

THE GIFT OF OUR VOICES

Today's lection includes a powerful "I am" statement from John the Baptizer: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make clear the way of the Lord'" (John 1:23). A couple of questions immediately emerge: 1) What kind of voices are we? 2) What are we making clear?

I invite you to join me in pondering those questions. Like John the Baptizer, we are living in wilderness times. The pandemics are stretching us. My intent in my preaching and teaching is to offer a voice of hope, encouragement, love and justice throughout this long night of our souls. I also acknowledge that at times it has taken focused intention to not slip into fear. Honestly, I've come



out of a few conversations feeling worse than when I entered the conversation, noticing that I contributed to the tone. Yes, there is a place for lament. It is necessary in touching our vulnerable places and releasing our cries to God. And, lament is not intended to set the measure of our lives. Especially in the Psalms, lament is balanced with the lift of praise.

Considering the second question, like John I seek to "Make clear the way of the Lord." In a world of confusion, where many muddle along, the "ways of the Lord" are a powerful guide. One of my favorite scriptures voices this clarity: "Seek first the Beloved Community of God, and the ways of God, and you'll have everything" (Matthew 6:33). I find that keeping Christ at the center is the best way to live victoriously, beyond and through the troubles of the dangerous polemic and crushing injustices of current political environments.

I'm grateful for the daily Advent Devotionals. What powerful voices! Though each has been unique, what they share in common is making clear that each one of us is a gift. Through our gifts, we are those "helpers" (thanks Jim Garner via Fred Rogers!) offering clear ways of love and hope for such a time as this.

By Faith,
Rev. Elder Dwayne