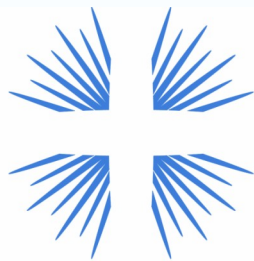




Devotions
for the Season of
Advent
2018



LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF HONOLULU



Advent Hymn based on the *Great O Antiphons*

O come, O come Emmanuel

*Veni, veni Emmanuel, Captivum solve Israel,
Qui genit in exilio, Prevatus Dei Filio
Gaude, gaude, Emmanuel, Nascetur pro te, Israel.*



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, O Israel.



O come, O **Wisdom** from on high, embracing all things far and nigh,
in strength and beauty come and stay; teach us your will and guide our way.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel



O come, O come, **O Lord of might**, as to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times you gave the law in cloud, and majesty, and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel



O come, thou **Branch of Jesse**, free your own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell your people save and give them victory o're the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel



O come, O **Dayspring**, come and cheer; O Sun of Justice, now draw near
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and Death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel



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.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel



O come, O **King of Nations**, come, O Cornerstone that binds in one;
Refresh the hearts that long for you, restore the broken, make us new.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel

text: *Psalteriolum Cantionum Cahtolicarum*, Köln, 1710;
tr. Composite music: French processional, 15th c.
Evangelical Lutheran Worship 257



The “O” Antiphons

Advent is a season of anticipation as we await the promised coming of the Messiah. It is a time for reflection and renewal, for prayer and spiritual preparation.

The beginning of Advent is often celebrated with a liturgy, the **Advent Procession**, using the “O” Antiphons as the principal theme. The antiphons are a lens through which we focus on the divine attributes of the Messiah given in the prophecies of Isaiah. The antiphon texts are the basis for the seven verses of the Advent hymn *O come, O come Emmanuel*.

History of the Antiphons

Initial references to the “O” Antiphons can be found as early as the sixth century and by the eighth century, they were in use in liturgical celebrations in Rome. The antiphons were featured in the daily Vespers services for the week preceding Christmas.

Saunders, Rev. William. “What are the ‘O Antiphons?’”
Arlington Catholic Herald.

<http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/religion/re0374.html>

: *O Antiphon* banners (made in 1989 by LCH members) and Advent paraments (made in 1974) in the LCH chancel

Sunday, December 2, 2018

**“The days are coming,’ declares the LORD,
‘when I will fulfill the good promise
I made to the people of Israel and Judah.**

Jeremiah 33:14 (NIV)

Here it is again, every Advent for the past two millennium. The promise of the Promise: ‘In those days and at that time I will make a Righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; he will do what is just and right in the land.’ (Jeremiah 33:15). But we are still divided, like Judah and Israel. We are still led by enmity, distrust, hatred. And we are still waiting, waiting for that Righteous Branch from David’s Line.

Perhaps, we might think, our expectations that the fulfillment of the promise is near are not realistic? And waiting is passive, and gets a little boring? Waiting needn’t be inactive. While we wait for the Righteous Branch, what would *active* waiting be like? What would *active* hoping be like?

Can we form a partnership, a collaboration with God, that would come out of our best understanding of the vision that God offers us through the life of Jesus? Jeremiah writes that the Righteous Branch will do what is just and right in the land.

Our Advent promise to God might be to take an active role in making that vision real, in our time and place. We call that vision the Kingdom of God. This is our Advent quest, our soul’s hope and desire.

Oh Spirit of Wisdom, Promise of Advent Hope and Grace,
Keep bright in us the vision of days when war shall cease,
when hatred and divisions give way to love and peace
till dawns the morning glorious when truth and love shall reign,
and Christ shall rule victorious o’er all the world’s domain. Amen.

(Prayer: O God of Every Nation, v. 4;
William W. Reid; ELW 713)

Carol Langner

Monday, December 3, 2018

**Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**

Psalm 90:2

Everlasting, now there is a word you do not often hear in everyday speech. I was both humbled and comforted when I discovered that the word means *forever*. Essentially, the Psalmist is proclaiming that God is God forever into the past and forever into the future. This is comforting as it reminds us that, through it all, God is ever present with us. Likewise, it is humbling as it reminds us that God cares deeply about our past, present, and future. God is not just present with us in the good and happy times, but also in the troubling and difficult times.

During the season of Advent we sing one of my favorite hymns, “O Come, O Come Emmanuel.” The word *Emmanuel* means *God with us*, which is another beautiful reminder that the same God who created the world and formed the mountains, also comes to us as the baby Jesus. Let us reflect on some of the words of that beautiful hymn this day and be reminded that God and God’s presence are everlasting.

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel...
O come, O Key of David,
come and open wide our heavenly home...
O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar.



Vicar Andrew M. Flatt-Kuntze



Tuesday, December 4, 2018

***I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the first and the last, the beginning and the end.***
Revelation 22:13

Each day a sunrise and a sunset. A few days ago, good news from North Dakota! Little PiperLynn finally got the surgery to correct a heart defect discovered by ultrasound while she stayed safe in mom's womb. From many, sight unseen, prayers provided additional care as she required six months for her body's development crawled by, each day a mix of anxious awaiting amid the growing hope for wholeness of life itself.

Good news came for PiperLynn's great grandfather at the same time. The nursing home in Grafton, ND had an opening for hospice care. A frugal farmer and WWII Army scout, Papa Vince really likes that his veteran's benefits means free room and board for the rest of his life.

The community of faith has sustained both of them all through their lives, from womb to 94 years. The comfort of God's love softens the anticipation from the beginning to the end.

Lord, thank you for always being there in our lives, from the start to the finish. Thank you for your comforting Presence, even in our solitude. Amen.

Jimmy Castro



Wednesday, December 5, 2018

**Lord, you have been our dwelling place
in all generations.
Psalm 90:1**

What does “dwelling place” mean? According to a footnote in the revised standard version of the Bible, it can mean refuge—shelter or protection from danger.

All of us, at one time or another, have probably felt doubt, fear or danger in our lives.

- We could be doubtful that we can get a job that will allow us to have a roof over our heads, food to eat, to provide for our family and be able to afford living in Hawai`i.
- We can be afraid that a major hurricane will hit any of our islands that could cause serious peril to our safety and infrastructure.
- We could wonder if our democracy is in danger and can withstand the current negative rhetoric, divisiveness and rancor from the executive branch of our government.

No matter what adversity we may face, actual or potential, God is always there for us. The road to refuge may not be an easy one to navigate. We must, however, have faith in our God that positive things will come to fruition in the end.

Just like Vicar Andy preached in his sermon on November 4th, “Even though we cannot see God, He is always with us.”

Jeanne Castello

Thursday, December 6, 2018

*By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us.*

Luke 1:78



After a night of darkness, the dawn brings relief, easing of fears encountered in the darkness, a feeling of hope. For millennia, darkness has threatened us, caused us some sense of fear. We discovered how to control fire, and much later to

produce electricity, to bring us light, and to keep the darkness at bay.

Darkness, however, is not merely physical, not merely at night. Darkness is also our estrangements— from family members, from co-workers, from friends, from political persons with whom we differ, from those we do not particularly like.

Estrangement places a barrier in our hearts, not just towards our family, friends and neighbors, but also a barrier towards God. Advent promises us the coming of dawn, of the light. To borrow the phrase from the King James Version of this verse, we are promised “the day-spring from on high,” which Christians often have interpreted as the Christ, though this child was John the Baptist who would prepare the way for Christ. Regardless of whom the passage refers, may we use Advent to prepare for that dawning from God..

James Farmer Cartwright



Friday, December 7, 2018

*To give light to those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.*

Luke 1:79

This passage contrasts light and darkness, but also contrasts action and passivity. It is quite natural to **sit** while in darkness. It's dangerous to go running about wildly in the darkness; it's safer merely to sit quietly.

As we know, scripture equates our treatment of others with our treatment of God. Anger, indifference, hostility towards our neighbors — family, friends, co-workers, towards anyone — leads to estrangement from God. That is darkness.

Such estrangement leads us to focus on death, or to “sit in the shadow of death.” We are promised the opportunity to cease sitting in the shadow of death and to walk, move, be active, into light, the way of peace. May we prepare during this Advent for the coming of light into our lives.

James Farmer Cartwright



Saturday, December 8, 2018

**In the beginning was
the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
John 1:1**

Words with the WORD:

**I AM the Word, the Logos, and Jesus Divine.
God and I commune as One beyond time.**

**Like a child in the dark, alone and in tears
I cry out for comfort - enlightenment from fears?**

**From the beginning We've been with you, listen to Me!
You've never been alone and never will be!**

**WE created you in Our image for community
To love and be loved and from fears to be free.**

**I've so many questions, of deep concern
Do you have answers, for all that I yearn?**

**I am the Word become flesh and Light Divine.
I will satisfy your hunger with my Presence and wine.**

**Christmas lights and music have a wondrous role,
But your Light and Presence fill my soul.**

**Freely You give us your love and light,
To share with others needing comfort in their 'night'.**

**You bring joy to My heart and joy to the world,
When you care for your neighbor with love unfurled!**

**What grace! What tidings of comfort and joy!
O come let us adore and our songs employ!**

Greg Gebhardt

Sunday, December 9, 2018

He was in the beginning with God.

John 1:2

Jesus our helper, you were there at the beginning of time, you live in the current age, and so shall you endure for all eternity.

Help us to remember that you were there at our birth, that you will be with us in life, and will call us each to return to you when we reach our earthly end.

May we rest in the comfort of your eternal presence.

Amen.

Scott Fikse



Monday, December 10, 2018

**All things came into being through him,
and without him
not one thing came into being.
John 1:3**

Jesus as a creator of all things? What about God, the Father, as creator? This is a difficult quote to interpret literally.

The quote talks about creating, not about obeying. Much of the Old Testament is about obedience to God. With the advent of Jesus in the world we made aware of new creative themes of individual responsibility and empowerment. We are to follow, not obey, Jesus. To follow implies learning from Jesus' actions and words, to model our behavior on Jesus. This requires personal awareness and personal choice. These are new responsibilities, which require development of a new moral responsibility, not only to God but also now to fellow humans.

This new behavior is much harder than obedience. It requires observation, insight, foresight, discipline, and prioritizing others' benefit. These can be encompassed by the word *compassion*. The advent of Jesus brought us the responsibility and privilege of compassion.



Lord, grant us the understanding, sympathy, and discipline to be fully compassionate. Let us realize that compassion for others is our highest joy. Let our joy be in the joy of others. Amen.

Steve Miller

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

**What has come into being in him was life,
and the life was the light of all people.**

John 1: 4

Which Scripture is right? *Psalm 79:5-10* or *Matthew 5:43-44*?

How do we take moral direction from Scripture when it has two conflicting messages? We are Trinitarians naming Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as our God. Be awed by the **Creator**! Lean the values of **Jesus**, then pay attention to the advocate/Counselor, the **Holy Spirit** (John 14:16,26).

Observe the Holy Spirit's promptings when you decide on moral issues. Following the teachings of Jesus, we no longer stone our rebellious sons to death (Deuteronomy 21:18-21), or keep slaves (Ephesians 6:5), or get our widowed sister-in-law pregnant (Deuteronomy 25:1-50).

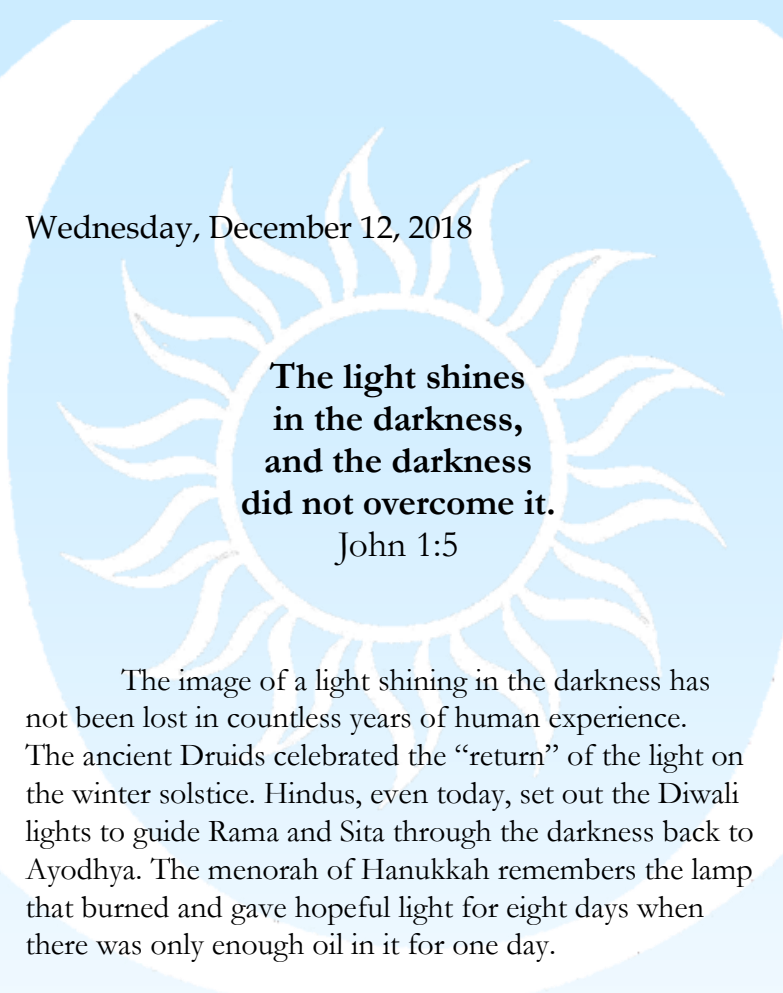
The Holy Spirit counsels us differently. Before his accusers, Martin Luther, proclaimed, "Here I stand, I cannot go against my conscience." The Holy Spirit encouraged our congregation to welcome our LGBT brothers and sisters during the AIDs Crisis and before it became a national inclination.

Quiet Advent is a beautiful time for preparing for the coming of Christ into your decision making life. It often takes courage to decide that God's Word to people in ancient times may be a different Word in today's context. Listen, listen, listen for the Holy Spirit's counsel. Because we learn from Jesus that God loves everyone, this Advent we may be wrapping love ribbons around gift for our enemies.

Prayer: Lord of Love, help us listen to your Spirit for guidance in today's world of conflicting values.

Pastor Don Johnson

Wednesday, December 12, 2018



**The light shines
in the darkness,
and the darkness
did not overcome it.**

John 1:5

The image of a light shining in the darkness has not been lost in countless years of human experience. The ancient Druids celebrated the “return” of the light on the winter solstice. Hindus, even today, set out the Diwali lights to guide Rama and Sita through the darkness back to Ayodhya. The menorah of Hanukkah remembers the lamp that burned and gave hopeful light for eight days when there was only enough oil in it for one day.

The Bethlehem star illumined the skies above the birthplace of Jesus - the Light of the World. Through the centuries even the most heinous, darkest evils have failed to extinguish this light.

“The gift of light we thankfully take,
But it shall not be alone for our sake.
The more we give light, one to another,
It shines and spreads and glows even further,
Until every spark by friends set aflame,
Until every heart with joy shall proclaim.
In the depths of our souls,
A shining light glows.”

**(a Waldorf Advent verse)
Randy Castello**

Thursday, December 13, 2018

**Surely God is my salvation;
I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the LORD
GOD is my strength and my might;
God has become my salvation.**

Isaiah 12:2

How can you not be afraid when you pack up all your worldly belongings, say goodbye to the people you love — the ones you consider family — and move thousands of miles away? I've done this three times in



my life: once right after high school when I enlisted in the Army, again when I moved to Hawaii eighteen years ago and finally last December when I moved back to the mainland.

I trusted God to help me overcome my fear and He has strengthened me beyond expectation. Faith is amazing when you give every fear over to God and let Him take charge of your life.

With every new door that has been opened to me, I hear a quiet voice saying, “we’ve been waiting for you.” Each person I meet reassures me of God’s unfailing grace that surely leads to my salvation.

My faith assures me that God is present in every situation, keeping me strong and focused on the journey where He leads me.

April Smith



Friday, December 14, 2018

The true light,
which enlightens everyone,
was coming into the
world.

John 1:9

Light is the revelation of God's love in Jesus Christ and the penetration of that love into lives darkened by sin. How does God's love penetrate our lives? The Greeks used the word "agape" to represent the giving of oneself freely for everyone, including those who may hate or harm us.

Agape is the unselfish expression of love to someone who is not your lover or friend. Who is that someone? The Bible provides an answer: Love your neighbor! Our neighbor is not just the person who lives next to us or nearby; it's anybody who really needs us or our help. To love your neighbor is to work for their well-being, even if it means sacrificing your own well-being for their benefit. As Christians, we can love our neighbor, even before we like them as a friend. In fact, a friendship may cloud our better judgment about what someone truly needs. Of course, liking someone as a friend can be part of loving them, too. After all, it's hard to work for a friend's well-being, without coming in the end to liking them, too.

Prayer: Dear Lord above, you are the incarnate Word of God. That Word enlightens and brightens our lives and the lives of others ... both friend and foe. Those who believe in you no longer live in darkness ... they share that light with others. Amen.

Peter Flachsbart

Saturday, December 15, 2018

***“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,
which means, “God is with us.”***

Matthew 1:23

From early childhood I had heard the story every year of how the young Virgin Mary had been chosen by God to bear his son. For me this was just the prelude to the much more interesting recounting of events on the night of Christ’s birth. Mary and Joseph had arrived in Bethlehem to a sold-out town with no room except in a manger.

It was not until a few years ago that I gave serious consideration to Mary’s condition and Joseph’s plight, finding that his bride-to-be was with child.

That Sunday I was serving as Deacon and Bob Zimmer was Sub deacon. As we processed the Gospel, I glanced over at the choir and saw Naomi and Karyn Castro as usual making wonderful music.

As I began to read the Gospel, I reached the part where Mary is told that she is the favored one. All of a sudden my voice cracked and Bob arched his eyebrows as if to ask if I were okay.

For the first time ever, I realized just how young Mary must have been...even younger than Naomi and Karyn. What courage and faith she and Joseph both had to be able to accept what the angels told them. And the path did not get easier for them as they trekked to Bethlehem, received strange and wonderful people ... the shepherds in the fields to the Three Wise Men ... and then fled to save their and their child’s lives.

This Advent Season my mantra will be “Emmanuel!
God is with us.”

Josie Bidgood

Sunday, December 16, 2018



As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah.

Luke 3:15

Nothing gets people more excited than a good old fire and brimstone sermon. Guilt, hope, inadequacy, and yearning for direction make light the work of a skilled orator. The crowd listens to John's stirring speeches and their hopes are raised.

Has the messiah finally come, dressed like a prophet and calling us to task? Is he the one? Hearts race in anticipation that the anointed one, long looked for, long hoped for, finally has come. Old people peer through gaps in the crowd and children are held overhead for a fleeting glimpse of the one God has sent, at last, to set free those who are captive. Perhaps HE is the one.

How often our hopes are pinned to fleeting things like wealth, prestige, fame, recognition, or even family. But soon we realize that hope has another home

Rev. Jeff Lilley

Monday, December 17, 2018

**John answered all of them by saying,
“I baptize you with water;
but one who is more powerful
than I is coming; I am not worthy
to untie the thong of his sandals.
He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”**
Luke 3:16

Old people clucked their tongues and children lowered from their lofty perch. “Our hopes again are dashed, he is not the one.” “He looked the part and the time is right, our need is great, yet he is not the one.”

Guilt and hope and yearning for direction make light the work of the skilled orator but his words fall short of a messiah’s voice. He is not the one. “Who then?” we wonder. If wealth and security, fame and family, if even John in his camel coat and repentance cannot bring hope, what can?

God offers little more than water, fire, Spirit, and Word to lighten dark days and heal broken spirits. John, the master of words, becomes servant to the very one whose brow is wet from the self-same waters. Old people peer through cracks in the crowd and children are held overhead to see anew who God has sent. Look, a child born of Mary, a carpenter’s son.
Is HE the one? Ref. Jeff Lilley





Tuesday, December 18, 2018

O Antiphons:

O Radix Jesse

Advent Hymn Isaiah 11.1
77 77D Salzburg # 310

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

Isaiah 11:1-9

Born from roots of Jesse's clan
Speaking truth where e'er he can
Justice wrapped around his waist
By God's spirit now embraced:
Spir't of counsel, spir't of might,
Spir't of knowledge for the right,
Spir't divine to cast new light,
Spir't sublime yet in our sight.

There can be no realm of peace
When the pow'rs of ill increase
Firm our justice now must reign
Fair for all must be our gain
Equity that spans the lands
Just as honesty demands
Then may peace be on the way
Long-awaited glorious day.

What unlikely fabled hope
Peace that lies beyond our scope
Wolf who lies down with the lamb
Lion, leopard with the ram
Dreamlike art of Edward Hicks
Fields of friendly beasts depicts
Force and violence sent away
Harmony shall rule the day.

Dare we hope for such a day
Only if God lead the way
Whose persuasive luring love
And non-violence as above,
Taught by Jesus, Gandhi, King
Transforms life, new joys to bring.
Common people then may share
Giving all in need good care.

Who will work toward such an end
'Gainst all fear and hate contend?
Whose the voice will victims use,
Breaking bonds of cruel abuse?
All who share in Jesse's sway
All who live in Jesus' way.
Ours the voice that must be raised
That God's cause can then be praised.

Fritz Fritschel, 2009

Wednesday, December 19, 2018

**In the sixth month the angel Gabriel
was sent by God to a town in Galilee
called Nazareth.**

Luke 1:26

This verse reminds me of Holden Evening Prayer which we often use during Midweek Lenten services. The Annunciation is my favorite part especially when it goes into two-part harmony.

A heavenly messenger visits Mary to tell her she has found favor with God and will bear a child named Jesus. This same messenger named Gabriel, had already visited Zechariah to tell him his wife, Elizabeth would bear a child. Gabriel visits Mary when Elizabeth is six months pregnant. I imagine Mary's surprise at the visit and I marvel at her confident response after Gabriel provided further explanation. "Here am I, the servant of the Lord," she says, "let it be with me according to your word." Gabriel gave Mary a profound sense of direction, meaning and purpose.

Messengers have visited me on my own journey. God has worked through them. Some provided encouragement. Others provided wisdom, insight and even warning. There have been times when I have felt rudderless and lacked a sense of meaning and purpose. During such times, messengers guided me and affirmed a sense of direction or call. I am so grateful for the messengers who helped me hear God's call and respond with confidence even when the call went in unexpected directions. I wonder what new directions lie in the future for you and for me and who will be the messengers to visit us?

Rev. Phyllis Hormann



Thursday, December 20, 2018

And he came to Mary and said,
Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.
Luke 1:28

What would have I say if the angel Gabriel came to me and said, "Greetings, favored one!" It is a question I have asked myself since I was a child.

I may not have had an angel appear to me, but I have experienced incredible moments when I have felt the Lord with me. It happens when I'm privileged to serve communion, when I spend time with my dad who shares his wisdom, when I am inspired by worship and when I feel overwhelmed by the acts of kindness and compassion that are all around.

In those moments, I do feel favored, blessed and often overcome with emotion. I know I am not worthy of the gifts I have received. And yes, I often feel guilty. Why am I blessed with abundance when others suffer? Am I doing enough to share what I have received? What more can I be doing?

These questions are always with me, but become more intense during the holiday season. I enter this Advent season once again privileged to feel the Lord with me, even when I am filled with self-doubt. I ask for the Lord's guidance to help me share his blessings with others.

Mary Fastenau

Friday, December 21, 2018

**But she was much perplexed by his words
and pondered what sort of greeting
this might be.**

Luke 1:29

Today's verse continues the story of the Annunciation, when the angel appear to Mary, greets her as "favored one," and says, "The Lord is with you."

The fact that Mary is perplexed by this greeting is proof that she is not Lutheran, or she would have answered, without thinking, "And also with you." Her response tells us that Mary takes the angel's greeting seriously and doesn't answer by rote. She is perplexed (or troubled in other translations).

While most of us would never call them angels, we do encounter messengers of God's love who tell us that God is with us and that we are each beloved children of God. Do we pass them off as rote greetings, or are we perplexed – or even troubled?

All too often society sends us messages that we do not measure up – we are not rich enough, or good looking enough, or smart enough, or whatever. In this context, it's no wonder that we doubt the message of God's love that comes through scripture, through our church family, and through the baby Jesus. In this Advent season, may we work through our perplexity and believe the angel's greeting that God is with us.

Bill Potter

Saturday, December 22, 2018

**The angel said to her, do not be afraid,
Mary, for you have found favor with God.**

Luke 1:30

Mary was just greeted by the angel Gabriel. We may ask well, sure she was afraid, but do we know why? Some may think, it's because she was greeted by an angel. In Jewish culture, for a woman to be greeted with a salutation by a man was not customary or lawful. Gabriel was an angel but he was in the form of a man. To Mary, his good news of praise was so unexpected, so extraordinary, and so unfamiliar. His speaking to her in that manner was against tradition, it was against the law, it was a change from the norm. She was caught her off guard by Gabriel's words

Good tidings that come into our lives often mean change in our lives as well. We fear change. It turns our world upside down even if that change is for the better. You may feel a strong urge or desire towards a different life path. Not all changes need to be on grand scale to change our lives, some come in a smaller way. Perhaps Gabriel is reaching out to you to make a change. It may be difficult, but go ahead, be brave. Like Mary, take that leap of faith and trust in the Lord.

Georgine Stark



Sunday, December 23, 2018

**And Mary said,
“Behold, I am the servant
of the Lord;
let it be to me according
to your word.”
Luke 1:38**



I have always loved the clarity and simplicity of Mary's response to God's messenger when she was given the news that she was to birth Jesus. Sure, she questions the feasibility of a virgin giving birth, who wouldn't? But she has her priorities straight. She accepts God's word as truth and trusts his plan. She doesn't shilly-shally about how this messes up her plans, or pray that the task be given to someone else. She trusts.

I've been thinking a lot about security and trust lately. The reality is we never can build a secure defense that will guarantee safety, happiness, or health, but we can make ourselves very unhappy trying. At some point we need to give up the control of our life, which we never really had in the first place. There is a wonderful feeling of relief if you can let yourself relax into trust. Mary's response is so beautiful. It cuts to the heart of what is happening. She acknowledges that she is God's servant – the one who makes God's plan a reality. She accepts the job with no attempt to change the plan. Such dignity, such trust.

Dear God, when we hear your call help us to trust your purpose and accept your plan.

Linda Miller



An Advent Devotional...

For many years LCH maintained a tradition of creating a devotional for the Season of Advent, using short meditations written by parishioners.

Our thanks to intern pastor, Vicar Andrew Flatt-Kuntze, for bringing this project back to life. He selected the verses, recruited the writers, and gently encouraged everyone to meet the deadlines and guidelines. A special *thank you* to all writers for your thoughtful participation.

Thanks as well to Carol Langner for booklet layout, to various photographers in the congregation for the use of images, to Anne Sing for good humor and ready assistance, and to Pastor Jeff Lilley for his steady hand and inspirational presence at LCH.

background images: shutterstock, by license

Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
within my heart, that it may be
A quiet chamber kept for thee. *Amen.*

Martin Luther



LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF HONOLULU

