

In the beginning was the Word...

An Advent & Christmas Course from the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney



Give

Tuesday 19th December 2023



Photo by Kelly Sikkema on Unsplash

Scripture: Luke 1:5-25

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. Now at the time of the incense-offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will

rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' Zechariah said to the angel, 'How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.' The angel replied, 'I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.' Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, 'This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favourably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.'

To reflect:

Today's Gospel reading is Luke's foretelling of the birth of John the Baptist. Something his parents had not and did not expect. Zechariah was a Priest and gave time and energy in serving God for himself and his community.

The word 'Give' appears in the readings from Isaiah, 1 Thessalonians and John 1 from last Sunday. Including in the testimony given by John the Baptist when asked who he was. John, whose birth is foretold in today's reading, speaks of who is when questioned, giving answers of who he is not as much as who he is.

As we journey through this Advent, where giving of gifts, service, joy and answers are all in our mind, you're invited today to consider what answer you would give when asked who are you? We are all beloved children of God, but what is your answer would you give to this question?

Today's Antiphon

O Radix Jesse: O Root of Jesse standing like a banner before the nations, in whose presence kings fall silent, whose praise all peoples shall sing: Come, set us free, do not delay.

To listen

Who Am I by Casting Crowns

<https://open.spotify.com/track/5VUQsLff8A3ruAyCdTxqzg?si=bb9e4dbabd564bf1>

This is the Record of John by Orlando Gibbons, one version is by The Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford.

<https://open.spotify.com/track/3xaZs6lLJRULqbwigV4sdO?si=4721cb373ac2453a>

The word for each day (3-25 December is taken from Advent Word 2023 #adventword).

...and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.