

**Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it...** Psalm 127:1a

**Worship:**

**Tabernacle Worship Service**

**Every Sunday Evening**

St. John's Parish House

75 East Main St. South Pottstown 5:30 pm

**Home Churches:**

**Hanover St. Home Church**

**Tuesday Evenings**

256 South Hanover Street Pottstown

7:00 to 9:00

**Bright Hope Community Home Church**

**Thursday Afternoons**

Myrtle Street, Pottstown

1:00 pm to 2:30 pm

**Ministry:**

**The Table**

**Every Wednesday Evening**

Washington & Chestnut Sts. 7:00 pm

**MAIN Street Shelter**

**December @ St. John's UCC**

**High & Price Streets, Pottstown**

Pick up at the Pear Resource Center

High Street

7:00 to 9:00

**Norman's Game Night**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday Evening** Each Month

Canceled for December

**This Year's Theme:**

hearing God in 2008

**Your Prayer Notes:**

**The Ministries at MAIN Street Shelter.**

Please pray that God would bless our endeavors as we begin the mobile shelter season December 1st. Also remember the host churches that will be extending the love of Christ to our friends.

Join us for a "Candlelight Vigil" to commemorate the members of our community who died homeless in Montgomery County, PA.

**2nd Annual National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day—**

**Friday, Dec. 19, 2007 at 4:30—5:30 pm, New Life Mennonite Church, 3 East Marshal St., Norristown**

Please also remember those of us who are struggling to find work in this broken economy. Please, this Christmas, remember our campaign to help those in Liberia who need the simplicity of clean drinking water. It's a matter of life, and death for them.



Gracious LORD, as we await your coming, give us your Holy Spirit, to proclaim justice in our land; to announce release from bondage, and to become your pleasure. Help us LORD, to be your voice in our wilderness of trouble, and thank you for the baptism of your JOY. Work in us to become your peculiar images of this JOY to those needing to know you and your kingdom, both in the Church and outside. May your will be done. Amen.



**Next Week's Scriptures:**

**December 21, 2008 Fourth Sunday of Advent (Year B)**

**2 samuel 7.1-11, 16, luke 1.26-38,**

**luke 1.47-55, & romans 16.25-27**

Get in touch with us at: i. [www.besidestillwaters.net](http://www.besidestillwaters.net) e. [Info@besidestillwaters.net](mailto:Info@besidestillwaters.net)  
256 South Hanover Street, Pottstown, PA 19465-7022 Phone: (610) 970-2444 Fax: (484) 363-4017

**still waters** of Pottstown  
home churches & worship center  
"He restores my soul . . . surely goodness and mercy will follow me" Psalm 23

December 14 - 2008

**Proclaiming  
Benevolence  
Or, trouble in Paradise**



3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent  
Worship

psalm 126

isaiah 61.1-4, 8-11

john 1.6-8, 19-28

1 thessalonians 5.16-24

**Benediction**

**Tabernacle Worship**

75 East Main Street, Pottstown, PA 19465

Every Sunday Evening at 9:30, St. John's Parish House

© 2008 still waters home churches & worship center

Still Waters is a member church of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, P.O. Box 384 Winona Lake, IN 46590



[Service]

## Tonight...

Responsive Reading:

Advent 3, Joy Candle Lighting

Worship Film ::

“From Tears to Joy ...”

Scripture Reading & Call to Worship ::

Psalms 126

Congregation Song Worship ::

~ offer thanksgiving sacrifices, and tell of his deeds with songs of joy

Scripture Reading ::

Isaiah 61.1-4, 8-11

Focus Film ::

“Garland, Not Ashes”

The Scripture ~

## Proclaiming Benevolence

Or, trouble in Paradise

He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ...

John 1.23-26

This week's Lectionary:

Third Sunday of Advent

psalm 126, isaiah 61.1-4, 8-11,

john 1.6-8, 19-28, & 1 thessalonians 5.16-24

Reflection Film ::

“3 Advent Conspiracy”

Benediction ::

1 Thessalonians 3.11-13

[Journaling Worship  
your talking points notes...  
for this Week's Church Discussion]

✚ announcing the Year...!

✚ favoring God

✚ sign bearers of the Kingdom



### Meditation:

1 The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; 2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; 3 to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit." **Isaiah 61.1—3**

### Reflection:

No one person could implement Isaiah 61's manifesto of justice - soothing to the brokenhearted, liberty to captives, release to those in prison, comfort to all who mourn, and restoring the ruined cities. A prophetic people, enabled by God, is needed to practice the justice demanded by the Jubilee, "the year of the Lord's favor." —Peter B. Price



# still waters

home church studies

## Psalm 126

[Worship]

1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. 2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." 3 The LORD has done great things for us, and we rejoiced. 4 Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses in the Negeb. 5 May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. 6 Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.

### Consider:

[Think & Pray...]

by Peter B. Price

The prophet offers hope for the present time. Isaiah says God "loves fair judgment" and "hates robbery and wrongdoing" (Isaiah 61:8). Isaiah looks for God's "saving justice and praise to spring up in the sight of the nations" (61:11). The prophet's task is to "prepare the way in the desert" (Isaiah 40:3). Real change in human affairs is often planned in the wilderness, exile, or prison. God prepares for the future through his people practicing justice now.

Isaiah envisaged a prophetic people. The prophet received anointing—"God has anointed me" (Isaiah 61:1), but no one person could implement this manifesto of justice—as well as news to the afflicted, soothing to the brokenhearted, liberty to captives, release to those in prison; offering comfort to all who mourn, rebuilding the ancient ruins, and restoring the ruined cities (61:4). Many are needed to practice the justice demanded by the Jubilee, "the year of the Lord's favor" (Isaiah 40:1-3; Leviticus 25).

Such a vision can only be fulfilled through the anointing of God, who clothes in "garments of salvation" and wraps in "a cloak of saving justice" (Isaiah 61:10). Words like salvation and justice (as well as kingdom and authority) have political implications. God's activity in history is public, communal, and visible. God intends his people in every age to be recognized as "a race whom God has blessed" (61:9).

God holds out the vision of a new light in the world, like John the Baptist ("he was not the light"). Prophetic people are to bear witness to the light (John 1.8).

Practically, that means being a community at peace among yourselves, who support the weak, aiming at what is best for everyone (1 Thessalonians 5:13-15).



### Talking Points

Where are the signs of hope in the present time? How are you being a prophetic people?

### Reflection and Action

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14-22 and ask, "Are we God's people, acting justly?"

[Scripture] 1 Thessalonians 5.16-24

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise the words of prophets, 21 but test everything; hold fast to what is good; 22 abstain from every form of evil. 23 May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.