



The Heart of Advent: Midweek Advent 1 December 2, 2020



WELCOME:

Welcome to midweek Advent worship at Desert Cross. We are so glad that you are here with us. During the season of Advent, we are encouraged to pause, to take time to reflect and prepare ourselves for the upcoming birth of Christ. This season we will focus on four elements of our spiritual life that grow out of our relationship with God: hope, peace, joy and love. In our worship today, we will focus on hope.

Let us begin with prayer.

OPENING PRAYER:

Gracious God, we come before you as Advent people, people of hope.

For us, Advent is a time of waiting, and so we wait. We wait for the coming of the One who is the fulfillment of God's promise, the fulfillment of hope, the declaration that we have been redeemed. Even so, we are not a naïve people.

We know that the world in which we live will continue to be filled with pain and sorrow. We know that hatred and violence will continue to exist. We know that death and separation will continue to be a part of our lives.

But because we are an Advent people, we know that none of these things will win in the end. The Holy One is coming, to make holy once again all that was, is and ever will be. And in our waiting and our hoping, we work and worship, pray and play, in all things hoping that peace, love and joy will reign in our lives and in our world, now and forever.

ADVENT SONG: "Come, Light Our Hearts"

Chorus:

For You O Lord our souls in stillness wait
For You O Lord our souls in stillness wait
Truly our hope is in You
Truly our hope is in You

Verse 1:

O, Lord of life our only hope
Your radiance shines
On all who look to You in the dark
Emmanuel come, come light our hearts

Chorus:

For You O Lord our souls in stillness wait
For You O Lord our souls in stillness wait
Truly our hope is in You
Truly our hope is in You

Verse 2:

Oh, joy above all other loves
In You we find more than enough
We come as we are O heal and restore
Come light our hearts

CCLI Song # 7054135 // Sandra McCracken
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HOLY SCRIPTURES:

Lamentations 3:21-24

But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:
²² The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
²³ they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
²⁴ "The Lord is my portion," says my soul,
"therefore I will hope in him."

Romans 8:24-30

²⁴ For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit, intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸ We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

POEM: *The Way It Is* by William Stafford

There's a thread you follow. It goes among
things that change. But it doesn't change.
People wonder about what you are pursuing.
You have to explain about the thread.
But it is hard for others to see.
While you hold it you can't get lost.
Tragedies happen; people get hurt
or die; and you suffer and get old.
Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding.
You don't ever let go of the thread.

MEDITATION: Pastor Doris Nolan

MEDITATION SONG: ELW 247 "Come, Now O Prince of Peace"

Verse 1:

Come now, O Prince of peace
Make us one body
Come, O Lord Jesus,
Reconcile your people

Verse 2:

Come now, O God of love
Make us one body
Come, O Lord Jesus
Reconcile your people

Verse 3:

Come now and set us free
O God, our Savior
Come, O Lord Jesus
Reconcile all nations

Verse 4:

Come, Hope of unity
Make us one body
Come, O Lord Jesus
Reconcile all nations

Text: Geon-yong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope
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ADVENT PRAYER:

O God of Hope, our fears and anxiety narrow our view so that we see only what is broken and wrong and miss the signs of hope that you have woven through the fabric of our lives.

Trusting in your mercy and relying on the hope you inspire, we lift to you our prayers:

- ✠ we pray for healing for all those who are sick in body, mind or spirit, especially those who are ill because of Covid,
- ✠ we pray for strength for all health care workers and first responders, for all essential workers.
- ✠ we pray for wisdom for scientists working on a vaccine, and for the leaders of nations, as they strive to protect their people from Covid,
- ✠ we pray for sufficient resources for all the homeless, the poor, the unemployed and the food insufficient,
- ✠ we pray for peace and an end to divisions in our nation.

We trust that you will answer our prayers according to your gracious will.

During this Advent season of holy waiting and preparation, open our hearts to the hope that is ours through the coming of Christ. Help us to remember that in times of darkness and despair, Christ came that we might have hope. Amen.

CLOSING SONG: ELW 242 "Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn" (vs. 1,2,4)

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| <p>1 Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn,
for angels herald its dawning.
Sing out your joy, for soon he is born,
behold! the Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor,
to bring all hearts together,
he opens wide the heav'nly door
and lives now inside us forever.</p> <p>2 To us, to all in sorrow and fear,
Emmanuel comes a-singing,
his humble song is quiet and near,
yet fills the earth with its ringing;
music to heal the broken soul
and hymns of lovingkindness,
the thunder of his anthems roll
to shatter all hatred and blindness.</p> | <p>4 Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though dark the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
be strong and loving and fearless.
Love be our song and love our prayer
and love our endless story;
may God fill ev'ry day we share
and bring us at last into glory.</p> |
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BENEDICTION:

Immanuel is coming,

Hope in the promises of God,

Hope is grounded in God's constancy;

hope, not fear;

hope, not doubt;

hope, not despair;

hope, not anguish.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.