



2020 Advent Devotionals

The Second Week of Advent
December 6 - 12, 2020



Sleepers Awake

1 “Sleepers, wake!” A voice astounds us;
the shout of rampart guards surrounds us:
“Awake, Jerusalem, arise!”

Midnight’s peace their cry has broken,
their urgent summons clearly spoken:
“The time has come, O maidens wise!
Rise up, and give us light;
the Bridegroom is in sight. Alleluia!
Your lamps prepare and hasten there,
that you the wedding feast may share.”

2 Zion hears the watchmen singing;
her heart with joyful hope is springing;
she wakes and hurries through the night.
Forth he comes, her Bridegroom glorious
in strength of grace, in truth victorious:
her star is risen, her light grows bright.
Now come, most worthy Lord,
God’s Son, incarnate Word, Alleluia!
We follow all and heed your call
to come into the banquet hall.

3 Lamb of God, the heavens adore you;
let saints and angels sing before you,
as harps and cymbals swell the sound.
Twelve great pearls, the city’s portals:
through them we stream to join the immortals
as we with joy your throne surround.
No eye has known the sight,
no ear heard such delight: Alleluia!
Therefore we sing to greet our King;
for ever let our praises ring.

This hymn, believed to be inspired by Psalm 45, verses 10-17, describes the bride of an ancient king. It is believed to describe the relationship of Jesus Christ (the bridegroom) and his church (the bride). Philippi Nicolai was a Lutheran pastor in Unna, Westphalia during a time of plague. He was repeatedly at odds with the Roman Catholic church over the belief of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's supper.

During his time in Unna, Westphalia, the city was twice struck by plague. During one of those times he wrote his two most recognized works, "How Bright Appears the Morning Star" and "Wake, awake! (Wachet, auf!)" "Wachet, auf!" has been described as "A spiritual bridal song of the believing soul concerning Jesus Christ, her heavenly bridegroom." It was written in half a day during a time of plague.

This hymn embodies the Advent message calling on us to prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ during the Advent season.

Bette Winegar



Rejoice! rejoice believers

**1 Rejoice! rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear!
The evening is advancing, and darker night is near.
The Bridegroom is arising, and soon he will draw nigh;
Up, watch with expectation! at the midnight comes the cry.**

**2 See that your lamps are burning, replenish them with oil;
look now for your salvation, the end of sin and toil.
The marriage-feast is waiting, the gates wide open stand;
Rise up, ye heirs of glory, the Bridegroom is at hand!**

**3 Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;
Arise, thou Sun so longed for, above this darkened sphere!
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
the day of earth's redemption, and ever be with thee!**

Hymnal 1982 #68

Monday, December 7, 2020

Based on the parable of the wise and foolish maidens (Matthew 25:1-13), this beautiful hymn reminds us that to be wise is to be prepared. In this season of expected waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus, might we consider that the lamps represent our outer selves? We spend our daily lives trying to be Christ's representatives here on earth. But without the oil, the inward and spiritual reality of a living faith, our lamps are not very effective. And let us not skimp on that oil, but rather have an abundance of it. For we wait not only for the coming of the bridegroom, but for Christ's return to complete the work of redemption. So we give special attention to living our lives in the light of eternity. After all, you don't want to be caught with an empty lamp, do you?

Jeni Lorenz

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

1 Comfort, comfort ye my people,
speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
comfort those who sit in darkness
mourning 'neath their sorrow's load.
Speak ye to Jerusalem
of the peace that waits for them;
tell her that her sins I cover,
and her warfare now is over.

2 Hark, the voice of one that crieth
in the desert far and near,
calling us to new repentance
since the kingdom now is here.
Oh, that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way;
let the valleys rise to meet him,
and the hills bow down to greet him.

3 Make ye straight what long was crooked,
make the rougher places plain:
let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits his holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
Now o'er earth is shed abroad;
and all flesh shall see the token
that the word is never broken.

Hymnal 1982 #67

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

This Advent hymn is based on Isaiah 40, verses 1-5; these verses of comfort from God are given when the people of Judah still had 100 years of trouble before captivity in Babylon for 70 more years. “The seeds of comfort may take seed in the soil of adversity. When your life seems to be falling apart, ask God to comfort you. You may not escape adversity, but God’s peace and comfort are still available to you in His Word, His presence, and His people.” I underlined this quote at an Advent Silent Retreat 4 days before the death of my Dad. I was stressed out from working full-time and checking on him and my Mom, as their health rapidly declined. The situation didn’t change, but I felt God’s peace and comfort heal my breaking heart.

Our lives for the past months may feel like a type of wilderness existence. We are still called to prepare for God’s arrival by “new repentance” and to let our “hearts be true and humble.” What obstacles or roadblocks do you need to remove during Advent, to prepare your heart for Christ’s arrival? How has God comforted you in adversity?

Robyn Dadig



Savior of the Nations Come

**1 Savior of the nations, come!
Virgin's Son, make here your home.
Marvel now, both heaven and earth,
that the Lord chose such a birth.**

**2 Wondrous birth! Oh, wondrous child
Of the Virgin undefiled!
Mighty God and Mary's son,
eager now his race to run!**

Hymnal 1982 #54

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

“Savior of the nations, come!” are the beginning lyrics of the hymn written by Martin Luther. The first three stanzas are a paraphrase of a Latin hymn, while the last represents Luther’s added doxology. For centuries, it was sung on the first Sunday of Advent, the beginning season of the church year, which is traditionally a time of penitence and quiet reflection to prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus Christ.

For me, the message contained in this hymn is one of hope for a savior for all people, excluding none. It is a reminder of Jesus’ humble birth and the belief that he was both human and divine. He was sent by the Father to save sinners through his teachings, his actions, and ultimately his death and resurrection.

This Advent season will likely be more subdued than what we have experienced in the recent past. My prayer is that it will be a time of peace in our country. The light of Jesus continues to shine when we become his hands and feet and act in service of others, especially the poor and marginalized. I recall Isaiah 61:1: “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners.”

Diane Torres



O Come, O Come Emmanuel

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

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go. Refrain

3 O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times did give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe. Refrain

4 O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem,
unto your own and rescue them!
From depths of hell your people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave. Refrain

5 O come, O Key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe for us the heavenward road
and bar the way to death's abode. Refrain

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

Hymnal 1982 #56

Thursday, December 10, 2020

Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was I am.”

John 8:58

During the Gospel of John there were several “I AM” statements that identified Jesus as deity... “I am the bread of life... the light of the world... the gate... the good shepherd... the resurrection and the life... the way, the truth, and the life... the vine” (John 6:35; 8:12, 10:9, 11; 11:25, 14:6; 15:5). Moses on the mountain asked Gods name, being told by God “I AM WHO I AM”.

At some point we all ask ourselves “Who am I”. Some struggle with this only a few times in our life, others throughout our lives. Just about the time we think we have it figured out something changes causing us to doubt ourselves. It more likely is a lifelong search. Many of us show strength, have relationships, community, success and security. As we move on, those things change as our need for something stronger than ourselves becomes more evident. It could be a real AH-HA moment or we are looking for an anchor to hold onto. We are always a child of God and can be assured of that true identity.

Sue Johnston

O Heavenly Word, Eternal Light

**1 O Heavenly Word, Eternal Light,
Begotten of the Father's might,
Who, in these latter days, art born
For succor to a world forlorn;**

**2 Our hearts enlighten from above,
And kindle with Thine own true love;
That we, who hear Thy call to-day,
May cast earth's vanities away.**

**3 And when as Judge Thou drawest nigh,
The secrets of all hearts to try;
When sinners meet their awful doom,
And saints attain their heavenly home;**

**4 O let us not, for evil past,
Be driven from Thy face at last;
But with the blessed evermore
Behold Thee, love Thee, and adore.**

Hymnal 1982 #63

Friday, December 11, 2020

2020 has been a challenging year to say the least. Our world as we have known it has been turned upside down. One minute we were going about our daily lives with our “normal routine” and the next we were scrambling to figure out how to work from home, worship online and find toilet paper. I don’t know about you, but these last several months have created in me a whole new level of anxiety, uncertainty and, well, fear. What does the future hold?

It is in times like these when I am so thankful that God is faithful, certain, and sovereign. I may not know what the future holds, but I can be certain that God does and the He always wants what is best for me. My hope during Advent is to deepen my relationship with the God who loves me and to know Him more and “behold thee, love thee, and adore.” (Advent Hymn #63)

Sally Louth



Come Thou Expected Jesus

1 Come, thou long expected Jesus
born to set Thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in Thee.

2 Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

3 Born thy people to deliver,
born a child, and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

4 By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by Ttne all sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Hymnal 1982 #66

Saturday, December 12, 2020

A friend of mine has a t shirt with that and a manger scene on it... as Christians He taught us to spread the news across the lands. But we have over the decades chosen to allow our nation to ignore Him and in some areas to do away with Him altogether. If our nation is going to survive and be truly Christian we must all remember that glorious night when Christ was born in the manger. We must share His love and forgiveness with the world. We must pray that the hatred and anger we have witnessed will end. We must pray for all of the world. We must live our lives as He taught us . We must shout out loud...for all the world to hear.....“WE WILL NOT BE SILENT ABOUT THAT NIGHT.”

Kathy Kay

The Song of Mary
Magnificat Luke 1:46-55

Week 1

Advent candle: Prophecy/Hope

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed: *
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.

Week 2

Advent candle: Bethlehem/Preparation

He has mercy on those who fear him *
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm, *
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

Week 3

Advent candle: Shepherd/Joy

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.

Week 4

Advent candle: Angel/Love

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
The promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.