



# The Shepherd's Voice

by Fr. Richard Bowman

December 17, 2013

## *"The Fullness of Time"*

*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman...*  
(Galatians 4:4)

When is this fullness of time? As far as you and I are concerned, it is always right now.

Ours and others' needs are immediate. Healing, strength, money, housing, employment, family peace, salvation of a loved one - are needs that need to be met ASAP. We pray. God doesn't respond in the way we expect. We wonder if He has heard. We ask why He is waiting. Doesn't He care? Is He too busy?

The generations of Israelites who lived from the age of the Prophets (ca. 8th C. BC) until the birth of the Lord Jesus asked the same questions. They had read or heard the prophecies. They knew the Psalms by heart. They lived under one oppressive regime after another. Their leaders led them away from the worship of the One True God - Jehovah. They were led into exile in Babylon for 70 years, released only when Cyrus, King of Persia, sent them back to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. Isaiah had prophesied that it would, indeed, be Cyrus who would do this - long before anyone knew his name. "When the fullness of time had come. . ." Cyrus did what God said he would do - sent the Jews back to their own land.

When the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives, two angels told the watching Apostles ". . . why do you stand looking into heav-

*en? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven."* (Acts 1:11)

For 20 centuries since that day, believers have looked for Jesus' Second Coming. Many have set firm dates for His Return - only to be proved wrong. Peter wrote that ". . . scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.'" (II Peter 3:3-5)

Such scoffers are around us today. They think the Scriptures are a pack of myths. They have no hope for any changes to our darkening world. Many have no hope in life after death. They are hopeless and without God in the world.

You may well know some people like this. What can you say to someone in this mindset when perhaps you are not seeing the answers to your own prayers? How can you help a hopeless and needy individual when you are frustrated at your own needs not being met by God?

You listen and understand them! You can identify with the frustration of waiting for God to act. But there is a difference between you: you have put your trust in Jesus as your Savior - and - your companion has not. You already have a relationship with the Lord - but - your friend either does not, or has turned away from Him at some point. You can definitely tell him that you really do understand and, indeed, have had doubts many times. [Fr. Caleb told us last Sunday that

doubting is normal for a Christian at times, so long as it doesn't become a permanent condition.] Then, as much for your own benefit as for his, you can look back at a couple of times in your own recent past when you waited on God for the answers to your own prayers – and when “in the fullness of time” for you, He answered perfectly. You can see that now – and you can see how your own faith in the Lord has grown.

right now, let us remember also how He has at the right moment provided for us in our past, and renew our trust in Him that our current situations will also be resolved in His Fatherly wisdom and love, “in the fullness of time”.

May you and your family have a brilliant and glorious and warm Christmas Season,

Fr. Richard

As we come near to Christmas once again, we rejoice again that “in the fullness of time” (as to the conditions in world history) the Father gave us His only-begotten Son to be our Savior, gave Him the only Name under heaven by which we must be saved. As we look at our own needs

### Sunday Servers

December 22, 2013	Advent 4	8:30 a.m. Service	10:15 a.m. Service
First Reader	Isaiah 7:10-17	Doug Hall	Petey Seibold
Psalm Reader	Psalm 24	Dick Phelps	Jani Dubski
Second Reader	Romans 1:1-7	Linnie Phelps	Jim Livingston
Intercessor		Thor Strom	David Archer
Lay Euch. Ministers		John & Myrna Lipnicke	Carolyn Blumberg, Frances Slaughter
Acolytes		Thor Strom	David A (C ); Dashiahmarie V (T1); Kai C (T2)
Welcomers		Paula Sholly, Myrna Lipnicke	Margaret Olsen, Paula Sholly
Ushers		David Green, Jackie Lansing	Ted Vallas, Jim Livingston, April Knowles
Vestry Person of Day	Richard Rieder		
Healing Ministers		Jan Simon, Jane Rost	JR & Ann Fox
Announcer		Robbin Gates	Judi Gillease
Counters			Cline Handy & Michael Murphy

## CHRISTIAN DISCERNMENT

Beginning on Tuesday, January 7 and running through Tuesday, February 18 from 7-8:30 pm, Larry Warner, Author of “Journey with Jesus”, will be teaching on the topic of Christian Discernment. As we mature in Christ we realize that the world is not black and white but very nuanced and thus the role of discernment becomes a critical skill for those who would whole-heartedly follow Christ in the world. This study is designed to help those attending to learn, understand and incorporate key principles and practices for making good God honoring decisions in order to live lives of freedom to be and become who God has created us to be while bringing greater praise and glory to God. This is a life changing series.

## **This Week at Grace**

**December 17, 2013-December 24, 2013**

### **Tues. December 17**

11:30 a.m. Rector's Bible Study  
4:30 p.m. Healing prayer and Eucharist at CHC  
7:00 p.m. Advent & Christmas Traditions from  
Around the World.

### **Wed. December 18**

8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer & Eucharist  
9:30 a.m. Staff Meeting

### **Thurs. December 19**

Fr. Richard's Day Off  
7:00 a.m. Bible Study  
11:30 a.m. Holy Communion—CHC  
7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

### **Fri. December 20**

Fr. Joe's Day Off  
10:00 a.m. Morning Prayer at CHC  
6:30 p.m. Evening Prayer & Healing

### **Sat. December 21**

8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship-Full Breakfast  
10:00 p.m. Praise Team rehearsal

### **Sun. December 22**

#### **4th Sunday of Advent**

7:30 a.m. Spoken Eucharist Service  
8:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist with choir  
9:45 a.m. Coffee & Fellowship  
10:00 a.m. Nursery opens  
10:15 a.m. Children's Church  
10:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist with praise team and  
Special Children's Program

### **Mon. December 23**

6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer

### **Tues. December 24**

Church Office Closed  
11:30 a.m. Rector's Bible Study  
5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service—Family  
10:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service—Traditional

### **Wed. December 25—Christmas Day**

Church Office Closed  
Deliver food for Stand up for Kids meal  
10:00 a.m. Christmas Day Service

## **Bible Readings this Week**

Isaiah 7:10-17

Psalms 24

Romans 1:1-7

Matthew 1:18-25

We are using the English Standard Version of the Bible and the Lectionary from the Book of Common Prayer (Year A)

## **Upcoming Events**

Dec. 17 Traditions of Advent & Potluck  
Dec. 22 Children's Christmas program & Party  
Dec. 24 Christmas Eve services—5 & 10 pm  
Dec. 25 Christmas Day service—10:00am  
Dec. 25-Jan 2—Office closed. The staff will check messages and emails if you need to contact the church.

## **Stand Up For Kids**

Christmas Dinner— December 25th  
Deliver the food to the church by 10:00 a.m.  
We will be feeding 40 youth. We still need a ham to fill out the menu.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the big picture project week. Thank you to Jane Rost for organizing the event. We will have a brand new picture directory coming to each of us. There is still some work to be done on it before it's ready. Your photos that you ordered should be mailed to you before Christmas. If you have pictures of church events taken during 2013, please email them or bring them in to the office on a CD or a camera memory card or on paper to be scanned. We want to include some of these pictures in the new directory and the rest will be archived.

**Grace Anglican Church**

**760-730-9900**

**[www.graceanglicanchurch.com](http://www.graceanglicanchurch.com)**