

ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT • DECEMBER 10, 2020

Evening Prayer

7:00 P.M.

WELCOME

LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLES

Officiant Let us pray.

God of light and love, God in darkness and new life, God who waits with us and for us; bless us and those you have entrusted to us as we await the birth of your Son. May the coming Christ scatter our darkness, illumine our hearts, and encourage our hope.

People **Amen.**

FIRST READING

“Making the House Ready for the Lord”

by Mary Oliver

Dear Lord, I have swept and I have washed but
still nothing is as shining as it should be
for you. Under the sink, for example, is an
uproar of mice—it is the season of their
many children. What shall I do? And under the eaves
and through the walls the squirrels
have gnawed their ragged entrances—but it is the season
when they need shelter, so what shall I do? And
the raccoon limps into the kitchen and opens the cupboard
while the dog snores, the cat hugs the pillow;
what shall I do? Beautiful is the new snow falling
in the yard and the fox who is staring boldly
up the path, to the door. And still I believe you will
come, Lord: you will, when I speak to the fox,
the sparrow, the lost dog, the shivering sea-goose, know
that really I am speaking to you whenever I say,
as I do all morning and afternoon: Come in, Come in.

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 4:6-10

Reader A reading from Second Corinthians.

It is the God who said, Let light shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our body.

The Word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

THIRD READING

“Dark Testament: Verse 8”

by Pauli Murray

Hope is a crushed stalk
Between clenched fingers
Hope is a bird's wing
Broken by a stone.
Hope is a word in a tuneless ditty—
A word whispered with the wind,
A dream of forty acres and a mule,
A cabin of one's own and a moment to rest,
A name and place for one's children
And children's children at last . . .
Hope is a song in a weary throat.
Give me a song of hope
And a world where I can sing it.
Give me a song of faith
And a people to believe in it.
Give me a song of kindness
And a country where I can live it.
Give me a song of hope and love
And a brown girl's heart to hear it.

FOURTH READING

Luke 1:39-55

Common English Bible

Reader A reading from Luke.

Mary got up and hurried to a city in the Judean highlands. She entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. With a loud voice she blurted out, "God has blessed you above all women, and he has blessed the child you carry. Why do I have this honor, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her."

Mary said, "With all my heart I glorify the Lord!

In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior.

He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant.

Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored

because the mighty one has done great things for me.

Holy is his name.

He shows mercy to everyone, from one generation to the next,

who honors him as God.

He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.

He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones and lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed.

He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, remembering his mercy,

just as he promised to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever."

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months, and then returned to her home.

The Word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

REFLECTION

LORD'S PRAYER

A Prayer Book for New Zealand

Officiant

Let us pray.

All **Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever.
Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

based on Advent hymns

Reader

Let us pray for the church and for the world.

Creator of the stars of night, which keep watch when our own faith is dim:
Awaken hope and kindle our longing for your return.

People

In your mercy,
Come, Lord Jesus.

Reader

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set your people free:
Release us from our sins and fears, that we may live in your light and truth.

People

In your mercy,
Come, Lord Jesus.

Reader

O Come, Desire of nations: bind in one the hearts of humankind.
Dissolve our sad divisions, and strengthen us to work for peace.

People

In your mercy,
Come, Lord Jesus.

Reader Comfort all who sit in the darkness of illness, grief, or distress, especially those we now name. (*People add names silently or aloud.*)

Silence

Speak to them your peace, which passes all understanding.

People In your mercy,
Come, Lord Jesus.

Reader Welcome into your glory those we love but see no longer, especially those we now name. (*People add names silently or aloud.*)

Silence

May light perpetual shine upon them, bright as sun and moon together.

People In your mercy,
Come, Lord Jesus.

Reader With the angels who announce your coming with shouts of joy, let us name the blessings of our lives. (*People add names and blessings silently or aloud.*)

Silence

You lift up our lowliness in many marvelous ways.

People In your mercy,
Come, Lord Jesus.

Officiant Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay; comfort those who mourn, and give new hope to your people, who seek you and trust in your love. By your coming, raise us to share in the joy of your kingdom on earth as in heaven, where you live and reign, one God for ever and ever.

People **Amen.**

TABLE REFLECTION

Where do you see hope, love, joy, and peace?

Compline

7:30 P.M.

NIGHT PRAYER

A Prayer Book for New Zealand

Officiant Lord,
it is night.

The night is for stillness.

All **Let us be still in the presence of God.**

Officiant It is night after a long day.

All **What has been done has been done;
what has not been done has not been done;
let it be.**

Officiant The night is dark.

All **Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you.**

Officiant The night is quiet.

All **Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,
all dear to us,
and all who have no peace.**

Officiant The night heralds the dawn.

All **Let us look expectantly to a new day,
new joys,
new possibilities.**

Officiant In your name we pray.

All **Amen.**

1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,
 2 Our God, heaven can - not hold him, nor — earth sus - tain;
 3 An - gels and arch - an - gels may have gath - ered there,
 4 What — can I give him, poor — as I am?

earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
 heaven and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign:
 cher - u - bim and se - ra - phim throng - ed the air;
 If I were a shep - herd, I would bring a lamb;

snow had fal - len, snow on snow, snow — on — snow,
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble - place suf - ficed
 but his mo - ther on - ly, in her maid - en bliss,
 if I were a wise — man, I would do my part;

in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
 the Lord — God in - car - nate, Je - sus Christ.
 wor - shiped the be - lov - ed with a kiss.
 yet what I can I give him — give my heart.

BLESSING

“This Is the Time to Be Slow”

by John O’Donohue
To Bless the Space Between Us

This is the time to be slow
Lie low to the wall
Until the bitter weather passes

Try, as best you can, not to let
The wire brush of doubt
Scrape from your heart
All sense of yourself
And your hesitant light.

If you remain generous,
Time will come good;
And you will find your feet
Again on fresh pastures of promise,
Where the air will be kind
And blushed with beginning.

And the blessing of God—Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit—
be with you and remain with you always.

People **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Officiant Go in peace, and live in hope.

People **Thanks be to God.**