



An Offering of Reflection, Prayer, and Music

First Sunday of Advent

11.29.2020

Cover image:
Trinity's
Advent Wreath

Welcome to Trinity's online community!

As you watch the Live Stream of this service, feel free to add comments, likes, etc. to the comment section at any time!

You might want to light a candle and place it near you. During the service, you will be invited to light a candle if you haven't already, so at least gather what you need for that moment if you wish to participate.

This service, streamed live on Facebook, is a complete offering in itself. Nevertheless, it is followed by an opportunity to participate in online communion via Zoom. A link to that Zoom meeting will appear in the comments on Facebook at the end of this service.

When we don't have to practice social distancing, the people of Trinity Church gather around a table piled high with spiritual food, and there is a place for you and everyone at the table, whatever your religious practice may be. For now, this is a time of sharing and connecting with one another, knowing that we are bound together by God's love. Trinity Church is a metropolitan house of prayer, a community of worship and spiritual inquiry, welcoming all people. Recognizing our common brokenness, yet rejoicing in the reconciling love of God through Jesus Christ, we nurture one another in our spiritual life together.

Trinity Church is an Episcopal Church and a member parish of the Diocesan Partnership of Western New York and Northwest Pennsylvania in the United States and is a part of the Anglican Communion, which is based in England, but found worldwide. If you would like to learn more about Trinity, see all our contact information on the last page.

PRELUDE

"SAVIOR OF THE NATIONS, COME" BY J.S. BACH

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

O God, we light the first candle of Advent.
(The first candle is lit.)

We kindle it with hope. We long for you to come to our world, to break through and reign with compassion, justice, and peace.

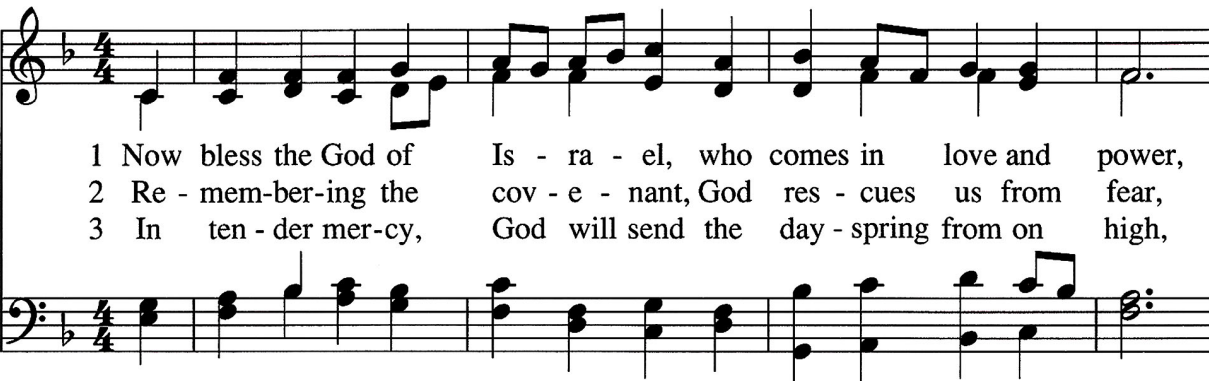
The prophet Isaiah cried to God to tear open heaven and come down. He called God's people to do right. Isaiah called them to be refashioned like clay by God, the potter. During Advent, we are invited to follow Isaiah's example and call out to God.

Mighty God, creator of the world, break through all that keeps us from you. We ask for your mercy and reform us in your image. This Advent visit us with your justice, love, and peace. **Amen.**

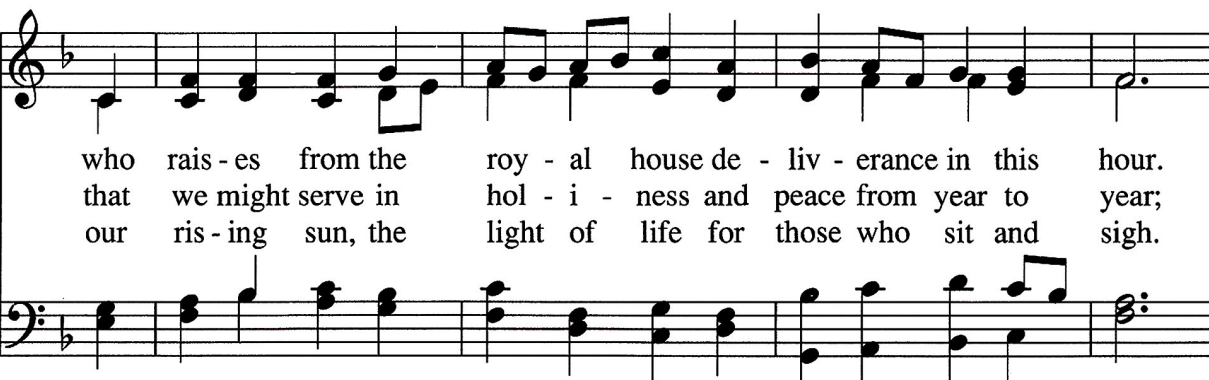
*Adapted from the
United Church of
Christ's Susan A.
Blain, Minister for
Faith Formation:
Curator for Worship
and Liturgical Arts.*

OPENING HYMN

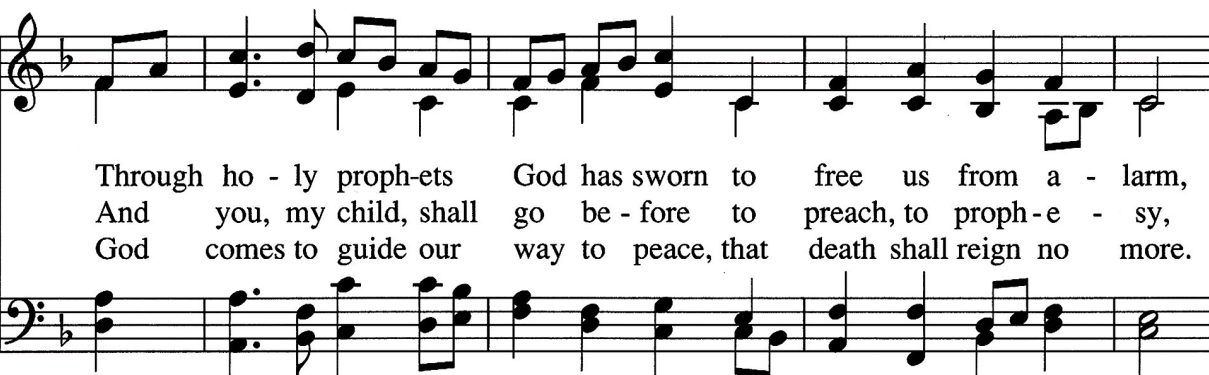
"NOW BLESS THE GOD OF ISRAEL"



1 Now bless the God of Is - ra - el, who comes in love and power,
 2 Re - mem-ber-ing the cov - e - nant, God res - cues us from fear,
 3 In ten - der mer-cy, God will send the day - spring from on high,



who rais - es from the roy - al house de - liv - erance in this hour.
 that we might serve in hol - i - ness and peace from year to year;
 our ris - ing sun, the light of life for those who sit and sigh.



Through ho - ly proph-ets God has sworn to free us from a - larm,
 And you, my child, shall go be - fore to preach, to proph-e - sy,
 God comes to guide our way to peace, that death shall reign no more.



to save us from the heav-y hand of all who wish us harm.
 that all may know the ten - der love, the grace of God most high.
 Sing prais-es to the Ho - ly One! O wor - ship and a - dore!

This text by United Church of Christ clergywoman Ruth Duck is a paraphrase of the "Benedictus," which is often sung at morning prayer. She came to appreciate daily prayer while studying at the University of Notre Dame.

Tune: FOREST GREEN C.M.D.
 Traditional English melody
 Harm. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

FIRST READING

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains would shake before you!
As fire kindles the brushwood
and the fire makes water boil,
make your Name known to your adversaries,
and let the nations tremble before you!
When you did awesome things
that we could not have expected,
you came down,
and the mountains quaked in your presence!
From ages past no ear has ever heard,
no eye has ever seen any God but you
intervening for those who wait for you!
Oh, that you would find us being right,
that we would be mindful of you in our ways!
You are angry because we are sinful;
we sinned for so long - how can we be saved?
All of us became unclean and soiled,
even our good deeds are polluted.
We have all withered like leaves,
and our guilt carries us away like the wind.
No one calls upon your Name,
there is none who clings to you,
for you hid your face from us
and delivered us into the hands of our sins
Yet you are our maker, O God;
we are the clay and you are the potter;
we are all the work of your hands.
Don't let your anger go beyond measure, O God,
don't remember our sins forever,
for we are all your people.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

Thanks be to God.

MIDDLE READING

“DRAWING NEAR: A BLESSING TO BEGIN ADVENT” BY JAN RICHARDSON

It is difficult to see it from here, I know,
but trust me when I say this blessing is inscribed on the horizon.
Is written on that far point you can hardly see.
Is etched into a landscape whose contours you cannot know from here.
All you know is that it calls you,
draws you, pulls you toward what you have perceived only in pieces,
in fragments that came to you in dreaming or in prayer.
I cannot account for how, as you draw near,
the blessing embedded in the horizon begins to blossom upon the soles of your feet,
shimmers in your two hands.

*The Bible readings
are taken from
The Inclusive Bible:
The First Egalitarian
Translation by
Priests for Equality.*

*Nobody set out to
write The Bible. The
Hebrew Scriptures
were created over
many centuries by
many people to
record the Jewish
People's experience
of God. The same is
true of the Christian
Scriptures, some of
which were letters
written to a specific
audience in response
to specific needs—
and were then found
to be helpful to the
faithful even after
fulfilling their
original purpose.*

*The Middle Reading
fills the role of a
Bible reading, but
it doesn't come
from the Bible. It is
our way of trying
to listen for God's
ongoing word as it
is spoken outside the
limits of the Bible.
Most often, we turn
to contemporary
poets for this
reading.*

Continued on next page

Jan Richardson is an artist, writer, and ordained minister in the United Methodist Church. Residing in Florida, she serves as director of The Wellspring Studio, LLC, and has traveled widely as a retreat leader and conference speaker.

It is one of the mysteries of the road,
how the blessing you have traveled toward,
waited for, ached for suddenly appears as if it had been with you all this time,
as if it simply needed to know how far you were willing to walk
to find the lines that were traced upon you
before the day that you were born.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

Thanks be to God.

BASS SOLO

"THUS SAYETH THE LORD/BUT WHO MAY ABIDE" FROM MESSIAH BY G.F. HANDEL

*Thus sayeth the Lord, the Lord of hosts,
Yet once a little while and I will shake
The heavens and the earth
The seas and the dry land, all nations I'll shake
And the desire of all nations shall come.
The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple
Even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in
Behold He shall come, sayeth the Lord of hosts.*

*But who may abide the day of His coming?
And who shall stand when he appeareth?
For He is like a refiners fire.*

THE GOSPEL

MARK 13: 24-37

Jesus said, "But in those days, after that time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Promised One coming in the clouds with great power and glory; then the angels will be sent to gather the chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

"Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that the Promised One is near, right at the door. The truth is, before this generation has passed away, all these things will have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

"As for that day or hour, nobody knows it - neither the angels of heaven, nor the Only Begotten - no one but Abba God. Be constantly on the watch! Stay awake! You do not know when the appointed time will come.

"It is like people traveling abroad. They leave their home and put the workers in charge, each with a certain task, and those who watch at the front gate are ordered to stay on the alert. So stay alert! You do not know when the owner of the house is coming, whether at dusk, at midnight, when the cock crows, or at early dawn. Do not let the owner come suddenly and catch you asleep. What I say to you, I say to all: stay alert!"

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

THE REV. MATT LINCOLN

MUSICAL REFLECTION

The four Gospels hold the core of Christian spiritual wisdom, reflecting the earliest stories and images of Jesus. Like all Scripture, they are not definitive prescriptions but narrative stories requiring endless interpretation.

The sermon invites your curiosity and thoughtfulness about the theme of worship, and is intended to evoke your thoughts rather than direct them. An audio recording of the sermon is posted to the parish website each week, usually by Tuesday.

*Like all summaries
of historic and
communal belief,
this affirmation of
faith is intended as a
symbol of unity and
continuity rather
than a litmus test
of one's individual
commitment to a
particular dogma.*

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

FROM THE MAORI PEOPLE OF NEW ZEALAND

**You, O God, are supreme and holy.
You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do.
You have always been with us.
You are God.**

**You, O God, are infinitely generous,
good beyond all measure.
You came to us before we came to you.
You have revealed and proved
your love for us in Jesus Christ,
who loved and died and rose again.
You are with us now.
You are God.**

**You, O God, are Holy Spirit.
You empower us to be your gospel in the world.
You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.**

**You are our God. We worship you.
Amen.**

COMMUNITY PRAYER: RECEIVING AND RELEASING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

If you haven't already lit a candle near where you are seated, you are invited to do so now. For the next few moments, sit quietly and offer your prayers to God for yourself, those close to you and all of the human family. Today's invitation to pray for each other, the church and the world is based on the prayers of Walter Brueggeman and several others. Words will alternate with music, giving you a chance to listen to the still small voice only you can hear, and to respond in the comment section if you wish.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Loving God, you have set us in families and clans, in cities and neighborhoods.

Our common life began in a garden, but our destiny lies in the city.

You have placed us in and around Buffalo. This is our home.

Your creativity is on display here through the work of human hearts and hands.

We pray for Buffalo today—for the East Side and the West Side, North Buffalo and South Buffalo.

Musical Response

We pray for our poorest neighbors and for powerful people in banks and businesses downtown.

We pray for people from the First Ward and the Fruit Belt.

We pray for neighboring communities from Olcott to Olean, from Angola to Albion, and a thousand other cities connected to our own.

Musical Response

Your financial support is not only a practical necessity. It can also be a very meaningful symbolic gesture, expressing your gratitude for the blessings in your life and your hope for health in the world. While the church is not open, Trinity has made a commitment to keep staff on the payroll. Plus, all the Trinity services are available online, either with Zoom or Facebook live streaming. You can [donate online here](#). You can also mail a check to Trinity at 371 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14202. Thank you!

This version of the Lord's Prayer is what many of us grew up learning. It is also the version shared at the end of many 12 Step meetings. Although it is important to stay fresh and engaged by the words of our prayers, it is also important to be reminded that we as individuals are part of a great cloud of witnesses who have been inspired to turn to God in prayer throughout the ages.

*Jesus revealed a new, personal sense of relationship with God by addressing God as something like "Papa." Always feel free to use your most meaningful name for God in saying the Lord's Prayer.

In all our neighborhoods this day there will be crime and callous moneymaking; there will be powerful people unable or unwilling to see the vulnerable who are their neighbors. There will also be beautiful acts of compassion and creativity in all these places—forgiveness and generosity; neighbors working together for a more just community. Help us see this place as something other than a battleground between us and them, where our imaginations are limited by win/lose propositions and endless rivalry. Show us a deeper reality, God: Show us your Beloved Community.

Musical Response

We pray also for all who are sick or lonely, all who are overwhelmed by difficult circumstances, or trapped in harmful relationships. We pray for all who grieve, and all who live in fear. We pray for all who are dependent on the compassionate care of others, and for those who work tirelessly to care for the ones who are in need.

Prosper our city, and help us to trust that you are God, we pray in the name of the one who wept over the city.

Amen.

Musical Response

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Now would be a great time to add a comment to the Live Stream!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

O nata lux de lumine,
Jesu redemptor saeculi
Dignare clemens supplicum
Laudes preces que sumere.
Qui carne quondam contegi
Dignatus es pro perditis.
Nos membra confer effici
Tui beati corporis.

TRANSLATION:

"O NATA LUX" BY THOMAS TALLIS

O Light from Light, resplendent birth
Jesus redeemer of the earth
In mercy grant us this reprieve
Our prayers and praises to receive.
Thou who in flesh didst once appear
To set souls free from sin and fear,
Gather us all, O Lord we plea
In Thy blest body, one with thee.

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

Now, as Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**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 trespasses,
as we forgive those**

who trespass against us.

**And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

The prayer of St. Chrysostom is found in both Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer in the Book of Common Prayer.

PRAYER OF ST. CHRYSOSTOM

Gracious God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.

BLESSING

Now, may the Holy Spirit
enfold us with love,
indwell our homes with joy,
build this community and this city in peace,
And the blessing of God, who made us, who loves us,
and who animates and guides us, be with you now and always.
Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

"COME THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS"

1 Come, thou long - ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;
2 Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art;
3 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king,
4 By thine own e - ter - nal Spi - rit rule in all our hearts a - lone;

from our fears and sins re - lease us, let us find our rest in thee.
dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
born to reign in us for ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788) Music: *Stuttgart*, melody from *Psalmody Sacra, oder Andächtige und Schöne Gesänge*, 1715; adapt. and harm. William Henry Havergal (1793-1870), alt.

DISMISSAL

Take your leave, trusting that we are made one in Christ, to shine in the world with God's light.
Alleluia, alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!

SERVICES @TRINITY

In the interest of staying connected and sharing what we can of our spiritual life together, here's our service lineup:

SUNDAY MORNING @10:30 Live streaming on Facebook. The Sunday online Live Stream service remains accessible as a video recording on Trinity's Facebook page after the service is over.

TRINITY @7 Zoom gatherings on Sunday night @7pm featuring poetry and jazz.

WEDNESDAY @NOON Zoom gatherings offering prayer and holy conversation.

THURSDAY @7 Zoom gatherings @7pm offering the wisdom and fellowship of 12-Step recovery.

This plan will be in place for the foreseeable future. It's clear we will not have any sizable groups for many months to come. If you have ideas about safe ways to use our building for spiritual enrichment, please contact the church office to share your ideas and plans for implementation. Please continue to read the newsletters to stay informed.

Click here to [find the readings](#).

Email your request for a [link to the Zoom worship services here](#).

THURSDAY @NOON TO 2PM OR BY APPOINTMENT The church will be open for private prayer or meditation. You can chat quietly with one of the volunteers, or if you need, you can ask them to pray with you. Please wear a mask. You are required to sign a registry at the entrance to be used in the event contact tracing is necessary.

JOURNEYING THE WAY OF LOVE DURING ADVENT DISCUSSION GROUP

Tim Lane and Jeffrey Tooke are facilitating the **Journeying the Way of Love: Advent** as a discussion group on Tuesdays at 7pm, starting December 1. Based on the Episcopal Church's Way of Love commitment to practices for a Jesus-Centered life, the Advent curriculum Journeying the Way of Love offers the opportunity to explore how we can live the Way of Love while we await the coming of Christ by exploring the first two chapters of Luke. We invite you to make this discussion group part of your spiritual practice for Advent.

Use this zoom link for the discussion group on Tuesdays at 7pm:

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81668634672?pwd=eTVJZXFoNzVYdHZvSHZONGlNUUowZz09>

Meeting ID: 816-6863-4672

Passcode: trintalk

Our journey during Advent will include the following focus:

December 1, 7pm: Advent One: The Annunciation: Saying "Yes" to the Journey.

Download the materials for Advent One for December 1:

https://1drv.ms/b/s!Al-L5d_LxgchtpgcNcwKe5FdirYQA?e=JhG3GE

December 8, 7pm: Advent Two: Mary and Elizabeth: Journeying with Family and Friends

December 15, 7pm: Advent Three: The Birth of John the Baptist: Journeying with Community

December 22, 7pm: Advent Four: The Birth of Jesus: Journeying with the World

If you are interested in joining the discussion group or have questions about the group, please send an email to Jeffrey Tooke at jeffrey@bayharboradvisors.com to receive more information. The full four-week curriculum is available [here](#).

