



St. Francis' EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 3, 2023

The Season of Advent takes its name from the Latin words adventus, meaning "coming" or "visits." Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. This is an unusual year, as Christmas Eve is a Sunday. So we celebrate the fourth Sunday of Advent in the morning and Christmas Eve in the evening of the same day.

For Christians, Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year. We prepare for and anticipate the coming of Christ. We remember the longing of our Jewish ancestors for a Messiah and our own longing for forgiveness, salvation and a new beginning.

PRELUDE 10:30am only

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

At 10:30am, the lighting of the wreath begins with the cantor singing.

Leader Advent is a time to wait.

People **We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.**

Leader During Advent we wait for light in the darkness.

People **We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.**

Leader During Advent we wait for freedom from captivity.

People **We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.**

Leader During Advent we wait for comfort in sorrow.

People **We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.**

Leader During Advent we wait for power in weakness.

People **We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.**

The congregation listens as prayer is offered.

All join in singing.

(1st Sunday) We wait in
(2nd Sunday) We watch in
(3rd Sunday) We pre - pare in
(4th Sunday) We praise with
(Christmas Eve) We pro - claim with

hope_____ for the morn - ing Light,

for the love of Christ to il - lu - mi - nate_____ the night._____

We wait with
We watch with
We pre - pare with
We praise with
We pro - claim with

joy_____ for the Sav - ior's birth;

we wait in
we watch in
we pre - pare in
we praise with
we pro - claim with

hope for peace on earth.

Presider God in heaven, as we begin this season of Advent, we pray that you will teach us to wait with patience, endurance and trust. Holding to the eternal promises revealed to us through the power of your Word, we ask that you remind us of your everlasting presence. Amen.

THE GREETING

Presider Blessed be the Holy One whose coming we await,

People **And blessed be the One who comes to set all people free. Amen.**

COLLECT FOR PURITY

Presider Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may truly love you, and worthily praise your holy name; through our Savior Jesus Christ.

People **Amen.**

THE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Deacon Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence is kept for a time.

People **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 your 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.

Presider Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

People **Amen.**

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider 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.

People **Amen.**

THE FIRST LESSON

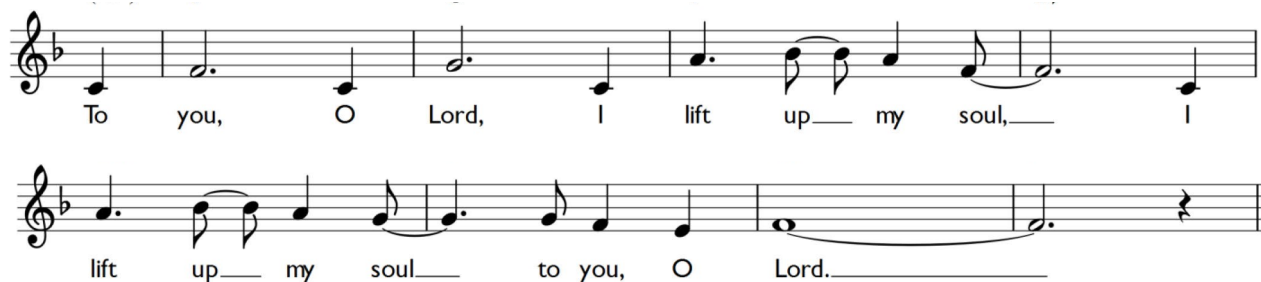
Reader	<p>A reading from the Book of Isaiah.</p> <p>64:1-9</p> <p>O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence-- as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil-- to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! 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 ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. 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 transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts 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 our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people. The Word of the Lord.</p>
People	<p>Thanks be to God.</p>

THE PSALM OF THE DAY

PSALM 24

At 8am, spoken. At 10:30, cantor sings antiphon one time through and then congregation joins.

Antiphon:



Lord, make me know your ways.

Lord, teach me your paths.

Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:

for you are God my Savior. **ANTIPHON**

The Lord is good and upright.

He shows the path to those who stray,

he guides the humble in the right path;

he teaches his way to the poor. **ANTIPHON**

His ways are faithfulness and love

for those who keep his covenant and will.

The Lord's friendship is for those who revere him;

to them he reveals his covenant. **ANTIPHON**

THE SECOND LESSON

Reader	A reading from the first letter to the Corinthians.	1:3-9
	Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	
	I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind-- just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you-- so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.	
	The Word of the Lord.	
People	Thanks be to God.	

GOSPEL SEQUENCE *Stand* **O COME, O COME EMMANUEL**

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.
*Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!*

THE GOSPEL

Deacon	The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.	13:24-37
People	Glory to you, Lord Christ.	
	Jesus said, "In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass	

away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

"But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

GOSPEL SEQUENCE *Stand* **O COME, O COME EMMANUEL**

*Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!*

SERMON

KAREN FLOTTE

After the sermon, silence is kept for a time.

THE ADVENT CREED

Our Advent Creed seeks to affirm our trust in God found in Jesus Christ.

Deacon Let us stand and affirm our hope in the light of Christ.

Do you believe and trust in God?

People **We believe in God, eternal, almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Deacon Do you believe and trust in Jesus Christ?

People **We believe in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of all, the Only Begotten One; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, lived and loved among us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; who descended to the dead, and on the third day rose again; Jesus, Our Savior, ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the loving God, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

Deacon Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

People **We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic and apostolic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead, and life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Deacon O God whose Messiah's coming we await, keep us awake and alert to watch for the signs of your coming. As the fig tree puts forth its leaves and the portents of the new day dawns, keep us awake and alert for the second advent of Christ our Savior. "May the Light of Christ; ***shine in our hearts.***"

People's response **Shine in our hearts.**

The Presider offers a concluding prayer.

Presider Shine forth O God of Hosts, encourage, embolden and energize your people to keep awake and alert to the coming of Jesus the Christ, that he, at his second Advent, may find us ready to greet him and eager to serve those in need; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God for ever and ever. Amen.

THE PEACE

Presider The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us share with one another a sign of Christ's peace.

We invite you to extend the peace of God to those in the congregation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS *Seated*

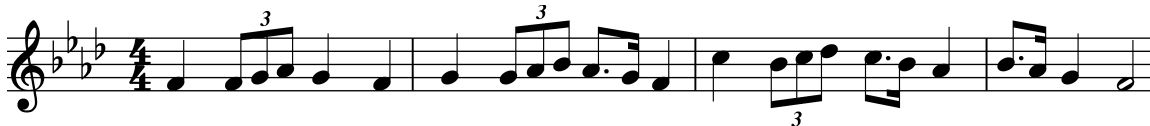
BIRTHDAY BLESSING

Presider Watch over your children, O Lord, as their days increase; bless and guide them wherever they may be. Strengthen them when they stand; comfort them when discouraged or sorrowful; raise them up if they fall; and in their heart may your peace which passes understanding abide all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People **Amen.**

GATHERING AT CHRIST'S TABLE

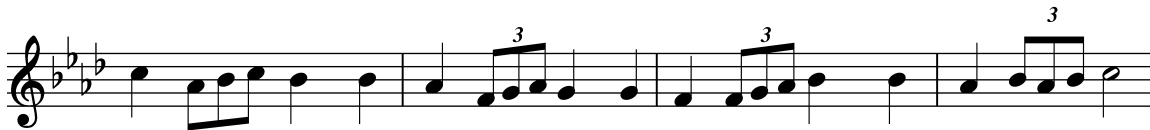
We return with thanksgiving the gifts God has given us. This includes bread and wine of the earth and financial offerings from our labor.



1. Signs of end-ings all a - round us— dark - ness, death, and win - ter days
 2. Can it be that from our end - ings, new be - gin - nings you cre - ate?



shroud our lives in fear and sad - ness, numb - ing mouths that long to praise.
 Life from death, and from our rend - ings, realms of whole - ness gen - er - ate?



Come, O Christ, and dwell a - mong us! Hear our cries, come set us free.
 Take our fears, then, Lord, and turn them in - to hopes for life a - new:



Give us hope and faith and glad - ness. Show us what there yet can be.
 Fad - ing light and dy - ing sea - son sing their Glo - ri - as to you.

As the gifts are brought forward, the congregation stands.

Presider Everything comes from you, O God, 1 Chronicles 29: 14

People and we have given you only what comes from your hand.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING *Stand*

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Presider It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.
 Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.
 Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever proclaim the glory of your Name:

Say at 8am:

People **Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed the One who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

SANCTUS 10:30am

S 125

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Music: From *A Community Mass*; Richard Proulx (b. 1937). Copyright © 1971, 1977 GIA Publications, Inc.

Presider We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

People Therefore, according to his command,
We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;

Presider And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with St. Francis, St. Clare, and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and for ever.

AMEN



A - men.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Presider And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

People **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 this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

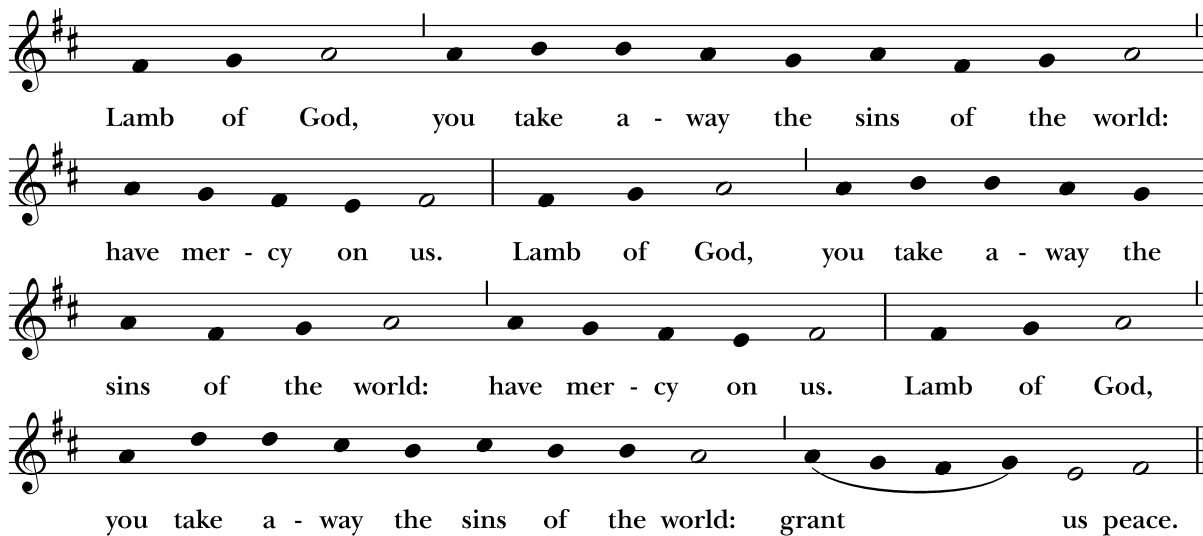
The Presider breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

Presider Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People Therefore let us keep the feast.

FRACTION ANTHEM *At 8am, spoken*

S 161



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world:
have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sins of the world: have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,
you take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace.

Music: From *New Plainsong*; David Hurd (b. 1950). Copyright © 1981 GIA Publications, Inc.

Presider The Gifts of God for the People of God.

Our bread is gluten-, dairy- and nut-free. This Eucharistic table does not belong to the Episcopal Church or to St. Francis'. This is God's table, and all are welcome. In the Episcopal Church, we receive both the bread and wine, the Body and Blood of Jesus. If you choose not to receive communion, please come forward and cross your arms over your heart to receive a blessing.



1. Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!_____
2. Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!_____
3. Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!_____
4. Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!_____



1. Thou art the pot - ter, I am the clay!_____
2. Search me and try me, Mas - ter, to - day!_____
3. Wound - ed and wea - ry, Help me, I pray!_____
4. Hold o'er my be - ing Ab - so - lute sway!_____



1. Mold me and make me Aft - er thy will,_____
2. Pur - er than snow, Lord, Wash me just now,_____
3. Pow - er all pow - er Sure - ly is thine!_____
4. Fill with thy Spir - it 'Til all shall see_____



1. While I am wait - ing, Yield - ed and still._____
2. As in thy pres - ence Hum - bly I bow._____
3. Touch me and heal me, Sav - ior di - vine!_____
4. Christ on - ly, al - ways, Liv - ing in me!_____

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

After all have received communion the Presider says

Presider God is with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray.

People **Eternal God, whom we await, you have fed us with the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation: keep us ever watchful, that we may be ready to stand before the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

BLESSING

Presider Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,
scatter the darkness from before your path,
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;
and the blessing ...

People Amen.

SENDING HYMN 8:00am

STAY AWAKE BE READY

Stay awake, be ready.

You do not know the hour when the Lord is coming.

Stay awake, be ready. The Lord is coming soon!

Alleluia, alleluia! The Lord is coming soon!

Sing 2 times

SENDING HYMN 10:30am

REJOICE, REJOICE, BELIEVERS



1 Re - joice! re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear!
2 See that your lamps are burn - ing, re - ple-nish them with oil;
3 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



The eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
look now for your sal - va - tion, the end of sin and toil.
a - rise, thou Sun so longed for, a - bove this dark - ened sphere!



The Bride-groom is a - ris - ing, and soon he will draw nigh;
The mar - riage - feast is wait - ing, the gates wide o - pen stand;
With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see



up, watch in ex - pec - ta - tion! at mid - night comes the cry.
rise up, ye heirs of glo - ry, the Bride-groom is at hand!
the day of earth's re - demp - tion, and ev - er be with thee!

DISMISSAL

Presider Our worship is ended, our service in the world begins. As we await our coming Savior, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE *10:30am only*

THE LITURGIES OF ADVENT

There are several significant shifts in the four liturgies of Advent.

Color: Because the Episcopal Church's roots are in the Church of England, we follow the old English tradition of using blue as the color of Advent. Blue is the color of Blessed Mary, and Advent is all about Mary as we await with her the arrival of the Incarnate God. Blue is the color of hope, expectation, confidence, and anticipation. These are all adjectives which describe the season of Advent.

Seating: Advent is a penitential season, a time of expressing sorrow and regret for having done wrong. Therefore, in our seating, we face one another to confess our need for God and the ways in which we have not loved God and our neighbors with our whole hearts.

Liturgy: The liturgy also highlights that Advent is a penitential season. We confess that we have "sinned against God in thought, word and deed" at the beginning of our liturgy. We do not sing the Gloria nor do we say "Alleluia." We open our liturgy singing of our expectant waiting for God.

Lectionary Readings:

The Advent readings, and what they say to us, are well explained in this excerpt from "Naming Where We Are" by Debie Thomas:

Like some of you, I didn't grow up observing Advent. Since my childhood church didn't follow the liturgical calendar, my family went straight from Thanksgiving turkeys and pumpkin pies to Christmas trees and 'Jingle Bells' — one consumer feeding frenzy pressing hard into the next. It's only in the past few years that I have come to value what Nora Gallagher calls the "counterweight" of liturgical time. "One time set against another." It's only recently that I have embraced the stark, hard-edged gifts Advent provides. As ever, I believe we need these gifts desperately.

According to the week's readings, we enter this first season of the Christian New Year — if we dare enter it at all — in lamentation. Eschewing all forms of denial, polite piety, and cheap cheer, we allow the radical honesty of Scripture to make us honest, too. "How long will you be angry with your people's prayers?" asks the Psalmist in desperation. "Because you hid yourself, we transgressed," cries Isaiah. During Advent, we stop posturing and pretending. We quit trying to make God's hiddenness okay. We shed our greeting card assumptions about the Divine. We get real.

"Our world is not okay," is what these Advent readings declare in stark, unflinching terms. God's apparent absence is not fine — it hurts. It hurts so much we can barely breathe from the agony of it. We are surrounded by evil and suffering, we're not sure our faith can endure what our eyes reluctantly witness each day, and though we long for a Savior to rend the heavens and come down, the very ferocity of that longing is wearying our souls. Hope itself has become a grind.

The first gift of Advent is the permission to tell the truth, even if that truth is laced with sorrow. We are invited to describe life "on earth as it is," and not as we mistakenly assume our religion requires us to render it. Into our surrounding cultures of denial and spin, apathy and hedonism, we are called to speak the whole truth: we need God. We need God to show up. We need God to stay. We need God to love, hold, deliver, and restore us. We were created for intimacy with a just, gracious, and profoundly compassionate Savior, and when that intimacy is missing, we suffer.