

*From the Desk of Rev. Ian
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December 2017

Advent is a time of looking inward and outward at the same time. It could hardly be otherwise for Advent is the Season of Preparation.

John the Baptist appears with his message of repentance. He came to prepare the way in anticipation of a new thing that God was about to do.

John was firmly rooted in the community of the people of God. Behind him is all that action of God over history in calling out a people and giving them a mission. God is working out a purpose. John brings great expectancy and hope. He gets the people on their tiptoes, eagerly looking forward to what God is doing in the world and in their lives. *The kingdom of heaven is upon you.* But just as they are looking forward to this kingdom, they must also look inward in preparation for being the kingdom. They also must look outward to where the kingdom and they are to be in this world.

The way of preparation is the way of repentance. We get ready for Christmas by getting ourselves ready. We cannot merely rest on our heritage or just draw on resources from the past. *Don't presume to say to yourselves, 'we have Abraham for our father'*. It is nothing less than the reorientation of our lives.

The change is personal, but the effect of the change is social, how we relate to one another. It is aligning one's whole being to the will of God. It is doing what you can to the will of God. It is doing what you can to enable everyone to have life as God intended it to be; relieving need; promoting justice; rooting out oppression; making peace. It is living the life of the kingdom.

May the time of Preparation be a blessing to you. We wish everyone the wonderment of joy and peace.

Upon behalf my self and my wife June,

Blessings and Shalom!

Ian