

## Introduction

Having completed John's main epistle, I thought we'd reflect a little more on the man, especially as our church is named after him. His appointed day in the church's calendar (in the West) is December 27th. He is designated "Apostle and Evangelist". Paraments are kept white as they are for all saints' days but they are already for Christmas. These are feast times. He is the son of Zebedee and Salome. His brother is James whom he shared a fishing venture with Peter and Andrew (Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 5:10). He is also believed by some to have had a connection to the Temple as he had ready access at the time of Jesus' arrest (John 18:15, 16). Known as "the Evangelist", John planted many congregations and is responsible for the second largest part of NT theology and writing only after Paul. A Gospel bearing his name which is quite different from the other three Synoptic Gospels, three epistles and the apocalyptic book Revelation are all attributed to John. These are highlights about John from Scripture:

1. *Special Witness*. John was among the first disciples that Jesus called: James and John who originally followed John the Baptist and Peter and Andrew were part of His first tour of Galilee. John was invited with James and Peter to privately witness certain events. The healing and resurrection of Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:49-56), Jesus' own Transfiguration (Luke 9:28) and Jesus' prayer at Gethsemane before His arrest (Mark 14:33) are given. He is first to reach the empty tomb of Christ but doesn't initially go inside as does Peter. John and Peter continue to be closely associated in the Bible (see examples in Mark 13:3; Luke 22:8; Acts 3:1, 4:3, 8:14; Galatians 2:9). John is one of the seven fishermen at the miraculous catch of 153 fish after Jesus' resurrection (John 21:1-14).

2. *Beloved Disciple*. John refers to himself in his gospel only as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23, 21:7). He is the one next to Jesus at the Last Supper. He is also the only apostle who does not abandon Jesus at the cross and receives instructions from Jesus to take care of His mother, Mary, there (John 19:25-27). He is the only one not to die a martyr's death but was exiled for a time to the island of Patmos off the Asia Minor coast. There he received the Book of Revelation (Rev. 1:9). Tradition holds that he was first put in a cauldron of boiling oil by the Roman Emperor Domitian but emerged unharmed. John lived to an old age dying in Ephesus around 100 A.D. He continued his ministry there until his death.

3. *Son of Thunder (Boanerges)*. Jesus gave John and his brother James this title (Mark 3:17). Reflected in their attitude when they wanted to call down fire from heaven on a Samaritan town for their rejection of Jesus (Luke 9:51-56). Otherwise mild mannered, John and James could be given to fiery anger when pushed or provoked. Some hubris also came forth as James and John wanted to rule with Jesus on His left and right when He came into His Kingdom (Mark 10:35-40).

For Our Further Discussion:

1. Which of these designations do you especially like about John and how can they reflect the ministry and mission of St. John Lutheran Church, Covina, his designee?