

*Sunday, December 12, 2021
Third Sunday of Advent
"A Home for All" ~ Joy*



48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ www.blcfairport.org
The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

Welcome!

We are so glad to have you share in worship at Bethlehem today. If you are visiting, please introduce yourself to one of the pastors – they would love to greet you personally! At this time, we ask all worshipers to wear masks in worship.

Today's service will be recorded and live-streamed. Our camera operators take care to focus on worship leaders and don't regularly film worshipers. In the movement of the service, glimpses of people may occur. Please speak with a pastor if you have concerns.

Communicate with us: Share more about who you are, request further information, or leave a prayer request or comment through our website - <https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/> - scroll down the page to request or share information.

Children are welcome and encouraged to participate in worship. We have designated space within the sanctuary (underneath the window of Jesus, the Good Shepherd) that is reserved for families who may need additional space for strollers or carriers for children who cannot yet wear masks. If there is a way we can make worship a more hospitable environment for your family, please speak to a pastor or leave a comment through our website (see above).

Hearing assistance: Our sound system is equipped with personal hearing loop devices. Please ask an usher for a loop device.

Holy Communion: All are welcome to share in Christ's meal of forgiveness and grace. Children who do not yet commune are welcome to come forward for a blessing. (If you feel your child is ready to receive or have additional questions, please speak with one of our pastors.) Please see additional notes about the Sacrament in the service portion of the bulletin.

Our Perrin Street entrance is accessible. Please ask an usher or greeter for help if you need assistance operating the lift.

Please silence your cell phones: As a courtesy to others, we ask that you please silence your cell phones during worship.

Today's Worship Team

We all contribute to worship: lifting our voice in prayer and song, bowing our heads in prayer, opening our ears to hear the Word, and extending our hands to receive the Sacrament. Are you willing to serve in one of these additional roles to contribute to worship this week? Put your name on the sign-up in the narthex and grab the corresponding bulletin so we know the role is filled by you!

Acolyte: *Lights the altar candles during the prelude and extinguishes altar candles during the final hymn, bringing the light of Christ out into the world! May robe and sit on the chancel or sit within the congregation during worship. All ages who can safely handle fire and reach the candles are welcome to serve!*

Glass Washer: *Washes communion glasses either immediately following worship or after Faith Formation for All. Instructions are posted in the sacristy. Many hands make light work so grab a friend to help! (This is also a great opportunity for a household to serve together!)*

Offering: *Sit in the congregation and bring the offering trays from the entrance of the sanctuary forward to the altar during the offertory, giving our congregation's gifts to the glory of God! Pair up with a child if you'd like, so they can have a hands-on role in worship!*

Communion Assistants (2): *Sit in the congregation and come forward at the time of communion (when the congregation begins to sing "Lamb of God") to serve the wine/grape juice for communion. Must be able to hold a tray steady and speak the words, "Blood of Christ shed for you!"*

Thank you also to those serving as Assisting Minister, leading the Children's Sermon, providing Special Music, and serving on Altar Guild, Bread Guild, Wine Guild, Hospitality Team (Usher, Greeter and Fellowship Hosts) and Livestream Team! For more information about any of these roles or to sign up to serve, please contact Beth in the church office or one of the Pastors.

Thank you for your participation and your overflowing grace and encouragement to one another as we work together to bring worship to life each week!

Sunday, December 12, 2021 ~ Third Sunday of Advent
“A Home for All” ~ Joy

Prelude:

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

STUTTGART
setting by Robert J. Powell

John the Baptist’s good news sounds harsh, but he preaches a home for all— where inequities are banished, valleys are lifted up, and all have the resources they need for collective flourishing. Ultimately, John’s message is one of joy. We are called to collectively build and repair the structures of our society; we are called to be kin-dom builders. Wherever we build, God is there. What we build should be a place with a large table and room for all.

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Call to Worship:

A voice calls out in the wilderness.

It sings of a home for all. It speaks of justice and peace.

We could choose to ignore it.

We could drown out that song. We could choose not to listen.

Instead, we come into this space.

We let the world grow quiet. We listen.

A voice calls out in the wilderness. Do you hear it?

We hear it. In listening, we worship.

Let us draw near to God.

Gathering Hymn:	<i>Comfort, Comfort Now My People</i>	ELW 256
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Greeting:

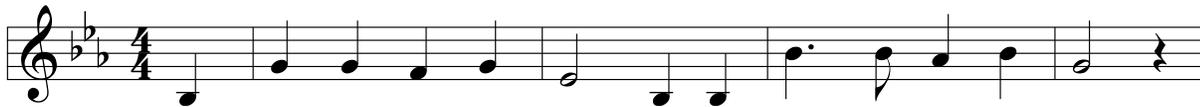
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Joy is seeing people you love after months apart.
 Joy is hearing, "Come on over, it has been too long!"
 Joy is the stretches and giggles of a newborn child.
 Joy is making it home when the journey is long.
 Joy is your dog sliding to meet you at the door.
 Joy is the energy of a new season.
 Joy is feeling found when you thought you were lost.
 So today we light the candle of joy, because the welcome God has for us is nothing short of joyful.
 Rest in that good news. Let it wash over you.
 Family of faith, we are close to home. Amen.

Advent Hymn:	<i>We Light the Advent Candles</i> Delaney Allen, soloist
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(Sing 3 times: ST 1/ All ST 2/ Solo ST 1/ All)



1. We light the Ad-vent can - dles a - gainst the win - ter night,
 2. Three can - dles now are gleam - ing and show us the true way,



to wel - come our Lord Je - sus who is the world's True Light,
 re - joice, the Bap - tist cries out, your Lord has come to - day,



to wel - come our Lord Je - sus who is the world's True Light.
 re - joice, the Bap - tist cries out, your Lord has come to - day!

Text: Gracia Grindal
 Music: German folk tune
 Text © 1999 Hope Publishing Company

Let us pray. God, you are forever welcoming us home.
You sent the voice in the wilderness that calls to us when we have lost our way. You extend radical welcome and sustain us with your unchanging love. Open our ears to hear your Word. Let it be for us the street light that guides us home. Through Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen

Special Music:

An Invitation for Advent

The Children's Choir

Piano: Glenda Lockard

Egg Shakers: Raedyn Purvis, Neil Vokes

words and music by Ruth Elaine Schram

incorporating VENI, EMMANUEL

arr. by Douglas

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-20

The prophet Zephaniah's message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God's salvation is at hand.

¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵The Lord has taken away the judgments against you,
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.

¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷The Lord, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing
¹⁸as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

¹⁹I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.

And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.

²⁰At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Special Music:

In the Bleak Midwinter

Gustav Holst

arr. by Eugénie Rocherolle

Julia Finkbeiner & Olivia Finkbeiner, piano duet

The gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Luke 3:1-18

John the Baptist heralds the mighty one who is coming. John teaches that preparation for God's reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.

¹In 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, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as 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.

⁵Every 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;

⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

⁷John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruits worthy of

repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" ¹¹In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." ¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." ¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.
The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: <i>For Everyone Born</i> (See the following pages for music) ST 1/Solo: Jim Jefferis STs 2, 3, 4, 5/All
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769

For Everyone Born

E *Leader or All* A2

1 For ev - ery - one born, a place at the ta - ble,
 2 For wom - an and man, a place at the ta - ble,
 3 For young and for old, a place at the ta - ble,
 4 For just and un - just, a place at the ta - ble,
 5 For ev - ery - one born, a place at the ta - ble,

E A2 Bsus B

for ev - ery - one born, clean wa - ter and bread,
 re - vis - ing the roles, de - cid - ing the share,
 a voice to be heard, a part in the song,
 a - bus - er, a - bused, with need to for - give,
 to live with - out fear, and sim - ply to be,

F#m7 E/G# A2 Bsus

a shel - ter, a space, a safe place for grow - ing,
 with wis - dom and grace, di - vid - ing the pow - er,
 the hands of a child in hands that are wrin - kled,
 in an - ger, in hurt, a mind - set of mer - cy,
 to work, to speak out, to wit - ness and wor - ship,

E Bsus E Bsus

for ev - ery - one born, a star o - ver - head,
 for wom - an and man, a sys - tem that's fair,
 for young and for old, the right to be - long,
 for just and un - just, a new way to live,
 for ev - ery - one born, the right to be free,

(Refrain on next page)

JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

Refrain

B All E E/G# A2 B sus B

and God will de-light when we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice and

E E/G# A2 B sus B

joy, com-pas - sion and peace: yes,

C#m C#m/B A2

God will de-light when we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice,

B sus B (E) Fine A2 E B sus B

jus-tice and joy!

D.C. al fine

This hymn from a noted New Zealand hymnwriter affirms that God's hospitality transcends the barriers erected by human society and that we who have been created in God's image are called to live in ways that reflect our Creator's values: justice and joy, compassion and peace.

TEXT: Shirley Erena Murray, 1998

MUSIC: Brian Mann, 2006

Text © 1998 Hope Publishing Company

Music © 2006 Brian Mann (admin. General Board of Global Ministries t/a GBCMusik)

FOR EVERYONE BORN

11.10.11.10 with refrain

The Prayers of the People:

*Our prayers are always offered on behalf of the whole community.
Where indicated the congregation will respond:*

The image shows a musical score for two systems. Each system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The first system has the lyrics: "Wait for the Lord, whose day is near." The second system has the lyrics: "Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!" The piano accompaniment features chords and single notes, with some measures containing a fermata or a final cadence symbol (a large '8' in a circle).

Text: Taizé Community

Music: WAIT FOR THE LORD, Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994

Text and music © 1984 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent, 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638.

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Eternal God, you hold firm amid the changes of this world. Hear us now as we pray for the church, the world, and everyone in need.

A brief silence.

God of open doors and porch lights,
of welcome mats and candles in the window—
we cannot thank you enough for your open door policy. You are forever
welcoming us home.

In a world that puts hand rails on park benches so that those without a roof over
their heads cannot lay down, you offer something radically different.

You welcome all of us, just as we are.

You paint a picture of a world that could be.

You remind us that there is enough love to go around, and that neighbor helping
neighbor is who we are called to be.

Thank you for the voice in the wilderness that calls to us.

Thank you for the radical welcome and the unchanging love.

(Wait for the Lord...)

Today, God, we give extra gratitude for the people and places that are home to us, but we also pray for all those without a home. We pray for immigrants and refugees. We pray for those who experience homelessness and who worry about paying their rent. We pray for those who do not feel at home in your church. We pray for those who long to build a home with another, but instead find themselves eating another meal alone.

God, there are so many who need a home, so help us be builders of that new day. Give us the courage of John, who saw a way forward so clearly. Turn our words into action and our conviction into change.

(Wait for the Lord...)

Gracious God, you are a God of welcome. Embrace those who are celebrating today.

We lift up prayers of thanksgiving for:

- The birth of Apollo on 12/5/21. Apollo is the son of Zachary and Melody and the step-grandson of Mary

Embrace those who are hurting today.

We pray for those who are grieving, especially the family and friends of:

- Ivan (father of Chris) who died on 12/2

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Doris (mother of Amy) who is recovering at home following a hospitalization for pneumonia
- Carrie who is recovering from surgery on 12/3
- Those who are involved with the ongoing work of caregiving for loved ones
- Those who are infected with or recovering from Coronavirus, and their caregivers

We give you thanks for all make this space hospitable and for all the ways you use us to share your welcome. Today, we pray especially for Andrea & Karl (Eliana & Raedyn), Becki & Bob, Morey, Dale, Hans & Robyn (Trysta), and our sisters and brothers in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe.

We trust that you know all that we need. Thank you for always inviting us home so that we might find our place with you. Through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, we pray and sing...

(Wait for the Lord...)

WE SHARE GOD'S MEAL:

The Peace:

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Greet those with whom you worship physically with a sign of peace. At home, extend the peace of Christ through the comments section or text to those who are at a distance.

Offering

Our worship is complete when we bring all of our resources to receive God's blessing and fulfill God's purpose. We celebrate the opportunity to share our abundance – of compassion, of time, and of material resources.



If you would like to make a one-time gift electronically, scan the QR (quick response) code on the right and you'll be brought to BLC's mobile giving page. For recurring gifts, download the Tithe.ly app. Checks may also be mailed to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450. Those worshipping in person may leave their offerings in the basket in the narthex.

Whatever form your offering takes, we give thanks to God for you and your generosity.

Offering of Music:

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

*PICARDY - French Carol
arr. by Elizabeth Campbell*

The Chancel Choir (Jim Jefferis, director)

Offertory:

Refrain

The King of glo - ry comes, the na - tion re - joic - es.

O - pen the gates be - fore him, lift up your voic - es.

Who is the King of glo - ry; how shall we call him?

He is Em - man - u - el, the promi - sed of ag - es. *To Refrain*

Text: Willard F. Jabusch
 Music: Israeli traditional
 Text© 1968, 1995 Willard F. Jabusch, admin. OCP Publications

Offertory Prayer:

Let us pray. God who welcomes us home,
who creates space, who leaves a chair with our name on it—we have two coats and we are giving one away. That’s what this offering is. It’s our second coat. It’s our hearts on our sleeves. It’s our audacious hope that there can indeed be a better world than this one. So take these gifts and use them to move us closer to that promised day. Gratefully we pray, amen.

Words of Institution:

In the night in which he was betrayed,
 our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
 broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
 Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
 Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
 and gave it for all to drink, saying:
 This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
 shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
 Do this for the remembrance of me.

With this bread and wine
draw us together into a community of joy.

Be among us in this meal.

And form us to be your home in the world.

The Lord's Prayer:

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who

sin against us.

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen**

Invitation to Communion:

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.

And let these gifts to us be blessed!

Distribution of Communion:

Please come forward at the direction of the worship leaders. All are welcome to share in Christ's meal of forgiveness and grace. Children who do not yet commune are welcome to come forward for a blessing. (If you feel your child is ready to receive or have additional questions, please contact one of the Pastors.) Gluten-free wafers and grape juice are available; please indicate your need to the pastor or communion assistant. You may lower your mask as you receive communion. If you worship through the Livestream and wish to receive communion, please reach out to one of the pastors.

The Communion:



O Lamb of God you take a-way our sin; have mer-cy on us, give_ us your
 peace. Pre -pare us to re - ceive_ your grace and teach us how to fol - low your ways. Re-
 joice! Re - joice! E - man - u - el has come to you, O Is - ra - el.

Words: David Eck, copyright ©2011
 Tune: VENI, EMMANUEL

Hymns sung during communion:

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

ELW #241

He Came Down

ELW #253

Table Blessing:

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in God's grace.

Amen

Post-Communion Prayer:

Most High God, you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest.

Amen.

WE LEAVE TO SERVE:

Benediction:

If our life together were a house:

May God's love be the foundation, Jesus – the cornerstone, the Holy Spirit – the windows, ushering light in, and joy be the walls that hold us together. May the blessing of God: Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit be yours, now and always.

Amen.

Sending Hymn:

Prepare the Royal Highway

ELW #264

Dismissal:

Go in peace. Christ is near.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude:

Sortie –Marche
(Postlude March)

Marcel Rouher

Thank you to all those who participated in worship this Sunday! If you would like to learn more about participating in a worship role, please speak to one of the co-pastors or contact the church office!

Happening today (12/12):

- 8:55 am Worship with Communion (in-person and livestream)
- 10:15 am Faith Formation for All!
 - Pre-K to 5th grade gathers in the Sunday School Wing
 - 6th-8th grade gathers in the Confirmation room
 - 9th-12th grade gathers in the LYO Room
 - Everyone else gathers in the Fellowship Hall!
- 10:55 am Final Blessing for Everyone (Fellowship Hall)
- 11:15 am Children's Choir (Choir Room)

Portions of the liturgy adapted from prayers by Rev. Sarah Are, A Sanctified Art LLC, sanctifiedart.org

The words to "Lamb of God" were written and/or adapted by David Eck, Copyright © 2011.

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Calendar for December 12 – December 19

(Last updated on 12/8/21 at 12 noon, visit <https://blcfairport.org/event-directory/> for updates)

Sunday, 12/12

3rd Sunday in Advent

8:55 am Worship with

Communion (in-person
and livestream)

10:15 am Faith

Formation for All

11:15 am Children's

Choir

12:30 pm 2nd Sunday

Dinner Ministry

(delivery only)

Monday, 12/13

Tuesday, 12/14

2:00 pm Support Group
for Caregivers

6:30 pm BSA Troop 2019
Meeting

Wednesday, 12/15

Office Closed

9:30 am Bible Study –

Hybrid (In-person or

[Join](#) via Zoom –

ID 943 3691 2942)

1:00 pm Men's Lunch at

Penfield Wegmans

6:00 pm Chancel Bells

6:15 pm Folk Group

7:30 pm Chancel Choir

Thursday, 12/16

Office Closed

6:30 pm Church Council

([Join](#) via Zoom –

ID 818 7910 2136)

Friday, 12/17

Office Closed

Pastor's Sabbath

2:30 pm Dulcimer
Group Rehearsal

Saturday, 12/18

10:00 am LYO Holiday

Pie Baking

Sunday, 12/19

4th Sunday in Advent

8:55 am Worship with

Communion (in-person
and livestream)

10:15 am Faith

Formation for All

11:00 am LYO Holiday

Pie pick-up

11:15 am Children's

Choir

Time Away: Beth Schoenfeld will be away December 15 – 17.

Church Office Hours: We continue to hold remote office hours M, W, Th & F from 9 am to 12 noon. Our co-Pastor's schedules vary from week to week. Both are available for scheduled appointments.

Zoom Meetings at BLC: The easiest way to join is to use the direct link available in the [Calendar of Events](#) on our website. If you don't see your meeting in the Calendar of Events or have questions, please contact your group leader or the church office for assistance or additional details!

In-Person Meetings at BLC: Submit details at <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/> for each planned meeting, event and activity at BLC. This allows us to check for availability, reserve the space, and plan accordingly. Please contact the church office to confirm or with any questions following your submission.

Today's reflection comes from this year's *Close to Home Advent Devotional*. B&W copies are available in the Narthex. Electronic or color copies can be available through the church office.

Read Luke 3:1-18

Commentary Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri

"No te duermas en los laureles."

The scripture for this week focuses on John's prophetic message. Though his words might sound harsh ("You brood of vipers!" (v. 7)), it is a message of good news—of change, forgiveness, and justice—to a suffering people. God called John for a specific place and time (v. 1-4), and his cry from the wilderness, as written in Isaiah, proclaimed leveled valleys and righted wrongs. This was, and is, a message of **joy**, especially for those who had lost hope, hurt by the inequities and injustices perpetrated by the empire and the religious authorities aligned with it. The world as they knew it was about to change.

Crowds came to John to be baptized, and he charged them with "bearing fruit worthy of repentance" (v. 8), not relying on past glories, heritage, or lineage, but producing their own fruit, living and acting in ways that demonstrated true change. Resting on their laurels for far too long, the crowd wasn't quite sure how to do that, and John offers words of wisdom. Instead of accumulating, share with others what you have. Instead of being indifferent or selfish, show consideration and compassion. Instead of taking advantage and preying on the vulnerable, be satisfied with what you have and treat others fairly and with dignity. . . even if you work for the empire (v. 12-14).

What implications does John's message have for us kin-dom builders today? If "all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (v. 6), we all have a part to play in the salvation story, in leveling valleys and righting wrongs. Like John, we are also called for a specific place and time: Here and now. Be at the ready, *no te duermas en los laureles*,⁹ and bear fruit worthy of repentance, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, giving voice to the silenced and oppressed, speaking truth to power, and protecting and empowering the vulnerable. Let our collective voice cry out in the wilderness—and everywhere—with exhortations and good news. And, as the message is heard, more and more people will join us in building the kin-dom of God, making it truly a **home** for all.

⁹ "Don't rest on your laurels."

