Homily – Third Sunday of Advent B, 2017
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St. Mark’s Gospel is the shortest of the four Gospels. Our reading of that Gospel this year will be regularly interrupted with readings from St. John’s Gospel.

Last Sunday, we heard the opening lines from Mark. They introduced us to this odd, scruffy character known as John the Baptist. It talked about the strange clothes he wore and the odd food he ate. That description was meant to conjure up images of Israel’s old-time prophets. The role of prophets was to speak in the name of God; to call people’s attention to God’s presence; to point out what God was asking of them.

So today, we have one of those interruptions from John’s Gospel. The reading comes from the beginning of that Gospel. Just before the lines we heard this morning, John’s Gospel begins with these dramatic words:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was in God’s presence, and the Word was God. Through the Word all things came into being. Whatever came to be in the Word found life, life for the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and darkness did not overcome it.”

In John’s Gospel Jesus is The Word.

After those opening lines, the Gospel speaks about the role of John the Baptist. He is the one who calls attention to the light that has come into the world. He is not the light, but testifies to the light.
John insists that he has no claim to anything other than pointing to the presence of Light.

John’s life, our lives, are meant to say
“REJOICE, the light is surely here!
God is saving the world."
It’s true: I don’t have to be the savior – God has taken care of that – and neither do you.

The question we are left with from today’s readings is,
“How does your care for others,
your joy and your awareness of God
tell others who and whose you are?”

How well do you testify to the truth that Word has become flesh and dwells among us?

Last Thursday, some us here participated in a prayer service about gun violence in our country.
That day was the fifth anniversary of murder of 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn.

More than half a million people have either died or been wounded through gun violence since.

Testifying to the LIGHT

No easy answers,
but I’m about as sure as you can be that putting more guns in people’s hands is not the answer.

Our gathering here is a fervent prayer that we grow in our trust that Jesus is truly the Savior of the world. That burden is off our shoulders.