

## **A Weekly Banquet**

Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6  
<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts/?y=384&z=a&d=2>

### *A Banquet*

Each week, St. Peter's serves a banquet; of words; God's words. The Gospel Book is carried in procession, lifted high for all to see. Later, a portion is broken off and fed/read to us. Before that, portions of the Old Testament and the New Testament Letters are read. In between, we respond with a Psalm or two. All this is food, not only for thought, but also for the soul. Good news that God still loves us. . .and has things for us to do. A light on our path and assurance of help from the Holy Spirit. We come in famished and go out filled, nourished, and energized.

### *In Advent*

It's a conflicted season. There are the incessant liturgies of the mall and on-line shopping; the drum beat of "black Friday." Also, the liturgies of the stadium; will the Eagles make it? The liturgy of the church year is hardly mentioned; a hobby for the few. The readings from Scripture tell a different story than the ads and hype of the mall and stadium. We'll hear what God did to bring in a new earth and heaven and finally sing "The hopes and fears of all the years/Are met in thee tonight."

Starting with Malachi 3:1-4, who is coming? How is he described? What will he do? Who will be effected and how is the effect described? What then will they do?

If you, hearing this in 2 BC, were awaiting this visitor, what would you expect to see?

In Luke 3:1-6, we find out what actually happened. Notice how carefully Luke dates the arrival. Who arrives on the scene? How does Isaiah, another Old Testament prophet, describe him and his task? Where does he work and what does he say? What will be the result?

When we turn to Philippians, how did this work out there? How does Paul, the writer of this letter, describe what he knows about this community and his prayers for them? Can you link this outcome with the promises in Malachi and Isaiah? Look for common words/synonyms/images.

### *Question for reflection.*

In your experience during the liturgy, how does hearing the readings and then participating in the Eucharist from week to week help you to grow and change; "refine [you] like gold and silver, until [you] present offerings to the LORD in righteousness?" If you're looking for a conversation starter during the coffee hour, ask this question (and be prepared to share your experience).

*Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

Larry Sibley