

Tuesday 12:10pm PRE-ADVENT Online Bible Study
Exploring the Call of John the Baptist to “Prepare the Way For the Lord.”

Based on the book & the leader guide:

Prepare the Way For the Lord: Advent & the Message of John the Baptist by Adam Hamilton

4 Week Session: October 25 - November 15

Follow-up from SESSION 1 – Bible Verse & Prayer from Introduction:

Bible Verse: Matthew 3:1-3

Prayer from the United Methodist “Service of Death and Resurrection”:

Help us to live as those who are prepared to die. And, when our days here are accomplished, enable us to die as those who go forth to live, so that living or dying, our life may be in you, and that nothing in life or in death will be able to separate us from your great love in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

SESSION 2 (November 1): Pregnancy, Birth, Circumcision, and Zechariah’s Prophecy (Part 1)

Opening Prayer: *Before you, Holy God, we sometimes fall silent in humility and awe. At other times, we cannot help but shout and sing your praises. In this time of study, help us to listen – in the Scripture, in our discussions with each other, and in our hearts – for your Word, that we may learn how to more faithfully echo and embody it, for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh. Amen.*

How Can I Be Sure?

Luke 1:18-20, 57-64, 67, 76-79

When our faith is well placed, our doubts or questions should lead us to a deeper faith.

Struck Silent

Psalms 46:1, 10; Habakkuk 19:12; 1 Kings 19:12; James 1:19

Silence is an expression of awe and worship that is an appropriate response to the glory of God. It is in silence that we can hear God speak.

Questions for Discussion:

Adam Hamilton says that most key decisions in our lives require a leap of faith.

Do you agree? Why or why not?

Hamilton quotes author and minister Frederick Buechner: “Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith. They keep it awake and moving.” What does this quote mean? Do you agree? Why or why not? How, if ever, have doubts led you to deeper faith?

Hamilton writes that the longer he lives, the more comfortable he is with uncertainty and simple trust in God. Do you share this experience? Why or why not?

While we, like Zechariah, crave certainty, God gives us mystery...” How does or how could your congregation recognize God’s gift of mystery – in its worship, in its education ministries, in its service to others, or in other ways – while encouraging people to both trust God and ask God questions?

Hamilton thinks “God was asking Zechariah to talk less and to listen more.” When have you found less talking and more listening, whether to God or to other people the right approach, and why?

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When, if ever, have you heard God speaking to you in and through silence? How? Where do you go when you want or need to take time for silence?

How does your congregation take time for silence in its worship? Do you think it takes enough? Why or why not?

Closing Hymn Text for Reflection & Prayer: “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

1. Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly-minded,
For with blessing in His hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
Our full homage to demand.
2. King of kings, yet born of Mary,
As of old on earth He stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
In the body and the blood;
He will give to all the faithful
His own self for heav'nly food.
3. Rank on rank the host of heaven
Spreads its vanguard on the way,
As the Light of light descendeth
From the realms of endless day,
That the pow'rs of hell may vanish
As the darkness clears away.
4. At His feet the six-winged seraph,
Cherubim with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the presence,
As with ceaseless voice they cry:
“Alleluia, Alleluia,
Alleluia, Lord Most High!”

https://library.timelesstruths.org/music/Let_All_Mortal_Flesh_Keep_Silence/