

## The Season of Advent: Year C, Week 3



On May 31, 2018, [TIME magazine](#) carried the article, “How the Nazi Regime's Pink Triangle Symbol Was Repurposed for LGBTQ Pride.” In the article Olivia B. Waxman writes, “Just as the Nazis forced Jewish people to wear a yellow Star of David, they forced people they labeled as gay to wear inverted pink triangles (or ‘die Rosa-Winkel’). Those thus branded were treated as [“the lowest of the low in the camp hierarchy,”](#) as one scholar put it.

Waxman adds, “More recently, pink triangles have been visible during gay rights demonstrations worldwide...” and what was once a historical [trademark](#) of persecution and discrimination is now a patent of LGBT survival and pride.

The liturgical color for the third Sunday of Advent is pink symbolized by the pink candle that is lit on advent wreaths instead of purple. The third Sunday of Advent is called Gaudete Sunday; “Gaudete” means “Rejoice.” The scripture texts for this Sunday energetically shout-out the promises of hope (from despair), restoration (from destruction), liberation (from oppression) and joy (from fear) giving all a reason to proudly [wear the color pink and rejoice](#).

### **ZEPHANIAH 5:1-4**

Shout for joy, O daughter Zion! Sing joyfully, O Israel!  
Be glad and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!  
Yahweh has removed the judgment against you and turned away your enemies;  
Israel, Yahweh is among you as ruler, you have no further misfortune to fear.  
On that day, it shall be said to Jerusalem: Fear not, O Zion, be not discouraged!

For Yahweh, your God, is in your midst, a warrior to keep you safe; who will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you with love, who will sing joyfully because of you, as one sings at festivals.

### **LUKE 3:10-18**

The crowds asked John the Baptist, "What should we do?" John replied, "Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He answered them, "Stop collecting more than what is prescribed." Soldiers also asked him, "And what is it that we should do?" He told them, "Do not practice extortion, do not falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages."

Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming whose sandals I am not fit to untie. This One will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand to clear the threshing floor and gather the wheat into the barn, but the chaff will be burnt with unquenchable fire." Exhorting them in many other ways, John preached good news to the people.

**For all the readings for the Third Sunday of Advent click [here](#).**

### **FOR REFLECTION**

1. In the Gospel, the gathered crowds, filled with expectation of the coming Messiah, ask John the Baptist, "What should we do?" and John's exhortations suggest that all people have a role to play in God's Reign according to their status in life. As an LGBT person or ally, how is God permitting (or even asking for) your cooperation in the divine plan?

2. The origins of the Christmas tradition of the [Jesse](#) tree lie in the words of Isaiah 11:1 - "*A shoot shall come out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.*" Decorated during the season of Advent, the Jesse tree ornaments tell the story of God in the Hebrew Scriptures, connecting the Advent season with the faithfulness of God across thousands of years of history. Some of the typical ornaments on a Jesse tree could be a rainbow, ark, coat of many colors, lamb, or the burning bush. To connect the season of Advent with LGBT history, what ornaments would you design for the Jesse tree to symbolize God's faithfulness to (or affirmation of) the LGBT community?

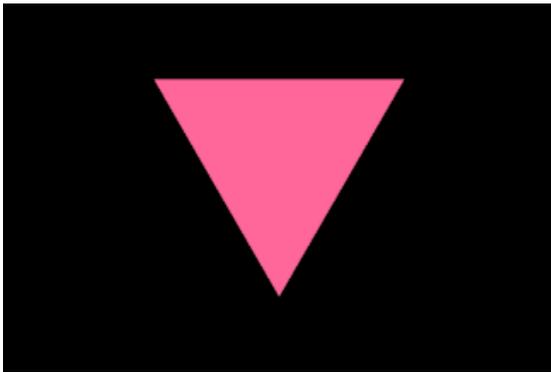
3. Do you think of God as rejoicing over you with gladness, as the prophet Zephaniah writes? Why or why not? What would it be like to hear God sing a joyful song over you? How might it transform your life?

4. In today's Second Reading, the Apostle Paul writes, "Then the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." How do you envision this peace of God for you and the LGBT community? What struggles do you currently see as needing most attention?

5. From the course of history (biblical, traditional or present) who are Advent saints for you - people, living or dead - whose contributions have led you to the Christ and made a difference in your life as an LGBT person or ally? How do you choose to remember and bless them this Gaudete Sunday? How would *you* like to be remembered and blessed?

## PRAYER

### Remembering our sacred history and our LGBT saints



You who personally stood up and were counted and who made a difference for all of us today – we remember you.

You who by your personal act of coming out challenging the system or changing it from within – we remember you.

You who actively shared your ideas with broad audiences or quietly affected individuals one at a time – we remember you.

You who helped others understand us or made ours a better community – we remember you.

You who by your courageous actions brought us forward even under pressures of physical pain, torture and death – we remember you.

You who braved social estrangement or chose integrity over loss of family, loved ones or friends – we remember you.

You who moved us all a little closer to a world that more fully celebrates love  
Your contributions are remembered and you are remembered

You give us a reason to rejoice  
Your memory is a blessing  
And we thank our loving God for your witness and sacrifice.

- Adapted [prayer](#) of Rabbi Heather Miller