

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster  
Sunday, December 12th, 2021, Advent III  
Zephaniah 3:14-20, Canticle #3 Isaiah 12:2-6, Philippians 4:4-7, Luke 3:7-18

What does it mean to bear fruit worthy of repentance?

This is not just a test of our past accomplishments and our connections, but just like the word Love is a verb, so is to bear fruit.

What seems to confuse us is the word repentance which has the connotation of negativity, feeling sorry for what we have done wrong. This means positive and negative combined, but does it?

One of the ways of understanding repentance is the image of aiming with a bow and arrow, that repentance is changing the direction in which we are aiming from the destructive to the beneficial direction. Moving in a direction which is loving and helpful.

Unfortunately, and realistically our spiritual journey does not progress in a straight line. We have ups and downs, steps backward as well as forward. That is why repentance is not a one-time thing, although at one time in church history people waited until on their deathbeds to be baptised because they figured they would not sin anymore.

But for us repentance and forgiveness are ongoing in our relationship with God and each other.

And there is hope.

*John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

The one who is coming will baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire, or I think passion.

This will be the energy and the wisdom to move in new and creative ways to be loving and helpful to those around us. So, we are not left to our own devices, but God not just expecting this from us, but being a part of making this happen.  
Amen