

**Communion Service • 5th December 2021  
with Revd. Peter Widdess  
The Second Sunday of Advent**



**Personal preparation before the service begins.**

Personal preparation before the service begins. Please take time to remember where you are, and why you are here. Give thanks and become still in the presence of God

**Prelude**

**Gathering and Greeting**

Grace, mercy and peace  
from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with you.

**And also with you**

**The advent wreath**

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, just and true:  
to you be praise and glory for ever.  
Your prophet John the Baptist was witness to the truth  
as a burning and shining light.  
May we your servants rejoice in his light,  
and so be led to witness to him  
who is the Lord of our coming kingdom,  
Jesus our Saviour and King of the ages.  
**Blessed be God for ever.**

The candles take their places on the wreath.

Light one candle for hope,  
one bright candle for hope.  
He brings hope to every heart.  
He comes! He comes!

Light one candle for peace,  
one bright candle for peace.  
He brings peace to every heart.  
He comes! He comes!

Words and music: Natalie Sleeth

People of God: return!  
You are called to be God's own.  
From the mountains announce the good news.  
God comes in justice and peace,  
to all who follow his ways.

You are God's children.  
**Lord, make us one in the peace of Christ  
today and for ever.  
Amen.**

A voice cries out in the wilderness,  
'Make straight the way of the Lord.'  
So let us listen, and turn to the Lord in penitence and  
faith.

Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations  
into the peace of your kingdom:  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

You come in word and sacrament  
to strengthen us in holiness:  
Christ, have mercy.  
**Christ, have mercy.**

You will come in glory  
with salvation for your people:  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent,  
have mercy upon you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,

confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**The reading is taken from the book of the prophet  
Malachi 3.1-4**

Let us prepare ourselves for the word of God.  
**Our hearts and our minds are open.**

“I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years.

This is the word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**



**Canticle Benedictus (Luke 1. 68-79 – the song of  
Zechariah)**

“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,  
**because he has come to his people and  
redeemed them.**

He has raised up a horn of salvation for us

**in the house of his servant David**  
**(as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),**  
salvation from our enemies

**and from the hand of all who hate us—**  
to show mercy to our ancestors

**and to remember his holy covenant,**  
**the oath he swore to our father Abraham:**

to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,

**and to enable us to serve him without fear**

**in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.**

And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;

**for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,**

to give his people the knowledge of salvation

**through the forgiveness of their sins,**

because of the tender mercy of our God,

**by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven**

to shine on those living in darkness

**and in the shadow of death,**

to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

**Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to Luke chapter 3**

**Glory to you, O Lord**

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch 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 country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,

‘Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.

Every valley shall be filled in,  
every mountain and hill made low.

The crooked roads shall become straight,  
the rough ways smooth.

And all people will see God’s salvation.’”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Homily



John the Baptist is a very challenging figure. I spent 10 years as the minister of the evangelical parish of Maulburg. The church was called the Johanneskirche (the baptist and not the evangelist). The building, the fifth church on that site, was due to celebrate its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We did what one does on such occasions. We decided to publish a “Festschrift”. Normally there would be words of greetings in such booklets from the Bürgermeister, the Landrat or the Landes-Bishop. In addition, we invited “promis” with the name John to write short texts reflecting on John the Baptist.

I was sitting in the church on the afternoon of Christmas Eve in that year, preparing myself for the first of the round of services on that day. My wife came across from the vicarage and said that the post had just brought a letter from the Bundespräsidialamt in Berlin. The President of Germany, Johannes Rau, had written. He told the story how he came to his name. His father was a travelling salesman and wasn’t at home when the child was born. His father sent a telegram asking her to read Luke 1.62-63 She looked in the bible and read: His name is John. This reminds us that John, like Johannes Rau, was born and brought up in a deeply devout family. The canticle, the Benedictus, which we prayed together before the gospel is the pray of thanksgiving which his father Zechariah prayed after the birth of John. John himself was devout from a very early age – Luke tells us that still not yet born, he jumped with joy in his mother’s womb when the pregnant Mary came for a visit.

One day my wife called me and said that I must immediately come to the telephone. I asked who is on the phone and she answered, “the papal Nuntius”. A voice with a strong Italian accent spoke: Layolo, Papal Nuntius in Berlin. You wrote a letter to pope John Paul. Did you honestly believe that the pope would write a text about his name for a protestant parish? Just think how many roman catholic parishes would expect him to write for them as well! The pope has asked me to tell you that he cannot fulfil your request. However, I can make you an offer: my name is Giovanni. Your letter

was so friendly, unusual, and polite, I would like to write a text about John for your community.

A few weeks later a very fine spiritual meditation on John the Baptist arrived from Giovanni Layolo. He reminds us that John in his preaching and teaching was preparing the way for Jesus. It was John who said of their relationship to each other, of their significance for their followers, I must become smaller, and he must become greater. In that great altar of Isenheim, painted by Grunewald at the time of a different pandemic, the plague, John stands under the cross and points to Jesus.

We proclaimed joyfully after the gospel reading today: this is the gospel of Christ. But in today's gospel we read nothing about Jesus, only John. An unthinking reflex, "the gospel of Christ", because we always do so, or is the gospel of Christ also the gospel of John?

The first two chapters of Luke's gospel tell the story of the births of John and Jesus. With today's gospel Luke starts the story of their adult life. He begins not with Jesus (he comes later with a detailed genealogy). Luke begins with John. He begins with the naming of people who serve as date markers for the beginning of John's ministry. The normal reaction nowadays is to say: ah, that must be round about the year 28/29 in our way of dating. But it is worth looking at the names as they give us a context for John. First of all, he names Tiberius, the emperor of Rome. A dreadful man, paranoid, convinced that everybody was his enemy and wanted to kill him. He trusted nobody. The newly appointed governor of the province of Israel wasn't allowed to travel to his province and take charge there. Tiberius kept him in Rome under his control. It was for this reason that the incompetent junior official Pontius Pilate was acting-governor of Israel until things in Rome changed.

Luke then names three of the four Tetrarchs of Israel. The Herod responsible for the murders in Bethlehem, had divided in his last will and testament his kingdom in 4 parts, one part for each of his four sons. The son who isn't named was forced by his elder brother Herod to divorce his wife, because Herod desired her. It was when John criticised this that he was arrested and eventually beheaded at the request of the wife.

Luke is putting the beginning of the ministry of John in a very bitter political context – power hungry rulers, always wondering who would stab whom. A context where justice and peace did not exist and the pressure from the top crushed those down below, a context where you did not say out loud what you thought in your heart.

Was there a religious context? Luke names the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas. There is normally only one high priest. Annas was once high priest and then was succeeded by his eldest son, and then by his second son, and Caiaphas was now the fourth son of Annas as high priest, and father Annas was still in the background pulling the strings. John, through his father's work in the temple, knew only too well that the temple establishment needed reform. Establishments always tend towards inertia and self-perpetuation of those in power. Reform and change are uncomfortable but necessary, whether in the temple in Jerusalem, the church at large and more specifically the ACF.

Very rightly John sees that reform requires forgiveness. Luke tells us: John preached a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins".

Repentance and forgiveness belong together

I think of the Stuttgarter Declaration in which the German Protestant bishops repented 1945 for their lack of courage and truthfulness in the Nazi dictatorship. It was an open question who could forgive them.

In South Africa the peaceful transformation away from Apartheid was founded in the truth and reconciliation commission. There public repentance led to forgiveness, healing of wounds and reconciliation.

There are biblical experts, concerned about the purity of the true faith, who argue that Luke made a mistake writing that John preached repentance for the forgiveness of sins. They argue: Luke must surely have meant Jesus, not John, as only Jesus can truly forgive. In answer to this criticism, I think of the Lord's prayer in which Jesus teaches us to pray: "forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us". Repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation are the foundations of living together in a loving community, a community of grace.

John the Baptist is laying foundations on which Jesus could build.

And so we move on in the cycle of Advent from he who prepared the way, to Jesus, the light of the world.

## The Creed

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is,  
seen and unseen.  
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation he came down from  
heaven,  
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the  
dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and  
glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of  
sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come.  
Amen.





The Lord be with you,  
**and also with you.**

We give you thanks  
because you prepared the way of your Son Jesus  
Christ  
by the preaching of your servant John the Baptist,  
who proclaimed him as the Lamb of God, our Saviour.

You give us your love,  
even when things go wrong.  
Jesus knew hurt and pain.  
Through him you wipe away our tears,  
and fill us with your peace.

We thank you, loving Father,  
because, when we turned away,  
you sent Jesus, your Son.  
He gave his life for us on the cross  
and shows us the way to live.

Send your Holy Spirit  
that these gifts of bread and wine  
may be for us Christ's body and his blood.

On the night before he died,  
when darkness had fallen,  
Jesus took bread.  
He gave thanks, broke it,  
and shared it with his disciples, saying:  
'This is my body, given for you.  
Do this to remember me.'

After they had eaten, he took the cup of wine,  
gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples, saying:  
'This is my blood, poured out for you and for many,  
for the forgiveness of sins.'

So Father, with this bread and this cup  
we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life.

As you feed us with these gifts,  
send your Holy Spirit,  
and change us more and more  
to be like Jesus our Saviour.

Help us, Father, to love one another,  
as we look forward to that day  
when suffering is ended,  
and all creation is gathered in your loving arms.

### **We pray together as our Lord has taught us: Our Father....**

We break this bread  
to share in the body of Christ.  
**Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

**We do not presume  
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,  
trusting in our own righteousness,  
but in your manifold and great mercies.  
We are not worthy  
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your  
table.  
But you are the same Lord  
whose nature is always to have mercy.  
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,  
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ  
and to drink his blood,  
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his  
body  
and our souls washed through his most precious  
blood,  
and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in  
us.  
Amen.**

### **Song during distribution of communion Turn our hearts (ACF 123)**

1. Turn our hearts to one another,  
let your kindness show:  
where our words or deeds have wounded,  
let forgiveness flow.  
Turn our hearts, turn our hearts.

2. Turn our hearts from pride and anger  
to your ways of peace,  
for you died and shed your blood  
that enmity may cease.  
Turn our hearts, turn our hearts.

3. Turn the hearts of generations  
That we may be one:  
make us partners in the kingdom  
till your work is done.  
Turn our hearts, turn our hearts.

4. As we all have been forgiven,  
so must we forgive;  
as we all have found acceptance,  
so let us receive.  
Turn our hearts, change our hearts,  
join our hearts, turn our hearts.

CCLI Song # 1595238  
Words and music: Graham Kendrick  
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### **Prayer after communion**

Father in heaven,  
Who sent your Son to redeem the world  
And will send him again to be our judge:  
Give us grace so to imitate him  
In the humility and purity of his first coming  
That, when he comes again,  
We may be ready to greet him  
With joyful love and firm faith:  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen**



## Blessing

May God himself, the God of peace,  
make you perfect and holy,  
and keep you safe and blameless, in spirit, soul and  
body,  
for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;  
And the blessing of God almighty,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
come upon you and remain with you always.  
**Amen**

## Announcements

(see below)

Go in the peace of Christ

**Thanks be to God**

## Song

**It came upon the midnight clear (SoF 251)**


It came upon the midnight clear,  
That glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth  
To touch their harps of gold;  
"Peace on the earth, good will to men  
From heaven's all-gracious King" –  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come  
With peaceful wings unfurled,  
And still their heavenly music floats  
O'er all the weary world;  
Above its sad and lowly plains  
They bend on hovering wing,  
And ever o'er its Babel-sounds  
The blessed angels sing.

But with the woes of sin and strife  
The world has suffered long;  
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled

Two thousand years of wrong;  
 And man, at war with man, hears not  
 The love song which they bring; –  
 O hush the noise, ye men of strife,  
 And hear the angels sing!

CCLI Song # 2596356  
 Edmund Hamilton Sears | Lani Smith | Richard Storrs Willis  
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<p>Wed, December 8, 2021</p>	<p><b>Evening Prayer on Wednesdays</b></p> <p>9pm (for 20-30min)</p> <p>(Please use the usual Sunday service link.)</p>
<p>Thu, December 9, 2021</p>	<p><b>Women's Prayer Group</b></p> <p>8:00 pm – 9:00 pm</p> <p>via zoom (Please get in touch to receive the link.)</p>
<p>December 12, 2021          at 11:00 am – 11:45 am</p> <p>St Michael Church,          Carl-Kistner-Straße,          79115 Freiburg-Haslach</p> <p>Tram line 5, „Haslach Bad“</p>	

PLEASE REGISTER:

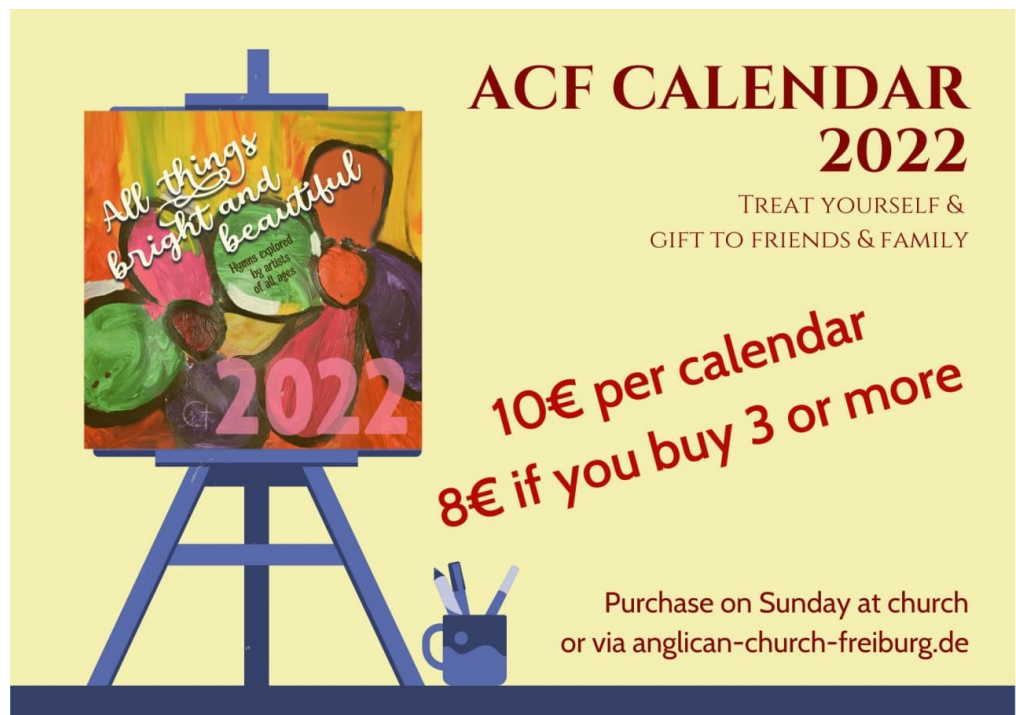
A blue poster for a licensing service. At the top left, there is a string of colorful triangular bunting flags. To the right, there are several colorful fireworks exploding against the dark blue background. The text is centered and reads: "ANGLICAN CHURCH FREIBURG" and "12th December 2021" in a small, white, sans-serif font. Below this is a horizontal line, followed by the main title "LICENSING SERVICE" in a large, white, serif font. Underneath the title is "OF REV VINOD VICTOR" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom right corner, there is a small white logo consisting of a cross and the letters "ACF".

ANGLICAN CHURCH FREIBURG  
12th December 2021

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**LICENSING SERVICE**  
OF REV VINOD VICTOR

<https://anglican-church-freiburg.de/licensingservice/>

An advertisement for the ACF Calendar 2022. The background is a light yellow-green color. On the left, there is a blue easel holding a colorful painting. The painting features the text "All things bright and beautiful" in a white, cursive font, and "2022" in large, pink, block letters at the bottom. Below the easel is a blue mug containing several pens and pencils. To the right of the easel, the text "ACF CALENDAR 2022" is written in a large, dark red, serif font. Below this, in a smaller, dark red, sans-serif font, it says "TREAT YOURSELF & GIFT TO FRIENDS & FAMILY". Further down, in a large, red, sans-serif font, it says "10€ per calendar" and "8€ if you buy 3 or more". At the bottom right, in a smaller, dark red, sans-serif font, it says "Purchase on Sunday at church or via [anglican-church-freiburg.de](https://anglican-church-freiburg.de)".

**ACF CALENDAR  
2022**

TREAT YOURSELF &  
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<https://anglican-church-freiburg.de/acf-calendar/>



The Anglican Church in Freiburg is entirely dependent on voluntary donations to pay stipends, for all activities and the upkeep of its programmes.

Donations can be made directly to the church account:  
IBAN: DE 29 6805 0101 0002 5119 20

- Please mark Verwendungszweck as 'Spende' and provide an address if you wish to receive a tax certificate.

Or you go to [betterplace.org](https://www.betterplace.org) and use the easy system there. Thank you for your generosity!