

**A SIMPLE EVENING LITURGY
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Sunday, December 20, 2020



St. Columba's Episcopal Church
Boothbay Harbor, Maine



CELTIC EVENING PRAYER

In this time of the Pandemic, we are changing and being changed.

What once was urgent in our daily lives is now put on pause.

Other more immediate ways of living and dying are transforming us.

As we contemplate and experience our collective living and dying,
we pray that we can be even more unified as One in God's Love all across the world.

There is great hope in all that is happening in this world, we embrace it all.

Now in these unprecedented times, our world is hushed . . .

In the quiet and the chaos,
we're witnessing the wellspring of new life, even in the midst of death.

All the world is now, perhaps for the first time ever,
singularly focused on the healing of one another
and the healing of "this fragile Earth, our island home."

Almost since time began,
this is also the spirit in which our evenings always have begun.
At this holy hour of twilight, we are hushed throughout all time,
breathing in more deeply, lighting our candles, pausing at the end of the day
together to pray into the love of God's welcoming embrace.

In this widened space at the end of the day,
our prayers encircle the world continuously.
We rest into the power of quietness and the healing touch of God.
As were all those who have gone before us, we too are comforted and calmed
at this hour of twilight by candlelight, music and prayer.

The Celtic tradition holds that we find God in Christ in our hearts,
in each other, and in all creation.

As always, we welcome all to join with us in these timeless prayers.

So come as you are, let down your burdens,
find your rest in God's expansive Love.
This love is sweeping over you and all of Creation,
sweeping 'round and 'round the world
throughout all time and in all places.

Let us pray, this prayer offered up by our friends in Virginia,

Almighty God: Our times are in your hand. We call upon you in this hour of our need, when we are lonely and must stand apart. Be our strength, O Loving God, our calm in the midst of raging seas, our refuge and our dwelling place. Sanctify to us this time drawn away from others, even as your Son, O God of All Creation, drew away to a lonely place for prayer. Deepen our need of you, dear God, that every breath may be a whisper of the Spirit's prompting, a renewed searching of the deep things of God. Stir up in us the great act of intercession, that we may spend our time apart in prayer for the world you created and sustain. Bless us in our turning toward you, and make us a blessing to those who stand in need of you, the whole fragile earth. All this we ask in the name of great Physician our healer, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

<https://mailchi.mp/vts/a-prayer-and-worship-resource-pack-from-vts-2615050>

With God's help, our gifts become the blessings we seek for the world.

A SIMPLE EVENING LITURGY

Welcome

The Rev. Maria J. Hoecker

Lighting of the fourth Advent Candle

Reader: O wisdom, holy Word of God, Jesus Christ,
all things are in your hands,

People: ***come and show us the way to salvation.***

(To the tune of "Away in a Manger")

Come, wander where lion and lamb gently play,
where evil is banished and faith takes the day,
a babe in a manger to fool the world's eyes.
One candle is lit for God's loving surprise.

(A short period of silence will be kept.)

Opening Responses

Iona Abbey Worship Book pg. 141

Leader: Peace on each one who comes in need,

All: Peace on each one who comes in joy.

Leader: Peace on each one who offers prayers,

All: Peace on each one who offers song.

Leader: Peace of the Maker, Peace of the Son,

All: Peace of the Spirit the Triune One.

Opening Collect of the Day

Leader: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray,

Leader: Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. ***Amen.***

Hymn #444 “Blessed be the God of Israel”

(to the tune of “O Little Town of Bethlehem”)

- 1 Blessed be the God of Israel, who comes to set us free;
he visits and redeems us, he grants us liberty.
The prophets spoke of mercy, of freedom and release;
God shall fulfill his promise and bring his people peace.
- 2 He from the house of David a child of grace has given;
a Savior comes among us to raise us up to heaven.
Before him goes his herald, forerunner in the way,
the prophet of salvation, the harbinger of Day.
- 3 On prisoners of darkness the sun begins to rise,
the dawning of forgiveness upon the sinner’s eyes.
He guides the feet of pilgrims along the paths of peace.
O bless our God and Savior, with songs that never cease.

Prayer

Leader: O God, for your love for us, warm and brooding,
which has brought us to birth and opened our eyes
to the wonder and beauty of creation,

All: We give You thanks.

Leader: For your love for us, wild and freeing,
which has awakened us to the energy of creation:
to the sap that flows,
the blood that pulses,
the heart that sings,

All: We give You thanks.

Leader: For your love for us, compassionate and patient,
which has carried us through our pain,
wept beside us in our sin,
and waited with us in our confusion.

All: We give You thanks.

Leader: For your love for us, strong and challenging,
which has called us to risk for you,
asked for the best in us,
and shown us how to serve.

All: We give You thanks.

Leader: O God we come to celebrate
that your Holy Spirit is present deep within us,
and at the heart of all life.
For us when we forget your gift of love
made known to us in Jesus,
and draw us into your presence.

THE WORD OF GOD

Gospel for the Day Luke 1:26-38

The Message

A Virgin Conceives

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth to a virgin engaged to be married to a man descended from David. His name was Joseph, and the virgin's name, Mary. Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her:

Good morning!
You're beautiful with God's beauty,
Beautiful inside and out!
God be with you.

She was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. But the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus.

He will be great,
 be called "Son of the Highest."
The Lord God will give him
 the throne of his father David;
He will rule Jacob's house forever—
 no end, ever, to his kingdom."

Mary said to the angel, "But how? I've never slept with a man."

The angel answered,
The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
 the power of the Highest hover over you;
Therefore, the child you bring to birth
 will be called Holy, Son of God.

"And did you know that your cousin Elizabeth conceived a son, old as she is? Everyone called her barren, and here she is six months pregnant! Nothing, you see, is impossible with God."

And Mary said,
Yes, I see it all now:
 I'm the Lord's maid, ready to serve.
Let it be with me
 just as you say.

Then the angel left her.

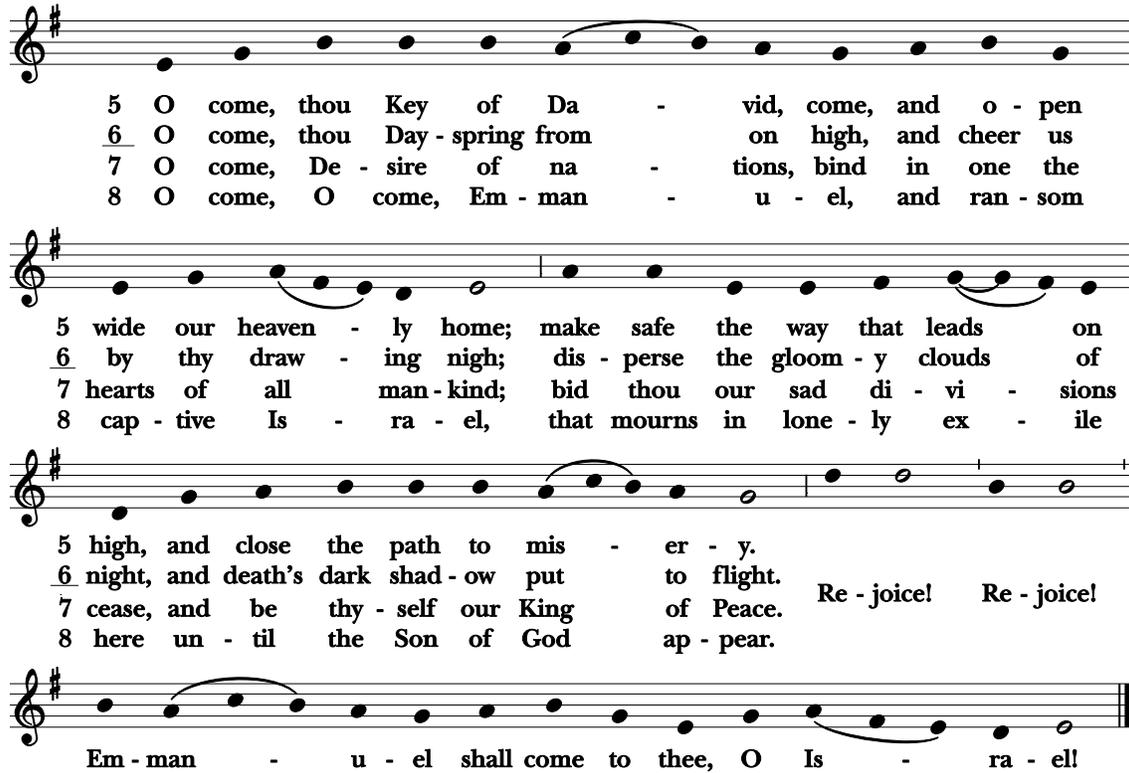
Here ends the reading.

Response

All are invited to reflect on the readings with a symbolic action to declare their engagement with their prayers of thanksgiving and concern; be it lighting a candle, meditating, placing stones in sand, ringing a bell, planting seeds, drawing or writing.

a period of silence follows

Hymn #56 "O come, O come, Emmanuel" (st. 5-8)



5 O come, thou Key of Da - vid, come, and o - pen
 6 O come, thou Day - spring from on high, and cheer us
 7 O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind in one the
 8 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som

5 wide our heaven - ly home; make safe the way that leads on
 6 by thy draw - ing night; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of
 7 hearts of all man - kind; bid thou our sad di - vi - sions
 8 cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile

5 high, and close the path to mis - er - y.
 6 night, and death's dark shad - ow put to flight. Re - joice! Re - joice!
 7 cease, and be thy - self our King of Peace.
 8 here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.

Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

Words: Latin, ca. 9th cent.; ver. *Hymnal* 1940, alt. Music: *Veni, veni, Emmanuel*, plainsong, Mode 1, Processionale, 15th cent.; adapt. Thomas Helmore (1811–1890); acc. Richard Proulx (b. 1937)

Prayer

(Here is opportunity for prayers of concern, spoken or unspoken, each prayer being followed by silence.)

We bring to God
 someone whom we have met or remembered today
 and for whom we want to pray
(Silence)

We bring to God
 someone who is hurting tonight and needs our prayer
(Silence)

We bring to God
 a troubled situation in our world tonight
(Silence)

We bring to God, silently,
 someone whom we find hard to forgive or trust
(Silence)

We bring ourselves to God
 that we might grow in generosity of spirit,
 clarity of mind,
 and warmth of affection.
(Silence)

Hymn #437 "Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!"

1 Tell out, my soul, the great - ness of the Lord!
 2 Tell out, my soul, the great - ness of his Name!
 3 Tell out, my soul, the great - ness of his might!
 4 Tell out, my soul, the glo - ries of his word!

Un - num - bered bless - ings give my spi - rit voice;
 Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
 Powers and do - min - ions lay their glo - ry by.
 Firm is his prom - ise, and his mer - cy sure.

ten - der to me the prom - ise of his word;
 his mer - cy sure, from age to age the same;
 Proud hearts and stub - born wills are put to flight,
 Tell out, my soul, the great - ness of the Lord

in God my Sa - vior shall my heart re - jice.
 his ho - ly Name— the Lord, the Might - y One.
 the hun - gry fed, the hum - ble lift - ed high.
 to chil - dren's chil - dren and for ev - er - more!

Words: Timothy Dudley-Smith (b. 1926); based on *The Song of Mary*
 Music: Birmingham, from *Repository of Sacred Music, Part II*, 1813; harm. *Songs of Praise*, 1925

Closing Responses

Leader: O Trinity of Love,
You have been with us at the world's beginning,

All: *Be with us till the world's end.*

Leader: You have been with us at our life's shaping,

All: *Be with us at our life's end.*

Leader: You have been with us at the sun's rising,

All: *Be with us till the day's end.*

Amen.

The Blessing

Traces of Glory pg. 14

To the only wise God be praise and glory for ever and ever. To God who is our Rock and our Salvation be blessing and honour; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. ***Amen.***



*Please note that during this time of pandemic
St. Columba's building is closed until further notice.
Donations can be sent to St. Columba's Episcopal Church
32 Emery Lane, Boothbay Harbor ME 04538*

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Bishop of The Diocese of Maine*

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