

Advent 4 Dec. 20, 2020

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*“Behold the Light is Coming”* by Milton Scott

**Title Card** - *“Christ comes to our heart in our home”*

Begin in Darkness “We begin in darkness”

Begin song Holden SP#24 Light and Darkness

[Carry in light to light the Christ Candle]

L1 The God of peace be with all of you. **And, also with you.**

L1 Let us pray (pause):

Stir up our hearts, O God, to prepare a pathway for your Christ.

By his coming speak peace to your people and turn our hearts toward you,  
That your steadfast love and faithfulness may dwell in all the earth.

Amen.

L2 As the days grow shorter and the nights longer,  
we gather in the darkness to await the dawn of God’s mercy.

Our prayer is woven of silence, scripture, and song.

The music is simple and easily learned.

And the time of silence will be long enough for you to breathe deeply,  
Wide enough to wrap around us, and deep enough to become our prayer.

L1 As we await Christ’s coming, let us give thanks for God’s presence in the  
darkness. Each bid will conclude with the words, “We praise you, O God.”  
Your response is “For the darkness and the light are both alike to you”.  
(pause) We praise you, O God.

**For the darkness and the light are both alike to you.**

L2 For the darkness of waiting, of not knowing what is to come,  
of staying ready and quiet and attentive, we praise you, O God.

**For the darkness and the light are both alike to you.**

L1 For the darkness of staying silent, for the terror of having nothing to say, and  
for the greater terror of needing to say nothing we praise you, O God.

**For the darkness and the light are both alike to you.**

L2 For the darkness of loving in which it is safe to surrender, to let go of our self-protection, and to stop holding back our desire, we praise you, O God.  
**For the darkness and the light are both alike to you.**

L1 For the darkness of choosing, when you give us the moment, to speak, and act, and change, and we cannot know what we have set in motion, but we still have to take the risk, we praise you, O God.  
**For the darkness and the light are both alike to you.**

L2 For the darkness of hoping in a world that longs for you, for the wrestling and the laboring of all creation, for wholeness and justice and freedom, we praise you, O God.  
**For the darkness and the light are both alike to you.**

L1 [adapted prayer from p. 68]  
Let us pray. (pause)  
Holy God, Eternal Light, we wait in the glow of this Christ candle – a light, signs of our hope and your promise. We cry out for your dawn to illumine our lives, to pierce the darkness of our sin and sorrow, and to shine on this community, our neighborhoods, our nation, and your whole creation. Hear our prayers, O God, and strengthen our faith, through the One for whom we wait, Jesus Christ, Amen

**CHANT *Stir Up Your Power* (SP39)**

L1 Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. In your mercy, receive our prayers and by your power hasten the day when peace and justice kiss and steadfast love and faithfulness meet for the sake of the world you love.  
Amen.

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**Sunday December 20, 2020**

**Advent Wreath** (Sundays and Seasons p. 25)

We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord whose, coming is certain and whose day draws near. Amen.

*(Light four candles)*

## **Confession & Forgiveness** (Sundays and Seasons p. 24)

Blessed be God, Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever. Amen.

Together let us honestly and humbly confess the times that we have not lived as God desires.

*(Silence is kept for reflection)*

Loving and forgiving God,

**We confess that we are held captive by sin.**

**In-spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray.**

**We have not welcomed the stranger.**

**We have not loved our neighbor.**

**We have not been Christ to one another.**

**Restore us, O God.**

**Wake us up and turn us from our sin.**

**Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven and you are free - free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, +comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Prayer of the Day**

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## **Holden Evening Prayer** (Page Numbers are from small book)

- 1) Service of Light (p. 2)
- 2) Evening Hymn (p. 3)
- 3) Evening Thanksgiving (p.4)
- 4) Psalm 141 "Let my prayer rise up" ELW #232 or (p. 4 -7)
- 5) Silence for meditation (p. 8)
- 6) Prayer – May our prayers come before you, O God, as incense, and may your presence surround and fill us, so that in union with all creation, we might sing your praise and your love in our lives. Amen.
  
- 7) Reading (Gospel: Luke 1:26-38)

### **Gospel: Luke 1:26-38**

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup>Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

- 8) The light shines in the darkness **and the darkness has not overcome it.** (p.8)
- 9) The Annunciation (p.8-9)
- 10) Litany (p. 10)
- 11) Prayer (p.11) – Great and merciful God, Source and Ground of all goodness and life, give to your people the peace that passes all understanding, and the will to live your Gospel of mercy and justice, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Offering**

*Wait for the Lord*

ELW 262

**Words of Institution** ELW p. 110 (Advent – Epiphany)

**The Lord's Prayer** ELW p. 112

**Invitation to Communion**

Even as we watch and wait, Christ is here. Come, eat and drink.

**Prayer after Communion**

Gracious and abundant God, you have done great things for us, and we rejoice.

In this bread and cup, you give us life forever.

In your boundless mercy, strengthen us and open our hearts to the world's needs, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

**Blessing from Holden** (p.12)

**Dismissal**

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Sending Hymn**

*Joy to the World*

ELW #267