

Christmas Day: Chosen Home

December 25, 2022

10 a.m.

"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: 14

Prelude

The Holly and The Ivy

Arr. A. Sherfield

Christmas Poetry

Godburst

Ann Weems

When the holy child is born into our hearts
There is a rain of stars
a rushing of angels
a blaze of candles
this God burst into our lives.
Love is running through the streets.

Carol

Reading

The Decree

Ann Weems

First Strings

In the Bleak Midwinter

Lighting the Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is a symbol of the season, with a candle lit each of the four Sundays leading up to and on Christmas Day. The light of the flickering candle flames reminds us who Jesus is: *"In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* John 1: 4-5

Prayer

Holy One, we give you thanks for your presence among us in Jesus, your Child, born into a poor family. Christ has entered our lives, and embraced our hope and our struggle; showing forth the power of your love in healing, teaching, and challenging the powers of the world that lead to death. With confidence in your faithfulness, we welcome your beloved Child in our midst.

Carol

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 52:7-10

Carol

Scripture Reading

John 1:14-18

Carol

What are you asking for this Christmas?

Joyce Rupp

What would bring us close to home this Christmas? These gifts from the heart of the holy can rejuvenate our spirits and enrich our spirits.

Love

to be the north star in my soul, leading me always in the direction of divine light.

Stillness

to sweep through my restless mind, instilling calmness and a serenity that dispels apprehension.

Nonviolence

to enter every thought, word, deed, and desire,
flowing gently from me like a brook caressing inflexible stones.

Savoring

to remember with thankfulness lovely moments of beauty and the joy of people's good will.

Other-centeredness

to dissolve the closely held part of myself that prefers to ignore or refuse to respond to the plight of others.

Laughter

to retain the sprightly dance of joy amid endless duties, preparations, chores, and responsibilities.

Perspective

to expand an inner vision that sees each difficult person or situation through the wide lens of kindness.

Solace

to recognize, welcome, and embrace whoever or whatever seeks shelter in the sanctuary of self.

Hope

to rekindle my affection and gratitude for the source of love who intermingles with each part of my life.

I Wonder . . .

Our children engage in Godly Play with Ms. Julia. This is biblical storytelling that leads to wonder, encourages children to ponder the source of wonder, allowing for insights to emerge. Take some time to wonder with one another or by yourself, perhaps even journaling.

I wonder... what have you seen this Advent and Christmas that was beautiful?

I wonder... what has made you laugh recently?

I wonder... what makes you feel like you have come home?

Prayer

God there is so much good here, and there is so much we have yet to learn. Help us to be people that create chosen homes. Help us to be people that welcome others into those safe spaces. Help us to be people who follow our calls boldly and bravely, holding open the door for others to follow suit. We come to you today full to the brim, O God, with prayers that are close to home.

(Add the prayers of your heart...)

Hold them closely. Amen.

Reading

Christmas Comes

Ann Weems

Carol #246

Joy to the World

Blessing**Postlude**

Christmas Eve in Sarajevo

Arr. K. Alexander

Vedran Smailovic is a cellist from Bosnia. During the siege of Sarajevo he played for 22 days in the ruined square of a downtown marketplace, often under the threat of snipers. His bravery inspired musical numbers and a novel.