

Voices through the veil

1. The voice of one calling

Welcome (10 mins)

If your phone was to ring right now, who would you most want it to be?

Worship (10min)

1. Listen to/sing Way Maker

OR

2. Names of God. God calls us by name. Spend a few minutes using some of his many names to declare who he is. Share the list by passing it round, posting it in the chat or screen sharing on zoom. Ask people to simply read out each name in turn. Do it slowly and with love and then pray at the end.

Word (30 min)

Set the scene:

This is the first of just two sessions for Advent, traditionally a time of preparation to meet Christ again. This session covers two weeks of sermons on John the Baptist. By Luke's account, we are already post Jesus' birth here, but it

Start by remembering who John was and where he's come from. His birth was foretold, and name declared, by angel Gabriel to astonished elderly, barren, parents. He always was a man with a call on his life.

Read: Luke 1. 13-17.

Q) What are the characteristics of John's life that are prophesied here?

In Lk 1.66 those hearing of his miraculous birth ask each other 'what then is this child going to be?' Our main reading gives the answer.

Read: Luke 3. 1-20

Q) How does the prophesy about John's life match up with what we see here?

note: The main point of this Q is to show that John's ministry was a divine calling, planned and anointed by God before birth, not a result of his strong character or anything else.

Q) If John is 'the voice of one calling', what is he calling people to?

Q) How do you feel about the word repentance? Is it comfortable and easy or awkward and hard?

Repentance is something that our society struggles with, because we have a low view of holiness and little concept of sin. But Luke describes John's message as 'good news' (v 20) and notes that the crowds kept coming to see him (v7)

Q) Why is repentance good news for us?

End this part by asking people to use single words to describe John's 'voice' (e.g strong, prophetic, challenging, hopeful, exposing, uncompromising, holy etc.) You might want to write them down on a piece of paper that everyone can see as you go.

Q) Which one of these words would you like to be more present in your voice? Could it be that this is part of 'preparing the way' for Christ in your life and in the lives of those around you?

note: you might like to circle each word and put someone's name by it a they speak to help you pray.

Witness

Use the words above to pray into people's lives and the situations they may have shared. Pray together for all those attending carol services this Christmas- that the offer of repentance for the forgiveness of sins would indeed be good news for them.