



The Heart of Advent: Midweek Advent 4 December 23, 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 love.

Let us begin with prayer.

OPENING PRAYER:

Let us pray:

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come.

May we, with Mary, sing your praises and magnify your name.

As we worship, renew our vision that we may do your will.

In your name we pray,

Amen.

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 peace is in You
Truly our peace is in You

Verse 1:

O, Lord of life our only peace
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 peace is in You
Truly our peace 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

HOLY SCRIPTURES:

Psalm 89:1-11

- ¹ I will sing of the Lord's great love forever;
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known
through all generations.
- ² I will declare that your love stands firm forever,
that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself.
- ³ You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to David my servant,
- ⁴ "I will establish your line forever
and make your throne firm through all generations."
- ⁵ The heavens praise your wonders, Lord,
your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones.
- ⁶ For who in the skies above can compare with the Lord?
Who is like the Lord among the heavenly beings?
- ⁷ In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared;
he is more awesome than all who surround him.
- ⁸ Who is like you, Lord God Almighty?
You, Lord, are mighty, and your faithfulness surrounds you.
- ⁹ You rule over the surging sea;
when its waves mount up, you still them.
- ¹⁰ You crushed Rahab like one of the slain;
with your strong arm you scattered your enemies.
- ¹¹ The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth;
you founded the world and all that is in it.

Luke 1:26-38 The Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

MEDITATION: Pastor Andrea Cain

Reflection 1:



Mary of the Annunciation, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

Reflection 2:



The Annunciation, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN

Reflection 3:



Saget, Father George. Annunciation to Mary, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

MEDITATION SONG: ELW 272 "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

- 1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
as seers of old have sung,
it came, a flow'r so bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half-spent was the night.
- 2 Isaiah had foretold it,
the rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it,
the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
she bore to us a Savior,
when half-spent was the night.
- 3 This flow'r, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendor
the darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God,
from sin and death he saves us
and lightens ev'ry load.
- 4 O Savior, child of Mary,
who felt our human woe;
O Savior, king of glory,
who dost our weakness know:
bring us at length, we pray,
to the bright courts of heaven
and into endless day.

Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851-1934,
sts. 1-2; Harriet R. Krauth, 1845-1925, st. 3;
John C. Mattes, 1876-1948, st. 4

ADVENT PRAYER:

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

Trusting in your mercy and relying on the love with which you fill us, 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, and caretakers,
- ✠ we pray for wisdom for the leaders of nations, as they strive to protect their people from this virus as we wait for the vaccine to be made available,
- ✠ we pray for sufficient resources for all people who are homeless, poor, unemployed and food insecure,
- ✠ we pray for peace and reconciliation and an end to divisions in our nation and in our world.

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 grace that is ours through the coming of Christ. Help us to remember that in times of darkness and despair, Christ came so that our love may be complete. Amen.

CLOSING SONG: ELW 487 “What Feast of Love”

- 1 What feast of love is offered here,
what banquet come from heaven?
What food of everlasting life,
what gracious gift is given?
This, this is Christ the king,
the bread come down from heaven.
Oh, taste and see and sing!
How sweet the manna given!

- 2 What light of truth is offered here,
What covenant from heaven?
What hope of everlasting life,
What wondrous word is given?
This, this is Christ the king,
The sun come down from heaven.
Oh, see and hear and sing!
The Word of God is given!

- 3 What wine of love is offered here,
What crimson drink from heaven?
What stream of everlasting life,
What precious blood is given?
This, this is Christ the king,
The sweetest wine of heaven.
Oh, taste and see and sing!
The Son of God is given!

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939

Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

Text © 1993 Delores Dufner OSB. Published by OCP Publications.

All rights reserved.

BENEDICTION:

Immanuel is coming,
May the Word made flesh fill your heart with hope & joy,
May the love of the Lord be born in your heart,
May the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,
guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus. + Amen