

*O Come
Promise of
Peace*

Advent 2023

Reflections

Lectionary Year B

by

Susanna M. Kawolics

O Come, Promise of Peace
Advent Reflections 2023

As I write these reflections, the top headlines scream of violence, vitriol, viciousness. Hamas has attacked Israel, and Israel is retaliating. Political factions in our country are attacking each other in hopes of winning elections. Not always in the headlines, yet certainly always in the background, is our own attack on this precious planet as we continue to take resources without giving back, to pollute our air, water and land, to consume out of greed rather than need.

We are entering the Advent season, a time when darkness in our hemisphere increases daily until the winter solstice. The growing darkness seems an apt metaphor for the state of the world as it often connotes evil, fear, or sadness. But in nature, darkness does not have such a negative association. The darkness of the sky signals a time for hibernation and renewal; the darkness of the earth provides an environment for growth.

One of my favorite names for God is "Ground of our Being." It is in rooting ourselves in the rich soil of God's love that we grow into the fullness of who God created us to be. It is in the awareness that we are all brought forth from this ground of God's being that we realize our connection to each other. It is in understanding that we are sustained by the ground of this earth that God has created for us that we become good stewards of our fragile home.

This Advent time of darkness invites us to a time of awareness, a time of remembrance, a time of reflection on our deep connection to each other, to our planet, to God, the Ground of Our Being. It is only through living out of this awareness that peace has any hope of being realized. This season invites us to prepare for the coming of Christ, the Prophet of Peace.

For centuries, we who long for Christ's presence have expressed this yearning in a variety of ways. One way was by

praying through various images of God, known as “O Antiphons.” They became part of the Christian tradition in the 7th or 8th century, and are different names for God, traditionally used during the last week of Advent, December 17th through 23rd. These Antiphons are prayed and sung and are best known in the seven verses of the Advent hymn *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (included in this booklet).

Because God is so much greater than our minds can even begin to comprehend, we can only know God through glimpses, through reflections. Inspired by the *O Antiphons*, I have sought to express other images of God based on the weekly Revised Common Lectionary readings for this Advent and Christmas season. The reflections for the Sunday readings begin on the Monday before so that we will have the opportunity to reflect on these Bible verses before hearing them in worship. There is also a prayer to guide each day.

In this Advent time of growing darkness, of slowing down, let us nourish the seed of God’s love deep within us. My hope is that these reflections will enrich our Advent journeys, and deepen our relationship with God, with each other, with creation. I trust that through our united prayers, we can offer hope, reconciliation, and peace to our world.

In Christ’s peace,

Susanna Kawolics

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The images of God are the author’s own responses to the scripture verses, except for the traditional “O Antiphons” from December 17 through December 23.

All prayerful reflections have been created by the author.

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O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Translated: John Neale, 1818-66

() indicates date of traditional "O Antiphons"

(12/23) 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 you, O Israel!

(12/17) O come, our Wisdom from on high,
And order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

(12/18) O come, O come, our Lord of might,
Who to your tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times gave holy law,
In cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

(12/19) O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem,
From ev'ry foe deliver them
That trust your mighty pow'r to save;
Bring them in vict'ry through the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

(12/20) O come, O 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 you, O Israel!

(12/21) O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

(12/22) O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease,
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

Hymn # 31 from **Lutheran Worship**

Author: French Processional

Tune: VENI EMMANUEL, first Published in 1854

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Alternative verses by Susanna M. Kawolics ©2014
() indicates date of traditional "O Antiphons"

(12/17) O come, O Wisdom who from dawning day
Creates and shapes a new world, a new way.
You at the gateways of our choices stand
And guide us with your dancing, loving hand.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O God amazing, wise,
May we each day be open to surprise.

(12/18) O come, O God of Ancient Israel,
Who with your people faithfully do dwell.
You've shown yourself in tablets of law,
And burning bush, and cloud that wand'ers saw.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O God of Ancient Days,
We trust and rest our hearts in you always.

(12/19) O come, O come, O Flower of Jesse's Tree.
No one believed a shepherd King would be.
You chose the humblest of his sons to reign
To show your ways are not our ways, again.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O Flower of Jesse's Tree,
Bring birth and newness from the smallest seed.

(12/20) O come, O Key of David, open wide
Our locked-down hearts so peace may come inside.
Release the hold of grudges past
And tenderly toward hope lead us at last.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O Key of David, free
Our hearts from hatred that they healed might be.

(12/21) O come, O Dayspring, in our darkest night
With your bright stars and moon disperse our fright.
Weave light through shadows, make all things new
And bring a wholeness only found through you.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O God of Radiant Light
And put the darkness in our lives to flight.

(12/22) O come, Uniter of the Nations, hold
All on this earth in your close, loving fold.
Heal wounds and mend together broken hearts.
Bring universal peace from varied parts.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O God of Unity,
Grant that your realm of love might come to be.

(12/23) O come, O come, Emmanuel,
Be birthed again that all earth be made well.
Inspire us all to make your presence known
By tending seeds of justice you have sown.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall through and in us once more come and dwell.

First Sunday of Advent:

December 3, 2023

Begin reflections on

Monday, November 27

Readings:



Isaiah 64:1-9

Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Mark 13:24-38

The overall theme of this week:

Hope

*“Hope arouses, as nothing else can arouse,
a passion for the possible.”*

William Sloane Coffin

*May we passionately pray and strive for
God’s **hope** of peace in our world.*

Monday, November 27

Antiphon

O Universal Potter, Come

Scripture

Isaiah 64:8b *We are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Universal Potter, Come~

Ground us in our kinship.

From clay you fashioned

each and every one of us;

from the ground of the earth

you bring forth all life.

Remind us of our connection

to you, our Creator,

to the earth, your creation,

to each other, your creatures.

You formed us all as vessels of your love.

Open us to take in the fulness

of your compassion, grace, and mercy.

As we are filled, may we generously pour out

your goodness

to bring hope and healing

to our thirsting world.

Amen.

Tuesday, November 28

Antiphon

O Guiding Shepherd, Come

Scripture

Psalm 80:1 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock.

Prayerful Reflection

O Guiding Shepherd, Come~

Attend to us.

Remind us that we are all one flock,
lovingly led by you, our shepherd.

Pilot us as we seek to follow your paths
of justice and peace.

Reassure us of your presence
as we journey in hope
to bring healing to our world.

Free us from fear of the next step,
and enable us to trust in the promise—
that wherever we roam, you are with us:
behind us, beside us, before us
so we never travel alone.

Shepherd us, abide in us, and unite us
with each other and with you.

Amen.

Wednesday, November 29

Antiphon

O Restorer of Lives, Come

Scripture

Psalm 80:3 *Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved!*

Prayerful Reflection

O Restorer of Lives, Come~
Repair the breaches in our lives;
remedy suffering of body and spirit.
rebuild broken relationships,
revise shattered dreams,
reconnect us to each other, to you,
and to the earth.

Recover our hopes for peace and harmony.
Reinvigorate us that we may work toward
re-establishing our beloved community
and rehabilitating our precious planet.

Grant us refreshed vision to see
a world shining with new possibilities.

Embolden us with courage to work toward
a renewed and restored creation.

Amen.

Thursday, November 30

Antiphon

O Enricher of Souls, Come

Scripture

1 Corinthians 1:5-6 *In every way you were enriched in Christ, in speech and knowledge of every kind—just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Enricher of Souls, Come~

Fill us with Christ's presence.

You sent your Child

as the embodiment of your love,

and have promised to enrich us in that spirit.

Enrich us in our speech, that our words may be

those of healing, of understanding,

of compassion.

Enrich us in our knowledge, that we may know

truth, depth, and nuance.

Enrich us in our strength as we seek

to testify to Christ's love

for all people, and for all of creation,

and to bring forth Christ's hope for peace,

through our prayers, words, and actions.

Amen.

Friday, December 1

Antiphon

O Eternal Word, Come

Scripture

Mark 13:31 *Heaven and earth will pass away,
but my words will not pass away.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Eternal Word, Come~
Your word formed the cosmos, all of creation,
at the dawn of time.
Your word dwelt among us in flesh appearing,
at your appointed time.
Your word still speaks of healing and hope,
at this present time.
Open us to honor, hear, and heed
your everlasting word
of mercy, kindness, and forgiveness
for all people.
May we speak and embody this word
to bring forth your eternal love,
grace, and hope
into our world.

Amen.

Saturday, December 2

Antiphon

O Purveyor of Peace, Come

Scripture

I Corinthians 1:3 *Grace to you and peace from
God . . . and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Purveyor of Peace, Come~

End our inner conflicts,
stop our battles with each other,
halt our warfare on creation.

We yearn for your promised peace.

Our souls long for reassurance
of your love and acceptance of us
just as we are.

Our spirits long for kindness and respect
among our loved ones, our neighbors,
our siblings throughout the world.

Our bodies long for clean air, water and earth.

Fill us with the hope that through your grace
we may love ourselves, our neighbors,
and our world as you do,
making us channels of your peace.

Amen.

Sunday, December 3

Prayer for the First Sunday of Advent

*O God of Hope, Come~
As we begin this Advent journey,
lead us in your ways.
Shape us into your people
of love and compassion,
of justice and mercy,
of healing and reconciliation.
Restore our connection
with each other,
with the earth,
with you.
Let your hope for the world
arouse in us
a passion for the possible,
and a pathway toward peace.
We ask this through Christ,
our Savior and our Hope.
Amen.*

Second Sunday of Advent

December 10, 2023

Begin reflections on

Monday, December 4

Readings:



Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Mark 1:1-8

The overall theme of this week~

Peace

“If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”

Mother Teresa

May we remember our connection to God, to each other, and to the earth as we work and pray for peace.

Monday, December 4

Antiphon

O Merciful Reconciler, Come

Scripture

Mark 1:4 *John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Merciful Reconciler, Come~

Forgive us.

For too long we have taken
more than we have needed.

We have plundered mother earth
without restoring her.

We have exploited those who are poor
to get what we want.

We have forgotten our connection to each other
and to this precious planet.

Have mercy on us.

Turn our hearts toward you,
toward your vision of a just world
for all people,

toward your dream of a restored creation,
toward your hope for a peace-filled earth.

In your mercy reconcile us to you
and to each other.

Amen.

Tuesday, December 5

Antiphon

O Peace-Speaker, Come

Scripture

Psalm 85:8 *Let me hear what God the Sovereign will speak, for God will speak peace to God's people.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Peace-Speaker, Come~
Bring us your word of peace.
Into our lives filled with clamor and noise,
with jarring news and divisive exchanges,
send your heaven-born Prince of Peace.
Remind us again and again
of our connection to each other,
of your dream, vision and hope
for peace in our world.
May your whisper of peace be heard
above the din, beyond the discord,
and over the drumming of our days.
Grant that we would become
peace-givers, peace-makers,
peace-speakers and peace-seekers
in your name.

Amen.

Wednesday, December 6

Antiphon

O Eternal Visionary, Come

Scripture

2 Peter 3:8-15a *But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Eternal Visionary, Come~
Transform our sense of time.
For you a day is like a thousand years,
and a thousand years like a day.
Grant us courage to take action
which will bring forth urgently needed change,
and patience to plant seeds
that will take time to flourish.
Release us from our relentless desire
to experience results in our time,
and give us hope for a future we may never see.
Grant us trust
that even from our seemingly ineffective
deeds and prayers,
your peace will come, in your time, not ours.
Amen.

Thursday, December 7

Antiphon

O Lifter of Valleys, Come

Scripture

Isaiah 40:4 *Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Lifter of Valleys, Come~
Raise up all those brought low,
those who are world-weary,
those who know only sad and lowly plains.
Make us harbingers of hope
and purveyors of peace
as we reach out
to those who are down-trodden.
Show us how to level the field alongside them,
encourage us to accompany them,
enable us to stand as allies with them.
Grant that together we may all know the song
of gladness, of hope,
and of peace in our lives.
Amen.

Friday, December 8

Antiphon

O Tender Comforter, Come

Scripture

Isaiah 40:1-2 *Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to it that its warfare is ended, that its iniquity is pardoned . . .*

Prayerful Reflection

O Tender Comforter, Come~
Soothe our sorrowing hearts,
mend our war-torn world.
Pardon our iniquity and
fill us with your mercy, kindness, and love.
End the battles, the strife, the violence
within ourselves and within our world.
Like Jesus, may we bring
peace where there is conflict,
softness where there is rigidity,
understanding where there is judgment.
Make gentle our words, our deeds,
and our footprints upon the earth
as we strive for peace in our world.
Amen.

Saturday, December 9

Antiphon

O Holy Baptizer, Come

Scripture

Mark 1:8 *I [John] baptized you with water; but the one who comes will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Holy Baptizer, Come~
Claim us as your own.
Immerse us in your healing, cleansing spirit.
Create in us new and pure hearts,
 healed from unforgiveness and hatred,
 empty of cruelty and unkindness,
 open to compassion and reconciliation.
Baptize us that we may be
 awash in your hope,
 soaked with your peace,
 saturated with your mercy.
With hearts overflowing
 with your abounding grace,
 send us forth to shower the world
 with your love.
 Amen.

Sunday, December 10

Prayer for the Second Sunday of Advent

O God of Peace, Come~

Form us into your Peace-Makers.

*Enable us to patiently and lovingly
await the coming of your dominion,
even as we strive*

*to bring forth healing changes
into our world.*

*As you gather us tenderly
and hold us close,*

renew our lives, and restore our souls.

*Refresh our hearts with your mercy,
and our lives with your compassion,
that peace and love
may flow from us
into our world.*

*We ask this through Christ,
our Savior and our Peace.*

Amen.

Third Sunday of Advent

December 17, 2023

Begin reflections on

Monday, December 11

Readings



Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Psalm 126 or

Luke 1:46-55

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

John 1:6-8, 19-28

The overall theme of this week~

Joy

*“The fullness of joy is to behold God
in everything.” Julian of Norwich*

*May we behold God in everything and
everyone as we work and pray for joy
in this world.*

Monday, December 11

Antiphon

O Planter of Oaks, Come

Scripture

Isaiah 61:3 *They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display God's glory.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Planter of Oaks, Come~
Make us your living trees of righteousness.
Open us to the extravagant hospitality
modeled by your magnificent oaks.
Just as these lavishly welcoming trees
are home to hundreds of species of animals,
thousands of types of insects,
countless kinds of plants, lichen and fungi,
housing all
without judgment, bias, or prejudice,
plant this same right spirit within our hearts.
May we joyfully welcome all people
with that same generosity,
with open and accepting hearts,
with an abundance of hospitality and love.
Amen.

Tuesday, December 12

Antiphon

O Transformer of Tears, Come

Scripture

Psalm 126:6 *Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home
with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Transformer of Tears, Come~

Attend to our weeping.

Our hearts break for those

who experience violence,

for those who hunger, who thirst,

who are unsheltered and unprotected.

Our hearts ache for those who are

falsely accused,

erroneously blamed

wrongfully convicted.

As we cry, turn our heartache to action

that our tears may produce

harvests of justice,

crops of compassion,

sheaves of generosity.

May today's tears of despair

reap tomorrow's shouts of joy and justice.

Amen.

Wednesday, December 13

Antiphon

O Repairer of the Ruined, Come

Scripture

Isaiah 61:4 *They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities . . .*

Prayerful Reflection

O Repairer of the Ruined, Come~
Repair and heal
 our bruised and broken places.
Our friendships are torn, our bodies worn,
 our spirits threadbare.
Gather up
 the scattered remnants of our hopes,
 the scraps of our relationships,
 the fragments of our faith,
 and stitch them back together.
Repair our ruins, raise us up,
 connect us back to each other, to you,
 and to all of creation.
Heal us and make us whole
 that we may experience joy once again.
 Amen.

Thursday, December 14

Antiphon

O Evoker of Gratitude, Come

Scripture

1 Thessalonians 5:18 *Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Evoker of Gratitude, Come~

Fill our hearts with thanksgiving and joy.

Make us mindful of all the ways
you bless our lives:

Your creation, which nourishes us,
sustains us, and fills us with wonder.

Your people, who gladden, love, support,
and encourage us.

Your Spirit, which inspires, renews, guides,
and grounds us.

Make us to live in awe of all the gifts
you so generously and lovingly
bestow upon us.

With grateful hearts, may we behold you
in everything, that our joy may be full.

Amen.

Friday, December 15

Antiphon

O Faithful Caller, Come

Scripture

1 Thessalonians 5:24 *The one who calls you is faithful, and will do it.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Faithful Caller, Come~
Amid the cacophony, clamor
and commotion in our world,
create a space of stillness in our hearts
where we may hear your voice.
You persistently and lovingly call us,
yet so often we do not hear or listen.
Be faithful to us, and continue to beckon us
until we respond in faithfulness to you.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for hearing and answering
and living into your call.
Give us the conviction to trust
that you will uphold us and sustain us
as we go in joy to where you summon us.
Amen.

Saturday, December 16

Antiphon

O Light of the World, Come

Scripture

John 1:8 *John was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Light of the World, Come~

Shine in the night

with your everlasting radiance.

When we encounter those

who experience brokenness in their lives,
may we extend to them

healing light to cast away the gloom,

comforting warmth to overcome the cold,

compassionate patience

and understanding

to see them through the night of despair

to the dawn of joy.

Make the spark of your love

burn joyfully and passionately in our hearts,

inviting others into its warmth and light.

Amen.

Sunday, December 17

Prayer for the Third Sunday of Advent

*O God of Joy, Come~
O God of Wisdom, Come~
Guide us, shape us, surprise us!
Show us the path of knowledge,
hospitality, connection, justice, and love.
Mend our wounds, our divisions,
our brokenness.
May our tears lead us
to acts of compassion
as you call us forth
to feed those who are hungry,
to warm those who are cold,
to comfort those who are broken-hearted.
Give us wisdom, courage, and strength
as we seek to walk in your light,
and open our eyes
to behold you in everything,
that our joy may be full.
We ask this through Christ,
our Savior and our Joy.
Amen.*

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023

Begin reflections on

Monday, December 18

Readings



2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Psalms 89:1-4, 19-26

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1:26-38

The overall theme of this week~

Love

*"Love is the greatest force in the universe.
It is the heartbeat of the moral cosmos.*

*[The one] who loves is a participant
in the being of God."*

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

*As we approach the celebration of the birth
of Jesus and express our longing through the
traditional "O Antiphons," may we
participate in making real God's love in the
world.*

Monday, December 18

Antiphon

O Lord of Ancient Israel, Come

Scripture

Psalm 89:1-2a *I will sing of your steadfast love,
O God, forever . . . I will proclaim your
faithfulness to all generations. For your
steadfast love is established forever . . .*

Prayerful Reflection

O Lord of Ancient Israel, Come~
Remind us of your steadfast love
established forever, since time eternal.

As you revealed yourself to our sacred
ancestors

through holy law on high,
through manna and water on earth,
through guiding cloud in the heavens,
reveal yourself to us as well.

Open our eyes to see
the wonders you orchestrate,
the blessings you bestow,
the steadfast love you promise.

Make us joyful witnesses
to your abiding presence and eternal love.

Amen.

Tuesday, December 19

Antiphon

O Flower of Jesse's Stem, Come

Scripture

2 Samuel 7:8 . . . *thus you shall say to my servant David: "Thus says the God of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel."*

Prayerful Reflection

O Flower of Jesse's Stem, Come~
Inspire us to see with your eyes.
Just as long ago you led your servant David
from the pasture to the palace,
from unknown shepherd to hero king,
so you see beyond our lives as they are
to the possibilities that can be,
further than the future of our imagining.
Plant in us the seeds
for a wider, broader, deeper vision
for our own lives, for the lives of others,
for our world.
Inspire us to live into our potential,
to trust in your guidance and love
as we blossom into becoming
all that you created us to be.
Amen.

Wednesday, December 20

Antiphon

O Key of David, Come

Scripture

Romans 16:25-26 *Now to God who is able to strengthen you . . . according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed . . . be the glory.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Key of David, Come~

Reveal to us the secret of your love
for all people and all of creation.

Open wide our understanding toward
those whom we fear,
those whom we dislike,
those whom we distrust.

Unlock the gates we have secured
against new ideas,
against challenging views,
against truths we do not want to face.

Free us from our self-imposed prisons
so we may
break down barriers,
embrace the mystery of every person,
and open wide the doors of our hearts.

Amen.

Thursday, December 21

Antiphon

O Radiant Dawn, Come

Scripture

Luke 1:46b-47 *My soul magnifies the Most High,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. . .*

Prayerful Reflection

O Radiant Dawn, Come~

Open us to magnify your name,
your love, your light.

Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
on this winter solstice, the shortest of days.

Kindle the embers of our hearts
that they may ignite and rejoice in you,
that they may break forth into a blaze of
love and compassion.

Spark within our souls
songs of glory and promise
that carry a melody of hope
to those in despair.

Make us joyful conduits of
your burning love
for the world.

Amen.

Friday, December 22

Antiphon

O Ruler of All Nations, Come

Scripture

Luke 1:33 "Jesus will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of that reign there will be no end."

Prayerful Reflection

O Ruler of All Nations, Come~
Bring us all into your house, and reign over us.
Bind all peoples in one heart and mind.
Connect us to you and to each other,
that we may cherish our bonds.
Remind us again that under your Dominion,
we are, each and every one of us,
deeply, unconditionally, and forever
loved by you.
Open our hearts to care for each other,
as you care for us all.
Reign in our lives, and shape us
into a worldwide family
filled with kindness and compassion
for one another.
May we rejoice to live
in your love-filled, all-inclusive embrace.
Amen.

Saturday, December 23

Antiphon

O Emmanuel, Come

Scripture

Psalm 89:21, 24 *My hand shall always remain with [David], my arm also shall strengthen him . . . My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him . . .*

Prayerful Reflection

O Emmanuel, Come~

Strengthen us with your steadfast love
and faithfulness.

Grant us trust to believe that you are with us,
that your guiding hand remains on us,
that your loving arm embraces us,
that your tender heart beats within us.

You are God with us, our Emmanuel,
who promises
your abiding and everlasting presence.

Be born in our world today and always
through our words, our deeds,
and our very lives,

as we seek both to receive and to reveal
your steadfast love here on earth.

Amen.

Sunday, December 24

Prayer for the Fourth Sunday of Advent

*O God of Love, Come~
On this the last Sunday of Advent,
as the new day dawns,
remind us of your steadfast love
and faithfulness.*

*Open wide our hearts that we may
remember always our connection
to you, to all people, to your creation.*

*Nurture us as we strive to become
the loving family you created us to be,
and let your compassion and mercy
rule over us.*

*As we celebrate your birth so long ago,
be born in us this day and always.*

*Shine your light in our hearts
so that we may know your presence,
witness your faithfulness,
and trust in your abiding love.*

*We ask this through Christ,
our Savior and our Love.*

Amen.

Christmas

December 25, 2023

Readings

Christmas Day, Proper I



Isaiah 9:2-7

Psalms 96

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

As we arrive at the day of the fulfillment of God's promise of salvation, we glorify God for this great and awesome gift. May we celebrate Love made flesh by praying and working toward birthing this love into our world today and always.

Monday, December 25

Antiphon

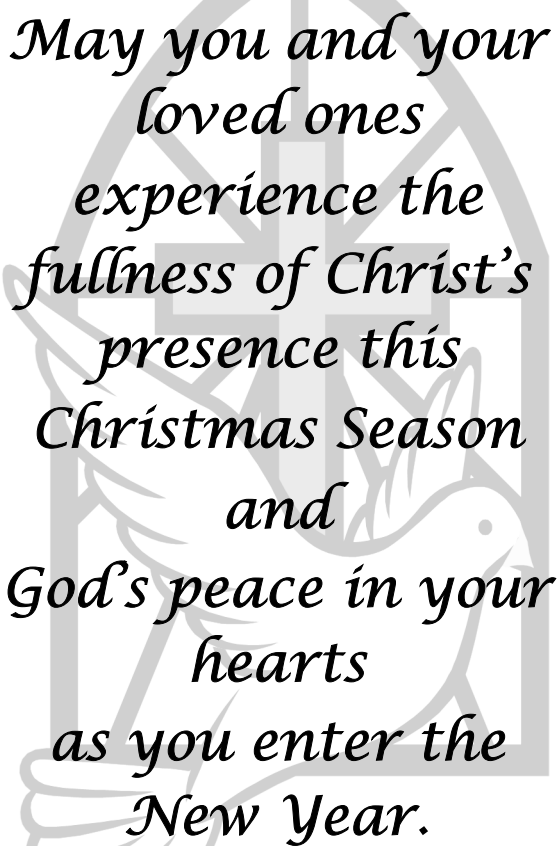
O Praise-Worthy Sovereign, Come

Scripture

Psalm 96:10-13 "GOD is sovereign!" . . . Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before GOD . . ."

Prayerful Reflection

O Praise-Worthy Sovereign, come~
Receive our songs of glory!
Together with the earth, we rejoice in you,
together with the field, we exult in you,
together with the trees, we sing for joy!
We celebrate the coming of your Child,
love made flesh,
compassion revealed,
peace personified.
Fill our hearts with Christ's presence
that we may bring your
healing, hope and compassion
to all people and all creation
this Christmas Day and always.
Amen.



*May you and your
loved ones
experience the
fullness of Christ's
presence this
Christmas Season
and
God's peace in your
hearts
as you enter the
New Year.*

Author's note:

I would welcome any of your thoughts, comments,
suggestions or reflections
as you journey through this Advent season.

Please share on my Facebook page:
facebook.com/AdventReflections,
or email to: *reverendsusi@gmail.com*.

I am deeply grateful for these communities
that support and nurture me in my faith journey,
and have enabled me to print these booklets
and offer them free of charge:



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Thank you for journeying with me in prayer
through the Advent season!

In Christ's Peace,

Susi Kawolics

