



3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT | DECEMBER 13, 2020

REFLECTIONS

“You can always tell when God is about to let some of the glory of heaven break into your life because things get unsettling and ponderous. But that is just how God’s mystery begins.”

CRAIG BARNES | “How Can This Be?”

“The stark actuality of Christ’s humanity, his flesh and blood and bone, guarantees to us that we have God among us... If Christ is not man, then God has not reached us, but has stopped short of our humanity—then God does not love us to the uttermost, for his love has stopped short of coming all the way to where we are, and becoming one of us in order to save us. But Christ’s humanity means that God’s love is now flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, really one of us and with us.”

T.F. TORRANCE | THE INCARNATION

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader Greetings, O chosen ones of God, the Lord is with you!
All What does this mean? How can this be?
Leader Fear not! You are his and you have found favor with him.
**All Our souls magnify the Lord; our spirits rejoice in God our Savior!
The Almighty has lifted us up and done great things for us!
Let us worship God, for God is our Maker and our Redeemer;
from generation to generation God gives mercy.**

—based on Luke 1:28-30; 46-50

SONG OF PRAISE

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL / JOHN WADE

1. O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold Him,
born the King of angels;
REFRAIN
*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

2. Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
glory to God, glory in the highest;
3. Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing;

PRAYER OF ADORATION

All God of all glory and splendor, we praise you for your condescension! In Jesus Christ, you take on our frail humanity and come to dwell with us, the small and humble; you take on our frail humanity to redeem us and your whole creation so that we may be lifted up, filled with your goodness, and showered with your mercy. By your Holy Spirit, make us aware of the poverty of our lives, that we may be open to you and welcome you. Make us ready, like Mary, to accept your grace and your salvation. Come to us and give yourself to us. Come, Lord Jesus, come! **Amen.**

SONGS OF PRAISE

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH / TRADITIONAL FRENCH CAROL

1. Angels we have heard on high
sweetly singing o’er the plains,
and the mountains in reply
echoing their joyous strains.
REFRAIN
*Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!*

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heavenly song?

3. Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

4. See Him in a manger laid,
whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
while our hearts in love we raise.

ANGELS FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY / JAMES MONTGOMERY

1. Angels from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story
now proclaim Messiah's birth:

REFRAIN

*Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.*

2. Shepherds, in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
yonder shines the infant light.

3. Sages, leave your contemplations,
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great Desire of nations;
ye have seen his natal star.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Reader

We light these candles as a sign of the coming light of Jesus Christ. We prepare for his coming by remembering these words from the prophet Isaiah: "The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God." (Isaiah 35:1-2)

[Light 3 Advent candles.]

Jesus is the light of the world and in him there is no darkness

All

Let us walk in the light of the Lord!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All

God of salvation, in Christ you have done great things;
our hearts are filled with joy.
By your power you lifted us out of the wasteland of sin
and brought us with joy and laughter into your kingdom.
Salvation is your gift to us.
But we confess that often we try to replace
your gift with our own efforts.
We try to complete what is already perfect;
we try to add to what is already full;
we try to earn what we already have.
Forgive us for our foolishness.
Surprise us with your grace
and disrupt our lives once again.
Overcome us with your Holy Spirit, fill us with your mercy,
and enable us to live lives of humble gratitude.
In the name of Jesus, we pray. **Amen.**

SONG OF RESPONSE & ASSURANCE

COME, O REDEEMER, COME / FERNANDO ORTEGA

1. Father, enthroned on high—"Holy, holy!"
Ancient eternal Light—hear our prayer.

REFRAIN

*Come, O Redeemer, come; grant us mercy.
Come, O Redeemer, come; grant us peace.*

2. Lord, save us from the dark of our striving,
faithless, troubled hearts weighed down.
3. Look now upon our need; Lord, be with us.
Heal us and make us free from our sin.

WORDS OF COMFORT & PEACE

Leader

Fear not! You have found favor with God! Be filled with the grace, mercy and new life of Jesus Christ, God with Us and the Savior of the World. Believe and be at peace! —based on Luke 1:30

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 MORNING LESSON — LUKE 1:26-38

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He 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 father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ And the angel answered 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 called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. [ESV]

THE SERMON — MARC CHOI

Sermon Series: Preparing the Way
Sermon Title: "The Gift of Disruption"

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE - AN ADVENT LAMENT

Leader Lord God, we long for the coming of your kingdom in Jesus Christ. We praise you for the in-breaking of your kingdom, yet we lament before you the signs that your kingdom has not come in fullness. We lament signs of brokenness in our community and the community of nations. We lament that Christians are persecuted because they profess the name of Jesus.

All **O come, O King of nations, bind us to you and to one another. Bid all our sad divisions cease, and be yourself our King of peace.**

Leader We lament the broken friendships and marriages that bring such pain to many we know. We lament that many of our cherished friends, neighbors and family members have chosen to ignore the gospel of Christ or have walked away from faith in you.

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

Leader We lament the destruction of your creation. We lament murder in all its forms. We lament racism that plagues our community. We lament the physical and emotional abuse of children, women and men. We lament sickness, suffering and death. We lament the many lives disrupted and lost because of the pandemic.

All **O come, O Bright and Morning Star, and bring us comfort from afar! Dispel the shadows of the night and turn our darkness into light.**

Leader With resolute hope, despite our sadness, we remember the promises of God and look to his coming again in Jesus Christ. As people filled with the very Spirit of God, we find comfort in God's presence with us, affirm the signs of his kingdom, and ask him to hasten that day when Jesus appears to renew all things and wipe away every last tear.

All **Come, Lord Jesus, come! 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

OH BEAUTIFUL STAR OF BETHLEHEM / R. FISHER BOYCE

1. Oh Beautiful Star of Bethlehem
Shining afar through shadows dim
Giving the light for those who long have gone
Guiding the wise men on their way
Unto the place where Jesus lay
Oh Beautiful Star of Bethlehem shine on.

CHORUS

*Oh Beautiful Star of Bethlehem
Shine upon us until the glory dawns.
Give us a light to guide the way
Unto the land of perfect day
Oh Beautiful Star of Bethlehem, shine on*

2. Oh Beautiful Star the hope of light
Guiding the pilgrims through the night
Over the mountains till the break of dawn
Into the light of perfect day
It will give out a lovely ray
Oh Beautiful Star of Bethlehem shine on

3. Oh Beautiful Star the hope of rest
For the redeemed the good and blessed
Yonder in glory when the crown is won
Jesus is now the star divine
Brighter and brighter he will shine
Oh Beautiful Star of Bethlehem shine on

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST / REINDEER TRIBE

Glory to God in the Highest
And peace on earth
And peace on earth
Glory God in the highest
And peace on earth
And peace on earth
Goodwill to men
Oh, daughter of Zion rejoice!
Shout with joy and sing:
"Our Savior is here!"

BENEDICTION & SENDING

Leader God the Father, who loved the world so much that he sent his only Son, give you grace to prepare for eternal life. God the Son, who comes to us as Redeemer and Judge, reveal to you the path from darkness to light. God the Holy Spirit, by whose working the virgin Mary conceived the Christ, help you bear the fruits of holy love.

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	\$10,072
BUDGETED GIVING _____	\$396,00	\$36,000	\$72,000
DIFFERENCE _____	+5,397	+4,595	-61,928

¹as of 12/11/2020; figures exclude directed gifts from outside donors