



St. Francis' EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 15, 2024

The Season of Advent takes its name from the Latin word adventus, meaning "coming" or "visits." Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve.

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 congregation singing.



Leader Advent is a time to celebrate the joy of living.
People **Lord of light, we thank you for the gift of life.**

Leader Advent is a time to celebrate the joy of relationships.
People **Lord of light, we thank you for our friends and family.**

Leader Advent is a time to celebrate the earth we all share.
People **Lord of light, we thank you for providing for our needs.**

Leader Advent is a time to celebrate eternal life.
People **Lord of light, we thank you for sending a Savior.**

The congregation listens as a prayer is offered and the candles are lit.

Leader Today we light three candles—the candle of hope, of peace, and the candle of joy. This third candle reminds us that because of our Lord, we have reasons to be truly joyful. The world around us is full with surprise and beauty. Our cups overflow with goodness and grace, and we rejoice in the promise of eternal life.

All join in singing the music on the previous page. Then, the Presider offers a closing prayer.

Presider God of light, we thank you for the many gifts you have given us, and we pray today that you will teach us to be truly joyful. Help us remember that you supply our needs and fill our lives with meaning. Fill our days with keen awareness of your presence, and fill our hearts with praise as we celebrate this joyful Advent season.

People **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.**

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 Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are
sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver
us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and
glory, now and for ever.

People Amen.

WE HEAR THE SACRED STORIES *Seated*

THE FIRST LESSON

Reader A reading from the Book of Zephaniah. 3:14-20

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!

The Lord has taken away the judgments against you,
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.

The Lord, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;

he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing
as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.

And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.

At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

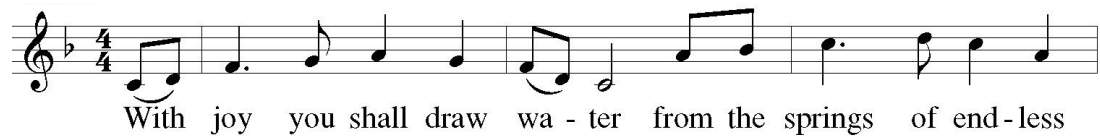
People

Thanks be to God.

CANTICLE 9, *THE SONG OF ISAIAH*

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

Antiphon:



God indeed is my Savior, I will never be afraid,
my strength and courage is the Lord, my Savior and my song. **ANTIPHON**

Give thanks and praise the name of God, sing out to all the earth
the wondrous deeds that God has done, our Savior and our song. **ANTIPHON**

Shout with joy, O Zion, for dwelling in your midst
is the Holy One is Israel, your Savior and your song. **ANTIPHON**

THE SECOND LESSON

Reader

A reading from the letter to the Philippians.

4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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 Luke.

3:7-18

People

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, 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. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

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

THE REV. LAURIE ANZILOTTI

After the sermon, silence is kept for a time.

THE NICENE CREED

Deacon We affirm our faith in the One, Holy and Living God.

People **We believe in one God,**
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
 the only Son of God,
 eternally begotten of the Father,
 God from God, Light from Light,
 true God from true God,
 begotten, not made,
 of one Being with the Father.
 Through him all things were made.
 For us and for our salvation
 he came down from heaven:
 by the power of the Holy Spirit
 he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
 and was made human.
 For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
 he suffered death and was buried.
 On the third day he rose again
 in accordance with the Scriptures;
 he ascended into heaven
 and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
 He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
 and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
 who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
 With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
 He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. 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.**

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*

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.

OFFERTORY *10:30am*

O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL
SOLO BY CANTOR

As the gifts are brought forward, the congregation stands.

Presider Everything comes from you, O God,
People and we have given you only what comes from your hand. 1 Chronicles 29: 14

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.**

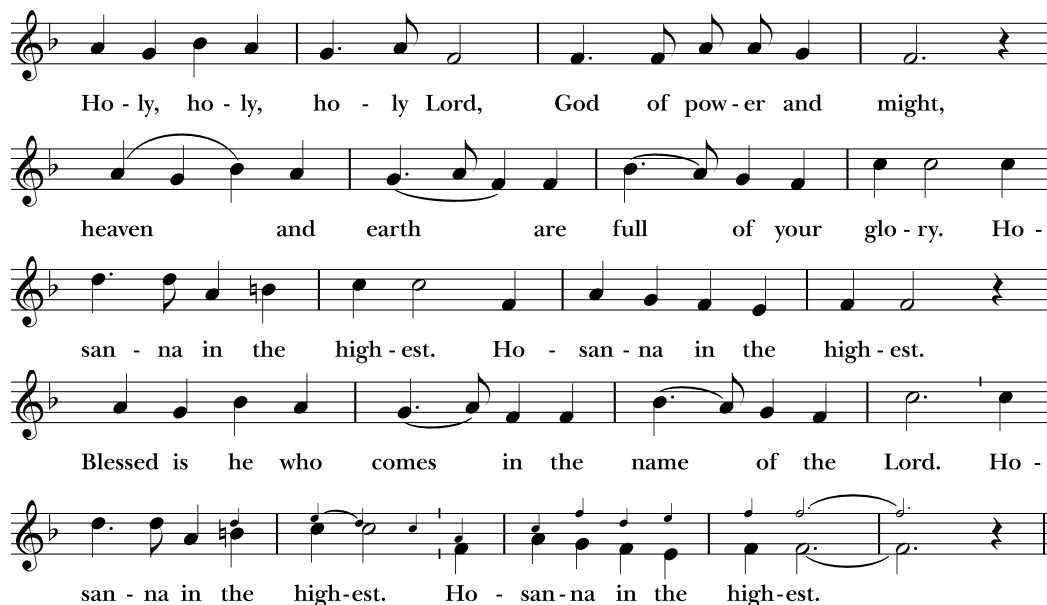
Presider It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.
Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great 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*

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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.

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.

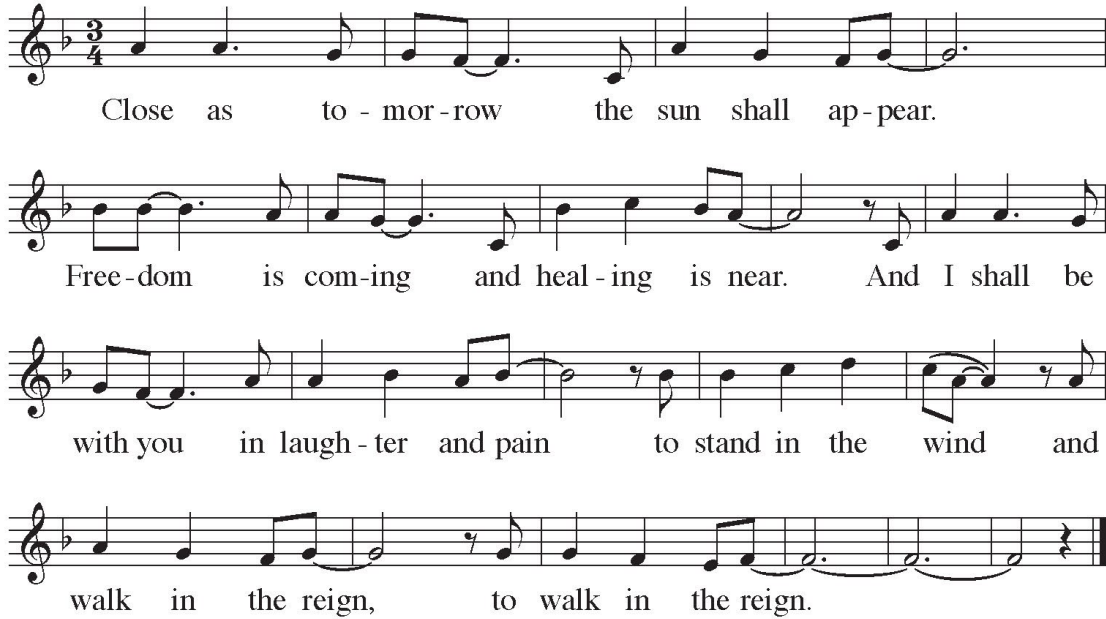
Presider The Gifts of God for the People of God.

This is Christ's table and all are welcome and all are fed. For gluten free wafer, please indicate as you walk forward to receive. 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.

COMMUNION HYMN

WALK IN THE REIGN

Refrain



Close as to - mor - row the sun shall ap - pear.
 Free - dom is com - ing and heal - ing is near. And I shall be
 with you in laugh - ter and pain to stand in the wind and
 walk in the reign, to walk in the reign.

Verses



1. In days to come the des - ert shall
 2. Com - fort each oth - er, for pain soon must
 3. A cur - tain of fear is be - ing torn
 4. A Sow - er is plant - ing in a - cres un -
 bloom. Riv - ers will run there, soon, ver - y
 end. A day comes when li - on and lamb shall be
 down. Pris - ons are o - pened; the lost have been
 seen the seeds of the fu - ture, the field of God's
 soon. So what shall we fear, though
 friends. The sight - less shall see then, the
 found. So go tell the seek - er what
 dream. Those mead - ows are hum - ming though
 death do its worst? The word of our God is the
 speech - less sing songs. The name of our God is the
 we've seen and heard: The name of our God is the
 none sees them rise. The name of the Sow - er is
 D.C.
 last shall be first, the last shall be first.
 right - er of wrongs, the right - er of wrongs.
 keep - er of word, the keep - er of word.
 God of sur - prise, the God of sur - prise.

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.**

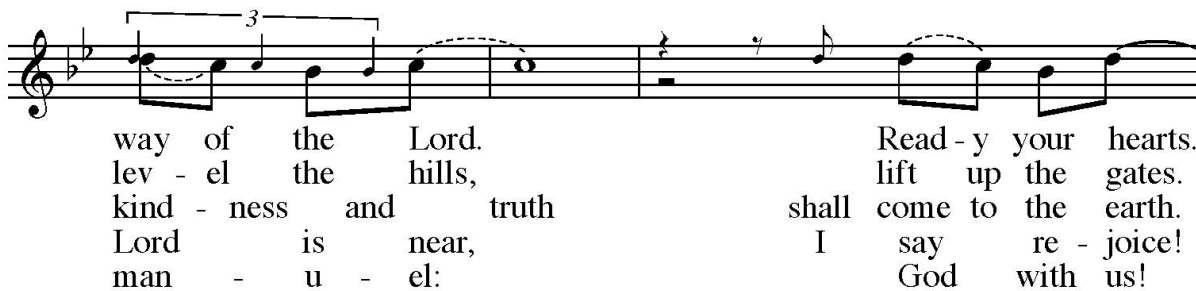
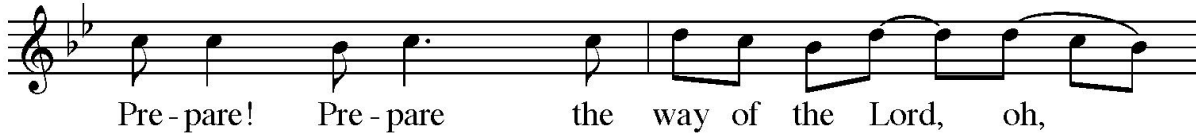
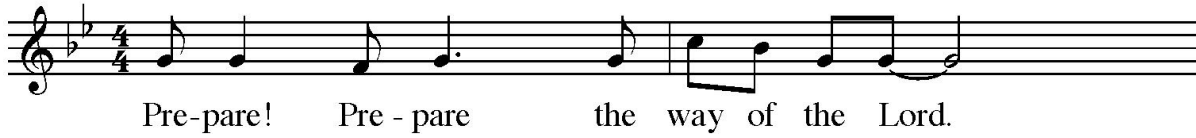
BLESSING

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

PREPARE, PREPARE



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*

THINGS TO NOTICE IN ADVENT

There are several significant shifts to notice 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. 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.

LECTIONARY READINGS, CONTINUED

"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.