

**WAIT FOR THE
LORD**



Advent Retreat
December 5, 2020



CHURCH OF THE
SAVIOR

MORNING PRAYER

OPENING SENTENCE

ISAIAH 40:5

The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

Leader: Our King and Savior now draws near:
People: Come, let us adore him.

JUBILATE

Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands;
serve the Lord with gladness
and come before his presence with a song.
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.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
go into his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and call upon his Name.
For the Lord is good;
his mercy is everlasting;
and his faithfulness endures from age to age.

PSALM 20

- ¹ May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble,
the Name of the God of Jacob defend you;
- ² Send you help from his holy place
and strengthen you out of Zion;
- ³ Remember all your offerings
and accept your burnt sacrifice;
- ⁴ Grant you your heart's desire
and prosper all your plans.

Cover image: Heather Maynard, *Find What Is Within*.

⁵ We will shout for joy at your victory
and triumph in the Name of our God;
may the LORD grant all your requests.

⁶ Now I know that the LORD gives victory to his anointed;
he will answer him out of his holy heaven,
with the victorious strength of his right hand.

⁷ Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we will call upon the Name of the LORD our God.

⁸ They collapse and fall down,
but we will arise and stand upright.

⁹ O LORD, give victory to the king
and answer us when we call.

All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: As
it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

CANTICLE 11**ISAIAH 12:2-6**

Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you.
For behold, darkness covers the land;
deep gloom enshrouds the peoples.
But over you the Lord will rise,
and his glory will appear upon you.
Nations will stream to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawning.
Your gates will always be open;
by day or night they will never be shut.
They will call you, The City of the Lord,
The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.
Violence will no more be heard in your land,
ruin or destruction within your borders.
You will call your walls, Salvation,
and all your portals, Praise.
The sun will no more be your light by day;
by night you will not need the brightness of the moon.
The Lord will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.

All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

LESSON

LUKE 21:5-19

⁵ Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, ⁶ “As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down.”

⁷ “Teacher,” they asked, “when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?”

⁸ He replied: “Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them. ⁹ When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.”

¹⁰ Then he said to them: “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹ There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

¹² “But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name.

¹³ And so you will bear testimony to me. ¹⁴ But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. ¹⁵ For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. ¹⁶ You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷ Everyone will hate you because of me. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish.

¹⁹ Stand firm, and you will win life.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

GENERAL THANKSGIVING

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

GRACE

ROMANS 15:13

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

ENTERING THE SILENCE

COLLECT FOR THE GOOD USE OF LEISURE

O God, in the course of this busy life, give us times of refreshment and peace; and grant that we may so use our leisure to rebuild our bodies and renew our minds, that our spirits may be opened to the goodness of your creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

QUIETING OUR HEARTS

The next few hours have been set aside for you as a gift from the Lord and an opportunity for your soul to meet with God. At the beginning of today's retreat, you may want to start with a simple quieting practice. Although many of us long for moments of silence and stillness, once we have the space, it takes some time and intentionality to enter into it. Here are some simple suggestions to begin:

- Find a place to sit where you can be alert and comfortable. Or, if moving your body helps silence your heart and mind, find a place to walk that will be mostly uninterrupted.
- Light a candle to remind you of the presence of God in this place.
- Set a small, reasonable goal for an amount of time to be completely silent, refraining even from reading, writing or other quiet activities. Perhaps start with 5-10 minutes of silence.
- Take some deep breaths, noticing tension or anxiety in your mind and body.
- Ask God to give you a brief prayer or phrase to express your intention, desire or need for this time. It can be as simple as "Help, Lord," or "Peace," or "Here I am."
- Allow the silence to fill your mind and body as you focus on God's nearness. Allow yourself to let go of whatever else comes to mind, perhaps using your brief prayer phrase to bring your attention back.

BRINGING OUR EMOTIONS TO GOD

Waiting can be difficult, especially when we can't quite see the thing we're awaiting and when we don't know at what time it may arrive. Anticipation turns into impatience, frustration, or even anger. We may fear that we've missed what we've been waiting for, or begin to despair that it will ever arrive. We may wonder: where is God in the midst of brokenness and pain?

Scripture is filled with people asking "How long, O Lord?" And repeatedly, scripture invites us to bring our sorrows and fears to God (e.g., Psalm 55:22, Matthew 11:28, 1 Peter 5:7). Adele Calhoun writes, "Sometimes the best response to the brokenness of this world and my own life is a mixture of tears and prayers. ... Tears and prayers of lament won't solve the problem of suffering, but they can stanch the raw nerve of pain by throwing us into the arms of God."¹

On the following pages, you will find a psalm of lament, suggestions for praying your own lament, and some music about waiting. If God is inviting you to a time of honest acknowledgment of the difficulty of waiting and the longing you feel for brokenness to be healed, these exercises may help you enter into conversation with God about your experience of waiting.

¹ Adele Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, p. 273.

LECTIO DIVINA: PSALM 38:9-22

Read the psalm slowly and meditatively. You may find it helpful to follow the traditional steps of lectio divina:

1. *Silencio: quiet your mind and heart and enter into God's presence.*
2. *Lectio: read the passage slowly, paying attention to the words or images that capture your mind. Hear what God is saying to you.*
3. *Meditatio: read the passage again, listening to God's invitation to you and pondering the words in your heart.*
4. *Oratio: respond to God, talking to God about the thoughts and feelings that have arisen in your reading.*
5. *Contemplatio: wait in the presence of God, allowing the words of the scripture to sink into your soul.*



⁹ All my longings lie open before you, Lord;
my sighing is not hidden from you.

¹⁰ My heart pounds, my strength fails me;
even the light has gone from my eyes.

¹¹ My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds;
my neighbors stay far away.

¹² Those who want to kill me set their traps,
those who would harm me talk of my ruin;
all day long they scheme and lie.

¹³ I am like the deaf, who cannot hear,
like the mute, who cannot speak;

¹⁴ I have become like one who does not hear,
whose mouth can offer no reply.

¹⁵ Lord, I wait for you;
you will answer, Lord my God.

¹⁶ For I said, "Do not let them gloat
or exalt themselves over me when my feet slip."

- ¹⁷ For I am about to fall,
and my pain is ever with me.
- ¹⁸ I confess my iniquity;
I am troubled by my sin.
- ¹⁹ Many have become my enemies without cause;
those who hate me without reason are numerous.
- ²⁰ Those who repay my good with evil
lodge accusations against me,
though I seek only to do what is good.
- ²¹ Lord, do not forsake me;
do not be far from me, my God.
- ²² Come quickly to help me,
my Lord and my Savior.

PRAYER OF LAMENT

Like David, we too can bring our laments to God. Spend time in prayer, using the words of the psalm or your own words; the suggestions below may help you work through your emotions with God.²

- Practice feeling your sadness or anxiety. What emotions arise? What do you notice about how your body feels when you allow yourself to experience the difficult emotions of waiting and longing? Bring these feelings to Jesus and ask him to help you carry this pain; remember that Jesus invites the weary and heavy-burdened to come to him for rest.
- Read John 11:17-37 and imagine that you are with Jesus as he weeps for his friend Lazarus. How do you feel watching Jesus' tears? How does his sorrow speak to your own?

² Adapted from Adele Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, p. 274.

MEDITATING WITH MUSIC

Listen to one or both of the songs linked below, meditating on what they say about waiting for God.

[“Wait for the Lord,”](#) Jacques Berthier (from the Taizé Community)

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

[“O Come, O Come Emmanuel,”](#) Red Mountain Music

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

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

O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
in ancient times didst give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe.

O come, thou Dayspring from on high,
and cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

O come, thou Key of David, come
and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.



- What do you notice as you listen to the music? What words or melodies stand out to you?
- What emotions arise? Talk about these with God.

WATCHING FOR THE LIGHT

In “Waiting for God,” Henri Nouwen writes: “People who wait have received a promise that allows them to wait. They have received something that is at work in them, like a seed that has started to grow.” He continues, “The secret of waiting is the faith that the seed has been planted, that something has begun.”³

Waiting can be difficult, and God invites us to pray and lament along with the psalmists as we wait. But God also points us towards hope, to the day when God will wipe away every tear and make all things new, as John records in the book of Revelation (21:4-5). No matter how great the darkness, the light of God shines and is not overcome.

Below, you will find suggested exercises to help you see hope and to find the light of Christ in the darkness. We do not need to rush to hope, or to the lessons we might learn as we wait. When we see Jesus weep after Lazarus has died, we see a God who understands that hope does not erase sorrow and pain. Instead, light shines in darkness; hope is present in the midst of suffering. Where is God meeting you in the darkness? What hope is God giving you as you wait?

³ Henri Nouwen, “Waiting for God,” in *Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas* (Farmington, PA: The Plough Publishing Group, 2001), p. 30, 31.

Read the passage slowly and meditatively. You may find it helpful to follow the traditional steps of lectio divina:

1. *Silencio: quiet your mind and heart and enter into God's presence.*
2. *Lectio: read the passage slowly, paying attention to the words or images that capture your mind. Hear what God is saying to you.*
3. *Meditatio: read the passage again, listening to God's invitation to you and pondering the words in your heart.*
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5. *Contemplatio: wait in the presence of God, allowing the words of the scripture to sink into your soul.*



¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

LISTENING PRAYER

As the name suggests, listening prayer invites us to hear God. Here are a few suggestions to help you listen to the hope God is giving you.⁴

- Use the Romans passage or Psalm 38 (on page 8) to begin listening. As you read through the passage, what do you notice? Use that as a starting point to listen to God.
- Listen to “Wait for the Lord” (link on page 10). Hear Jesus saying these words to you.
- As you listen, your mind will likely wander; this is normal. When you notice that you have become distracted, gently return your attention to God.
- Do not be discouraged if you do not hear a specific word or message. Know that God is near to you as you pray.

⁴ Adapted from Adele Calhoun, *Disciplines Handbook*, p. 268.

VISIO DIVINA

Like lectio divina, this practice invites you to meditate on an image and to talk to God about what you notice and listen to how God may be speaking to you through the image.⁵



⁵ Heather Maynard, *Find What Is Within*. Follow Heather's artwork on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).

REMEMBERING HOPE

As you listen to God and meditate on the hope that sustains our waiting, ask God for a word or an image to help you sustain your hope. You may want to write this word down, journal about the word or image, or even create a piece of art that depicts the hope you have received.

JOURNALING

MIDDAY PRAYER

OPENING SENTENCES

Leader: O God, make speed to save us.

People: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

PSALM 126

¹ When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dreamed.

² Our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy.

Then it was said among the nations,
“The Lord has done great things for them.”

³ The Lord has done great things for us,
and we are filled with joy.

⁴ Restore our fortunes, Lord,
like streams in the Negev.

⁵ Those who sow with tears
will reap with songs of joy.

⁶ Those who go out weeping,
carrying seed to sow,
will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with them.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Leader: The love of God has been poured into our hearts through
the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. *Romans 5:5*

People: Thanks be to God.

PRAYER

Leader: Lord, have mercy.
People: Christ, have mercy.
Leader: Lord, have mercy.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

CLOSING COLLECT

Heavenly Father, send your Holy Spirit into our hearts, to direct and rule us according to your will, to comfort us in all our afflictions, to defend us from all error, and to lead us into all truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

GRACE

Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God.