



2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT | DECEMBER 6, 2020

REFLECTIONS

“For outlandish creatures like us, on our way to a heart, a brain, and courage, Bethlehem is not the end of our journey but only the beginning - not home but the place through which we must pass if ever we are to reach home at last.”

FREDERICK BUECHNER | THE MAGNIFICENT DEFEAT

Lord, grant us eyes that we might see / Within the seed a mighty tree
Within the glowing egg a bird/ Within the shroud a butterfly
Then taught by such as these we see/ Beyond all creatures it is thee
And listening for thy tender voice/ We hear “Fear not, for it is I”

SISTER SINJIN | LYRICS FROM “THAT WE MIGHT SEE”

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his Word I hope.
My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning.
All There is no darkness with you, O Lord.
Leader O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
and with him is plenteous redemption.
All There is no darkness with you, O Lord.
Leader Glory to the God in the highest!
All We praise the God who saves his people from sin and darkness!
Come, Lord Jesus, come! —based on Psalm 130:5-7, Matt. 1:21

SONG OF PRAISE

HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING / FRANS MIKAEL FRANZEN

1. Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with th’angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
*Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”*

2. Christ, by highest Heav’n adored;
Christ the everlasting Lord;
late in time, behold Him come,
offspring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail th’incarnate Deity;
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.
*Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”*

3. Hail the heav’nly Prince of Peace;
hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
ris’n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
born that man no more may die;
born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give them second birth.
*Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”*

PRAYER OF ADORATION

Together

God of glory and might, in the life of Abraham, in the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, in the psalms of David, and in the words of the prophets, your promise is spoken and takes flesh at last in the womb of the virgin. Like Joseph, surprise us anew with your gracious presence, and may we make room to receive your promised salvation. Take flesh in our lives and be for all peoples the welcome advent of redemption and grace. We ask this through your son, our Lord Jesus Christ, whose coming is certain, whose Day draws near, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

SONGS OF PRAISE

THE FIRST NOEL /

1. The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay tending their sheep,
on a cold winter’s night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.
2. They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east, beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.

3. And by the light of that same star,
three wise men came from country far,
to seek for a King was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.
4. Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
that hath made heaven and earth of naught,
and with His blood mankind hath bought.

O COME, O COME EMMANUEL / *TRANS. JOHN NEALE*

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to Thee, O Israel.

2. O come, Thou Rod of Jesse,
free Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell Thy people save,
and give them victory over the grave.

3. O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high
and cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

4. O come, Thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Reader We light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ. We prepare for his coming by remembering these words from the prophet Isaiah: "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them." (Is. 11:6)

All *[After lighting 2 Advent candles, all respond:]* "Jesus is the Light of the world!"

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All Merciful God, always with us, always coming:
We confess that we do not know
how to prepare for your Advent.
We have forgotten how to hope in miracles;
we have ignored the promise of your kingdom;
we get distracted by all the busyness and worries of this season.
Forgive us and renew us. *(silence)*
Grant us the simple wonder of the shepherds,
the intelligent courage of the Magi,
and the patient faith of Mary and Joseph,
that we may journey with them to Bethlehem
and find the good news of a child born for us.
Now, in the quiet of our hearts,
we ask you to make us ready for his coming. **Amen.**

SONG OF RESPONSE & ASSURANCE

MY SOUL IN STILLNESS WAITS / *MARTY HAUGEN*

1. For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits,
truly my hope is in you.
O Lord of Light, our only hope of glory,
your radiance shines in all who look to you,
come, light the hearts of all in dark and shadow.

2. For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits,
truly my hope is in you.
O Spring of Joy, rain down upon our spirits,
our thirsty hearts are yearning for your Word,
come, make us whole, be comfort to our hearts.

3. For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits,
truly my hope is in you.
O Root of Life, implant your seed within us,
and in your advent, draw us all to you,
our hope reborn in dying and in rising.

4. For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits,
truly my hope is in you.
O Key of Knowledge, guide us in our pilgrimage,
we ever seek, yet unfulfilled remain,
open to us the pathway of your peace.

5. For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits,
truly my hope is in you.
Come, let us bow before the God who made us,
let ev'ry heart be opened to the Lord,
for we are all the people of his hand.

6. For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits,
truly my hope is in you.
Here we shall meet the Maker of the heavens,
Creator of the mountains and the seas,
Lord of the stars, and present to us now.

WORDS OF COMFORT & PEACE

Leader "Comfort, comfort my people," says your God. Your sins are pardoned; the penalty is paid in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Emmanuel. Believe and be at peace!

—based on Isaiah 40:1-2

All **Thanks be to God!**
Leader May the peace of the Lord be always with you.
All **And also with you.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

* Continue passing the peace to one another during announcements.

** Check our website for the latest updates and ways to invest in the life of our church and city.

THE OFFERING & OFFERTORY

If you're accustomed to giving during worship on Sunday mornings, please consider giving online and setting up a recurring or one-time gift through the Subsplash platform. (Subsplash has one of the lowest transaction fees and reduces our fees the more people give online.) To give online, visit <https://gracepasadena.org/give>. Questions? Email info@gracepasadena.org.

THE 1ST LESSON – MATTHEW 1:18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³ "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus. [ESV]

THE SERMON – BRANNIN PITRE

Sermon Series: Preparing the Way
Sermon Title: "Receiving an Unexpected Grace"

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

- Leader With the Good News of Jesus Christ resounding in our hearts, minds, and bodies, let us approach God boldly with our needs and the needs of our world:
O Emmanuel, come to your world with your liberating presence. Redeem us and break the chains of sin and darkness, so that our hearts, minds and bodies can be free to love as you love us. Make room in our hearts to receive you. For this, O Lord, we pray:
All Come with your presence, O Lord.
- Leader O Wisdom, come to your people with your life giving words. Soften our ears and hearts to receive your truth, and may all of our words, thoughts and actions be ordered by your truth alone. Fill the shepherds of your Church and the leaders of the nations with fear of you that they may serve with wisely, humbly and self-sacrificially. Make room in our hearts to receive you. For this, O Lord, we pray:
All Come with your wisdom, O Lord.
- Leader O Morning Light, come to us with your splendor and glory. Reveal your beauty in our lives and in your creation. Illumine our eyes to see your renewing work, especially in those times we feel desperate and hopeless. May Grace Pasadena shine forth your light through our life together; heal the divisions of your body and fill us with your love so that the world may know you are Lord. Make room in our hearts to receive you. For this, O Lord, we pray:
All Come with your light, O Lord.
- Leader O Joy, come to the suffering with your comfort. We now name the needs our city and world and the names of friends and family who need you. [Respond in silence, write down petitions, or share requests with others around you.] Help us to remember your past faithfulness so that we may have faith-filled patience and joy in our waiting. Make room in our hearts to receive you. For this, O Lord, we pray:
All Come with your joy, O Lord. In your name we pray and wait. Amen.

A COMMUNION PRAYER FOR ADVENT

- All** Satisfy us and strengthen us, O God, with your steadfast love. Fill us with the power of your Spirit to bring good news to the poor and lift blind eyes to sight, to loose the chains that bind and claim your blessing for all people. Keep us faithful in your service until Christ comes in final victory and we shall feast with all your saints in the joy of your eternal realm. Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, now and forever. **Amen.**

CLOSING SONGS

THERE WAS A STAR / *THE STAPLE SINGERS*

There was a star (There was a star)
On Christmas night (On Christmas night)
That gave the world (That gave the world)
A wondrous light (A wondrous light)
To show that peace and love
come from above (come from above)

There was a star (There was a star)
To show the way (To show the way)
Straight to the place (Straight to the place)
Where Jesus lay (Where Jesus lay)
To show Christmas night there was a star (A star)

Jesus lamb we see Thee shining bright
Put out thy hand and lead us in the light
That Christmas joy (That Christmas joy)
Unto us all (Unto us all)
And help my heart (And help my heart)
And hearts rejoice (And hearts rejoice)
To show Christmas night there was a star (A star)

COMFORT, COMFORT MY PEOPLE / *REINDEER TRIBE*

Comfort, comfort
Comfort my people
Comfort, comfort
Comfort my people
The voice of him calling in the desert
Prepare the way for the Lord

BENEDICTION & SENDING

Leader Stay alert! Jesus is near! As you wait, may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. —based on 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

All **Come, Lord Jesus, come! Amen!**

ADVENT

Advent is here! As Philip Reinders explains, “Advent (from the Latin *adventus*, meaning ‘coming’ or ‘arrival’) is the four-week season of preparation for the coming of Jesus at Christmas. A good celebration requires proper preparation for us to fully enjoy it.” There are presents to purchase, cookies to bake and people to see. These are all good things! But for many of us, these become our primary preparations for Christmas. For Christians, the focal point of our preparations is remembrance: Advent calls us to remember Christ’s first coming and his coming again as he promised. This makes Advent a wonderful time to dive more deeply into spiritual disciplines or to take them up anew. To enter into Advent more fully, use the Grace Pasadena Prayer Guide. Download a copy at our website or request a hard copy. Let’s press into Advent and prepare room in our hearts for the King of kings!

GIVING & BUDGET

	<u>JAN-NOV</u>	<u>NOV 2020</u>	<u>DEC¹</u>
OFFERINGS & CONTRIBUTIONS _____	\$401,397	\$40,595	\$1,100
BUDGETED GIVING _____	\$396,00	\$36,000	\$72,000
DIFFERENCE _____	+5,397	+4,595	-70,900

¹as of 12/04/2020; figures exclude directed gifts from outside donors