



Hope is Rising
Prayers of our Community
Advent 2010

Resurrection Covenant Church
Chicago, Illinois

HOW TO USE THIS PRAYER MANUAL

If you are wondering what on earth you were just handed, don't panic. This is not one more thing for you to do every day. This is a book designed to walk our community through Advent using Scripture and reflections.

It is a prayer book based largely on the rhythms and format of *The Divine Hours* books by Phyllis Tickle, whose prayer manuals guide Christians in a modern expression of a very old practice: praying at fixed hours of every day. The outcome of praying the hours is lending your voice to voices of the Church scattered across the world praying together.

The uniqueness of this prayer book is that not only are these prayers or "offices" blending Scripture with traditional Christian prayers, but also included are reflections from our own ResCov community.

You will find printed here daily offices for each day of Advent, from the first Sunday through Christmas day. The morning prayers are designed to start your day, praying between 6 and 9am. The evening prayers are designed to close your day, praying between 5 and 8pm. The morning prayers are adapted from Phyllis Tickle's book, *Christmastide*. The evening prayers are meditations from our community based on the weeks' lectionary texts. At the beginning of every week, you'll find the schedule of lectionary texts, to round out the context for what we are praying, as well as the standard text for the Lord's Prayer, which will be prayed daily.

Within the pages, you will find tiny asterisks (*); these are a signal for you to breathe. Deeply. Inhale and exhale. Slow down. These prayers are intended to be prayed while being bathed in Scripture; they're not one more thing to entertain you once *The Red Eye* is skimmed through. Use these little signals to calmly sink into the anticipation of Christ's Advent to our world.

Experiment with how you pray these prayers day by day. Pray out loud one day and silently the next. Pray in a group or in solitude. Sing the hymns. Savor these words all day and ruminate on them.

And on that morning when you have woken up late, grumpy and with no clean clothes, and the last thing that you want to do is pray, pray anyway! Refuse the temptation to write off the Holy Spirit's ability to overcome and transform. And remember that you are never praying alone. Remember that. Your community is praying with you every morning and every evening - one Church, one voice, and one hope in the Risen Christ who WAS and IS and IS TO COME.

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Sunday, November 28 through Saturday, December 4

LECTIONARY TEXTS

Isaiah 2:1-5

Psalm 122

Romans 13:11-14

Matthew 24:36-44

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 today our daily bread

And forgive 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.

Whoever sings, prays twice.

- St. Augustine

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,* in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.

Psalm 111:1

THE GOSPEL LESSON

But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. For as in the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know the day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house has known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

Matthew 24:36-44

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Come, You People of the Promise

Joy Patterson

Come, you people of the promise, sing for joy! The time is near!
God, the covenant fulfilling, soon among us will appear!
As proclaimed in prophet's story, Christ will come in humble glory—
God with us, Emmanuel!

Long in darkness we have waited, through the shadows made our way,
Gloom and sorry our companions as we longed for signs of day—
Great our need for hope and healing, some great light our God revealing,
God with us, Emmanuel!

God's own Son shall dwell among us; shadows vanish in that light.
Earth shall know his peace and justice: Christ who comes shall rule in might.
Let our joy dispel all sadness: he who comes turns tears to gladness—
God with us, Emmanuel!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise;* give thanks to him and call upon his Name.

Psalms 100:3

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In the days to come

The mountain of the Lord's house

Shall be established as the highest of the mountains,

and shall be raised above the hills;

all the nations shall stream to it.

Isaiah 2:1-2

THE VESPERS PSALM

I was glad when they said to me,

“Let us go to the house of the LORD!”

Psalms 122:1

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin... Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out my iniquity. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me, the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. *Amen.*

Psalms 51:1-2, 7-12

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Come unto us, Lord Jesus. For you we wait patiently, but with expectation, anticipation.

Wake us from our sleep; help us to cast off those things, which separate us from you.

Guide us in your brightness up to the mountain top and down into the sunken places.

Where you have built your temple, wherever it is that you dwell, we seek to follow your light and receive you there. *Amen.*

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Let my mouth be full of your praise* and your glory all the day long. *Psalm 71:8*

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment to you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in the reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Romans 13:11-14

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

O How Shall I Receive You

Paul Gerhardt

O how shall I receive you, how greet you, Lord, aright?
All nations long to see you, my hope, my heart's delight!
O kindle, Lord most holy, your lamp within my breast,
To do in spirit lowly all that please you best.

Your people palms are strewing, and branches fresh and fair;
My heart, its pow'rs renewing, an anthem shall prepare.
My soul puts off its sadness your glories to proclaim;
With all its strength and gladness it longs to serve your name.

Love caused your incarnation, love brought you down to me;
Your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.
O love beyond all telling that led you to embrace,
In love all love excelling, our lost and fallen race!

Rejoice then, you sad hearted, who sit in deepest gloom,
Who mourn for joy's departed and tremble at your doom.
He who alone can cheer you is standing at the door;
He brings his pity near you and bids you weep no more.

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Sing to the LORD a new song;* sing the LORD, all the whole earth.

For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised;* he is more to be feared than all gods.

Psalms 96:1, 4

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

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 instruction and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Isaiah 2:3

THE VESPERS PSALM

Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.

Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together.

To it the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the LORD.

For there the thrones for judgment were set up, the thrones of the house of David.

Psalms 122:2-5

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord, it is apparent that we are quick to preserve ourselves. Our words hold more defense than love; our actions protect our pride more than our neighbor's good. We give into despair more than we proclaim hope. Have mercy on us. Remember us. Let your words of resurrection and return ring in our ears that we might boldly love, defiantly hope and extend grace that does not make sense to neighbors and a world in need of you. *Amen.*

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

As a child, Christmas morning could not get here soon enough. Bedtime of December 24th found me lying awake, too worked up to be able to sleep. Anticipation of the coming presents and the worlds created from Lego and my imagination kept me from sleeping well. Any other day off would find me able to sleep till 8 or 9 in the morning, but Christmas morning, my parents were lucky if I made it till 6 am before waking up. This level of excited anticipation of events carries with me today. Just a few weeks ago, I was eagerly awaiting my chance to see a new movie that had been released. Anticipation and watchfulness. Events such as Christmas morning and movie releases are firm, set dates. We know when to expect them, we can know the day of the week December 25th actually falls on and plan our vacation time accordingly. We don't know and are not supposed to know the day of our Lord's return. Jesus tells us in Matthew 24 to remain watchful for the day the Lord is coming. Remain watchful. Not plan and save vacation time. We don't know. We live our lives in this anticipation and thank God for the chance to do so. We wait for the Lord. *Amen.*

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Come, let us sing to the Lord;* let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving* and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

Psalms 95:1-2

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment to you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in the reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Romans 13:11-14

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

“Wake, Awake for Night is Flying”

Philipp Nicolai

“Wake, awake for night is flying,” the watchmen on the heights are crying;

“Awake, Jerusalem, arise!”

Midnight hears the welcome voices and at the thrilling cry rejoices:

“Where are the virgins pure and wise? The Bridegroom comes: awake!

Your lamps with gladness take! Alleluia! With bridal care and faith’s bold pray’r,

To meet the Bridegroom, come, prepare!”

Zion hears the watchmen singing, and in her heart new joy is springing.

She wakes, she rises from her gloom.

For her Lord comes down all glorious and strong in grace, in truth victorious.

Her star is ris’n, her light is come!

Now come, O blessed One, Lord Jesus, God’s own Son.

Sing hosanna! We answer all in joy your call; we follow to the wedding hall.

Lamb of God, the heav’ns adore you, the saints and angles sing before you

With harp and cymbals clearest tone. Of one pearl each shining portal, where

Joining with the choir immortal, we gather round your radiant throne.

No eye has seen that light, no ear the echoed might of your glory;

Yet there shall we in victory sing shouts of joy eternally!

THE LORD’S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Open my lips, O Lord,* and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.* Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice,* but you take no delight in burnt-offerings. The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;* a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Psalm 51:16-18

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; 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 any more.

Isaiah 2:4-5

THE VESPERS PSALM

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

“May they prosper, they who love you.

Peace within your walls, and security within your towers.”

For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say to you, “Peace be within you.”

For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your good.

Psalm 122:6-9

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Who can understand the human heart? There is nothing else so deceitful; it is too sick to be healed. I, the Lord, search the minds and test the hearts of people. I treat each of them according to the way they live, according to what they do. Lord, heal me and I will be completely well; rescue me and I will be perfectly safe. You are the one I praise!

Amen.

Jeremiah 17:9-10

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

“The night is far spent. The day is at hand.”

- Madeleine L'Engle

Come, Lord Jesus! Do I dare
Cry: Lord Jesus, quickly come!
Flash the lightning in the air,
Crash the thunder on my home!
Should I speak this awful prayer?
Come, Lord Jesus, help me dare.

Come, Lord Jesus! Come this night
With your judgment and your power,
For the earth is dark with blight
And in sin we run and cower
Before the splendid raging sight
Of the breaking of the night.

Come, Lord Jesus! You I call
To come, come soon, are not the child
Who lay once in the manger stall,
Are not the infant meek and mild.
You come in judgment on our fall.
Help me to know on whom I call.

Come, my Lord! Our darkness end!
Break the bonds of time and space.
All the powers of evil rend
By the radiance of your face.
The laughing stars with joy attend.
Come, Lord Jesus! Be my end!

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Let us make a vow to the Lord our God and keep it;* let all around him bring gifts to him who is worthy to be feared.

Psalms 76:11

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment to you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in the reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Romans 13:11-14

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Hold My Heart

Tenth Avenue North

How long must I pray, must I pray to you?
How long must I wait, must I wait for you?
How long till I see your face, see you shining through
I'm on my knees, begging you to not test me.
I'm on my knees, Father will you turn to me?

I've been so afraid, afraid to close my eyes
So much can slip away before I say goodbye
But if there's no other way
I'm done asking why
Cause I'm on my knees begging you to turn to me
I'm on my knees, Father will you run to me?

So many questions without answers, Your promises still remain,
I can't see but I'll take my chances to hear you call my name.
One tear in the dropping rain, one voice in a sea of pain
Could the Maker of the stars, hear the sound of my breaking heart?
One light that all I am, right now I can barely stand
If you're everything you say you are, would you come close and hold my heart?

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O God, come to my assistance! O Lord, make haste to help me!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Come, let us sing to the Lord;* let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving* and raise a loud shout to him with
psalms. *Psalm 95:1-2*

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would
quake at your presence—as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to
boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble
at your presence! *Isaiah 64:1-9*

THE VESPERS PSALM

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame;
do not let my enemies exult over me.
Do not let those how wait for you be put to shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. *Psalm 80:1-3*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We confess to you, Lord what we are: we are not the people we like others to think we are;
we are afraid to admit even to ourselves what lies in the depth of our souls. But we do
not want to hide our true selves from you. We believe that you know us as we are, and
yet you love us. Help us not shrink from self-knowledge; give us the courage to put
our trust in your guiding and power. *Amen.*

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Lord, I have craved you since I was a child. That desire is the strongest thing within me.
Thank you, Lord, for saving me. I just want to love you with everything I have. You
have provided, but I will cherish you above your gifts. May we seek you instead of our
fullness. May we deliberately cut out the distractions. Challenge and encourage, Lord.
Show us what our daily bread is. Help us contemplate on your ways together. May the
future not be our fear. Bring your angels of healing on this land. We submit to you.

Speak, Lord. Your servants are awake and listening.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Know this: the Lord himself is God;* he himself has made us, and we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

Psalm 100:2

THE GOSPEL LESSON

But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. For as in the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know the day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house has known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

Matthew 24:36-44

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

O Promised One of Israel

Jane Parker Huber

O promised one of Israel by prophet long foretold.
We waited in urgency and hope to see God's will unfold.
The dark of night and cold predawn arouse our anxious fears.
Help us to see the light ahead through trials, doubts and tears.

In silent suffering some await your reign of justice here,
While others, dulled by wealth and ease, can not explain their fear.
When prophets spoke and Mary sang of tables overturned,
Dare we admit, in trembling awe, our hearts within us burned?

Creation stand alert and tense to see your sovereign power.
You choose to come a tiny child revealed this day and hour.
O grant us patience to receive without pretense or pride,
The gift of God's redeeming grace, a Savior by our side.

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O God, come to my assistance! O Lord, make haste to help me!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Come now and see the works of God,* how wonderful he is in his doing toward all people.
In his might he rules for ever; his eyes keep watch over the nations;* let no rebel rise up against him.

Psalm 66:4, 6

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
From ages past no one has heard, no eye has seen any God besides you,
who work for those who wait for him.

Isaiah 64:3-4

THE VESPERS PSALM

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 day long.

Psalm 80:4-5

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

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 our 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 REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Almost every good thing requires you to get ready. If you are having a party, getting married, going to college or having a baby—you need to get ready. You can't put it off to the last minute or pretend it's not going to happen. If a baby is coming it will be there whether you are ready or not! Advent is about getting ready. But in this case it is more important than a Christmas party! The gospel passage is a rather sober warning. There is joy in awaiting the coming of God, but there is risk as well. Jesus tells more than one parable about people who aren't ready: foolish virgins without oil; foolish servants who bury their master's money in the ground. So how do we get ready? In Romans 13:11-14 Paul tells the church in Rome to "put aside the deeds of darkness" and to clothe themselves with light. It is as simple and complex as that. You need to clean the house before the guests arrive for the party. You need to decorate the tree and cook the turkey. We get ready for God's arrival in the same way—sorrow, repentance, and renewed hope.

*Dear Lord, help me to get ready to receive you. Help me clean the house. Decorate my life with joy.
Amen*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Come now and see the works of God,* how wonderful he is in his doing toward all people.

Psalm 66:4

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment to you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in the reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Romans 13:11-14

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Hark, the Glad Sound!

Philip Doddridge

Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes, the Savior promised long;
Let every heart prepare a throng and every voice a song.

He comes the prisoners to release, in Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before him burst, the iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken heart to bind, the bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of his grace to enrich the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, the Prince of Peace, your welcome shall proclaim,
And heaven's eternal arches ring with your beloved name.

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord,* you that stand by night in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the holy place and bless the Lord;* the Lord who made heaven and earth bless you out of Zion. *Psalm 134*

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself, we have transgressed.
We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all are righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Isaiah 64:5-6

THE VESPERS PSALM

Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.

Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
According to your love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O LORD!

Psalm 80:6-7

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide and too deep to undo.

Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us the grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image; through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. *Amen.*

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

The Refrain: This life offers no guarantees.

I was reminded of this again during a conversation with Woody, one of our regular guests at the Warming Center. Life on the street is difficult and unpredictable. Scenarios change in a heartbeat and often times without warning. One moment your clothes are dry, the next soaked from a rain shower not forecasted by the meteorologist. Possessions are transient without permanent housing. One moment you can be minding your own business, the next in hand-cuffs being ushered into the back seat of a 19th precinct police car.

The Refrain: This life offers no guarantees.

I think Jesus makes a similar pronouncement when he declares, "But about that day or hour nobody knows..." He's speaking about the arrival of the Lord, and how for most this coming will be quite unexpected. And for this reason, we must keep watch. Those faithful to Jesus must be a people ever ready, standing guard attentively, in anticipation, and in hope of the God who is to come again.

Life's only guarantee is that God will come.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Come now and look upon the works of the Lord,*
what awesome things he has done on earth.

Psalm 46:9

THE GOSPEL LESSON

But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. For as in the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know the day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house has known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

Matthew 24:36-44

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates

George Weissel

Lift up your heads, O mighty gates: behold the King of glory waits!
The King of kings is drawing near, the Savior of the world here!

O blest the land, the city blest, where Christ the ruler is confessed!
O happy hearts and happy homes to whom this King of triumph comes!

Fling wide the portals of your heart: make it a temple set apart
From earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to you here, Lord abide!
Let me your inner presence feel: your grace and love in me reveal.

So come, my Sovereign, enter in! Let new and nobler life begin!
Your Holy Spirit guide us on, until the glorious crown be won.

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Bless our God, you peoples;* make the voice his praise to be heard;
Who holds our souls in life,* and will not allow our feet to slip.

Psalm 66:7-8

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

There is no one who calls on your name, or attempt to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

Do not be exceeding angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever.

Now consider, we are all your people.

Isaiab 64:7-9

THE VESPERS PSALM

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 decrees.

Psalm 80:8-10

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Forgive us for being so unsure of our good news and so un-ready to tell it. Raise us out of the paralysis of guilt into the freedom and life of forgiven people. For those who find forgiveness hard to give and harder to receive, we ask that you break their bondage and set them free through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Heavenly Father,

We come into your presence this day, seeking to know You better. We stand before You yearning for direction so that we may walk in Your way. Keep us from temptation and evil things that only lead us into darkness. Help us to remain focused on You. Help us to remind each other that this world is not our home; that better things are yet to come. We pray for patience and discipline while we wait. Help us not to be stagnate while we wait but active in our faith and in our witness to those who walk in the dark.

Give us the courage to reach out to our brothers and sister who have yet to know You.

We pray for peace here on earth both in our immediate communities and families and in and amongst the communities around the world. Keep us from selfish ambition.

Discipline us so that we will continually walk forward in Your truth, bettering ourselves and those around us. Help us not to interact with hate and malice towards one another and towards You. Soften our hearts. Prepare us for what is yet to come. We praise You this day for You are good. Thank You for calling us your sons and daughters and for giving us the gift of salvation, grace, and life everlasting. Thank you for giving us Your Son and for being a Father who cares. We love You and adore You.

In Your Sons' name we pray, Amen.

SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 5 - Saturday, December 11

LECTIONARY TEXTS:

Isaiah 11:1-10

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

Romans 15:4-13

Matthew 3:1-12

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 today our daily bread

And forgive 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.

Whoever sings, prays twice.

- St. Augustine

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

I will sing of mercy and justice;* to you, O Lord, will I sing praises.

Psalm 101:1

THE GOSPEL LESSON

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Matthew 3:1-12

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Liturgy of St. James

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly minded, For with blessing in His hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth, Our full homage to demand.

King of Kings, Yet born of Mary, As of old earth He stood,
Lord of Lords, In human vesture, In the body and the blood;
He will give to all the faithful. His own self for heavenly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven spreads its vanguard on the way,
As Light of light descendeth from the realms of endless day,
That the powers of hell may vanish as the darkness clears away.

At His feet the six-winged seraph, Cherubim, With sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to His presence as with ceaseless voice they cry:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Lord Most High!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Open my lips, O Lord,* and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Psalm 51:16

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

The spirit of the Lord shall rest on his, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of council and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

Isaiah 11:1-2

THE VESPERS PSALM

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son.

May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice.

Psalm 72

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin... Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out my iniquity. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me, the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. *Amen.*

Psalm 51:1-2, 7-12

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

From Plato's Republic to Thomas More's Utopia, we have always imagined a new order of cities and kingdoms – places where justice rules and love flourishes. In hope, we instinctively yearn and reach out for such kingdoms, which Christians believe to be glimpses of the kingdom. Yet all of our attempts to build it fail: every human community is, to some degree, both a source of justice and solidarity and potentially a threat to the well-being its members. Every revolution becomes a new regime; every social step forward comes at a real price. Our attempts to pour new wine into the wineskins of this world, while necessary, will always disappoint the human imagination – the sense that things are off-kilter, and that the earth is yet to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.

Thus, the one who can baptize with Spirit, and not just water, comes to meet us, to bring his kingdom to an earth awaiting it. We repent, not in order to set things aright, but rather to adopt a posture of anticipation toward the one who can and will do so. Utopia is present among us in the flesh, within us through the Spirit. Utopia has, literally, “no-place”, not because it is mere fancy, but because it might be every place, by God's grace.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Open my lips, O Lord,* and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Psalm 51:16

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

As it is written: "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing the praises of your name."

Again, it says, "Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people."

And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples extol him."

And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope."

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. *Romans 15:4-13*

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

The Light Will Come

Phil Wickham

To the one with the wounded heart; Years of fighting have left you scarred.

Wait, the light will come

To the one with the distant eyes; All this crying has left you dry

Wait, the light will come; Wait, the light will come

Here is laughter beyond the tears; Here is courage to face your fears

Look the light has come

So rise you daughters and stand you sons; Claim the victory that Jesus won

Look the light has come; Look the light has come

Lift your eyes, the sun has overcome the night

Come alive as we shine in love's true light.

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Come now and look upon the works of the Lord,*
what awesome things he has done on earth.

Psalm 46:9

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; 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 around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. *Isaiah 11:3-5*

THE VESPERS PSALM

May the mountain yield prosperity for the people,
And the hills, in righteousness.

Psalm 72:3

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord, it is apparent that we are quick to preserve ourselves. Our words hold more defense than love; our actions protect our pride more than our neighbor's good. We give into despair more than we proclaim hope. Have mercy on us. Remember us. Let your words of resurrection and return ring in our ears that we might boldly love, defiantly hope and extend grace that does not make sense to neighbors and a world in need of you. *Amen.*

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Lord God, Almighty and Everlasting Father: We are a people living in the "in between."
As we celebrate the birth of our Savior so long ago, we wait again for the coming Christ. But as we live in the joy of this time, we cannot help but see the ways in which our world is broken.

We pray with our community for the needs of our church and world: for those who are sick, for those who are down-trodden; for our friends who are experiencing homelessness, and for those caught up in the stress of school and work; for the deep sins and oppressions suffered by your people each day, all over the world. We also give you praise, Lord, for the many blessings and protections you work out in our lives. We pray that you continue to prompt us to bring pieces of your Kingdom to our world in the hope of the coming Christ.

We watch and wait in the hope of Jesus' return: for the peaceful kingdom, for the right ordering of our world. As we wait, not in inactivity, but following Christ's example here on earth, grant us the patience to live in the wilderness with the words of John the Baptist: waiting for the return of the one who is more powerful than we, the one whose sandals we are not worthy to carry.

"May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 4:5-6).

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Bless God in the congregation;* bless the Lord, you that are of the fountain of Israel.

Psalm 68:26

THE GOSPEL LESSON

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Matthew 3:1-12

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Hark! A Thrilling Voice

Latin Hymn

Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding. "Christ is nigh," it seems to say;
"Cast away the works of darkness, O ye children of the day."

Wakened by the solemn warning, let the earth-bound soul arise;
Christ, her Sun, all sloth dispelling, shines upon the morning skies.

Lo! the Lamb, so long expected, comes with pardon down from heaven;
let us all, with tears of sorrow, pray that we may be forgiven;

that when next he comes with glory, and the world is wrapped in fear,
with his mercy he may shield us, and with words of love draw near.

Honor, glory, might, and blessing to the Father and the Son,
with the everlasting Spirit, while eternal ages run.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;* make music to our God upon the harp. *Psalm 147:7*

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling 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 asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. *Isaiah 11:6-8*

THE VESPERS PSALM

May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
Give deliverance to the needy, And crush the oppressor. *Psalm 72:4*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Who can understand the human heart? There is nothing else so deceitful; it is too sick to be healed. I, the Lord, search the minds and test the hearts of people. I treat each of them according to the way they live, according to what they do. Lord, heal me and I will be completely well; rescue me and I will be perfectly safe. You are the one I praise!
Amen. Jeremiah 17:9-10

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

"A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"

God,

As I prepare my heart to welcome the Christ child, I find it difficult to understand these words. I am humbled, and ready and willing to repent. I am waiting in anticipation, full of excitement and awe, eager to encounter Jesus. However, I am also overwhelmed, wondering what is required of me as I welcoming the Christ. I know that I am called to do justice, love mercy

and walk humbly with you. I know that I am called to love my neighbor. I know that I am called to love you first. These are tall orders though God, and there are times when I do not even fully

comprehend what these instructions look like manifested in my everyday life. So I come to you, in anticipation, asking for your guidance, show me how to live a life that is a reflection of your grace.

Teach me how to humble myself before you, give me the wisdom to know what is required of me, and the strength to come before you when I am not sure where else to begin.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous,* and give thanks to his holy Name. *Psalm 97:12*

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

As it is written: "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing the praises of your name."

Again, it says, "Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people."

And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples extol him."

And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope."

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. *Romans 15:4-13*

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Panis Angelicus

The angelic bread
becomes the bread of men;
The heavenly bread
ends all prefigurations:
What wonder!
consumes the Lord
a poor and humble servant.

Triune God,
We beg of you,
that you visit us,
as we worship you.
By your ways,
lead us who seek
the light in which you dwell.

Amen.

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me.
O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me.
O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, grant me your peace.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Come, let us sing to the Lord,* let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

Psalm 95:1

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. On that day, the root of Jess shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Isaiah 11:9-10

THE VESPERS PSALM

May he live while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.

Psalm 72:5

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We confess to you, Lord what we are: we are not the people we like others to think we are; we are afraid to admit even to ourselves what lies in the depth of our souls. But we do not want to hide our true selves from you. We believe that you know us as we are, and yet you love us. Help us not shrink from self-knowledge; give us the courage to put our trust in your guiding and power. *Amen.*

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

When sunlight greets a brand new day,
I pause to say a silent prayer
Of thanks for safety through the night.
And for Gods tender loving care.
I pray to great each stranger with
A smile to brighten up their day,
And guidance for my footsteps, too,
That this day I'll not go astray.
I pray that my actions will reflect,
The grace and love God's given me,
That others might have the desire
To follow Him eternally

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;* let the whole earth tremble before him.

Psalm 96:9

THE GOSPEL LESSON

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire." *Matthew 3:1-12*

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

Johan Orearius

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.

For the herald's voice is crying in the desert far and near, Bidding all men to repentance, Since the kingdom now is here. O 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.

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 the earth is shed abroad, and all flesh shall see the token that His Word is never broken.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

God is the Lord; he has shined upon us;* form a procession with branches
up to the horns of the altar. *Psalm 118:27*

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has
been completed, that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. *Isaiah 40:1-2*

THE VESPERS PSALM

May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,
Like showers that water the earth.
In his days may righteousness flourish
And peace about until the moon is no more. *Psalm 72:6-7*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

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 our 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 REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

I don't know for sure, but I think it's safe to say that John the Baptist stood out from the
crowd. The camel hair clothing. Eating locusts and wild honey. It's possible that some
of those things were regular...but it certainly stands out in the text as a tad different.
John stood out and people took notice - both in good ways and bad. It makes me think
about how I stand out, or don't, in my community. For all intents and purposes, I blend
in with the crowd. I wear similar clothing, have a similar hair style, and eat the same
food as a lot of people around me. Looking at me, one could not tell I'm a Christian.
Even in what I do for a living, what I study at school, what I do in my spare time...
nothing really sets me apart from the crowds. Even partaking in community service or
helping various non-profits that help others in need doesn't set Christians apart from
everyone else. I think I've come to like how I blend in. It's like camouflage. I don't have
to face difficult decisions or circumstances if I blend in.

John didn't try to blend in. He stood out and proclaimed the coming of Christ boldly - no
hesitation. He certainly had to face difficult circumstances because of it as well. Not
that I think all Christians should stand on street corners yelling "REPENT!" or take
to eating locusts. But, we should consider how we can stand out for Christ. What can
we do in our daily lives to set ourselves apart and show people that we are living for
Christ? I don't have the answers. But this Advent season, I am praying to God to help
guide me in my life. Am blending in with the crowds as a way to avoid being challenged
in my walk with Christ? Are there things in my life that need changing, and I'm afraid
because I'll stand out more and lose my camouflage? I'm praying for God to help me
in these ways, and I encourage you to do the same.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Know this: the Lord himself is God;* he himself has made us, and we are his; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture. *Psalms 100:2*

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

As it is written: "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing the praises of your name."

Again, it says, "Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people."

And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples extol him."

And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope."

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. *Romans 15:4-13*

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Deliver Us

Andrew Peterson

Our enemy, our captor is no pharaoh on the Nile
Our toil is neither mud nor brick nor sand
Our ankles bear no calluses from chains, yet Lord, we're bound
Imprisoned here, we dwell in our own land
Deliver us, deliver us;
Oh Yahweh, hear our cry and gather us beneath your wings tonight
Our sins they are more numerous than all the lambs we slay
These shackles they were made with our own hands
Our toil is our atonement and our freedom yours to give
So Yahweh, break your silence if you can
'Jerusalem, Jerusalem; How often I have longed
to gather you beneath my gentle wings'

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Taste and see that the Lord is good;* happy are they who trust in him! *Psalm 34:8*

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.
And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken." *Isaiah 40:3-5*

THE VESPERS PSALM

May his name endure forever,
His fame continue as long as the sun.
May all nations be blessed in him; may they pronounce him happy. *Psalm 72:17*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide and too deep to undo.
Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what
has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we can-
not change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us the grace to
grow more and more in your likeness and image; through Jesus Christ, the light of the
world. *Amen.*

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

In advent all of creation is in suspense waiting for the day when we remember and celebrate Christ coming to earth in human form. It is a season of darkness and of silence and reflection. It is a time to contemplate the mystery of a God in silence and awe. The days are shortest during advent, the trees and plants have all lost their leaves and gone dormant, the birds do not sing, the world turns cold, dark and monochrome. It is all a part of the rhythm and the patterns of this world. Advent is a time to remember the birth of Christ but more importantly for me it is a season of anticipation and hope. Hope for when Christ will again come and will redeem what we have ravaged, mutilated and sabotaged. We long for a very real time when the King of kings will make right the toxic, stagnant place that his creation has become. My heart aches for a time when righteousness and justice will prevail. This season when you see the Christmas lights, let it remind you of the light that came into the darkness and that will again come to illuminate the world and bring an end to the darkness.

Father God, Redeemer: Come into our lives this season to fill us with light. Renew in us the expectancy and hope that you will restore your creation. Give us opportunities today to participate in bringing your kingdom to this earth now. Encourage us today that we might not grow bitter and cynical. Remind us of the love that you had in coming to earth, help us to stay humble and spread that love. Christ, fill us with the fruit of the spirit and your peace, which transcends understanding. Unified as one church body we pray these things in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Know this: the Lord himself is God;* he himself has made us, and we are his; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

Psalms 100:2

THE GOSPEL LESSON

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire." *Matthew 3:1-12*

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

Charles Coffin

On Jordan's bank, the Baptist's cry announces that the Lord is nigh;
awake, and hearken, for he brings glad tidings of the King of kings!

For Thou art our Salvation, Lord, Our Refuge, and our great Reward.
Without Thy grace we waste away, Like flowers that wither and decay.

To heal the sick stretch out Thine hand, And bid the fallen sinner stand;
Shine forth, and let Thy light restore Earth's own true loveliness once more.

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Come, let us sing to the Lord;* let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving* and raise a loud shout to him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God,* and a great king above all gods. *Psalms 95:1-3*

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

A voice says, "Cry out." And I said, "What shall I cry?"

"All people are like grass, and all human faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them.

Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever."

You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!"

See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

Isaiah 40:6-10

THE VESPERS PSALM

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever; may his glory fill the whole earth. *Amen and Amen. Psalm 72:18-19*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Forgive us for being so unsure of our good news and so un-ready to tell it. Raise us out of the paralysis of guilt into the freedom and life of forgiven people. For those who find forgiveness hard to give and harder to receive, we ask that you break their bondage and set them free through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

From John to John

The words of John are hardly comforting. There is an image of a brood of vipers and an ax lying at the foot of the tree. The tree will be cut down and thrown into the fire if it does not produce good fruit. These are the passages I stumble over, they make me walk like I have a rock in my shoe. I'm uncomfortable. I don't want to think about the tree with an ax lying on the ground next to it or a viper. John's words make me squirm.

In the same way, I had the squirming feeling when talking to one of the guys at the Warming Center. What can I say when he is facing cancer, homelessness and a job that just doesn't cover the middle, much less, make ends meet? Where is hope in that?

But what I realized and what I am realizing is that John continues. In his next breath, he says, "One who is more powerful than I is coming." THAT is the hope. In the reality of cancer, dead-end jobs, draining relationships, all the weight we carry—we have Jesus.

From the stump comes a green shoot, from the cancer comes healing, from the broken comes healing, from the Virgin comes a baby and from death comes life. Come, Lord Jesus!

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 12 - Saturday, December 18

LECTIONARY TEXTS:

Isaiah 35:1-10

Psalm 146:5-10

James 5:7-10

Matthew 11:2-11

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 today our daily bread

And forgive 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.

Whoever sings, prays twice.

- St. Augustine

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Hallelujah! 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

Psalm 146:1

THE GOSPEL LESSON

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Matthew 11:2-11

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

12th Century Latin Hymn

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 thee Oh, Israel.

O come thou Day-spring come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here,
and drive away the shades of night, and pierce the clouds and give us light

Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee Oh, Israel.

O come thou Key of David come, and open wide our heavenly home;
make sage the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery

Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee Oh, Israel.

O come desire of nations come, bind all peoples in one heart and mind,
bind envy strife and quarrels cease fill all the world with heavens peace.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Hallelujah! Praise the Lord from the heavens;* praise him in the heights. *Psalm 148:1*

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

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.

Isaiah 35:1-2a

THE VESPERS PSALM

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!

Psalm 146:1

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin... Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out my iniquity. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me, the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. *Amen.*

Psalm 51:1-2, 7-12

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Each of these Bible passages talk about how God takes care of his children and how we should respond. In Isaiah 35:1-10, the author gives an example of how we should praise God for his blessings and his promise of redemption. Both Psalm 146 and the passage in James send similar messages. Like Isaiah 35, these passages show examples of how to praise God for his love for us. James 5 focuses more on how God will provide for us in the future. It reminds us to take heart in our current struggles and wait patiently for blessings to come.

The passage from Matthew shows how God provides for us in a little different way than the other passages. The passage starts out with Jesus' talking about how he blesses others. He then tells the people that John the Baptist is the greatest person to have lived and then goes on to say that all those who will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven are greater than John. This idea confused me at first but I came to the conclusion that once we have accepted the salvation found in Christ's resurrection, we become a part of the Kingdom of Heaven and so we become even greater than John the Baptist.

My point is not to take pride in knowing that Jesus has said that we are greater than John the Baptist. Instead it is the idea if God was blessing the lives of those who were not of the Kingdom of Heaven and the life of John the Baptist, we can take assurance in knowing that God will certainly bless us, whom Jesus has seen greatness in.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Bless the Lord, you angels of his, you mighty ones who do his bidding,*
and hearken to the voice of his word.

Bless the Lord, all you his hosts,* you ministers of his who do his will.

Bless the Lord, all you works of his,* in all places of his dominion... *Psalm 103:20-22*

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. *James 5:7-10*

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Charles Wesley

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.

Israel's strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear Desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver, Born a Child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us for ever, Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.

By Thine own eternal Spirit Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all-sufficient merit Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Let us praise the Lord, whom the Angels are praising,
whom the Cherubim and Seraphim proclaim: Holy, holy, holy!

The Short Breviary

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Let the Name of the Lord be blessed,* from this time forth for evermore.

From the rising of the sun to its going down* let the Name of the Lord be praised.

Psalm 113:2-3

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.

Isaiah 35:2b

THE VESPERS PSALM

I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

Psalm 146:2

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord, it is apparent that we are quick to preserve ourselves. Our words hold more defense than love; our actions protect our pride more than our neighbor's good. We give into despair more than we proclaim hope. Have mercy on us. Remember us. Let your words of resurrection and return ring in our ears that we might boldly love, defiantly hope and extend grace that does not make sense to neighbors and a world in need of you. *Amen.*

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

As followers of Jesus, we remember this powerful time of our year. We expectantly wait in anticipation for the hope found through the incarnation of God. We do this in awe of His grandeur and we are overwhelmed by His humility. How is it that the Creator, the King of Kings, the Sustainer of life, the One who put the universe in motion became like us? We remember and are thankful for His name, Immanuel, the God who is with us.

Father, not only are You God of the universe but you are also Immanuel. You are God with us. Our prayer is that we would never forget Your breaking into our world through Jesus. We remember that even though you deserved royal treatment you instead chose to enter into humanity in humility.

God we thank You for Joseph and his noble heart. Thank You for his willingness to be faithful even to the point of risking his reputation. May we have the courage to be like Joseph today.

Almighty Lord in anticipation we remember Your story and are grateful for inviting us to partake in Your wonderful narrative.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Come, let us sing to the Lord;* let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation

Psalm 103:20-22

THE GOSPEL LESSON

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Matthew 11:2-11

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Glory Be

Mike Cosper

It was the longest night; The world was waiting
Eager for the light; The world was waiting

Oh Come, Come Messiah

Sing for joy all the earth
Messiah's come to set you free
Join the angels in their song
Glory Be! Glory Be!

It was the longest night; My heart was waiting
Eager for the light; My heart was waiting

Hallelujah, the Lord of life has come; To reconcile the nations to their God
Hallelujah, he's coming back again; To finish what began in Bethlehem.

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Praise the Lord, all you nations;* laud him, all you peoples. For his loving-kindness toward us is great,* and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever... *Psalms 117:1-2*

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.

Say to those who are of a fearful heart,

“Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.”

Isaiah 35:3-4

THE VESPERS PSALM

Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help.

When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish.

Psalms 146:3-4

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Who can understand the human heart? There is nothing else so deceitful; it is too sick to be healed. I, the Lord, search the minds and test the hearts of people. I treat each of them according to the way they live, according to what they do. Lord, heal me and I will be completely well; rescue me and I will be perfectly safe. You are the one I praise!

Amen.

Jeremiah 17:9-10

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

I have always been fascinated with the sky and stars. I have been known to just stand outside for as long as possible waiting for a shooting star or satellite or something. What has always made me stop is that the Big Dipper no longer dips in the winter, but rather forms a giant question mark in the sky as if to say, “How long will this season last?”

John’s question in Matthew is not one of doubt but seems to be one of longing. He had been preaching in the wilderness. His life was singled out for preparing the world for the Messiah. He longed to know that he had prepared the world for the right Messiah.

Jesus’ response is not one of “tsk, you should know this” or “you of little faith”. His response is more, “John, look up! Look at the deeds that have been done. Hear the stories of things taking place. Take courage! Look up!”

Lord, in our longing and questions, bring to our minds the deeds you have done and the things you are doing so we might have faith and courage to walk with you and prepare the way for your return.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord;*

let all flesh bless his holy Name for ever and ever.

Psalm 145:22

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. *James 5:7-10*

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

People, Look East

Eleanor Farjeon

People, look east. The time is near Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able, Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the guest, is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, One more seed is planted there:
Give up your strength the seed to nourish, That in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the rose, is on the way.

Birds, though you long have ceased to build, Guard the nest that must be filled.
Even the hour when wings are frozen, God for fledging time has chosen.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the bird, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather, Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the star, is on the way.

Angels, announce with shouts of mirth Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming, With the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Lord, is on the way

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O God, come to my assistance! O Lord, make haste to help me!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Praise the Lord, all you nations;* laud him, all you peoples. For his loving-kindness toward us is great,* and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Hallelujah! *Psalm 117*

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

Isaiah 35:5-6a

THE VESPERS PSALM

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their 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.

Psalm 146:5-7a

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We confess to you, Lord what we are: we are not the people we like others to think we are; we are afraid to admit even to ourselves what lies in the depth of our souls. But we do not want to hide our true selves from you. We believe that you know us as we are, and yet you love us. Help us not shrink from self-knowledge; give us the courage to put our trust in your guiding and power. *Amen.*

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

As we read in Matthew 11: 2-11, John the Baptist who is imprisoned sends his disciples to ask Christ, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" Jesus recalls for them the words of Isaiah: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and good news is preached to the poor. John's disciples see and hear these miracles, and are reminded that this is what was long ago promised and prophesied about Jesus' life and the time of salvation. The Messiah's arrival was not marked by banners and armies, but by healing people and transforming lives. It is through our actions as well that we are recognized as followers of Christ. Not through books we write about ourselves, or titles we give ourselves, or celebrations we have for ourselves, but through living like the kingdom is already present on earth. We may be expecting the new creation to come in a big way, but through Christ it has already begun.

May the hope of the resurrection, the hope of God's kingdom coming on earth, free us to live as advanced foretastes of His new creation.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Open my lips, O Lord,* and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Psalm 51:16

THE GOSPEL LESSON

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Matthew 11:2-11

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Wait for the Lord

Taize Community

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near;
Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart.

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Be, Lord, my helper and forsake me not. Do not despise me, O God, my savior.

The Short Breviary

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving*
and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

Psalm 95:2

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

Isaiah 35:6b-7

THE VESPERS PSALM

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.

Psalm 146:7b-8

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

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 our 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 REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

There is a loneliness to doubt. I wonder if the cold shudder of my lack of faith will cut me through if I whisper it to another. John has wrestled long enough. He is done pretending. His prayers are hollow. He has to know; he has to ask, “Did I do the right thing? Are you the Messiah, Jesus?”

Jesus responds to our doubts in the same way. He points to the works of his hand. The lives restored, the good news is reaching the poor. The castoffs are brought home. There is reconciliation. There is healing. There is a new kingdom. The response is not condescending. It is a reminder of the hand of God.

God, in your great mercy you have allowed us mortals to step into your plan and act. You call us to walk on water but frankly, sometimes, it's hard to even get into your boat. Thank you for your power to transform lives, your strength break free from the bondage of addictions, your healing balm of love to restore what is broken to how it should be and your deep, cool grace that we can only gulp deeply. Whisper to us your truth so we have the courage to follow you—even onto the water in the middle of the storm.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

I will call upon God,* and the Lord will deliver me.

In the evening, in the morning, and at noonday, I will complain and lament,*
and he will hear my voice.

He will bring me safely back . . . * God, who is enthroned of old, will hear me.

Psalm 55:17ff

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

James 5:7-10

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Long Ago, Prophets Knew

Fred Pratt Green

Long ago, prophets knew
Christ would come, born a Jew,
come to make all things new;
bear his people's burden,
freely love and pardon.

Mary hail! Though afraid,
she believed, she obeyed.
In her womb, God is laid:
till the time expected,
nurtured and protected.

God in time, God in man,
this is God's timeless plan:
He will come, as a man,
born himself of woman,
God divinely human:

Journey ends! Where afar
Bethlehem shines, like a star,
stable door stands ajar.
unborn Son of Mary,
Savior, do not tarry!

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O God, come to my assistance! O Lord, make haste to help me!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

I will call upon the Lord,* and so shall I be saved from my enemies.

Psalm 18:3

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall 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.

Isaiah 35:8-9

THE VESPERS PSALM

The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

Psalm 146:9

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide and too deep to undo.

Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us the grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image; through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. *Amen.*

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

“Be strong, do not fear!”

“Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God”

“Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord”

These words offer encouragement and hope in a time clouded by distress, darkness and despair. But what is so uplifting in these exhortations is that what we wait and hope for is not a mystery. It is the redemption and restoration of God's world! It is life - new and wholly complete. The texts all provide beautiful glimpses of this unbroken world. Sickness, pains and diseases are healed! The oppressed and trampled are lifted up and their dignity restored! The parts of the earth laid to waste by drought and scorching heat suddenly break forth with water and new life! The Lord is coming to make right the muddled, crazy mess of this world.

In the midst of so much confusion, so much hurt and so much injustice, it is extremely difficult to hold on to hope. For many, hope is not only fleeting but has often failed us. God's promises of mercy and justice seem far removed from our daily lives. Fortunately, hope is not deterred and not dependent on our ability to comprehend it. The hope of redemption in the coming Christ is offered to us always, over and over. It is given to us freely and will encourage and strengthen us as often as we return to it.

Friends, the wait may be long, but our hope is clear.

“Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.”

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Proclaim with me the greatness of the Lord;* let us exalt his Name together. *Psalms 34:3*

THE GOSPEL LESSON

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. *Matthew 11:2-11*

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

My Deliverer

Rich Mullins

Joseph took his wife and her child and they went to Africa
To escape the rage of a deadly king. There along the banks of the Nile,
Jesus listened to the song that the captive children used to sing
They were singin`

My Deliverer is coming - my Deliverer is standing by

My Deliverer is coming - my Deliverer is standing by

Through a dry and thirsty land, water from the Kenyon heights
Pours itself out of Lake Sangra's broken heart
There in the Sahara winds Jesus heard the whole world cry
For the healing that would flow from His own scars
The world was singing

My Deliverer is coming - my Deliverer is standing by

My Deliverer is coming - my Deliverer is standing by

He will never break His promise - He has written it upon the sky

My Deliverer is coming - my Deliverer is standing by

I will never doubt His promise though I doubt my heart, I doubt my eyes

My Deliverer is coming - my Deliverer is standing by

He will never break His promises though the stars should break faith with the sky

My Deliverer is coming - my Deliverer is standing by

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Come now and look upon the works of the Lord,*
what awesome things he has done on earth.

Psalms 46:9

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Isaiah 35:10

THE VESPERS PSALM

The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!

Psalms 146:10

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Forgive us for being so unsure of our good news and so un-ready to tell it. Raise us out of the paralysis of guilt into the freedom and life of forgiven people. For those who find forgiveness hard to give and harder to receive, we ask that you break their bondage and set them free through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Mary's Magnificat has been sung and performed by hundreds, if not thousands of singers over the years. The versions I have heard and sung seem to confirm the popular opinion of young Mary as a sweet, innocent, gentle, doe-eyed girl—dressed in blue—who loved Jehovah enough to sacrifice her life for the sake of the Kingdom.

*My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.*

*From now on all generations will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.
His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.*

I bought into the myth and sang the beautiful words of the first half of her song...

Then I read the whole song and everything changed. I began to understand that the girl-woman God chose to be his mother (the mother of the God-man, God in flesh, God with us) was anything but meek and mild... Mary's song reveals that she was both God-lover and Rome-hater. Both submissive to God and subversive to the Roman conquerors.

*He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
He has brought down rulers from their thrones.*

Our Advent-Christmas icon, the Virgin Mary, was a rebel and it was that rebel who helped nurture and teach the One who came to liberate us from the tyranny of our sin-slavery. God chose his mother carefully. God made no mistake. His mother helped form the Man who is our Rebel King.

"You keep us waiting. You, the God of all time, Want us to wait. For the right time in which to discover Who we are, where we are to go, Who will be with us, and what we must do. So thank you ... for the waiting time." (*John Bell*)

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 19 - Saturday, December 25

LECTIONARY TEXTS:

Isaiah 7:10-16

Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19

Romans 1:1-7

Matthew 1:18-25

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 today our daily bread

And forgive 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.

Whoever sings, prays twice.

- St. Augustine

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Sing to the Lord and bless his Name;* proclaim the good news of his salvation
from day to day.

Declare his glory among the nations* and his wonders among all peoples.

For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;* he is more to be feared than all gods.

Psalm 34:3

THE GOSPEL LESSON

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Luke 1:26-33

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

Laurentius Laurentii

Rejoice, rejoice, believers, And let your lights appear; The evening is advancing, And darker night is near. The bridegroom is arising And soon is drawing nigh. Up, pray and watch and wrestle; At midnight comes the cry.

The watchers on the mountain Proclaim the bridegroom near; Go forth as He approaches With alleluias clear. The marriage feast is waiting; The gates wide open stand. Arise, O heirs of glory; The bridegroom is at hand.

The saints, who here in patience Their cross and sufferings bore, Shall live and reign forever When sorrow is no more. Around the throne of glory The Lamb they shall behold; In triumph cast before Him Their diadems of gold.

Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear; Arise, O Sun so longed for, Over this benighted sphere. With hearts and hands uplifted, We plead, O Lord, to see the day of earth's redemption That sets Your people free!

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O Lord, hear my prayer and let my cry come unto you. Thanks be to God.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Open my lips, O Lord,* and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Psalm 51:16

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, "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." Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

Isaiah 7:10-16

THE VESPERS 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!

Psalm 80:1-2

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin... Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out my iniquity. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me, the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. *Amen.*

Psalm 51:1-2, 7-12

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

In this week's readings we are presented with the many sides of God. Giver, Shepherd, angered against people, cause of sorrow, Almighty, Holy, Immanuel. It is difficult for my mind to understand the compassion of God as well as his righteous anger. This difficulty and confusion makes me long to have walked with the human person of Jesus. During this Christmas season, I have been experiencing a recurrence of ambiguity... an experience of multi-layered interpretation of the events in my life. And just as I would prefer to see God as one or another, I would prefer to not have to experience this ambiguity in areas that are inextricably tied to my identity, family, relationships and purpose. But my wishing is in vain and I realize that though I would initially prefer to be on one side of the balance, it inevitably means that I miss out on what the other side offers. Thus, as we consider the intensity and fullness of all of God, may we do it with a willingness to hold all interpretations of His person in balance. And as that is difficult in the human experience, may we call on the fleshy-divinity of Jesus to show us what that looked like here on earth. May we utilize Immanuel, His "with-us-ness" to do this and may we experience great joy and fullness in its pursuit.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Love the Lord, all you who worship him;* the Lord protects the faithful,
but repays to the full those who act haughtily.

Be strong and let your heart take courage,* all you who wait for the Lord. *Psalm 31:23-24*

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. *Romans 8:1-7*

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

Sabine Baring-Gould

The angel Gabriel from heaven came, his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
"All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary, most highly favored lady," Gloria!

"For know a blessed Mother thou shalt be, all generations laud and honor thee,
thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold, most highly favored lady," Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head, "To me be as it pleaseth God," she said,
"my soul shall laud and magnify his holy Name." Most highly favored lady, Gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say—

"Most highly favored lady," Gloria!

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

In the evening, in the morning, and at noonday, I will complain and lament,*
and he will hear my voice. *Psalm 55:18*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Be joyful in God, all you lands;* sing the glory of his Name; sing the glory of his praise. Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! . . .

All the earth bows down before you,* sings to you, sings out your Name." *Psalm 66:1-3*

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labour has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

Micah 5:2-3

THE VESPERS PSALM

Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

Psalm 80:3

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord, it is apparent that we are quick to preserve ourselves. Our words hold more defense than love; our actions protect our pride more than our neighbor's good. We give into despair more than we proclaim hope. Have mercy on us. Remember us. Let your words of resurrection and return ring in our ears that we might boldly love, defiantly hope and extend grace that does not make sense to neighbors and a world in need of you. *Amen.*

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Consider it from Joseph's perspective. Dreams and angelic appearances notwithstanding, it was a risk to go ahead with the wedding. No doubt there would be sly looks, winks and whispers about Mary's obvious pregnancy. No man likes to be considered a cuckold. In a culture where honor and shame were extremely important it would be a severe blow to family honor for Mary to bear a baby out of wedlock and for Joseph to do nothing about it. Mary, of course, took significant risks as well. She risked her reputation, her marriage, her future happiness, and perhaps even her life by bearing this child. We look at the scene through a nostalgic holiday fog. But bearing, raising and loving the Messiah was a risky business! But suppose they had not taken the risk? Suppose Joseph had not followed through with the marriage or even insisted Mary be stoned in accordance with the law? Suppose Mary had told God to find someone else to be mother of the Messiah? Surely God would have found another means to carry out his will. But Joseph and Mary would have missed the opportunity to participate in the very salvation of the world. Their lives would be safe, but impoverished. Following Jesus is a risky business. But not following him is even riskier.

God help me to be open to risks for the sake of your good purposes. Help me to trust you with my life even when I am afraid.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Come and listen, all you who fear God,* and I will tell you what he has done for me.

Psalm 66:14

THE GOSPEL LESSON

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:34-38

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Joy To the World

Isaac Watts

Joy to the World, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
Let Heaven and nature sing, Let Heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the World, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love, and wonders of His love.

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below;
praise him above, you heavenly hosts; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. *Doxology*

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth;
and he shall be the one of peace. *Micah 5:4-5a*

THE VESPERS PSALM

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 the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among themselves.
Psalm 80:4-6

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Who can understand the human heart? There is nothing else so deceitful; it is too sick to
be healed. I, the Lord, search the minds and test the hearts of people. I treat each of them
according to the way they live, according to what they do. Lord, heal me and I will be com-
pletely well; rescue me and I will be perfectly safe. You are the one I praise! *Amen.*
Jeremiah 17:9-10

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Oh Lord our God,
You came among us as one of us.

Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth,
conceived of the Holy Spirit, and reared by Mary and Joseph.

In obedience of your self same word:
The virgin will be with child, and you will call him...

Jesus because he will save us from our sins,
Immanuel because you are truly God with us.

Oh Lord our God,
come among us this day, full of grace and truth.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Hallelujah! 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.

Psalms 146:1

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,
To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:1-7

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Come, Lord Jesus

Carey Landry

Come, Lord Jesus; come, Lord Jesus;
Come, Lord Jesus; come and be born in our hearts.

Come, O Prince of Peace; come, O Prince of Peace;
Come, O Prince of Peace; come, and be born in our hearts.

Come, Emmanuel; come, Emmanuel;
Come, Emmanuel; come, and be born in our hearts.

THE SMALL VERSE

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone.

Isaiah 9:1

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

But I will call upon God,* and the Lord will deliver me.

In the evening, in the morning, and at noonday, I will complain and lament,*
and he will hear my voice.

He will bring me safely back . . . God, who is enthroned of old, will hear me.

Psalm 55:17ff

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'

Jeremiah 33:14-16

THE VESPERS PSALM

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

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We confess to you, Lord what we are: we are not the people we like others to think we are; we are afraid to admit even to ourselves what lies in the depth of our souls. But we do not want to hide our true selves from you. We believe that you know us as we are, and yet you love us. Help us not shrink from self-knowledge; give us the courage to put our trust in your guiding and power. *Amen.*

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Abba, we are so close to Christmas, we can almost taste it. We are humming the songs, wrapping the gifts and making the food. In the midst of our bustling, remind us anew of the significance of this time. Let us hear the stories again, as if for the first time. May our hearts burn with the excitement when the angel spoke! Let us see Mary and Joseph as people, not just names on a page. Remind us of the sheer audacity of believing that you came to earth as a baby, born to a virgin. Whisper to us, the songs of deliverance so that whatever comes, we are confident in our Prince of Peace.

Praise to the God who hears our cry, who strengthens the weak, who came in humility and who will return again!

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is our God,* and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand . . .

Psalms 95:6-7

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God."

Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:26-38

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Amen, Amen

Neil and Kate Robins

Let every creature rise and bring their grateful praises to our King
Angels descend with songs again and Earth repeats a loud 'Amen'

Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen
I found my life, I found my life in Him
Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen

Peace like a river from His throne will flow to nations yet unknown
His word a light where all hope is dim and all tribes unite to cry "Amen"

And in this Child we'll find our rest and all the meek and lowly blessed
An infant tongue could sing the hymn of Hallelujah and Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord,* you that stand by night in the house of the Lord.

Psalm 134:1

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

Malachi 3:1-2

THE VESPERS PSALM

But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
the one whom you made strong for yourself.

Psalm 80:8

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

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 our 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 REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Immanuel, Immanuel,

As bells sing in joyful harmony this Advent,

commemorating holy birth and salvation,

may our lives chime sweetly of living hope

in resplendent restoration

for this day. and for every day to come.

Amen.

CHRISTMAS EVE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Wake up, my spirit; awake, lute and harp;* I myself will waken the dawn. *Psalm 57:8*

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds. *Titus 2:11-14*

THE GOSPEL CONCERNING THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD, JESUS CHRIST

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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 Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, '*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!*'

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. *Luke 1:1-20*

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

CHRISTMAS EVE
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.
Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous works among all the peoples.

Psalm 96:1-3

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with
joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.
For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be
burned as fuel for the fire.
For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness
from this time onwards and for evermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 9:2-7

THE VESPERS PSALM

Say among the nations, 'The Lord is king! The world is firmly established; it shall never be
moved. He will judge the peoples with equity.'
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
let the field exult, and everything in it.
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord; for he is coming,
for he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.

Psalm 96:10-13

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide and too deep to undo.
Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what
has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we can-
not change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us the grace to
grow more and more in your likeness and image; through Jesus Christ, the light of the
world. *Amen.*

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Today we find Mary, betrothed of Joseph, burgeoning with new life and filled with
anticipation of the birth of her son, Jesus. This scene is the tipping point toward the

culmination of prophecies, “His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

Often our day-to-day experience, as was true for Mary and Joseph, is one where our hopes and fears, pains and joys intermingle. Often lands and people are inhospitable, do not understand, and are reluctant to receive. However, as was also true for Mary and Joseph, God is with us along this journey providing the light to our path, sending voices to encourage and instruct, as well as others along the way who anticipate and join in the celebration.

Today, we wait for the coming of Jesus, with Mary and Joseph, in the midst of travails and worries, triumphs and wonderment. May we be open to the message of an angel “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people” (Luke 2:10). Let us wait, tonight in anticipation, with great hope of a new and glorious tomorrow.

CHRISTMAS DAY

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2010: MORNING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

For he is our God,* and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand . . .

Psalm 95:6-7

THE GOSPEL LESSON

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. *John 1:1-14*

A SONG OF THE CHURCH

Amen, Amen

Neil and Kate Robins

Let every creature rise and bring their grateful praises to our King
Angels descend with songs again and Earth repeats a loud 'Amen'

Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen

I found my life, I found my life in Him

Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen

Peace like a river from His throne will flow to nations yet unknown
His word a light where all hope is dim and all tribes unite to cry "Amen"

And in this Child we'll find our rest and all the meek and lowly blessed
An infant tongue could sing the hymn of Hallelujah and Amen

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. *Titus 3:4-7*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us safely 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.*

CHRISTMAS DAY SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2010: EVENING OFFICE

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord,* you that stand by night in the house of the Lord. *Psalms 134:1*

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Go through, go through the gates, prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway, clear it of stones, lift up an ensign over the peoples. The Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to daughter Zion, "See, your salvation comes; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him." They shall be called, "The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord"; and you shall be called, "Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken." *Isaiah 62:10-12*

THE VESPERS PSALM

For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. The Lord loves those who hate evil; he guards the lives of his faithful; he rescues them from the hand of the wicked. Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!

Psalms 97:9-12

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Forgive us for being so unsure of our good news and so un-ready to tell it. Raise us out of the paralysis of guilt into the freedom and life of forgiven people. For those who find forgiveness hard to give and harder to receive, we ask that you break their bondage and set them free through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Have you ever spent time in a barn? It is certainly nothing like the pristine, picturesque manger scenes that adorn many of our homes and childhood memories. Barns tend to be full of dust and dirt, challenging aromas and unpredictable animals both large and small. As I think of my grandmother's barn from my childhood the memories include wondering if a cow would step on me, when I would step in something and how do I avoid all of these cobwebs. I think it interesting that God, the all-powerful King of Creation, chose a humble barn as the place where the true light, God's only begotten son, would enter the world to show his glory, grace and truth.

Would it have made a difference if God had chosen a regal palace, or the comfortable estate of a merchant or landowner or even the simple home of a peasant? Possibly, because each of those settings brings qualities that welcome some people while repelling others. The light was coming for all people: all races, all classes and all ages. None would be excluded as long as they received him and believed on his name. In fact, all who believed became part of the family, children of God.

Once again, this year we journeyed through the preparation of advent to the celebration of Christmas. Today, Christmas day, we recount the story of the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us. We enjoy his glory, his grace, and his truth. And, we remember that the true light came to give us his light.

As we move from this day of celebration, let us take his light with us into the new year. Let us allow his light to shine through us into the darkness of our world. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells his followers, which includes us, to let "your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Again, from John, "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it."
Amen, so be it.

Many thanks to the contributors from our community who have written such rich words to guide our prayers together this Advent season:

Angie Alvarado-Ecker, Erik Amundsen, Kristina Amundsen, Leah Boyd, Marissa Brown, Aune Carlson, Rick Elgandy, Robin Freed, Megan Gilmore, Aaron Johnson, Marta Johnson, Bruce Lawson, Krista Lindwall, Earl Martin, Catherine Masterson, Christin McFadyen, Jon McFadyen, Alissa Mosourinjohn, Julie Musselman, Dawn Phelan, Jay Phelan, Jamie Rose, Joey Swenson, Margie Swenson, Dena Wangberg, Ric Wild.



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