

# THE PROPHETS OF ADVENT

YEAR C

THE YEAR OF LUKE

# ADVENT

- ⦿ **Advent** is a season observed in many Western Christian churches as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas.
- ⦿ The term is an anglicized version of the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming."
- ⦿ Advent is the beginning of the Western liturgical year and commences on December 2, 2012.

# IN ADVENT WE WAIT



- In Advent we wait for the coming of Christ into our lives, into our world.
- What are we waiting for Christ to do?
- For what are we hoping?

# IN ADVENT GOD WAITS



- Look around you at our world... for what is God waiting?
- Look at our community... for what is God waiting?
- Look into your own heart... for what is God waiting?

**WHAT COMES TO YOUR MIND WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD “PROPHET”?**



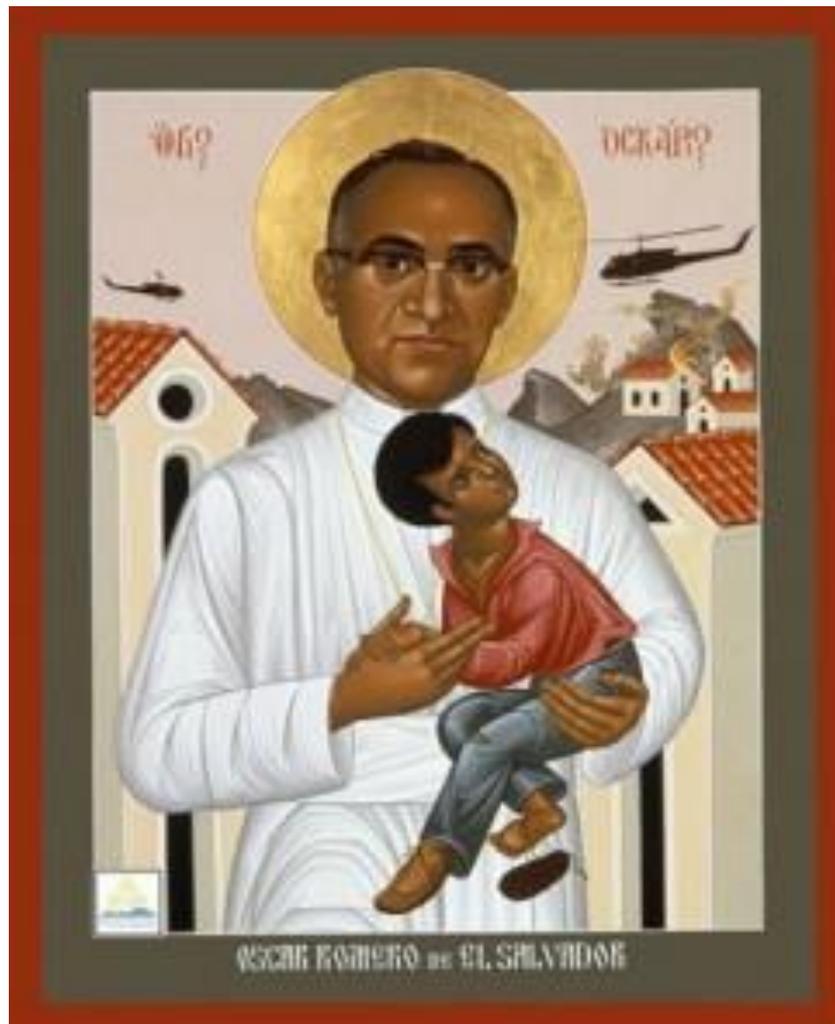
# PROPHET

- ◉ Many people think of a “prophet” as someone who can tell the future, someone who knows what is coming.
- ◉ The English word “prophet” comes from a Greek word, “profétés.”
- ◉ It means “advocate.”

# A PROPHET IS AN ADVOCATE

- ⦿ A prophet is someone who advocates on God's behalf before the people.
- ⦿ Does God need an advocate?
- ⦿ Today, God sometimes does need **us**, faithful believers, to speak up on God's behalf and give witness to God's love, God's mercy, God's healing, God's compassion!

# WHAT DOES A PROPHET DO?



# A PROPHET LISTENS

- ⦿ The prophet listens to God, has an ear finely attuned to God.
- ⦿ The prophet can discern God's ways.
- ⦿ The prophet can see God at work in the signs of the times.
- ⦿ The prophet sometimes has a very particular message from God to speak to the people of his or her day.

# THE PROPHET PRAYS

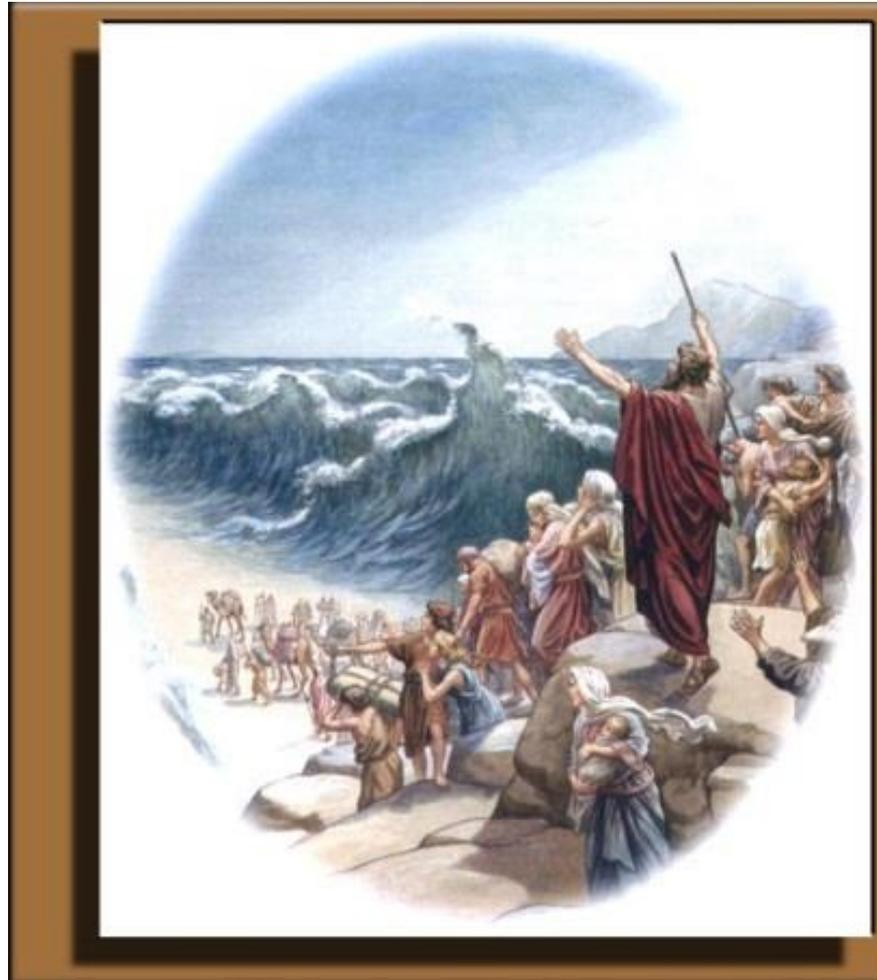
- ◉ The other side of the prophet's task is that the prophet advocates for the people before God.
- ◉ A prophet is attuned to the people.
- ◉ This means that the prophet, again, listens.
- ◉ The prophet hears the cries, the hopes, the longings of the people,
- ◉ The prophet is sometimes called upon to represent them before God.

# OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS

## KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING

- ◉ The first key to understanding the Old Testament prophets and their ministry is understanding that,
  - first of all, the prophets were listeners.
  - In their prayer, they gained insights about God's dream
  - They were compelled to share these insights with the people.
  - They also listened to the people of their day.
  - They listened to the signs of their times.
- ◉ The second key to understanding the Old Testament prophets is that, each individually and as a group, they tell the great story of God's love and faithfulness to God's chosen people.

# THE GREAT NARRATIVE OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES THE EXODUS



# THE ROLE OF THE PROPHETS

- ⦿ Through all this time God, through the prophets, made a great promise.
- ⦿ God would be faithful.
- ⦿ God would save them.
- ⦿ God would send a redeemer.
- ⦿ The redeemer would rescue the people of Israel, and be their leader.
- ⦿ Many people took this person to be a political messiah, who would lead the nation.

# THE PROMISED MESSIAH

- ◉ They weren't expecting a religious and moral messiah, Jesus.
- ◉ God did something totally unexpected in Jesus—God became incarnate. God became one of us. God took on our flesh.
- ◉ In Jesus, God saved us, once and for all!
- ◉ In Jesus and because of Him, sin and death no longer have the final say.
- ◉ This is real hope. This is real joy.

# THIS ADVENT, IN YEAR C, WE MEET FIVE PROPHETS

- ◉ Jeremiah
- ◉ Malachi
- ◉ Isaiah
- ◉ Micah
- ◉ John the Baptist.

# JEREMIAH



# JEREMIAH

- ◉ Jeremiah was one of the major prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures.
- ◉ When he was called by God, he thought that he was too young for the task being placed before him.
- ◉ God promised to be with him, to give him the words that he would need.
- ◉ Jeremiah's sole purpose was to reveal the sins of the people and explain the reason for the impending disaster (destruction by the Babylonian army and captivity).

# JEREMIAH

- ◉ God's personal message to Jeremiah, "Attack you they will, overcome you they can't," was fulfilled many times in the Biblical narrative,
- ◉ Jeremiah was:
  - attacked by his own brothers,
  - beaten and put into the stocks by a priest and false prophet,
  - imprisoned by the king,
  - threatened with death,
  - thrown into a cistern by Judah's officials,
  - and opposed by a false prophet.
- ◉ When Nebuchadnezzar seized Jerusalem in 586 BC, he ordered that Jeremiah be freed from prison and treated well.

# 1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 2

## ***THE PROMISE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS - JEREMIAH 33:14-16***

- The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>15</sup>In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>16</sup>In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’

**IN THIS READING FROM JEREMIAH,  
WHAT DID YOU HEAR?**



# MALACHI



# MALACHI

- ◉ Malachi was a minor prophet in the days of Nehemiah, after the Exile and the return of the remnant to Jerusalem.
- ◉ Malachi appeals to the backsliders.
- ◉ This Book was written around 432 B.C. to 425 B.C.
- ◉ The prophet Malachi uses the question/answer method to probe deeply into Israel's problems of hypocrisy, infidelity, divorce, false worship and arrogance.
- ◉ The Lord's words through His prophet Malachi did not phase the Jews.

# MALACHI

- ◉ Until John the Baptist came, God remained silent and quit communicating to His people through a prophet's voice.
- ◉ The way Malachi prophesied, it was designed to break through the barrier of Israel's disbelief, disappointment and discouragement.
- ◉ Through all their rebellion, though God reveals His continuing love. The love of God is shown for the nation of Israel.
- ◉ The sin of the priests and the people are confronted and then the future is proclaimed with the coming of Jesus Christ and of Elijah.
- ◉ The spiritual climate of the people had grown cold, and Malachi rebukes them for their religious and social compromise.

# 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## DECEMBER 9

### *THE REVELATION OF GOD -MALACHI 3:1-4*

- ⦿ See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?
- ⦿ For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness.\* Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

**IN THIS READING FROM MALACHI,  
WHAT DID YOU HEAR?**



# ISAIAH



# ISAIAH

- ◉ Isaiah is the most-quoted prophet in the Old Testament.
- ◉ Isaiah's calling as a prophet was primarily to the nation of Judah (the southern kingdom) and to Jerusalem.
- ◉ Isaiah urged the people to repent from their sins and return to God.
- ◉ The Prophet Isaiah lived and wrote between (circa) 740-680 B.C., toward the end of the reign of King Uzziah and throughout the reigns of King Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah.

# ISAIAH

- Isaiah foretold the destruction of Jerusalem.
- He also foretold the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of the Lord.
- Many of his prophecies predicted events that occurred in Isaiah's near future, yet at the same time they foretold the events of the distant future (such as the coming of the Messiah), and even some events still to come in the last days (such as the second coming of Christ).
- In summary, the message of Isaiah is that salvation comes from God—not kings, princes or earthly leaders. God alone is Saviour, Ruler and King.

# 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## DECEMBER 16

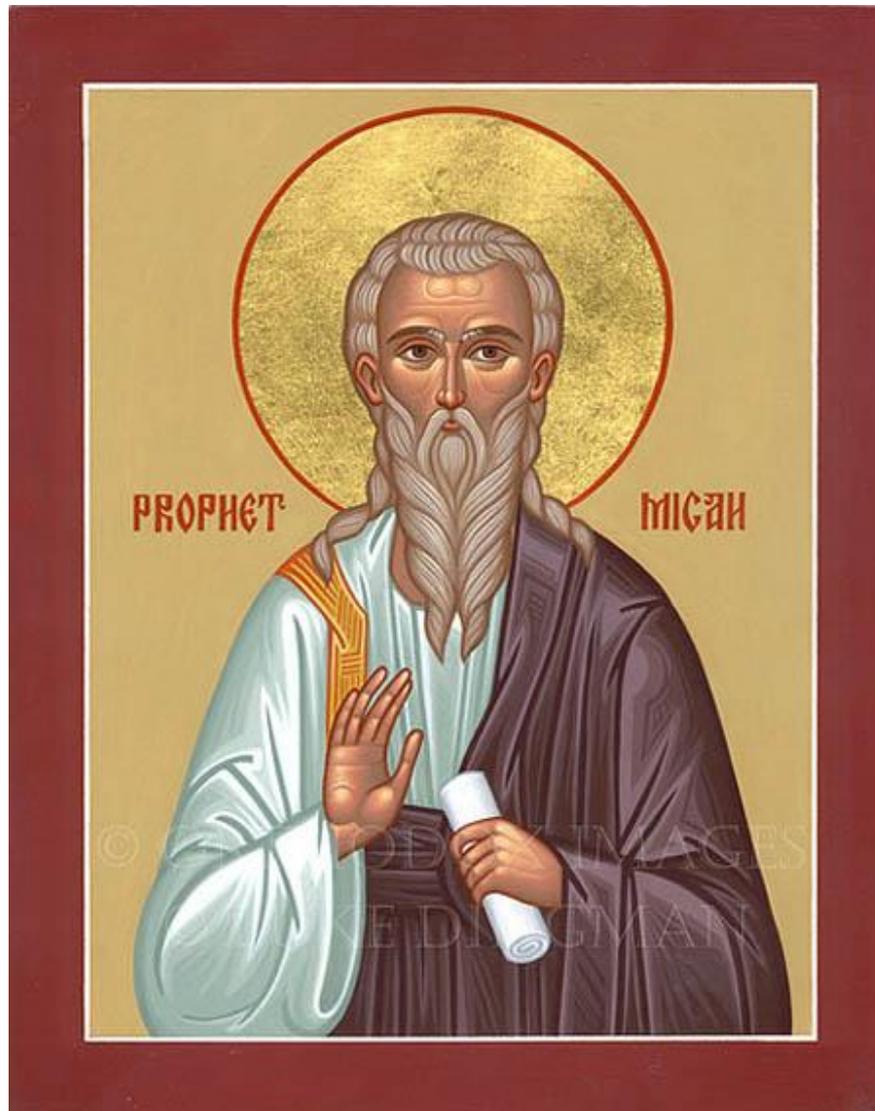
### *THE MESSIANIC SONG- ISAIAH 12:2-6*

- Surely God is my salvation;  
I will trust, and will not be afraid,  
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might;  
he has become my salvation.  
With joy you will draw water from the wells of  
salvation.  
And you will say on that day:  
Give thanks to the LORD,  
call on his name;  
make known his deeds among the nations;  
proclaim that his name is exalted.  
Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously;  
let this be known\* in all the earth.  
Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal\* Zion,  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

**IN THIS READING FROM ISAIAH,  
WHAT DID YOU HEAR?**



# MICAH



# MICAH

## Micah

He has told you, O man, what is good.  
And what does the LORD require of you  
But to do justice, to love kindness,  
And to walk humbly with your God?

# MICAH

- ◉ **Micah** was a prophet who prophesied from approximately 737-690 BC in Judah.
- ◉ He was a contemporary of the prophets Isaiah, Amos and Hosea
- ◉ He is considered one of the twelve minor prophets of the Tanakh, or Old Testament.
- ◉ Micah was from Moresheth-Gath, in southwest Judah.
- ◉ He prophesied during the reigns of kings Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah of Judah.
- ◉ Micah's messages were directed chiefly toward Jerusalem.
- ◉ He prophesied the future destruction of Jerusalem and Samaria, the destruction and then future restoration of the Judean state.
- ◉ He rebuked the people of Judah for dishonesty and idolatry.
- ◉ His prophecy that the Messiah would be born in the town of Bethlehem is recalled in the Gospel of Matthew.

**4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
**DECEMBER 23**  
***THE SHEPHERD AND PEACEMAKER -***  
**MICAH 5:2-5A**

- But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
    who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
    one who is to rule in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
    from ancient days.  
Therefore he shall give them up until the time  
    when she who is in labour has brought forth;  
then the rest of his kindred shall return  
    to the people of Israel.  
And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of  
the LORD,  
    in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.  
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great  
    to the ends of the earth;  
and he shall be the one of peace.

# IN THIS READING FROM MICAH, WHAT DID YOU HEAR?



## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT: DECEMBER 23

### LUKE 1:39-45

- ◉ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be\* a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

# IN THIS READING OF THE STORY OF THE VISITATION, WHAT DID YOU HEAR?



# JOHN THE BAPTIST



# JOHN THE BAPTIST

- ◉ John the Baptist was an itinerant preacher and a major religious figure.
- ◉ He is mentioned in all four Gospels.
- ◉ He is also mentioned in the Qur'an.
- ◉ He is described in the Gospel of Luke as a relative of Jesus who led a movement of Baptism at the River Jordan.
- ◉ John is regarded as a prophet in Christianity and Islam.

# JOHN THE BAPTIST

- ◉ Most biblical scholars agree that John baptized Jesus at "Bethany beyond the Jordan", by wading into the water with Jesus from the eastern bank.
- ◉ John anticipated the coming of a Messiah who would be greater than himself.
- ◉ In the New Testament, Jesus is the one whose coming John foretold.
- ◉ Christians commonly refer to John as the precursor or forerunner of Jesus, since John announces Jesus' coming.
- ◉ John is also identified with the prophet Elijah. Some of Jesus' early followers had previously been followers of John.
- ◉ Some scholars have further speculated that Jesus was himself a disciple of John for some period of time, but this view is disputed.

# 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## DECEMBER 9,

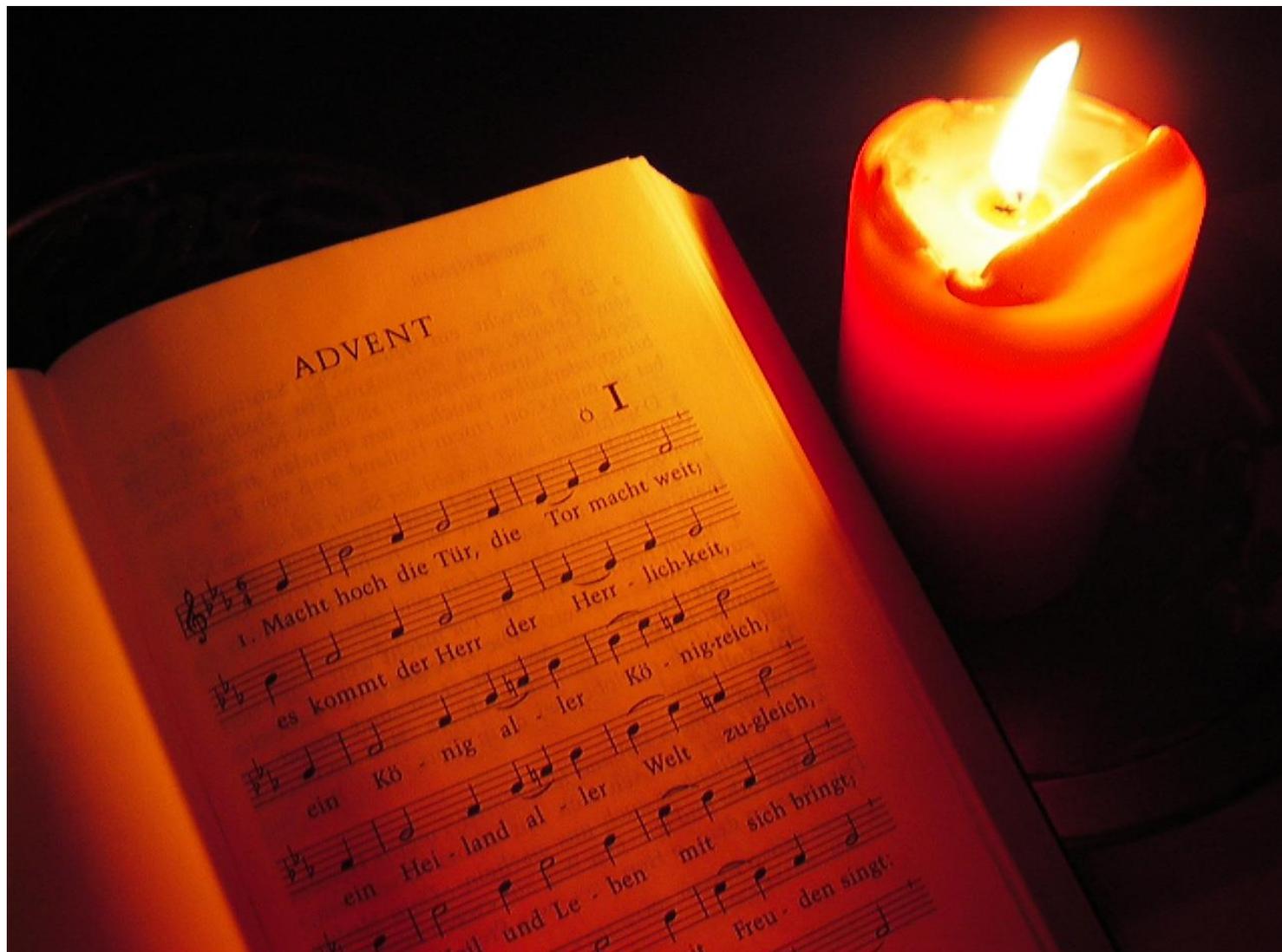
### LUKE 3:1-6

- In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler\* of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,  
‘The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:  
“Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.  
Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth;  
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” ’

**IN THIS READING FROM LUKE,  
WHAT DID YOU HEAR?**



# ADVENT



# THE LONG ADVENT

- ⦿ So, there is a way that we can look at the Old Testament period as a long Advent, a time of preparation for the coming of the Messiah.
- ⦿ Each Advent, we re-live this long waiting, and we tell some of the stories of the Old Testament people who led the people in their waiting and through their waiting.

# OUR ADVENT

- This year, we wait with:
  - Jeremiah
  - Isaiah
  - Malachi
  - Micah
  - John the Baptist.
- These Old Testament prophets pointed to the One who would come to bring salvation, peace, joy, judgment, and the Kingdom of God.
- The birth of Jesus Christ fulfilled God's promise.

# WE ARE THE PROPHETS OF TODAY

- ⦿ Today, we are the modern-day prophets.
  - We are called to listen to God.
  - We are called to be his voice of mercy, love and justice before the people and situations of our day.
- ⦿ We are also called to listen to the joys and sorrows, hopes and fears of the people of our day.
  - We are called to be advocates for them, giving:
    - voice to the voiceless,
    - hope to the hopeless,
    - joy to the sorrowing.

# ADVENT AND INCARNATION

- ⦿ Advent is here and now.
- ⦿ But the Incarnation is here and now, as well.
- ⦿ Jesus continues to become flesh in us.
- ⦿ How? Through our engaging in the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

# WHO ARE THE PROPHETS OF TODAY? WHO ADVOCATES FOR GOD BEFORE THE PEOPLE?

- ⦿ Today, who do you know, or know of, who listens to God and has a gift for listening and interpreting God's ways and messages to us?
- ⦿ Who are God's advocates in our midst?

# PROPHETS OF TODAY WHO ADVOCATES FOR THE PEOPLE BEFORE GOD?

- The other side of the prophet's task is that the prophet advocates for the people before God. A prophet is attuned to the people. This means that the prophet, again, listens.
- Who brings our needs and hopes, joys and sorrows, before God?
- Who are our advocates before God?