

*O Come
Seed of
Hope*

Advent 2024

Reflections

Lectionary Year C

by

Susanna M. Kawolics

As I write these reflections, I am spending time in the “Hildegard” Hermitage at Mount St. Benedict Monastery in Erie, PA. It is the week before elections. The people in our nation are on edge, divided and anxious, each side frightened about what will happen if their candidate does not win. Globally we see no end to war in Ukraine or in the Middle East. During this time away, I am praying for the deep healing we need to mend relationships and restore our earth. It seems appropriate that Hildegard’s teachings are guiding my thoughts.

Hildegard of Bingen lived in the Bavaria region of Germany over 900 years ago, yet her prayers, her visions, her theology are very relevant for our times. She was a poet, abbess, musician, artist, healer, scientist, theologian, prophet, and mystic. One of the central themes of her writing was the goodness of creation, and humankind’s responsibility to care for it. She saw an interconnectedness among all humans, all creation, and all creatures, and proclaimed all nature to be kissed by the love of God. She spoke often of “veriditas,” the verdancy, the “greening” power of God.

I take her words to heart as I reflect on this loving God who connects us to each other and to our natural world. This Advent I reflect on a God who pours out love upon us in order to heal, save, and empower us. As we prepare for the celebration of the coming of Jesus, God made flesh, We are called to gratefully embody this love of God for all, and use it to restore relationships and to mend the earth.

Throughout the centuries, Advent has been a season of preparation of our hearts during which we Christians express our longing for the coming of the promised Messiah, of God’s love and salvation made flesh on earth. This yearning has been articulated in a variety of ways, including through images of God known as “O Antiphons.” These became part of the Christian tradition in the 7th or 8th century. (I imagine that perhaps Hildegard prayed with these images in her monastery!) O Antiphons are different names for God, traditionally used during the last week of Advent, December 17th through 23rd, and sung in the seven verses of the Advent hymn *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (included in this booklet).

The Advent season continues to be a time to deliberately prepare our hearts to welcome Christ anew. These reflections have been created in the hope that they will enrich our Advent journeys by providing a prayerful intention of opening ourselves to a deeper relationship with God. Because God is so much greater than our minds can even begin to comprehend, we can only know God through glimpses, through reflections. Inspired by the *O Antiphons*, I have sought to express other images of God based on the weekly Revised Common Lectionary readings for this Advent and Christmas season. The reflections for the Sunday readings begin on the Monday before so that we will have the opportunity to reflect on these Bible verses before hearing them in worship. There is also a prayer to guide each day. They are grouped under the traditional Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

May this prayerful time during the Advent season lead to a healing of relationships with each other and with the earth, to a deepening relationship with God, and to love born anew each day as we journey towards the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

In Christ’s peace,

Suri Kavalics

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Scripture verses are quoted from *An Inclusive-Language Lectionary: Readings for Year C*, Copyright 1986 by Division of Education and Ministry, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

The images of God are the author's own responses to the scripture verses, except for the traditional "O Antiphons" from December 17 through December 23.

All prayerful reflections have been created by the author.

Information about and prayers by Hildegard of Bingen come from: *Meditations with Hildegard of Bingen* by Gabriele Uhlein (Bear & Company, Inc.; Santa Fe, NM, 1983)

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I dedicate this year's Advent Reflections booklet to Reverend Hamilton Throckmorton, in honor of his retirement from his 20 year ministry at Federated Church, Chagrin Falls, OH. His impact on my life and faith journey has been profound ...

- ... as faithful listener and compassionate counselor when I was lost and searching for a new faith community;
- ... as a gifted preacher whose dedication to his practice inspired me in my own writing and preaching;
- ... as a supporter and mentor to me as I pursued my own call to ordination in the UCC;
- ... as a wonderfully collaborative colleague when I joined the staff as Associate Pastor at Federated Church;
- ... and, most importantly as a dear friend and companion on life's journey.

Although all his sermons are incredibly inspiring, in 2007 Hamilton preached a sermon on the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), and gave each member of the congregation \$50.00 to use as seed money to grow that which we felt called to offer. My own money was used to produce the first of these Advent Reflections booklets, and I have been creating them ever since.

Throughout that time, Hamilton has been the editor extraordinaire of these booklets, and I am indebted to his attention to detail in correcting omissions, repetitions, and other errors in the text. However, if there are mistakes in this dedication I take full responsibility, as I did not include this page in the draft I gave him to review!

With deep gratitude and love, and prayers for a fulfilling, joy-filled retirement,

Suri

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Translated: John Neale, 1818-66

() indicates date of traditional "O Antiphons"

(12/23) O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

(12/17) O come, our Wisdom from on high,
And order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

(12/18) O come, O come,
our Lord of might,
Who to your tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times gave holy law,
In cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

(12/19) O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem,
From ev'ry foe deliver them
That trust your mighty pow'r to save;
Bring them in vict'ry through the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

(12/20) O come, O Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

(12/21) O come, thou Dayspring,
come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

(12/22) O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease,
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

Hymn # 31 from **Lutheran Worship**
Author: French Processional
Tune: VENI EMMANUEL, 1st Published
in 1854

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Alternative verses by Susanna M. Kawolics
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() indicates date of traditional "O Antiphons"

(12/17) O come, O Wisdom
who from dawning day
Creates and shapes a new world,
a new way.
You at the gateways of our choices stand
And guide us with your
dancing, loving hand.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O God amazing, wise,
May we each day be open to surprise.

(12/18) O come, O God of Ancient Israel,
Who with your people faithfully do dwell.
You've shown yourself in tablets of law,
And burning bush,
and cloud that wand'ers saw.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O God of Ancient Days,
We trust and rest our hearts in you always.

(12/19) O come, O come,
O Flower of Jesse's Tree.
No one believed a shepherd King would be.
You chose the humblest of his sons to reign
To show your ways are not our ways, again.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O Flower of Jesse's Tree,
Bring birth and newness from the smallest
seed.

(12/20) O come, O Key of David, open wide
Our locked-down hearts
so peace may come inside.
Release the hold of grudges past
And tenderly toward hope lead us at last.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O Key of David, free
Our hearts from hatred
that they healed might be.

(12/21) O come, O Dayspring,
in our darkest night
With your bright stars and moon
disperse our fright.
Weave light through shadows,
make all things new
And bring a wholeness
only found through you.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O God of Radiant Light
And put the darkness in our lives to flight.

(12/22) O come, Uniter of the Nations, hold
All on this earth in your close, loving fold.
Heal wounds and mend together
broken hearts.
Bring universal peace from varied parts.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O God of Unity,
Grant that your realm of love
might come to be.

(12/23) O come, O come, Emmanuel,
Be birthed again that all earth be made well.
Inspire us all to make your presence known
By tending seeds of justice you have sown.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall through and in us
once more come and dwell.

First Sunday of Advent: December 1, 2024

Begin reflections on **Monday, November 25**



Readings:

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Psalms 25:1-10

Thessalonians 3:9-13

Luke 21:25-36

The overall theme of this week:

Hope

“O Holy Spirit,

Clear fountain,

In you we perceive God . . .

Bulwark of life, you are the hope of oneness for that which is separate.”

Meditations with Hildegard of Bingen, p. 41

Monday, November 25

Antiphon ~ O Righteous Branch, Come

Scripture

Jeremiah 33:15 *In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David . . .*

Prayerful Reflection

O Righteous Branch, Come~

Spring up from the kernels of our past
and blossom into hope for the future.

Let our yesterdays become nourishment
for the fruits of our tomorrows.

Make us ever stronger, wiser,
more compassionate,
that each new day

we may grow closer to becoming
the persons you have created us to be.

Rooted in your hope,
branching toward your light,
strengthened and nourished by your love,
may we scatter seeds today that will
produce a harvest
of righteousness and peace.

Amen.

Tuesday, November 26

Antiphon ~ O Bestower of Abundant Love, Come

Scripture

1 Thessalonians 3:12 . . . *and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all people . . .*

Prayerful Reflection

O Bestower of Abundant Love, Come~
Expand our constricted hearts
with your all-embracing compassion.
Just as you kiss all of creation with your care,
grant us an extravagance of love as well.
Fill us so that as easily as we love
those who love us, those who are like us,
those who believe as we do,
we may offer that love to others as well.
May we embrace with tenderness
those whose actions we cannot understand,
those whose stories we cannot imagine,
those whose ways we cannot fathom.
As your love in us increases and abounds,
establish in us your hope
for peace among all your children,
that through our prayers, words, and deeds,
it may be realized in this world.
Amen.

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Wednesday, November 27

Antiphon ~ O Ancient Mercy, Come

Scripture

Psalms 25:6 *Be mindful of your mercy, O God, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Ancient Mercy, Come~
Save us once again.
Hold us in compassion
as we seek your forgiveness
for the times we have not lived
mercifully, lovingly, and
generously in this world.
Pardon us, redeem us, reclaim us as your own.
Make your ancient mercy new, and forgive us,
that we may also forgive.
Remind us that we are made for relationship
with all your children and your creation.
We place our hope
in your steadfast love and mercy,
flowing in us, through us, and from us
to bring peace to your people on earth.
Amen.

Thursday, November 28

Antiphon ~ O Bringer of Joy, Come

Scripture

I Thessalonians 3:9 *How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you?*

Prayerful Reflection

O Bringer of Joy, Come~
Make our hearts glad.
Open our eyes to see all that is good.
Receive our gratitude
for our friends, family, and
faithful companions along our journey.
Immerse us in appreciation
for the beauty of the natural world,
no matter the season.
Summon praise from our lips for food, shelter,
clothing, and all other blessings.
Remind us of your unconditional love
and abiding presence with us always.
In grateful response, lead us to do good works,
to bear fruits of hope and healing
for all people and for all the earth.
Amen.

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Friday, November 29

Antiphon ~ O Giver of Signs, Come

Scripture

Luke 21:29-30 *“Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near.”*

Prayerful Reflection

O Giver of Signs, Come~
Reveal to us your renewing power.
Give us hope as we survey
the emptiness of the fields,
the barrenness of the trees,
the darkness of the days.
Make us secure in the knowledge
that beneath the ground,
nourished and fed by the earth,
buds and seeds are already sprouting.
Open our inner eyes to see glimpses
of newness, of greenness,
of freshness in our lives and in our world,
signs of your greening force and energy
always in our midst.
Amen.

Saturday, November 30

Antiphon ~ O Eternal Word, Come

Scripture

Luke 21:33 *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Eternal Word, Come~
Be birthed in our lives this day.
Remind us that your word
formed creation at the dawn of time,
that your word dwelt among us in the flesh
at your appointed time.
Inspire us to be your living word,
your embodied word,
your still-speaking word
giving hope to our world today.
May your eternal word
blossom forth from our mouths,
and come alive in our deeds,
that it may eternally bless and renew
all of creation and all humanity.
Amen.

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First Sunday of Advent, December 1

Antiphon ~ O Path of Steadfast Faithfulness, Come

Scripture

Psalms 25:10 *All the paths of God are steadfast love and faithfulness . . .*

Prayerful Reflection

O Path of Steadfast Love, Come~
On this first Sunday of Advent,
fill us with hope.
Direct our steps to the rhythm of your ways,
and guide our feet along the course
of steadfast love and faithfulness.
Shepherd us that our journeys may lead
to co-creating with you
a more just and peace-filled world.
Lead us, instruct us, inspire us
that we may bring hope and healing
to those who suffer,
and that we may faithfully follow
your path of love.
Amen.

Second Sunday of Advent: December 8, 2024

Begin reflections on **Monday, December 2**



Readings

Baruch 5:1-9

Luke 1:68-79

Philippians 1:3-11

Luke 3:1-6

The overall theme of this week~

Peace

“Limitless love,
from the depths to the stars:
flooding all,
loving all.
It is the royal kiss of peace.”

Meditations with Hildegard of Bingen, p. 52

Monday, December 2

Antiphon ~ O Over-Arching Grace, Come

Scripture

Philippians 1:7 *It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me . . .*

Prayerful Reflection

O Over-Arching Grace, Come~
Hold us close in your heart,
even as you are held close in ours.
Remind us that you bring
your work to fruition in humankind.
As your grace fills our hearts,
may it flow through us,
and out over all creation.

Make us to extend this grace to every
creature on earth.

Let our grace-filled words, prayers, and deeds
plant seeds of peace,
to be watered with your spirit
for a harvest of abundant grace.

Amen.

Tuesday, December 3

Antiphon ~ O Transformer of Sorrow, Come

Scripture

Baruch 5:1 *Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Transformer of Sorrow, Come~
When our hearts are cloaked
in sorrow or affliction,
in rage or unforgiveness,
in hopelessness or despair,
strip us bare and wrap us
in the blanket of your transforming love.
Clothe us in your solace,
dress us in your wisdom,
cover us in your mercy,
drape us with courage.
Transform our struggles into resilience,
our heartaches into hope,
our anguish into action.
Enfold our afflicted, anxious, and grieving hearts
in the beautiful glory
of your comfort and your peace.
Amen.

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Wednesday, December 4

Antiphon ~ O Producer of the Harvest, Come

Scripture

Philippians 1:9-11 . . . *this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight . . . that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness . . .*

Prayerful Reflection

O Producer of the Harvest, Come~
Water and nourish the seeds we have planted.
Take away our need to be perfect,
our desire for completion,
our regret of things left undone.
Fill us with your love,
and gift us with knowledge and insight
to be good workers
for your Dominion of peace and justice,
and faithful servants to your people.
Give us peace in knowing
that you are the Master Gardener,
that we only help produce a harvest
for a future we may never see.
Amen.

Thursday, December 5

Antiphon ~ O Way-Preparer, Come

Scripture

Luke 3:4 *"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make the paths of the Lord straight.'"*

Prayerful Reflection

O Way-Preparer, Come~
As we wander along
the obstacle-filled roads of our own making,
make straight a course back to you.
Call our names, beckon us,
tune our ears and hearts
to your voice.
Guide us to follow your ways,
to clear the barriers that obstruct the path
of your compassion and justice.
Strengthen us to mow down
the hatred and judgment that thwart
the blooming of your mercy and love.
Lead us to make clear the paths
of righteousness and peace,
for your name's sake.
Amen.

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Friday, December 6

Antiphon ~ O Tender Daybreak, Come

Scripture

Luke 1:78-79 *By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in the night and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*

Prayerful Reflection:

O Tender Daybreak, Come~
Let your mercy dawn on this world.
Break into the shadows
of hatred, of despair,
of loneliness and fear.
Caress our hardened hearts
with the soft touch of your mercy.
Illumine our judgmental minds
with the glow of compassion.
Shine in our shadowed corners
with shafts of your glimmering light,
that our hearts and minds,
our hands and feet, may be guided
to radiate your peace into this world.
Amen.

Saturday, December 7

Antiphon ~ O Voice in the Wilderness, Come

Scripture

Luke 3:2b . . . *the word of God came to John, son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, in the wilderness.*

Prayerful Reflection:

O Voice in the Wilderness, Come~
Call out to us over the blaring noise,
the constant activity,
the unrelenting demands
that seem to bombard our lives.
Summon us to the wilderness,
the place of barrenness and solitude,
the place of openness and quiet.
Take us deep within ourselves
and speak to us
in the silence of our hearts.
Restore stillness, calm, and peace
to our hearts, minds, bodies, and souls,
that we may be moved
to restore this peace in the world.
Amen.

Second Sunday of Advent, December 8

Antiphon ~ O Gatherer of Children, Come

Scripture

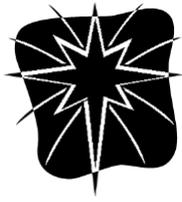
Baruch 5:5b . . . *see your children gathered from west and east, at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that God has remembered them.*

Prayerful Reflection:

O Gatherer of Children, Come~
On this second Sunday of Advent,
fill us with your peace.
Bring us together as your children all,
from the west, east, north, and south.
From all the corners of the earth
gather us into true community:
to hear each others' stories,
to respect and appreciate differences,
to seek peace.
As your children, we rejoice that you know,
love, and remember each one of us,
as you also do all your children.
Out of this love and unity, may we treat
all people in this world
as our brothers, siblings, and sisters,
one family held in your all-embracing heart.
Amen.

Third Sunday of Advent: December 15, 2024

Begin reflections on **Monday, December 9**



Readings

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Isaiah 12:2-6

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18

The overall theme of this week~

Joy

“Under your protection,
I rejoice, O God!
In your shadow, I exult, O God!
You rescue me
from the heaviness of sin.”

Meditations with Hildegard of Bingen, p. 99

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Monday, December 9

Antiphon ~ O Holy Baptizer, Come

Scripture

Luke 3:16b *I baptize you with water . . . that one will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Holy Baptizer, Come~

Set our hearts afire.

Engulf us in

your passionate, shimmering spirit.

Create in us new and pure hearts,
healed from unforgiveness and hatred,
empty of cruelty and unkindness,
open to compassion and reconciliation,
passionate with your justice.

Baptize us that we may be

ablaze in your hope,

aglow in your peace,

enkindled in your mercy.

May your declaration to us

that we are your Beloved

set our hearts afire with joy,

to illuminate the world with your love.

Amen.

Tuesday, December 10

Antiphon ~ O Uplifter of the Outcast, Come

Scripture

Zephaniah 3:19b *And I will save the one who is lame, and gather the one who is outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Uplifter of the Outcast, Come~
Tenderly gather in all those on the margins.
Give us compassion
for all those who are displaced,
for those who live on the out-skirts,
those who struggle with scarcity,
those who are oppressed or violated.
Compel us to care, to change our attitude
from blame to mercy,
from ostracization to companionship,
from pity to solidarity.
May all your children be treated
with respect and dignity
as we seek to lift them up, to ally with them
until they know security, safety,
peace, and joy in their lives.
Amen.

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Wednesday, December 11

Antiphon ~ O Attender of Prayers, Come

Scripture

Philippians 4:6 *Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Attender of Prayers, Come~
Give ear to our deepest desires,
our heartfelt confessions,
our paralyzing fears,
our raging anger,
our profound adoration and gratitude.
We praise you that you welcome us
into your heart just as we are,
with everything we carry.
Join us in our joys,
companion us in our sorrows,
calm us in our anxieties,
heal us in our brokenness,
as we trust you to lovingly attend
to each and every one of our prayers.
Amen.

Thursday, December 12

**Antiphon ~ O Burner of Chaff, Come
Scripture**

Luke 3:17 *With winnowing fork in hand, that one will clear the threshing floor, and gather the wheat into the granary, but will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Burner of Chaff, Come~
Cleanse us, and clear the chaff from our lives.

Burn away
our descent into despair,
our hunger for vengeance,
our expectation of the worst.

Winnow from us
hostile ill will,
unforgiving hearts,
judgmental attitudes.
Enable us to gather into the granary of our lives
the flourishing wheat of your abiding presence,
your unconditional love,
and your profound peace,
that joy may bloom and grow.
Amen.

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Friday, December 13

Antiphon ~ O Surpassing Understanding, Come

Scripture

Philippians 4:7 *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Surpassing Understanding, Come~
Into our limited minds pour your wisdom.

Grant each of us a heart of humility
and a mind of Christ

as we seek to discern your truth.
Lead us to uncomfortable places
and difficult conversations,
that our minds may be stretched
and our hearts expanded.

Fill us with your peace as we seek
courage to admit that we may be wrong,
and humbleness to acknowledge
that we may not know.

May we know joy in discovering
new and surprising understanding.

Amen.

Saturday, December 14

Antiphon ~ O Well of Salvation, Come

Scripture

Isaiah 12:3 *With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Well of Salvation, Come~

Saturate our arid souls.

We are parched from the relentless noise,
from the demands and stresses of our lives,
from the despair that permeates our souls.

Give us living water for our thirst,
balm for our woundedness,
calm for our anxiousness.

Soak us to our core with your kindness,
your reassurance, your love,
your comfort, your stillness, your peace.

Quench our dryness with your verdancy,
giving us strength and courage.

Water our spirits,
that we might once again know
the joy of your presence,
and the depths of your saving grace.

Amen.

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Third Sunday of Advent, December 15

Antiphon ~ O Exultant Song-Giver, Come

Scripture

Zephaniah 3:17 . . . *your God is in your midst,
. . . who will rejoice over you with gladness, who will renew you in God's love, and will
exult over you with loud singing.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Exultant Song-Giver, Come~

On this third Sunday of Advent,
fill us with joy.

Inspire our hearts to sing
as we rejoice in your love,
and praise your name with exuberant voice.

Come into our open hearts.

Make us your instruments,
and play us

that we would resound
with chords of your kindness,
filling the earth with notes of
harmony and love.

Together with heaven and nature,
may we sing out with joy to the world.

Amen.

Fourth Sunday of Advent: December 22, 2024

Begin reflections on **Monday, December 16**



Readings
Micah 5:2-5a
Psalms 80:1-7
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-55

The overall theme of this week~

Love

“Humankind should ponder God . . .
Recognize God’s wonders and signs.
Let these signs and wonders be the firmament on which to build,
so as not to be shaken by fear,
or distracted from the love of God.”

Meditations with Hildegard of Bingen, p. 46

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Monday, December 16

Antiphon ~ O Embodiment of Compassion, Come

Scripture

Hebrews 10:5 *Christ, having come into the world, said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me . . .”*

Prayerful Reflection

O Embodiment of Compassion, Come~
You who robed yourself in a human body,
make your presence real in this world
through us, your servants.
You have given us bodies
through which to live,
in which we are called
to incarnate your compassion and mercy.
Awaken goodness and love within us so that,
as Christ embodied your love,
we may embody Christ’s love.
Move us to become compassionate,
merciful, and sacrificial,
that in giving of ourselves to others
we offer ourselves to you in love.
Amen.

Tuesday, December 17

Antiphon ~ O Wisdom of God, Come

Scripture

Luke 1:45 *And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from God.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Wisdom of God, Come~
Open our ears to hear your voice
which speaks your wisdom.
Open our hearts to believe
your incredible promise,
that the power of love will defeat hatred,
that the grace of kindness
will conquer despair,
that the glimmer of light
will cast out shadows,
and that your promise of eternal life
will defeat even death.
Grant us the wisdom and hope to believe
that you are a God
of endless love and possibilities,
and that what you have spoken will be fulfilled.
Amen.

.....
Wednesday, December 18

Antiphon ~ O God of Ancient Israel, Come

Scripture

Micah 5:2 *But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, . . . from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Lord of Ancient Israel, Come~
Increase our trust in you.
Remind us of your origin from ancient days,
of your abiding presence still today.
Reassure us that you still live and move
in our world, in our time,
as you have throughout our sacred history.
Grant us courage and hope
as we journey forward,
to trust and remember
that your steadfast love and mercy
have always been,
are now,
and shall be forevermore.
Amen.

Thursday, December 19

Antiphon ~ O Flower of Jesse's Stem Come

Scripture

Luke 1:47-48 . . . *my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, who has looked with favor on the lowliness of God's servant.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Flower of Jesse's Stem, Come~
Inspire us to see with your eyes.
Show us again how you use those who
appear lowly to do great things.
Just as you anointed David,
the smallest of Jesse's children, to be King,
and as you summoned Mary,
a mere peasant woman,
to give birth to our Savior,
so you call each of us
to live into the fullness of
our own powerful potential.
Reassure us that, as in creation,
where each tiny kernel sown
is never wasted under your care,
all our seeds of love, generosity, and justice
will also yield a bountiful harvest for you.
Amen.

.....
Friday, December 20

Antiphon ~ O Key of David, Come

Scripture

Hebrews 10:9 . . . *then Christ added, "See, I have come to do your will." Christ abolishes the first in order to establish the second.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Key of David, come~
Establish a new order.
Unlock the places within us which cling to
tenacious grudges, persistent prejudices,
paralyzing fear, berating self-doubts.
Free us from these self-imposed prisons
so we may break down barriers,
and embrace the mystery and beauty
of each and every person,
including ourselves.
Open wide the doors of our hearts
that with you,
we may establish a new world order
rooted in peace, justice,
and love of all.
Amen.

Saturday, December 21

Antiphon ~ O Radiant Dawn, Come

Scripture

Psalm 80:7 *Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved . . .*

Prayerful Reflection

O Radiant Dawn, Come~
Shine down your love on us all.
Disperse the clouds of night
that threaten to overwhelm us
on this winter solstice, the shortest of days.
Save us from despair.
Let us see your radiance
in all of creation,
in all of your creatures,
in all of your children,
that our hearts may burn with gladness.
Enkindle sparks of your light within us,
and summon us to share these
until the world is ablaze with your love,
and all earth is once again
restored to wholeness.
Amen.

.....

Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 22

Antiphon ~ O Ruler of All Nations, Come

Scripture

Psalm 80:2b *Stir up your might and come to save us!*

Prayerful Reflection

O Ruler of All Nations, Come~
On this fourth Sunday of Advent,
fill us with love.
Save us from selfishness, hatred, and greed.
Strengthen your hold upon all of our hearts
so that your rule of care, generosity,
and compassion for all people,
and all creation
may be made real in all the world.
Remind us that under your Dominion,
all living things are bound together.
Grant that we treat each other,
and this earth,
with the love you imbue in all.
Rule in our hearts
with the might of your love.
Amen.

Christmas: December 25, 2024

Begin reflections on **Monday, December 23**

Readings (Christmas Day - Proper 2)

Isaiah 9:2-7

Psalms 96

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)



“The human is the very garment with which my Son robed himself in royal splendor, showed himself as God of all creation and Life of all life.”

Meditations with Hildegard of Bingen, p. 113

Mary, O luminous mother,
holy, healing art!
. . . by your holy son you pour balm on death's wounds and travail.

Meditations with Hildegard of Bingen, p. 117

Monday, December 23

Antiphon ~ O Emmanuel, Come

Scripture

Luke 2:10-12 *But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”*

Prayerful Reflection

O Emmanuel, Come~
Prepare us to celebrate your child's birth,
who by becoming flesh
and dwelling among us
revealed the nature of your heart.
Through Jesus's caring presence,
compassion and forgiveness,
peacemaking and justice-seeking ways,
and willingness to sacrifice all for our sake,
you showed us how to live and how to love.
By your promise to be with us always,
may we be strengthened
to follow in his example,
embodying your loving presence
to the world through our lives.
Amen.

Tuesday, December 24

Antiphon ~ O God of Many Names, Come

Scripture

Isaiah 9:6 *For unto us a child is born . . .
One whose name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father
and Mother, Prince of Peace."*

Prayerful Reflection

O God of Many Names, Come~
As you came to make yourself known to us
in Jesus so long ago,
make yourself known to us again today.
In your myriad manifestations,
reveal to us your many dimensions.
Guide us with your wisdom,
O Wonderful Counselor.
Strengthen us with your power, O Mighty God.
Ground us in your eternal care,
O Everlasting Father and Mother.
Calm our anxious spirits, O Prince of Peace.
Open our hearts and minds to recognize you
in the endless ways you reveal yourself
in our lives and in our world.
Amen.

.....
Christmas Day, Wednesday, December 25

Antiphon ~ O Blessed Hope, Come

Scripture

Titus 2:11-13 *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all . . . [w]hile
we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God . . .*

Prayerful Reflection

O Blessed Hope, Come~
Save us from despair.
As we celebrate the gift of Christ's birth,
remind us that few people recognized
his saving power at his birth.
Grant us patience to believe
that your salvation is at work, healing us,
that your mercy is poured out, restoring us,
that your grace is alive,
sprouting up over all the earth
through your creation and creatures.
As long ago revealed by your child,
may your love and glory once again
be made manifest
through our words, prayers, and deeds,
through our very lives
today and always.
Amen.

Author's note:

I would welcome any of your thoughts, comments, suggestions, or reflections as you journey through this Advent season.

Please share comments on my Facebook page:

facebook.com/AdventReflections,

or email to: adventreflections2024@gmail.com.

I am deeply grateful for these communities that support and nurture me in my faith journey, and have enabled me to print these booklets and offer them free of charge:



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76 Bell St.
Chagrin Falls, OH 44022
440.247.6490
<https://fedchurch.org/>



The Community of St. Peter
7100 Euclid Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44103
216.431.1798
<https://www.communityofstpeter.org>

Thank you for journeying with me in prayer
through the Advent season!
In Christ's Peace,
Susi

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.....
May we, and all people on earth, experience the fullness of Christ's presence this
Christmas season,
and God's peace in our hearts
as we enter the new year.

And let us remember . . .
When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds
are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart.

The Work of Christmas
By Howard Thurman (adapted)

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