



THE MOTHERS OF CHRIST
2016 ADVENT PRAYER BOOK



REDEEMER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



INTRODUCTION

Common worship and prayer has always been a part of the life of the people of God. The most basic form of this, for us, is on Sunday morning, when believers gather together to sing common songs, pray common prayers, eat the same Lord's Supper, hear the same word preached, and celebrate the same holy seasons and days, with Advent being the first of the Church calendar year. Yet, for most strands of Christendom, other times of weekly and daily worship and prayer have been seen as vital and necessary for living a life of discipleship.

This prayer guide is an entrance into that experience of common prayer and worship. Here you will find a daily "liturgy" for prayer that includes Psalms, Old and New Testament readings, confessions, prayers, traditional refrains, hymns, and songs. It is a holy and unifying experience to know that you, your local congregation, and the Church of Jesus around the world are worshipping together in a common way throughout this season of Advent, whether together or apart. This year, the guide uses scripture selections from the Daily Office Lectionary (the lectionary of the Church of England). Though most of the assigned scripture is included, there is not enough space to fit every reading on every day, so you are encouraged to "fill out" the readings with those found here: <http://www.bcponline.org/DOLectionary/Advent.htm>,

THE HOW-TO'S

So how do you use this thing anyway? Each week will start with a brief introduction of our weekly character, a list of suggested songs that can be incorporated into the liturgy each day, and a weekly prayer or "collect" assigned to the week. Each day in the liturgy, there is a time for singing. You are encouraged to sing these songs together acapella, with an instrumentalist, or along with the recordings provided via physical discs and streaming playlists online. Please see the *Advent Supplement Book* for lyrics.

After this, you will find the daily prayer liturgies. You will notice that there is no liturgy for Sunday morning, only for Sunday evening. This has the practical purpose of saving space in the booklet, yes, but it also reminds us to gather with the our local congregation for worship on the Lord's Day. If your church meets on Sunday evening, you may of course use the evening prayer for your morning prayer time.

Each day begins with a call to prayer from the Psalms and ends with a benediction. In between those two things, you will find a pause for quiet, an Old Testament reading, a Gospel or New Testament reading, a "dwelling" time to pause and meditate on the scriptures, prayer prompts, common weekly prayers, songs, and various other prayers and refrains. If doing this liturgy individually, you are encouraged to go straight through it, taking your time to soak it in. If doing this as a family or a group, it may be best to alternate speaking each element out loud: one person does the psalm, the next person says the reading, the next person says a refrain, etc. When we practice daily prayer as part of our Pastoral Rule of life, the one who is reading the benediction raises his or her hands and the rest of us put our hands out in a receiving posture (as is our customs on Sunday morning).

Feel free to find what practices work best for you and yours. Find times in you, your friends', or your family's day where you can give yourselves to this time together. You are encouraged to lean on the Body of Christ for this life of common prayer, don't go at it alone! We at Redeemer offer public daily prayer every weekday at 11:30AM.

May all of us experience a vibrant communion with the Triune God during this season of Advent, where we enter into anxious longings, sorrowful pain, and unspeakable joy together, waiting for the visitation of our Lord Jesus.

MUSIC & FAMILY PRACTICES

- For the music and family devotional/activity portions of this year's Advent, please use the additional **2016 Advent Supplement Book**, which can be picked up in person at Redeemer or accessed online at www.redeemerws.org.
- The album *Waiting Songs* by Rain for Roots, which this prayer book uses extensively, can be listened to and purchased at <https://rainforroots.bandcamp.com/>.
- There is also a streaming Spotify playlist that is intended to go along with this guide here: <https://open.spotify.com/user/jlittlepage/playlist/3vXOL4W8n9F8qmTZeSZpGx>

ABOUT ADVENT

“Advent” means a “coming” or “visitation.” That is exactly what we, as followers of Christ, are waiting for. This waiting frames our experience as Christians in the holy season of Advent. This practice of waiting for things of ultimate concern helps us prioritize life in an age obsessed with the temporality of the now and the new. This is truer in the month of December than in any other month, for our culture’s conception of these Holidays (Holy-days) is largely focused around what one will buy or be given. The Christian conception of this season begins with the realization that what, or who, we really want and need cannot be bought and is not “just a click away,” but must be waited for with patience, submitting to God’s timing, embracing our limits and finitude.

During this season, we rehearse the dramatic plot of scripture, going back in time to revisit the story of God’s creation of the world, its devastating Fall into sin and misery, and His plan to “visit and redeem” his people in the Messiah. In doing so, we find our place within God’s story as a people living in the already and the not yet. We know the Messiah, we know where the Story is going, and so we acutely know how unfinished it really is. So we look and love into a world with a holy impatience, wanting our hearts to mirror the King’s and longing for the earth to mirror His Kingdom.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

- The layout and format of the daily liturgies are inspired by three chief sources: Seeking God’s Face (Baker/CICW/Faith Alive, ©2013) by Phillip Reinders; *The Divine Hours* (Galilee, ©2003) by Phyllis Tickle, and the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England (citations noted with BCP).
- All scripture readings are from the English Standard Version (©2001, Crossway).

• Artwork

- Front Cover: *The Virgin Mary Consoles Eve*, crayon and pencil by Sr. Grace Remington, OCSO ©2005, Sisters of the Mississippi Abbey
- Back Cover: *The Fall*, altered book page by Corrie Beck.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Joel Littlepage

Assistant Pastor of Worship
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ADVENT – WEEK 1

November 27th - December 3rd

EVE

[GENESIS 3:8-24]

*My mother, my daughter, Life-giving Eve,
Do not be ashamed, do not grieve,
The former things have passed away,
Our God has brought us to a New Day.
See, I am with Child,
Through whom all will be reconciled.
O Eve My sister, my friend,
We will rejoice together
Forever
Life without end.*

*-The Virgin Mary Consoles Eve
Text by the Sisters of the Mississippi Abbey ©2004*

Who can imagine the complexity of what it was like to be Eve? She was the first woman, the first wife, the first mother. The woman who, along with Adam, walked in perfect, unblemished communion with God in the Garden in the cool of the day. The only woman to know life before it became twisted, deadly, and sad.

She was the first woman to meet the cunning trickery of the Devil himself, who deceived her by making her doubt the lovingkindness of God and promised her a life where she could take comfort in her own knowledge of *everything*: both good and evil. Adam, who was with her, failed to protect Eve and participated in the great treachery. And together they *fell* into a world of sin.

How quickly the “firsts” of Eve stung from the poisonous venom from the bitter fruit. She was the first woman to know the “pains of childbirth.” She was the first woman to have her family ripped apart by violence when her firstborn, Cain, out of jealousy and bitterness murdered her second-born, Abel. She, a mother, was the first to have to bury a child.

Yet Eve was the first woman to receive the love of God in the midst of sin. Mercy and grace. In her shame, she was clothed. In her despair, she was given the promise of one who would come to crush that Great Snake that had created this horror in the first place.

Years later, another mother would lose her innocent son. She would have to bury him too. But unlike the blood of Abel, whose blood “cried out from the ground” a word of sin, death, and violence, this Son’s blood would speak a better word: forgiveness, restoration, shalom, life everlasting, and the reversal of the curse (Heb. 12:24).

WEEKLY SONG SUGGESTIONS

- *Come Light Out Hearts*
- *Mary Consoles Eve*
- *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

THE PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (BCP)

ADVENT – DAY 1

Sunday, November 27th, 2016

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

Praise the LORD! Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD! Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and forevermore! From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised! The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens! Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people. He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. Praise the LORD!

(Psalm 113)

-QUIET-

NEW TESTAMENT READING

This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

(2 Peter 3:1-10)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this Sabbath day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For the poor, hungry, and homeless
- For thankfulness of the beauty of creation and human life
- For friends and family members who do not yet profess faith in Jesus

THE BENEDICTION

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

(Psalm 27:14)

ADVENT – DAY 2

Monday, November 28th, 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

(Psalm 1)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations— I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause. "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

(Isaiah 1:10-20)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For the ceasing of evil, the presence of justice, and the correction of oppression
- For a delight in the law of the Lord
- For rest and refreshment in the presence of the Triune God

THE PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (SGF)

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

(Psalm 2:1-12)

-QUIET-

CONFESSION & ASSURANCE

C: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

A: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
(Romans 5:8)

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

NEW TESTAMENT READING

For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

(1 Thessalonians 1:4-10)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

THE BENEDICTION

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!
(Psalm 27:14)

ADVENT – DAY 3

Tuesday, November 29th, 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER: FOR THE FLUTES. A PSALM OF DAVID. Give ear to my words, O LORD; consider my groaning. Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to you do I pray. O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch. For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you. The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers. You destroy those who speak lies; the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man. But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house. I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you. Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies; make your way straight before me.

(Psalm 5:1-8)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

How the faithful city has become a whore, she who was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers. Your silver has become dross, your best wine mixed with water. Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They do not bring justice to the fatherless, and the widow's cause does not come to them. Therefore the Lord declares, the LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel: "Ah, I will get relief from my enemies and avenge myself on my foes. I will turn my hand against you and will smelt away your dross as with lye and remove all your alloy. And I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city." Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness. But rebels and sinners shall be broken together, and those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed. For they shall be ashamed of the oaks that you desired; and you shall blush for the gardens that you have chosen. For you shall be like an oak whose leaf withers, and like a garden without water. And the strong shall become tinder, and his work a spark, and both of them shall burn together, with none to quench them.

(Isaiah 1:21-31)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For the absence of violence and presence of peace
- For those who work in medicine
- For those who are in groaning this morning

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name! Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

“Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up your hand; forget not the afflicted. Why does the wicked renounce God and say in his heart, “You will not call to account”? But you do see, for you note mischief and vexation, that you may take it into your hands; to you the helpless commits himself; you have been the helper of the fatherless. Break the arm of the wicked and evildoer; call his wickedness to account till you find none.

The LORD is king forever and ever; the nations perish from his land. O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.”

(Psalm 10:12-18)

-QUIET-

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

GOSPEL READING

“And he began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.’ And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” When they heard this, they said, “Surely not!” But he looked directly at them and said, “What then is this that is written: “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone”? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

(Luke 20:9-18)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

LOCAL & GLOBAL PRAYER

- Pray for the known needs of your local and global community: singles, families, widows, churches, ministries, missionaries, etc.

THE BENEDICTION

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

(Psalm 27:14)

ADVENT – DAY 4

Wednesday, November 30th, 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD! Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways! You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous rules. I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me! How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes!
(Psalm 119:1-12)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD. For you have rejected your people, the house of Jacob, because they are full of things from the east and of fortune-tellers like the Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of foreigners. Their land is filled with silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures; their land is filled with horses, and there is no end to their chariots. Their land is filled with idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made. So man is humbled, and each one is brought low— do not forgive them! Enter into the rock and hide in the dust from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty.
(Isaiah 2:1-10)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For those who suffer with physical illness, and those who care for them
- For a deep awareness of the love of God
- For those suffering from war

THE PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (SGF)

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER. A PSALM OF DAVID. How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him," lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken. But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me.

(Psalm 13)

-QUIET-

CONFESSION & ASSURANCE

C: Lord Jesus, you taught us that in Your kingdom: Blessed are the poor in spirit. **But we have been rich in pride.** Blessed are those who mourn. **But we have not known much sorrow for our sin.** Blessed are the meek. **But we are rebellious by nature.** Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. **But we have great desire for evil and little longing for Your true goodness.** Blessed are the merciful. **But we are harsh and impatient.** Blessed are the pure in heart. **But we have impure hearts.** Blessed are the peacemakers. **But we have not sought reconciliation.** Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness. **But our lives do not challenge the world.**

(based on the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:3-11)

A: For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

(Mark 10:45)

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

NEW TESTAMENT READING

And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last! But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us. For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy.

(1 Thessalonians 2:13-20)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

THE BENEDICTION

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

(Psalm 27:14)

ADVENT – DAY 5

Thursday, December 1st, 2016

✦ MORNING PRAYER ✦

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER. A PSALM OF DAVID, THE SERVANT OF THE LORD, WHO ADDRESSED THE WORDS OF THIS SONG TO THE LORD ON THE DAY WHEN THE LORD DELIVERED HIM FROM THE HAND OF ALL HIS ENEMIES, AND FROM THE HAND OF SAUL. HE SAID: I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies. The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me; the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears. Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him...

(Psalm 18:1-9)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

For the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low; against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and against all the oaks of Bashan; against all the lofty mountains, and against all the uplifted hills; against every high tower, and against every fortified wall; against all the ships of Tarshish, and against all the beautiful craft. And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. And the idols shall utterly pass away. And people shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth. In that day mankind will cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats, to enter the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth. Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?

(Isaiah 2:12-22)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For courage and trust in the God who is our rock and fortress
- For those who suffer with mental illness, and those who care for them
- For musicians and artists

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name! Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

He rode on a cherub and flew; he came swiftly on the wings of the wind. He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him, thick clouds dark with water. Out of the brightness before him hailstones and coals of fire broke through his clouds. The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice, hailstones and coals of fire. And he sent out his arrows and scattered them; he flashed forth lightnings and routed them. Then the channels of the sea were seen, and the foundations of the world were laid bare at your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils. He sent from on high, he took me; he drew me out of many waters. He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the LORD was my support. He brought me out into a broad place; he rescued me, because he delighted in me. The LORD dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he rewarded me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

(Psalm 18:10-21)

-QUIET-

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain. But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you— for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith? Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, and 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.

(1 Thessalonians 3:1-13)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

LOCAL & GLOBAL PRAYER

- Pray for the known needs of your local and global community: singles, families, widows, churches, ministries, missionaries, etc.

THE BENEDICTION

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

(Psalm 27:14)

ADVENT – DAY 6

Friday, December 2nd, 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

A MIKTAM OF DAVID. Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.” As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips. The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

(Psalm 16)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

For Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen, because their speech and their deeds are against the LORD, defying his glorious presence. For the look on their faces bears witness against them; they proclaim their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them! For they have brought evil on themselves. Tell the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds. Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for what his hands have dealt out shall be done to him. My people—infants are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, your guides mislead you and they have swallowed up the course of your paths. The LORD has taken his place to contend; he stands to judge peoples. The LORD will enter into judgment with the elders and princes of his people: “It is you who have devoured the vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor?” declares the Lord GOD of hosts.

(Isaiah 3:8-15)

THE MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For those who mourn a death, and those who minister to them
- For the Spirit to form us more and more after the image of Christ
- For retail workers and their families

THE PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (SGF)

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER: ACCORDING TO THE DOE OF THE DAWN. A PSALM OF DAVID. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame. But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; "He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!" Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God. Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help.

(Psalm 22:1-11)

-QUIET-

CONFESSION & ASSURANCE

C: Often, O holy and righteous God, we dare your justice, mock your mercy, jeer your patience, slight your power, and show contempt for your love. We even say "I'm sorry" insincerely and confess our sin flippantly. We plead your help to own up carefully to how we have wronged you, to admit honestly how we have grieved you, to plead penitently for your mercy and pardon. We beg your forgiveness through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. *(based on a prayer by John Bunyan)*

A: As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
(Psalm 103:12)

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

GOSPEL READING

But he said to them, "How can they say that the Christ is David's son? For David himself says in the Book of Psalms, "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." David thus calls him Lord, so how is he his son?" And in the hearing of all the people he said to his disciples, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation." Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

(Luke 20:41-21:4)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

THE BENEDICTION

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!
(Psalm 27:14)

ADVENT – DAY 7

Saturday, December 3rd, 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER. A PSALM OF DAVID. May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob protect you! May he send you help from the sanctuary and give you support from Zion! May he remember all your offerings and regard with favor your burnt sacrifices! (*Se/ah*) May he grant you your heart's desire and fulfill all your plans! May we shout for joy over your salvation, and in the name of our God set up our banners! May the LORD fulfill all your petitions! Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; he will answer him from his holy heaven with the saving might of his right hand. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright. O LORD, save the king! May he answer us when we call.
(Psalm 20)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

In that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel. And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning. Then the LORD will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy. There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain.
(Isaiah 4:2-6)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For a deeper understanding, love of, and obedience to the gospel.
- For those who are imprisoned, and those who minister to them
- For the local church: unity in the congregation

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name! Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies! Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours. The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth. He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head.

(Psalm 110)

-QUIET-

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

NEW TESTAMENT READING

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

LOCAL & GLOBAL PRAYER

- Pray for the known needs of your local and global community: singles, families, widows, churches, ministries, missionaries, etc.

THE BENEDICTION

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

(Psalm 27:14)

ADVENT - WEEK 2

December 4th - 10th

TAMAR

[GENESIS 38:1-26]

Breakthrough. The story of Tamar is, admittedly, a bit perplexing and eye-widening to the modern reader. It is uncomfortably gritty. One might read this story and think, "How could this fit with Advent? With the soft, tender newborn Jesus and the glowing star leading to Bethlehem? With carols and angels and shepherds with their lambs? With the humble virgin nestled with her baby boy?" Indeed, as only the Scriptures could weave, the connection is a peculiar and profound one. At the end of this Genesis 38 story, Tamar has twins, naming one of them "Perez," which means "breakthrough." This simple name whispers of the incredible Advent story.

Like Mary, Tamar is a young, probably teenage girl, and one of lowly estate. We learn that through a series of events, she is left even more destitute and in great need of Judah to fulfill his obligation as a father-in-law. At this time, women were protected and cared for by the provision of husbands and fathers. Judah is now obligated to give her his third son, but because he is not of age he tells her to wait. He sends Tamar away, but over time it becomes clear that he really has no intention of fulfilling his word. The Bible makes it plain that this is indeed an oppressive act on Judah's part.

This is the raw and unvarnished part of the story. Tamar, realizing Judah's oppression toward her and pursuing justice for herself, takes matters into her own hands. It is worth noting here that although the Bible does not condone her methodology, it praises her pursuit of justice. She has been wronged and *should* fight for righteousness to be done. Judah is exposed in his hypocrisy and double standards, first calling for Tamar to be burned (an abnormally brutal and malicious punishment, even for ancient times) for a sin that he himself is also guilty of, but then being pierced to the heart when he is confronted with his complicity. Both Tamar and Judah experience "breakthrough": Tamar, the breakthrough of justice served and her oppression relieved; Judah, the breakthrough of repentance.

Truly, God uses "crooked sticks to draw straight lines." Perez, "breakthrough," is born and the crescendo to God's own incarnational breakthrough grows. As we celebrate Advent, we remember that God Himself, in the flesh, broke through in a relentless pursuit of justice, as Tamar did. We remember that Jesus, the Son of God, broke through in a piercing call to recognize our sin - just as Judah recognized his staff, cord, and signet - and repent as Judah did. This season, may we each be met again by the warmth of the Spirit, lighting our hearts to seek justice while turning to the One who breaks through it all.

WEEKLY SONG SUGGESTIONS

- *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*
- *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*
- *Every Valley (It's Hard To Wait)*

THE PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness while it was day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (BCP)

ADVENT – DAY 8

Sunday, December 4th, 2016

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

“Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the godly! Let Israel be glad in his Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King! Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with tambourine and lyre! For the LORD takes pleasure in his people; he adorns the humble with salvation. Let the godly exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their throats and two-edged swords in their hands, to execute vengeance on the nations and punishments on the peoples, to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute on them the judgment written! This is honor for all his godly ones. Praise the LORD!”

(Psalm 149)

-QUIET-

NEW TESTAMENT READING

“Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”

(2 Peter 3:11-18)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this Sabbath day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For joy in the Lord
- For local and national elected officials
- For purity, holiness, and peace

THE BENEDICTION

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

(Matthew 5:4)

ADVENT – DAY 9

Monday, December 5th, 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

“To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long. Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O LORD! Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.”

(Psalm 25:1-10)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

“Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land. The LORD of hosts has sworn in my hearing: “Surely many houses shall be desolate, large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant. For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah.” Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may run after strong drink, who tarry late into the evening as wine inflames them! They have lyre and harp, tambourine and flute and wine at their feasts, but they do not regard the deeds of the LORD, or see the work of his hands. Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of falsehood, who draw sin as with cart ropes, who say: “Let him be quick, let him speed his work that we may see it; let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near, and let it come, that we may know it!” Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight! Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink, who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right!”

(Isaiah 5:8-12, 18-23)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For humility and dependency on God
- For those who suffer with addiction, and those who support them
- For those who work in education

THE PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness while it was day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (BCP)

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my guilt, for it is great. Who is the man who fears the LORD? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose. His soul shall abide in well-being, and his offspring shall inherit the land. The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant. My eyes are ever toward the LORD, for he will pluck my feet out of the net. Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins. Consider how many are my foes, and with what violent hatred they hate me. Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me! Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you. May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you. Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

(Psalm 25:11-22)

-QUIET-

CONFESSION & ASSURANCE

C: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

A: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

(Romans 5:8)

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

(1 Thessalonians 5:1-11)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

THE BENEDICTION

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

(Matthew 5:4)

ADVENT – DAY 10

Tuesday, December 6th, 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

OF DAVID. To you, O LORD, I call; my rock, be not deaf to me, lest, if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit. Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help, when I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary. Do not drag me off with the wicked, with the workers of evil, who speak peace with their neighbors while evil is in their hearts. Give to them according to their work and according to the evil of their deeds; give to them according to the work of their hands; render them their due reward. Because they do not regard the works of the LORD or the work of his hands, he will tear them down and build them up no more. Blessed be the LORD! For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy. The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him. The LORD is the strength of his people; he is the saving refuge of his anointed. Oh, save your people and bless your heritage! Be their shepherd and carry them forever.

(Psalm 28)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Therefore my people go into exile for lack of knowledge; their honored men go hungry, and their multitude is parched with thirst. Therefore Sheol has enlarged its appetite and opened its mouth beyond measure, and the nobility of Jerusalem and her multitude will go down, her revelers and he who exults in her. Man is humbled, and each one is brought low, and the eyes of the haughty are brought low. But the LORD of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness. Then shall the lambs graze as in their pasture, and nomads shall eat among the ruins of the rich. Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble, and as dry grass sinks down in the flame, so their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom go up like dust; for they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against his people, and he stretched out his hand against them and struck them, and the mountains quaked; and their corpses were as refuse in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.

(Isaiah 5:13-17, 24-25)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For those who are orphaned, and those who care for them
- For those who work in the justice system
- For deep communion with God

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name! Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER. OF DAVID, THE SERVANT OF THE LORD. Transgression speaks to the wicked deep in his heart; there is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flatters himself in his own eyes that his iniquity cannot be found out and hated. The words of his mouth are trouble and deceit; he has ceased to act wisely and do good. He plots trouble while on his bed; he sets himself in a way that is not good; he does not reject evil. Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast you save, O LORD. How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light. Oh, continue your steadfast love to those who know you, and your righteousness to the upright of heart! Let not the foot of arrogance come upon me, nor the hand of the wicked drive me away. There the evildoers lie fallen; they are thrust down, unable to rise.

(Psalm 36:0-12)

-QUIET-

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

GOSPEL READING

And he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." And every day he was teaching in the temple, but at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet. And early in the morning all the people came to him in the temple to hear him.

(Luke 21:29-38)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

LOCAL & GLOBAL PRAYER

- Pray for the known needs of your local and global community: singles, families, widows, churches, ministries, missionaries, etc.

THE BENEDICTION

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

(Matthew 5:4)

ADVENT – DAY 11

Wednesday, December 7th, 2016

✦ MORNING PRAYER ✦

THE PSALM

A PSALM OF DAVID, FOR THE MEMORIAL OFFERING. O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath! For your arrows have sunk into me, and your hand has come down on me. There is no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink and fester because of my foolishness, I am utterly bowed down and prostrate; all the day I go about mourning. For my sides are filled with burning, and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and crushed; I groan because of the tumult of my heart. O Lord, all my longing is before you; my sighing is not hidden from you.

(Psalm 38:1–9)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for." And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." And he said, "Go, and say to this people: "'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed." Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" And he said: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste, and the LORD removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.

(Isaiah 6:1–12)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For a keen awareness of the holiness of God.
- For those who are persecuted for their faith
- For family members and friends who do not have faith

THE PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness while it was day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (BCP)

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

My heart throbs; my strength fails me, and the light of my eyes—it also has gone from me. My friends and companions stand aloof from my plague, and my nearest kin stand far off. Those who seek my life lay their snares; those who seek my hurt speak of ruin and meditate treachery all day long. But I am like a deaf man; I do not hear, like a mute man who does not open his mouth. I have become like a man who does not hear, and in whose mouth are no rebukes. But for you, O LORD, do I wait; it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer. For I said, “Only let them not rejoice over me, who boast against me when my foot slips!” For I am ready to fall, and my pain is ever before me. I confess my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin. But my foes are vigorous, they are mighty, and many are those who hate me wrongfully. Those who render me evil for good accuse me because I follow after good. Do not forsake me, O LORD! O my God, be not far from me! Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation!

(Psalm 38:10–22)

-QUIET-

CONFESSION & ASSURANCE

C: Lord Jesus, you taught us that in Your kingdom: Blessed are the poor in spirit. **But we have been rich in pride.** Blessed are those who mourn. **But we have not known much sorrow for our sin.** Blessed are the meek. **But we are rebellious by nature.** Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. **But we have great desire for evil and little longing for Your true goodness.** Blessed are the merciful. **But we are harsh and impatient.** Blessed are the pure in heart. **But we have impure hearts.** Blessed are the peacemakers. **But we have not sought reconciliation.** Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness. **But our lives do not challenge the world.**

(based on the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:3-11)

A: For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
(Mark 10:45)

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

(2 Thessalonians 1:4–8)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

THE BENEDICTION

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

(Matthew 5:4)

ADVENT – DAY 12

Thursday, December 8th, 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

OF DAVID. Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday. Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.

(Psalm 37:1-9)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

In the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah the king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not yet mount an attack against it. When the house of David was told, "Syria is in league with Ephraim," the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind. And the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-jashub your son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer's Field. And say to him, 'Be careful, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands, at the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria and the son of Remaliah. Because Syria, with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, has devised evil against you, saying, "Let us go up against Judah and terrify it, and let us conquer it for ourselves, and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it," thus says the Lord GOD: "It shall not stand, and it shall not come to pass. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin. And within sixty-five years Ephraim will be shattered from being a people. And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah. If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all."

(Isaiah 7:1-9)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For patience and the grace to "wait on the Lord"
- For those who struggle in their work
- For those who are trafficked and exploited

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name! Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread. He is ever lending generously, and his children become a blessing. Turn away from evil and do good; so shall you dwell forever. For the LORD loves justice; he will not forsake his saints. They are preserved forever, but the children of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell upon it forever. The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip. The wicked watches for the righteous and seeks to put him to death. The LORD will not abandon him to his power or let him be condemned when he is brought to trial. Wait for the LORD and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land; you will look on when the wicked are cut off. I have seen a wicked, ruthless man, spreading himself like a green laurel tree. But he passed away, and behold, he was no more; though I sought him, he could not be found. Mark the blameless and behold the upright, for there is a future for the man of peace.

(Psalm 37:25-37)

-QUIET-

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

GOSPEL READING

Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people. Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd. Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it." They said to him, "Where will you have us prepare it?" He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters and tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there." And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

(Luke 22:1-13)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

LOCAL & GLOBAL PRAYER

- Pray for the known needs of your local and global community: singles, families, widows, churches, ministries, missionaries, etc.

THE BENEDICTION

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

(Matthew 5:4)

ADVENT – DAY 13

Friday, December 9th, 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind! In the cover of your presence you hide them from the plots of men; you store them in your shelter from the strife of tongues. Blessed be the LORD, for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me when I was in a besieged city. I had said in my alarm, “I am cut off from your sight.” But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cried to you for help. Love the LORD, all you his saints! The LORD preserves the faithful but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride. Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the LORD!
(Psalm 31:19–24)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz: “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father’s house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria!”
(Isaiah 7:10–17)

THE MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For the forgiveness of God and the ability to extend that to others
- For racial reconciliation
- For the children in our lives

THE PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness while it was day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (BCP)

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

OF DAVID. Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me! Take hold of shield and buckler and rise for my help! Draw the spear and javelin against my pursuers! Say to my soul, "I am your salvation!" Let them be put to shame and dishonor who seek after my life! Let them be turned back and disappointed who devise evil against me! Let them be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the LORD driving them away! Let their way be dark and slippery, with the angel of the LORD pursuing them! For without cause they hid their net for me; without cause they dug a pit for my life. Let destruction come upon him when he does not know it! And let the net that he hid ensnare him; let him fall into it—to his destruction! Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD, exulting in his salvation. All my bones shall say, "O LORD, who is like you, delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, the poor and needy from him who robs him?"

(Psalm 35:1-10)

-QUIET-

CONFESSION & ASSURANCE

C: Because of the way I have treated You. *(Silence)*

Because of the way I have treated myself. *(Silence)*

Because of the way I have treated others. *(Silence)*

A: As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

(Psalm 103:12)

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

NEW TESTAMENT READING

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word. Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command. May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.

(2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

THE BENEDICTION

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

(Matthew 5:4)

ADVENT – DAY 14

Saturday, December 10th 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

A MASKIL OF DAVID. Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. *(Selah)* I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. *(Selah)* Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. *(Selah)* I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you. Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD. Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

(Psalm 32:1-11)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Be broken, you peoples, and be shattered; give ear, all you far countries; strap on your armor and be shattered; strap on your armor and be shattered. Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing; speak a word, but it will not stand, for God is with us. For the LORD spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people, saying: "Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken."

(Isaiah 8:9-15)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For spiritual renewal
- For those who work in agriculture
- For those who live as single persons

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name! Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER. A MASKIL OF THE SONS OF KORAH. As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?" These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival. Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your waves have gone over me. By day the LORD commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life. I say to God, my rock: "Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?" Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. (Psalm 42)

-QUIET-

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

GOSPEL READING

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death." Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me." And he said to them, "When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing." He said to them, "But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors.' For what is written about me has its fulfillment." And they said, "Look, Lord, here are two swords." And he said to them, "It is enough." (Luke 22:31-38)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

LOCAL & GLOBAL PRAYER

- Pray for the known needs of your local and global community: singles, families, widows, churches, ministries, missionaries, etc.

THE BENEDICTION

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
(Matthew 5:4)

ADVENT – WEEK 3

December 11th - 17th

RAHAB

[JOSHUA 2:1-14]

“By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient”

The scriptures do not hide from the realities of the human life. Some Christians in our culture blush at even the most veiled allusions to sex, while the scriptures, on the other hand, naturally and, at times, graphically reveal sex as a part of normal human life, with all of its beauty, brokenness, abuse, wonder, and shame. *“Rahab the Prostitute.”* This exact title is given to Rahab several times in the scriptures, with the above verse coming from the 11th chapter of the book of Hebrews in the ‘Hall of Faith.’ Evidently, the Holy Spirit wanted us to know the truth about Rahab, a woman who God met right where she was: selling her body to pay for her and her family’s expenses. A woman who, like many in our world today, felt that she had to put herself in an exploitative, unhealthy, and dangerous position just to survive. There she was in the misery of her life behind the walls of Jericho, waiting for a change.

And a change came. Rumors in the region about Israel and their God were spreading. Rahab told the Israelite spies to whom she gave safe haven that she had heard about “how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt...And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, “ (2:10-11). Because of the reverence and care she showed for God and His people, Rahab was dealt with in “kindness” and “faithfulness” (2:14), two qualities that she, a prostitute, was probably not accustomed to experiencing. She found a new home within the camp of Israel and found her unlikely place within the genealogy of the Messiah (Matt. 1:5), the Savior of *all* kinds of people.

That same kindness and faithfulness that the Israelites showed to Rahab was a foretaste of the kind of love and tenderness that the Messiah would show to scandalized and marginalized women (Jn. 4, 8:1-11; Lk. 7:36-49 etc.). Jesus himself, lashing out against the religious leaders of his day said, “Truly, I say to you...the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you,” (Matt. 21:31). In Jesus’ Kingdom, the outsiders are let in, the thirsty are quenched, and the scandalized find themselves nearer to the heart of God than those who ride the moral high horse. Rahab the Prostitute knew that she was helpless apart from the mercy of God and thus she became hero of the faith and a mother of Christ.

WEEKLY SONG SUGGESTIONS

- *Great Rejoicing*
- *Isaiah 11*
- *Lo! How a Rose E'er Blooming*

THE PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP)

ADVENT – DAY 15

Sunday, December 11th, 2016

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

A PSALM OF DAVID, WHEN HE WAS IN THE WILDERNESS OF JUDAH. O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me. But those who seek to destroy my life shall go down into the depths of the earth; they shall be given over to the power of the sword; they shall be a portion for jackals. But the king shall rejoice in God; all who swear by him shall exult, for the mouths of liars will be stopped.

(Psalm 63)

-QUIET-

GOSPEL READING

After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing. John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized (for John had not yet been put in prison). Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification. And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him." John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease."

(John 3:22-30)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this Sabbath day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For a saturation in the loving-kindness of God
- For military personnel
- For the poor

THE BENEDICTION

The LORD your God is in your midst...he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.
(Zephaniah 3:17)

ADVENT – DAY 16

Monday, December 12th, 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER. A PSALM OF DAVID. Blessed is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him; the LORD protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land; you do not give him up to the will of his enemies. The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness you restore him to full health. As for me, I said, "O LORD, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against you!" My enemies say of me in malice, "When will he die, and his name perish?" And when one comes to see me, he utters empty words, while his heart gathers iniquity; when he goes out, he tells it abroad. All who hate me whisper together about me; they imagine the worst for me. They say, "A deadly thing is poured out on him; he will not rise again from where he lies." Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me. But you, O LORD, be gracious to me, and raise me up, that I may repay them! By this I know that you delight in me: my enemy will not shout in triumph over me. But you have upheld me because of my integrity, and set me in your presence forever. Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen.

(Psalm 41)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Bind up the testimony; seal the teaching among my disciples. I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him. Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion. And when they say to you, "Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter," should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living? To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn. They will pass through the land, greatly distressed and hungry. And when they are hungry, they will be enraged and will speak contemptuously against their king and their God, and turn their faces upward. And they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish. And they will be thrust into thick darkness. But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

(Isaiah 8:16–9:1)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For those suffering from illness and those caring for them
- For a deeper knowledge of God and of ourselves
- For those who suffer under the bonds of oppression and injustice

THE PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP)

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER. A MASKIL OF THE SONS OF KORAH. O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us, what deeds you performed in their days, in the days of old: you with your own hand drove out the nations, but them you planted; you afflicted the peoples, but them you set free; for not by their own sword did they win the land, nor did their own arm save them, but your right hand and your arm, and the light of your face, for you delighted in them. You are my King, O God; ordain salvation for Jacob! Through you we push down our foes; through your name we tread down those who rise up against us. For not in my bow do I trust, nor can my sword save me. But you have saved us from our foes and have put to shame those who hate us. In God we have boasted continually, and we will give thanks to your name forever. (Selah)

(Psalm 44:1-8)

-QUIET-

CONFESSION & ASSURANCE

C: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

A: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

(Romans 5:8)

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

NEW TESTAMENT READING

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

(2 Peter 1:3-11)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

THE BENEDICTION

The LORD your God is in your midst...he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.
(Zephaniah 3:17)

ADVENT – DAY 17

Tuesday, December 13th, 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER: ACCORDING TO LILIES. A MASKIL OF THE SONS OF KORAH; A LOVE SONG. My heart overflows with a pleasing theme; I address my verses to the king; my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe. You are the most handsome of the sons of men; grace is poured upon your lips; therefore God has blessed you forever. Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendor and majesty! In your majesty ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness; let your right hand teach you awesome deeds! Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; the peoples fall under you. Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions; your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia. (Psalm 45:1-8)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:1-7)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For those who suffer from war and for the coming of the kingdom of eternal peace
- For international relief organizations
- For deep communion with God

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name! Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER. A PSALM OF THE SONS OF KORAH. Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy! For the LORD, the Most High, is to be feared, a great king over all the earth. He subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet. He chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loves. (Selah) God has gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm! God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne. The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted!
(Psalm 47)

-QUIET-

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

NEW TESTAMENT READING

For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things. For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
(2 Peter 1:11-21)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

LOCAL & GLOBAL PRAYER

- Pray for the known needs of your local and global community: singles, families, widows, churches, ministries, missionaries, etc.

THE BENEDICTION

*The LORD your God is in your midst...he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.
(Zephaniah 3:17)*

ADVENT – DAY 18

Wednesday, December 14th, 2016

✦ MORNING PRAYER ✦

THE PSALM

The LORD is my portion; I promise to keep your words. I entreat your favor with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise. When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies; I hasten and do not delay to keep your commandments. Though the cords of the wicked ensnare me, I do not forget your law. At midnight I rise to praise you, because of your righteous rules. I am a companion of all who fear you, of those who keep your precepts. The earth, O LORD, is full of your steadfast love; teach me your statutes! You have dealt well with your servant, O LORD, according to your word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe in your commandments. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word. You are good and do good; teach me your statutes. The insolent smear me with lies, but with my whole heart I keep your precepts; their heart is unfeeling like fat, but I delight in your law. It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes. The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

(Psalm 119:57-72)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

The Lord has sent a word against Jacob, and it will fall on Israel; and all the people will know, Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, who say in pride and in arrogance of heart: “The bricks have fallen, but we will build with dressed stones; the sycamores have been cut down, but we will put cedars in their place.” But the LORD raises the adversaries of Rezin against him, and stirs up his enemies. The Syrians on the east and the Philistines on the west devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still. The people did not turn to him who struck them, nor inquire of the LORD of hosts. So the LORD cut off from Israel head and tail, palm branch and reed in one day— the elder and honored man is the head, and the prophet who teaches lies is the tail; for those who guide this people have been leading them astray, and those who are guided by them are swallowed up. Therefore the Lord does not rejoice over their young men, and has no compassion on their fatherless and widows; for everyone is godless and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks folly. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.

(Isaiah 9:8-17)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For a love of the righteous law of God
- For the beauty of creation and those who care for the earth
- For pastors, directors, and staff members of churches and ministries.

THE PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP)

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER: ACCORDING TO MAHALATH. A MASKIL OF DAVID. The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity; there is none who does good. God looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all fallen away; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one. Have those who work evil no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon God? There they are, in great terror, where there is no terror! For God scatters the bones of him who encamps against you; you put them to shame, for God has rejected them. Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When God restores the fortunes of his people, let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.
(Psalm 53)

-QUIET-

CONFESSION & ASSURANCE

C: Lord Jesus, you taught us that in Your kingdom: Blessed are the poor in spirit. **But we have been rich in pride.** Blessed are those who mourn. **But we have not known much sorrow for our sin.** Blessed are the meek. **But we are rebellious by nature.** Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. **But we have great desire for evil and little longing for Your true goodness.** Blessed are the merciful. **But we are harsh and impatient.** Blessed are the pure in heart. **But we have impure hearts.** Blessed are the peacemakers. **But we have not sought reconciliation.** Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness. **But our lives do not challenge the world.**
(based on the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:3-11)

A: For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
(Mark 10:45)

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

GOSPEL READING

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."
(Mark 1:1-8)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

THE BENEDICTION

*The LORD your God is in your midst...he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.
(Zephaniah 3:17)*

ADVENT – DAY 19

Thursday, December 15th, 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

A PSALM OF ASAPH. The Mighty One, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth. Our God comes; he does not keep silence; before him is a devouring fire, around him a mighty tempest. He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that he may judge his people: "Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!" The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge! (Selah) "Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God. Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me. I will not accept a bull from your house...The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!"

(Psalm 50:1-9, 23)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

For wickedness burns like a fire; it consumes briars and thorns; it kindles the thickets of the forest, and they roll upward in a column of smoke. Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts the land is scorched, and the people are like fuel for the fire; no one spares another. They slice meat on the right, but are still hungry, and they devour on the left, but are not satisfied; each devours the flesh of his own arm, Manasseh devours Ephraim, and Ephraim devours Manasseh; together they are against Judah. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still. Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees, and the writers who keep writing oppression, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey! What will you do on the day of punishment, in the ruin that will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help, and where will you leave your wealth? Nothing remains but to crouch among the prisoners or fall among the slain. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.

(Isaiah 9:18-10:4)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For a thankful heart, readily attentive to the many gifts of God
- For those who struggle with marital difficulties
- For those who suffer from unjust lending schemes

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name! Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright. Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings! Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts. For the word of the LORD is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD. By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!

(Psalm 33:1-12)

-QUIET-

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

NEW TESTAMENT READING

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.

(2 Peter 2:1-10)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

LOCAL & GLOBAL PRAYER

- Pray for the known needs of your local and global community: singles, families, widows, churches, ministries, missionaries, etc.

THE BENEDICTION

The LORD your God is in your midst...he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.
(Zephaniah 3:17)

ADVENT – DAY 20

Friday, December 16th, 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

A PSALM OF ASAPH. The Mighty One, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth. Our God comes; he does not keep silence; before him is a devouring fire, around him a mighty tempest. He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that he may judge his people: "Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!" The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge! (Selah) "Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God. Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me. I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine.

(Psalm 50:1-11)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will punish the speech of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the boastful look in his eyes. For he says: "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I have understanding; I remove the boundaries of peoples, and plunder their treasures; like a bull I bring down those who sit on thrones. My hand has found like a nest the wealth of the peoples; and as one gathers eggs that have been forsaken, so I have gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved a wing or opened the mouth or chirped." Shall the axe boast over him who hews with it, or the saw magnify itself against him who wields it? As if a rod should wield him who lifts it, or as if a staff should lift him who is not wood! ...The light of Israel will become a fire, and his Holy One a flame, and it will burn and devour his thorns and briars in one day. The glory of his forest and of his fruitful land the LORD will destroy, both soul and body, and it will be as when a sick man wastes away. The remnant of the trees of his forest will be so few that a child can write them down.

(Isaiah 10:12-15, 17-19)

THE MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For a love of Jesus and an awareness of the cost of discipleship
- For those in financial trouble
- For those who long for children

THE PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP)

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER. A PSALM OF DAVID, WHEN NATHAN THE PROPHET WENT TO HIM, AFTER HE HAD GONE IN TO BATHSHEBA. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

(Psalm 51:0-17)

-QUIET-

CONFESSION & ASSURANCE

C: Because of the way I have treated You *(SILENCE)*

Because of the way I have treated myself *(SILENCE)*

Because of the way I have treated others *(SILENCE)*

A: As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

(Psalm 103:12)

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

GOSPEL READING

Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

(Matthew 11:2-6)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

THE BENEDICTION

The LORD your God is in your midst...he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.
(Zephaniah 3:17)

ADVENT – DAY 21

Saturday, December 17th, 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

But I call to God, and the LORD will save me. Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice. He redeems my soul in safety from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me. God will give ear and humble them, he who is enthroned from of old, (Selah) because they do not change and do not fear God. My companion stretched out his hand against his friends; he violated his covenant. His speech was smooth as butter, yet war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords. Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved. But you, O God, will cast them down into the pit of destruction; men of blood and treachery shall not live out half their days. But I will trust in you.

(Psalm 55:16–23)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on him who struck them, but will lean on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return. Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness. For the Lord GOD of hosts will make a full end, as decreed, in the midst of all the earth. Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts: “O my people, who dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrians when they strike with the rod and lift up their staff against you as the Egyptians did. For in a very little while my fury will come to an end, and my anger will be directed to their destruction. And the LORD of hosts will wield against them a whip, as when he struck Midian at the rock of Oreb. And his staff will be over the sea, and he will lift it as he did in Egypt. And in that day his burden will depart from your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck; and the yoke will be broken because of the fat.”

(Isaiah 10:20–27)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For spiritual renewal
- For those who are lonely, and those who support them
- For those who work in homemaking

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name! Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER. A PSALM OF DAVID. O LORD, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you. For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand.

(Psalm 139:1-17)

-QUIET-

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

NEW TESTAMENT READING

But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

(Jude 1:17-25)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

LOCAL & GLOBAL PRAYER

- Pray for the known needs of your local and global community: singles, families, widows, churches, ministries, missionaries, etc.

THE BENEDICTION

The LORD your God is in your midst...he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.
(Zephaniah 3:17)

ADVENT – WEEK 4

December 18th - 24th

RUTH

[THE BOOK OF RUTH]

“Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer.”

When Ruth lays these words on the ears of Boaz, the little book that bears her name reaches its dramatic peak. Ruth was a Moabite widow (the lowest of the lowest wrung in the social ladder of Israel). She was a young woman who had endured the death of her dear husband and who, with desperate, tested, and beautiful faith, pledged her very life and love to her mother-in-law, Naomi, to Naomi’s people, and, most importantly, to Naomi’s God: Yahweh, the God of Israel “under whose wings” she “had come to take refuge” (2:12).

When Naomi learns that Ruth has been given a place working in the field of her distant relative, a man named Boaz, she praised the God whose “kindness does not forsake the living or the dead” (2:20) because she had finally found the “redemption” and “rest” (3:1) that she had wanted for her faithful daughter-in-law. Ruth sneaks into Boaz’ house late at night, “uncovers his feet,” and lays hold of them, thus laying hold of the promise of redemption from her condition, the promise of a husband, an heir, and a future.

Towards the end of the book, Boaz receives a blessing from the people of his village after he has secured the right to redeem Ruth: “May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the LORD will give you by this young woman,” (4:12). You see, Boaz turns out to be Perez’ great, great, great, great grandson! Stranger yet, Boaz’ mother was none other than Rahab herself! (Mark 1:5). And our wonderful character, Ruth, finds herself grafted into this odd promised line, bearing the child named Obed, who would father a son named Jesse, who would father a son named David, the king of Israel (4:22).

Ruth’s story, like her forbearer Tamar’s, is one of a tireless search for redemption, gaining the means to be freed from one’s dreadful condition, even if it means humbling and humiliating oneself to acquire it. What Ruth finds “under the wings” of Boaz is a tangible sign of what she ultimately gains from being “under the wings” of Yahweh.

In Ruth’s long away offspring, called Jesus, the God of Israel sent a Redeemer and King into the world, the only one who was a position to both free a people from the condition of sin and destroy the tyranny of the Devil. In Christ, God provided the long awaited *rest* for a wandering world. Let us, like Ruth, lay hold of the feet of our Redeemer and of his promises. Let us, like Boaz, spread our wings over others, showing to the them the redemptive love of God.

WEEKLY SONG SUGGESTIONS

- *Magnificat*
- *Zechariah*
- *Joy to the World*

THE PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Lord, you now have set your servant free to go in peace as you have promised, for these eyes of mine have seen the savior, whom you have prepared for all the world to see: A light to enlighten the nations, and the glory of your people Israel. (The Song of Simeon from Luke 2:29-32)

ADVENT – DAY 22

Sunday, December 18th, 2016

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

A PSALM OF DAVID. The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. *(Selah)* Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory! *(Selah)*
(Psalm 24)

-QUIET-

GOSPEL READING

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”
(John 3:16–21)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this Sabbath day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For the poor, hungry, and homeless
- For thankfulness of the beauty of creation and human life
- For friends and family members who do not yet profess faith in Jesus

THE BENEDICTION

*“Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”
(Luke 1:38)*

ADVENT – DAY 23

Monday, December 19th, 2016

✦ MORNING PRAYER ✦

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER: ACCORDING TO JEDUTHUN. A PSALM OF DAVID. For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken. How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence? They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse. *(Selah)* For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. *(Selah)* Those of low estate are but a breath; those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath. Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them. Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God, and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work.

(Psalm 62)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

(Isaiah 11:1-9)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For the ceasing of evil, the presence of justice, and the correction of oppression
- For a delight in the law of the Lord
- For rest and refreshment in the presence of the Triune God

THE PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Lord, you now have set your servant free to go in peace as you have promised, for these eyes of mine have seen the savior, whom you have prepared for all the world to see: A light to enlighten the nations, and the glory of your people Israel. (The Song of Simeon from Luke 2:29-32)

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in his commandments! His offspring will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever. Light dawns in the darkness for the upright; he is gracious, merciful, and righteous. It is well with the man who deals generously and lends; who conducts his affairs with justice. For the righteous will never be moved; he will be remembered forever. He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD. His heart is steady; he will not be afraid, until he looks in triumph on his adversaries. He has distributed freely; he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever; his horn is exalted in honor. The wicked man sees it and is angry; he gnashes his teeth and melts away; the desire of the wicked will perish!

(Psalm 112)

-QUIET-

CONFESSION & ASSURANCE

C: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

A: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

(Romans 5:8)

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

(Revelation 20:1-6)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

THE BENEDICTION

"Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."

(Luke 1:38)

ADVENT – DAY 24

Tuesday, December 20th, 2016

✦ MORNING PRAYER ✦

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER: WITH STRINGED INSTRUMENTS. A PSALM. A SONG. May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, (*Selah*) that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. (*Selah*) Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

(Psalm 67)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious. In that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea. He will raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the banished of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The jealousy of Ephraim shall depart, and those who harass Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not be jealous of Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim. But they shall swoop down on the shoulder of the Philistines in the west, and together they shall plunder the people of the east. They shall put out their hand against Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites shall obey them. And the LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt, and will wave his hand over the River with his scorching breath, and strike it into seven channels, and he will lead people across in sandals. And there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant that remains of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt.

(Isaiah 11:10-16)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For the nations to come and inquire of Jesus, the root of Jesse
- For the absence of violence and presence of peace
- For those who work in medicine

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name! Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. O LORD, I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant. You have loosed my bonds. I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!

(Psalm 116: 12-19)

-QUIET-

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

GOSPEL READING

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years. Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared." And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home. After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, "Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

(Luke 1:5-25)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

LOCAL & GLOBAL PRAYER

- Pray for the known needs of your local and global community: singles, families, widows, churches, ministries, missionaries, etc.

THE BENEDICTION

"Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."

(Luke 1:38)

ADVENT – DAY 25

Wednesday, December 21st, 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

OF SOLOMON. Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice! Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness! May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor! May they fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations! May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth! In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more!

(Psalm 72:1-7)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scoffers, who rule this people in Jerusalem! Because you have said, “We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we have an agreement, when the overwhelming whip passes through it will not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter”; therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’ And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plumb line; and hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter.” Then your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand; when the overwhelming scourge passes through, you will be beaten down by it. As often as it passes through it will take you; for morning by morning it will pass through, by day and by night; and it will be sheer terror to understand the message. For the bed is too short to stretch oneself on, and the covering too narrow to wrap oneself in. For the LORD will rise up as on Mount Perazim; as in the Valley of Gibeon he will be roused; to do his deed—strange is his deed! and to work his work—alien is his work! Now therefore do not scoff, lest your bonds be made strong; for I have heard a decree of destruction from the Lord GOD of hosts against the whole land.

(Isaiah 28:14-22)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For those who suffer with physical illness, and those who care for them
- For a deep awareness of the love of God
- For those suffering from war

THE PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Lord, you now have set your servant free to go in peace as you have promised, for these eyes of mine have seen the savior, whom you have prepared for all the world to see: A light to enlighten the nations, and the glory of your people Israel. (The Song of Simeon from Luke 2:29-32)

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation. Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them. Full of splendor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever. He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and merciful. He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever. He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the inheritance of the nations. The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy; they are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness. He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name! The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever! (Psalm 111)

-QUIET-

CONFESSION & ASSURANCE

C: Lord Jesus, you taught us that in Your kingdom: Blessed are the poor in spirit. **But we have been rich in pride.** Blessed are those who mourn. **But we have not known much sorrow for our sin.** Blessed are the meek. **But we are rebellious by nature.** Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. **But we have great desire for evil and little longing for Your true goodness.** Blessed are the merciful. **But we are harsh and impatient.** Blessed are the pure in heart. **But we have impure hearts.** Blessed are the peacemakers. **But we have not sought reconciliation.** Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness. **But our lives do not challenge the world.**
(based on the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:3-11)

A: For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
(Mark 10:45)

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.
(Revelation 21:9-14)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

THE BENEDICTION

*"Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."
(Luke 1:38)*

ADVENT – DAY 26

Thursday, December 22nd, 2016

✠ MORNING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER: ACCORDING TO LILIES. A TESTIMONY. OF ASAPH, A PSALM. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock. You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth. Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up your might and come to save us! Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved! O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers? You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in full measure. You make us an object of contention for our neighbors, and our enemies laugh among themselves. Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved!
(Psalm 80:1-7)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men, therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden." Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?" You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?... Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob: "Jacob shall no more be ashamed, no more shall his face grow pale. For when he sees his children, the work of my hands, in his midst, they will sanctify my name; they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob and will stand in awe of the God of Israel. And those who go astray in spirit will come to understanding, and those who murmur will accept instruction."
(Isaiah 29:13-16, 21-24)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For restoration and healing in your life
- For those who suffer with mental illness, and those who care for them
- For musicians and artists

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name! Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul! I will praise the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation. When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish. Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin. The LORD will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD!

(Psalm 146:1-10)

-QUIET-

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

GOSPEL READING

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever." And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

(Luke 1:39-56)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

LOCAL & GLOBAL PRAYER

- Pray for the known needs of your local and global community: singles, families, widows, churches, ministries, missionaries, etc.

THE BENEDICTION

"Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."

(Luke 1:38)

ADVENT – DAY 27

Friday, December 23rd, 2016

✦ MORNING PRAYER ✦

THE PSALM

The LORD reigns; he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed; he has put on strength as his belt. Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting. The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their roaring. Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the LORD on high is mighty! Your decrees are very trustworthy; holiness befits your house, O LORD, forevermore.

(Psalm 93)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Your eyes will behold the king in his beauty; they will see a land that stretches afar. Your heart will muse on the terror: "Where is he who counted, where is he who weighed the tribute? Where is he who counted the towers?" You will see no more the insolent people, the people of an obscure speech that you cannot comprehend, stammering in a tongue that you cannot understand. Behold Zion, the city of our appointed feasts! Your eyes will see Jerusalem, an untroubled habitation, an immovable tent, whose stakes will never be plucked up, nor will any of its cords be broken. But there the LORD in majesty will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams, where no galley with oars can go, nor majestic ship can pass. For the LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us.

(Isaiah 33:17–22)

THE MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For those who mourn a death, and those who minister to them
- For the Spirit to form us more and more after the image of Christ
- For retail workers and their families

THE PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Lord, you now have set your servant free to go in peace as you have promised, for these eyes of mine have seen the savior, whom you have prepared for all the world to see: A light to enlighten the nations, and the glory of your people Israel. (The Song of Simeon from Luke 2:29-32)

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

(Psalm 150:1-6)

-QUIET-

CONFESSION & ASSURANCE

C: Because of the way I have treated You *(SILENCE)*

Because of the way I have treated myself *(SILENCE)*

Because of the way I have treated others *(SILENCE)*

A: As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

(Psalm 103:12)

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

NEW TESTAMENT READING

And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place." "And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy." I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

(Revelation 22:6-11, 18-20)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

THE BENEDICTION

"Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."

(Luke 1:38)

ADVENT – DAY 28

Saturday, December 24th, 2016

CHRISTMAS EVE

✠ **MORNING PRAYER** ✠

THE PSALM

TO THE CHOIRMASTER. OF THE SONS OF KORAH. ACCORDING TO ALAMOTH. A SONG. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. *(Selah)* There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. *(Selah)* Come, behold the works of the LORD, how he has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. *(Selah)*

(Psalm 46)

-QUIET-

OLD TESTAMENT READING

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. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.” Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

(Isaiah 35)

DWELLING

Pause at the start of a new day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and let the Word lead you into prayer. Pray freely.

PROMPTED PRAYER

- For a longing for and expectation of the Advent of Jesus
- For those who suffer from broken family relationships
- For those working long hours

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name! Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

✠ EVENING PRAYER ✠

THE PSALM

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions; your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia. From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad; daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor; at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir. Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear: forget your people and your father's house, and the king will desire your beauty. Since he is your lord, bow to him. The people of Tyre will seek your favor with gifts, the richest of the people. All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold. In many-colored robes she is led to the king, with her virgin companions following behind her. With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king.

(Psalm 45:5-15)

-QUIET-

SONG

Choose a song from the Advent Songbook

GOSPEL READING

And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

(Luke 1:67-80)

DWELLING

Pause at the end of this day. Enjoy communion with the living God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Read back over the Scripture and take note of things that jump out at you. Pray freely.

LOCAL & GLOBAL PRAYER

- Pray for the known needs of your local and global community: singles, families, widows, churches, ministries, missionaries, etc.

THE BENEDICTION

"Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."

(Luke 1:38)



LORD, YOU NOW HAVE SET YOUR SERVANT FREE
TO GO IN PEACE AS YOU HAVE PROMISED,
FOR THESE EYES OF MINE HAVE SEEN THE SAVIOR,
WHOM YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE:
A LIGHT TO ENLIGHTEN THE NATIONS,
AND THE GLORY OF YOUR PEOPLE ISRAEL.
-THE SONG OF SIMEON