

Matthew 3:1-12 “Advent Begins in the Wilderness”

Read Matthew 3:1-12

vv.1-3: The passage opens with John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness. Matthew declares that it was prophesied by Isaiah that John would cry out in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight” (v. 3).

1. What does the word “wilderness” mean to you? What is, or has been, the wilderness in your life?
2. How did you cope with the wilderness you were in? Did you stay or did you try to leave, and how?
3. Did you encounter God’s grace in your wilderness? If so, please share your stories of how God blessed you in the midst of the wilderness, including through the love and care of others: family, friends, and sometimes even strangers.
4. If you did not have a concrete encounter with God in your time of need. Does John the Baptist’s message in v. 3 give you comfort and hope? Are there other passages in Scripture that you have turned to in your wilderness?
5. John calls on the people to “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (v. 2), and to “Bear fruit in keeping with repentance” (v. 8). What does repentance mean, and what does it look like to bear fruit in keeping with repentance?
6. What does it mean that repentance is plural, that the call to repent is a collective call to the entire community?
7. What are we waiting for as we repent together as children of God? What do we wait for during the season of advent?