deus Israel!” he begins, “Blessed is the Lord God of Israel!” That is how Saint Jerome translates this song from the original manuscript into Latin in the Vulgate. It is the triumphant song of a father, who by an “implicit epiclesis” now blesses his yet unborn son—a son whom the Holy Spirit has revealed will be a pivotal force in the unfolding drama of Salvation History; a child herein described as a Mighty Prophet of God, who will announce the coming of Salvation from God; a child destined to be a “Way-maker” for the Christ of God!

And by implication this proclamation is also given to us, the Ek-kaleo, the Ekklesia, the “Called Out,” the Church of Christ, to continually be “way-makers” for the Savior of the World! That’s what we are! That’s who we are! That is our truest designation! We, who are blessed to be leaders and members of this living body of Christ, are set apart and called to be “way-makers” for the Messiah. You and I, like John to ancient Israel, are modern-day Forerunners of the Faith.

Every day of our lives we are charged with the responsibility to not only witness, but to also be a witness of what God through Christ has done and is doing in the work of redemption, to declare by word and deed that our God is the keeper of the Covenant sworn before we became the children and heirs of Grace.

IV. Moves/Points

Move/Point One – Way-Makers are people of destiny.

- a. Way-makers, like John, are children of promise;
- b. Way-makers possess a character that permeates; and
- c. Way-makers are “called” for a purpose.

Move/Point Two – Way-Makers have determined direction.

- a. John had a clear and concise proclamation;
- b. Way-makers pursue a Christ-centered program; and
- c. Way-makers are committed to a consistent paradigm.

Move/Point Three – Way-Makers are committed to duty.

- a. For John, people were his chief concern;
- b. John was dedicated to promoting the cause of Christ; and
- c. John pronounced that Christ had come.

V. Celebration

John was never confused with his role, destiny, direction, or duty. John's humble admission was, "There comes one after me whose sandals I am not worthy to unlatch." In other words, "There is someone greater than I to come." John recognized that he was a way-maker for The Way-Maker.

The people of God were waiting and expecting Zechariah to speak. God blessed him to not only speak but to announce the coming of the forerunner. Elizabeth was expecting a child, but Zechariah assured her that it was not an ordinary boy, but a Mighty Prophet of God! Mary was expecting the Savior of the World as annunciated by Gabriel, Heaven's Trumpeter. We who are believers sit with bated breath and anxious anticipation for the return of the soon-coming King. Yes, the Church of God is waiting in hope pregnant with possibilities for its Lord and God's Christ!

As Christians and church leaders we too are way-makers and likewise waiting as prognosticators of the Gospel continue to show us the way. Like John we lift our voices and admonish men and women, boys and girls all in the name of "Preparing the way of the Lord!" The strength of our labor is demonstrated by the power of God's love. It is a love that enables us and emboldens us to declare with undiminished determination the power of the One who is Heaven's Way-Maker. We are charged to declare to a dying world that Christ has come and because he has come our path has been blazed and our way has been made.

Yes, Christ is the Consummate Way-maker. Look at him, making his way down through forty-two generations. He makes his way from Adam to David, from David to the City of David, down to Bethlehem where in this season we await his birth.

The one who is to come IS a way-maker! I believe it's true; the ancients of old this they knew too. I believe it because THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO!! And because the Bible told ME so, I have come to tell YOU that the one for whom we wait during this Advent Season is still making a

way! No matter what your situation is, he can make a way! No matter how far or how long you have been straying, he has already made a way back! No matter what you've done or NOT done, he loves you and has made a way for you!

VI. Illustration

Exalting God

My son does the exact same thing every time I come home from work. First, he shouts, “He’s here! He’s here!” Then he says, “You’re Home!” He then grabs my leg, and I cannot continue to walk until I pick him up and give him a bear hug. After the hug, I put him down and he asks, “Can I take you back to Mama?” I always acquiesce. He takes hold of my index finger and leads me to my wife. Upon arrival he says, “Here’s the SUPER, SUPER DADDY!” While saying this he’s waving his hand to present me, as he almost bows.

I recently thought to myself this is what we should do during church: praise, worship, and present. When we come together in church we should always praise God, first. Next we should worship him (the hug/kiss). Finally, we should use our knowledge of how great he is to present him to others.

—Cameron Cooley, Memphis, Tennessee

This illustration was taken from the Sermon Illustrations section of The African American Lectionary. See this area for other illustrations you may wish to use.

VII. Sounds, Sights, and Colors in This Passage

Sounds: Deafening silence broken by gasps of astonishment as Zechariah begins to sing;

Sights: Friends and family gathered in the home of Zechariah and Elizabeth to hear what Zechariah has to say; bright light juxtaposed against blinding darkness as expressed in the Song of Zechariah; the light of a day’s dawning; and

Colors: Muted earth tones of brown, beige, and grey; and the golden brightness of reflective sunlight.

VIII. Songs to Accompany This Sermon

A. Well-Known Song(s)

- Saved. By Jack P. Scholfield
- Step Aside. By Yolanda Adams
YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILkwuo72CCI>

B. Modern Song(s) (Written between 2005–2010)

- Dear God. By Smokie Norful

- Wait on the Lord. By Edwin Hawkins and Walter Hawkins
- Order My Steps. By Glenn Burleigh
YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FyDmrWzDKU0>

C. Spiritual(s)

- My Lord! What a Morning.
- He Came Down. Cameroon Traditional
- While We Are Waiting, Come. By Claire Cloninger. Tune by Don Cason

D. Liturgical Dance Music

- No Looking Back. By Deitrick Haddon

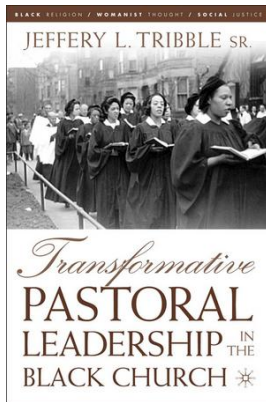
E. Invitational Song(s)

- Empty Me. By William Murphy
- Expectation. By William McDowell

IX. Videos, Audio, and/or Interactive Media

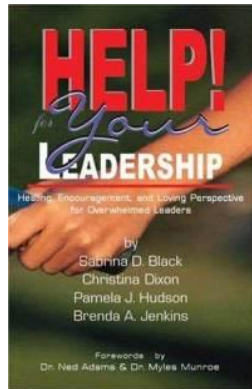
- Advent Reflections for the Third Sunday of Advent by Br. John Paul Phillips, O.P.
Online location: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5FHkiNklSE>
- Desmond Tutu discusses what makes a good leader. Online location:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IrCeVwwu0Xc>
- Advent Service at Holy Rosary Catholic Church. Online location:
<http://vodpod.com/watch/4697125-113009-holy-rosary-advent-revival>
- Kids answering the question, What Makes a Good Leader? Online location:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQfrcOX5tW4&feature=related>

X. Books to Assist in Preparing Sermons or Bible Studies Related to the Third Sunday of Advent & Officers/Leaders Sunday

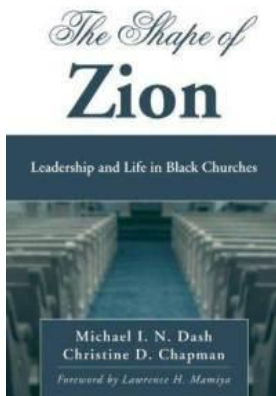


Tribble, Jeffery L., Sr. Transformative Pastoral Leadership in the Black Church. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

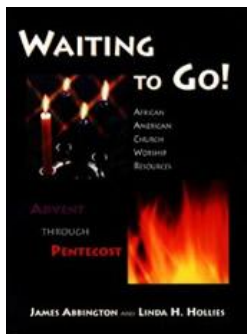
Black, Sabrina D., Jenkins. HELP! for Loving Perspective PriorityOne



Christina Dixon, Pamela J. Hudson, and Brenda A. Your Leadership: Healing, Encouragement, and for Overwhelmed Leaders. Farmington, MI: Publications, 2003.



Dash, Michael I. N., and Christine D. Chapman. The Shape of Zion: Leadership and Life in Black Churches. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2007.



Abbingon, James and Linda H. Hollies. Waiting to Go! African American Church Worship Resources—Advent through Pentecost. Chicago, IL: GIA Publishers, 2002.

XI. Ideas and Links to Helpful Websites for the Third Sunday of Advent & Officers/Leaders Sunday

- The *Benedictus* (also *Song of Zechariah* or *Canticle of Zachary*), given in the Gospel of Luke 1:68-79, is one of the three canticles in

the opening chapters of this Gospel. Online location:
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedictus_\(Song_of_Zechariah\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedictus_(Song_of_Zechariah))

- Preschool Lesson Plans on Advent. Online location: <http://www.first-school.ws/activities/bible/advent1.htm>
- Raymond Harris. “Trusting in the Promises of God—An Advent Message.” Online location: <http://www.nbccongress.org/features/advent-message-01.asp>
- Catholic Liturgical Resources for Advent. Online location: <http://www.liturgies.net/Advent/advent.htm>

XII. Notes for Select Songs

A. Well-Known Song(s)

- Saved. By Jack P. Scholfield
Location:
The Mississippi Mass Choir. Amazing Love. Jackson, MS: Malaco Records, 2005.
- Step Aside. By Yolanda Adams
Location:
Tyler Perry’s Daddy’s Little Girls—Music Inspired by the Film. Atlanta, GA: Atlantic Records, 2007.

B. Modern Song(s) (Written between 2005–2011)

- Dear God. By Smokie Norful
Location:
Smokie Norful Live. Brentwood, TN: EMI Gospel, 2009.
- Wait on the Lord. By Edwin Hawkins and Walter Hawkins
Location:
Testify. Nashville, TN: Central South, 2008.
- Order My Steps. By Glenn Burleigh
Location:
The Mighty Clouds of Joy. In the House of the Lord—Live in Houston. Brentwood, TN: EMI Gospel, 2011.

C. Spiritual(s)

- My Lord! What a Morning.
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001. #195
- He Came Down. Cameroon Traditional
Location:
Zion Still Sings for Every Generation. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007. #54
- While We Are Waiting, Come. By Claire Cloninger. Tune by Don Cason
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. #190

D. Liturgical Dance Music

- No Looking Back. By Deitrick Haddon
Location:
Damita Haddon: No Looking Back. Indianapolis, IN: Tyscot Records, 2008.

E. Invitational Song(s)

- Empty Me. By William Murphy
Location:
Murphy, William. The Sound. Nashville, TN: Central South, 2007.
- Expectation. By William McDowell
Location:
McDowell, William. As We Worship Live. Nashville, TN: eOne music, 2009.