



# grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

**November 30-December 6, 2020**  
**Sermon by Lead Pastor Pete Moon**  
**Second Sunday of Advent**  
**Sermon Title: “Comfort Dressed in Camel’s Hair”**

<b>Notes from sermon on 11/29:</b>	<b>Things for which to pray this week:</b>
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**Family Focus Question:**

If you had been in Palestine 2000 years ago, would you have joined the crowd going to see John?  
Why or why not?

**Questions for Small Groups**

1. Why is it that Advent always includes John the Baptist?
2. Has there ever been a time in your life when you needed to hear a message from John?
3. What is the difference between the message of John and the message of Jesus?  
How were they the same? Why was it that someone had to “prepare the way” for Jesus?

**Monday, November 30: Read Mark 1:1-8**

We wish this Advent season was all about sweetness, peace, and joy. We don’t want to hear the loud voices crying out that things aren’t okay and that we need to change our habits, behaviors, and perspectives. We don’t want anyone telling us that darkness is coming before the light. Let’s stick to the Hallmark movie version of our present reality and hold our breath for 2021 to come, when everything will be back to how it always was, right?

As we read our scriptures this week, we will be challenged to recognize that Advent and Christmas have always involved loud voices crying out in stark, plain language about the reality of our situation and our need to repent and change. John the Baptist’s voice crying out in the wilderness prepared us for the great light to come in part by showing people the reality of the darkness in which they were currently living. This year, we have had our own experiences of hearing voices crying out for racial justice, social responsibility, and change. Like John the Baptist’s, the voices were often harsh, but for those hurting and hungry, the clarity was appreciated and desperately needed.

As we listen to and become the voices preparing the way for Christ, are we willing to embrace harsh messages that give justice to the amount of pain others are feeling, thus giving them clarity and hope?

**Tuesday, December 1: Read Matthew 11:1-18**

We add this scripture passage to the common lectionary readings this week to double-down on the holiness and importance of John the Baptist's message...and delivery. While Jesus often spoke in beautiful parables, he also could be incredibly direct and seemingly harsh, calling out for change, repentance, and action. As we read Jesus's words in today's scripture, we can recognize that violence, discord, and ignorance plagued Jesus's community just as it plagues ours today. Jesus, like John, did not sugarcoat the situation nor declare that all was lost. Instead, he called people to action through faith. What messages from God are you getting in today's situation that are calling loudly to you? What callings are you finding hard to ignore...ones that, if you responded, could help people better see Christ's light?

**Wednesday, December 2: Read Isaiah 40:1-11**

We return to the common lectionary for the rest of the week in our readings, today finding scripture that brings comfort in both its words and its familiarity during the Advent season. We may recognize the final verses from Handel's *Messiah*, "He will feed his flock like a shepherd..." The chapter begins with the one word so many of us need now more than ever: "Comfort." How can we use our words to comfort others? As we've already covered, this does not mean ignoring the harsh reality; verse six describes people as being constant as "grass" and recognizes that we will wither and fade...no sugarcoating here! We can, however, find comfort in the constantcy of God's love and God's word, which has withstood every pandemic, economic crisis, government turmoil, and racial discord in history and will withstand 2020.

**Thursday, December 3: Read 2 Peter 3:8-15a**

Only the Bible can deliver a message that is so simultaneously comforting and convicting. In today's passage from Peter, we are urged to be both patient and ready – to neither fear that God isn't coming nor be complacent that God couldn't arrive in the next moment. "Hurry up and wait" is not a state of being in which many of us are comfortable, so we are given some very explicit instructions on what we are supposed to be doing with our time: working to "be at peace, with spot or blemish." As we wait for the full revelation of the light of Christ in our world this Advent season, what can we be actively doing...or NOT doing...so we can be at peace? Where are the spots and blemishes in our behavior, character, and thoughts we need to actively root out, with God's help and grace?

**Friday, December 4: Read Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13**

What more beautiful a promise could we hear in this time than "Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other"? This is the sweet, lovely Advent message we have wanted to hear all week. But how does it happen? As many of us have learned this year, we cannot simply wish for love and peace to prevail, just as we cannot simply refrain from overt racism in order for racism to end. It takes stronger, more direct words and specific action to enact true change. Our God is calling for us to be that agent for change this Advent – to be a strong, clear voice for love, faith, righteousness, and peace. Let us thank Christ for coming to give us the template for what such a life and world can look like, and thank all of the voices such as John the Baptist and the other prophets and saints in our history and in our world today who cry out in the wilderness for us to see the great light of Christ.

**Saturday, December 5: Scripture Memorization: Isaiah 40:3**

"A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

**Sunday, December 6: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession:** *Almighty God, we confess that we do not have room in our lives for John the Baptist. Our lives, with their relative comfort and superficial satisfaction hear his message as historically interesting but not relevant to us. Forgive us for our spiritual smugness and satisfaction. Forgive us for our chronological snobbery. Remind us that real hope falls upon the hopeless, and uniquely to those who are hungry for the stark clarity of the message only John can offer. We offer this prayer in the name of Jesus.*  
**AMEN**