

SERMON FOR DECEMBER 16, 2012

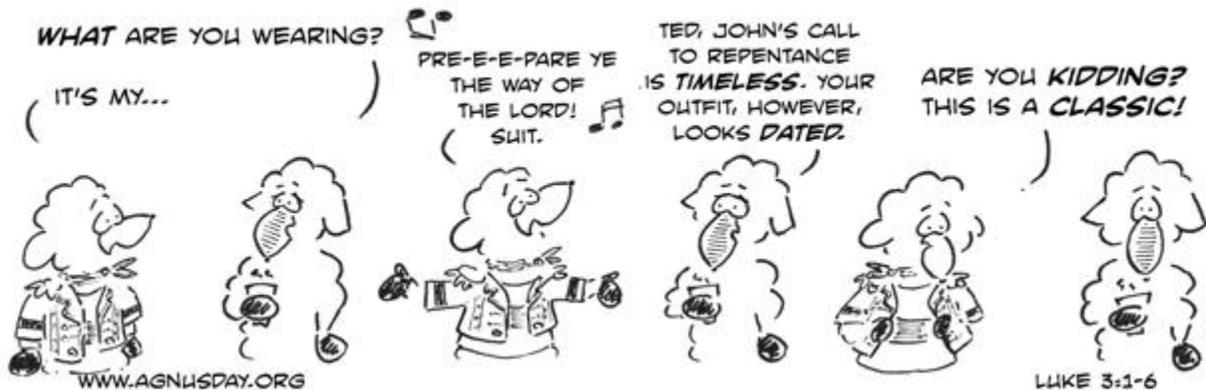
The First Chinese Church of Christ in Hawai'i (UCC)

7:45 & 10:30 Worship Services

Scripture: Zephaniah 3:14-20; **Luke 3:7-18 (Focus)**

Message: **"Nū Oli – God's Joyful News of Great Joy!"**

Kekapa P.K. Lee



Gathering in the Word

Hearing the Word

Zephaniah 3:14-20 (Contemporary English Version)

A Song of Celebration

¹⁴ Everyone in Jerusalem and Judah, celebrate and shout with all your heart!

¹⁵ Zion, your punishment is over. The LORD has forced your enemies to turn and retreat. Your LORD is King of Israel and stands at your side; you don't have to worry about any more troubles.

¹⁶ Jerusalem, the time is coming, when it will be said to you: "Don't be discouraged or grow weak from fear!" ¹⁷ The LORD your God wins victory after victory and is always with you. God celebrates and sings because of you, and God will refresh your life with his love."

The LORD's Promise to His People

¹⁸ The LORD has promised: Your sorrow has ended, and you can celebrate.

- ✓ ¹⁹ I will punish those who mistreat you.
- ✓ I will bring together the lame and the outcasts, then they will be praised, instead of despised, in every country on earth.
- ✓ ²⁰ I will lead you home, and with your own eyes you will see me bless you with all you once owned.

Then you will be famous everywhere on this earth. I, the LORD, have spoken!

Luke 3:7-18 (Focus – Contemporary English Version Bible)

- ✓ Crowds of people came out to be baptized, but John said to them, "You bunch of snakes! Who warned you to run from the coming judgment? ⁸ Do something to show that you really have given up your sins. Don't start saying that you belong to Abraham's family. God can turn these stones into children for Abraham. ⁹ An ax is ready to cut the trees down at their roots. Any tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into a fire." ¹⁰ The crowds asked John, "What should we do?" ¹¹ John told them, "If you have two

coats, give one to someone who doesn't have any. If you have food, share it with someone else." 12 When tax collectors came to be baptized, they asked John, "Teacher, what should we do?" 13 John told them, "Don't make people pay more than they owe." 14 Some soldiers asked him, "And what about us? What do we have to do?" John told them, "Don't force people to pay money to make you leave them alone. Be satisfied with your pay." 15 Everyone became excited and wondered, "Could John be the Messiah?" 16 John said, "I am just baptizing with water. But someone more powerful is going to come, and I am not good enough even to untie his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. 17 His threshing fork is in his hand, and he is ready to separate the wheat from the husks. He will store the wheat in his barn and burn the husks with a fire that never goes out." 18 In many different ways John preached the good news to the people.

Doing the Word

So what is the Word of God for us on this Third Sunday of Advent 2012?

- 1. ONE: Bear fruit worthy of repentance!**
- 2. TWO: Being God's Chosen requires faithful a response!**
- 3. THREE: Produce the fruits in your life worthy of the relationship you have with God!**

Sent in the Word

Story by Tom Long (Atlanta, Georgia):

In one of his fine sermons some while back, I heard Tom Long tell a story about the church he joined when he moved to Atlanta a while back. At a new members dinner, the pastor had people go

around the table to introduce themselves and say a little something about why they had joined the church.

- Some noted the good children's programs that gave their kids something to do after school and for a week or two in the summer—that kind of thing helps out Mom and Dad, you see.
- Some noted the convenience of the church's location, the proximity to their home, the good parking.
- Still others appreciated the organist and the great music.
- Finally it came around to a man who told the group that for more years than he could remember he'd been a crack addict, a boozier, and a derelict but that through this church he found the power of Jesus to turn it all around and that's why and how he became a member.

As Long tells it, there all those new members sad, feeling sheepish. “We came for the good parking. He came for the salvation!”