

# A STABLE ADVENT

“SHELTER FOR YOUR SOUL”

WEEK 3: THE HEAVENLY HOST

~ IN HARMONY

WITH THE COSMOS



## PERSONAL PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE<sup>[1]</sup>

Today, with this gathered community, I sit.  
I wait for you, O God:  
for your presence,  
though you are always near;  
for your peace,  
through the distractions of the week.  
I wait to hear your word,  
to see the light of your face in Jesus Christ,  
to be renewed by your Spirit.

I sit,  
I wait in faith with your people.  
Accept our praise, forgive our sin, send us out refreshed;  
in the name of Christ.  
Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> UIW2, pg. 144

# CALL TO WORSHIP AND CANDLE-LIGHTING

In a world of rush and restless change,  
step into the hush of this sanctuary,  
with these hearts beside you—  
ready to seek God here and now,  
to breathe in gentle rhythm,  
to listen quietly and wait with hope,  
to find what's holy in simple acts of love,  
and to welcome the Christ  
who makes a home in each of us.

In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.

Through the Word, all things came to be:  
**Jesus is the life, the light, of all people.**  
**Even now, the light shines in the darkness,**  
**and the darkness cannot put it out.**

## DAY STAR<sup>[2]</sup>

May the hope of Christ rise up.  
May it guide from near and far.  
May the light of Christ shine out,  
shine like a day-star.

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<sup>2</sup> Music and lyrics by Trisha Watts

# POEMPRAYER: TOUCHING THE UNSEEN<sup>[3]</sup>

Oh, in the beginning, when you were alone,  
did you dream of someone like me?  
in the beginning, from soil and stone,  
when you breathed out a world to be .....  
did you dream a great dream,  
did it glisten and gleam  
for all of the angels to see?  
in the beginning, in the depths of your heart,  
were you thinking already  
of me?

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When I pause long enough to listen  
I hear noise rather than music in my soul.

the chords of my heart strain  
to find the first harmony.  
it's there, somewhere in my distant memories,  
I hear snatches of it sometimes,  
in the silences,  
in the corners,  
on the outskirts of my dreams.  
but my days are all so busy  
and my moments are all so heavy,  
that they pull my hope down again into a minor key.  
is harmony even possible anymore  
in this out of whack,  
out of tune world?

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<sup>3</sup> By Steven James in "Story: Recapture the Mystery"

lead me into the music again.  
show me where the breeze of your harmony blows.  
for only with your help  
will I ever be part of the original song  
again.

## SACRED SCRIPTURE: LUKE 2:13-20 (NIV)

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,  
“Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

## PRAYERS FOR OTHERS (ADVENT CANDLES)

God of wonder and harmony,  
as we remember the heavenly host singing in the night sky,  
we light this candle for all who seek joy and connection  
in a world often filled with noise and distraction.

We pray for those who feel isolated among the crowd,  
for those yearning for unity and understanding,  
for communities longing to come together in peace,  
for creatures and creation with no voice,  
for each soul searching for their place in this vast universe,  
and for everyone who dreams of a world in harmony.

### TIS 286 VERSEs 1, 2 & 3

Light one candle for hope,  
one bright candle for hope.  
He brings hope  
to every heart.  
He comes! He comes!

Light one candle for peace,  
one bright candle for peace.  
He brings peace  
to every heart.  
He comes! He comes!

Light one candle for Joy  
One bright candle for Joy  
Every nation  
shall find salvation  
in Bethlehem's baby boy.

# LIVING SERMON: IN HARMONY WITH THE COSMOS

- I wonder what goodwill and peace look like in today's world.
- I wonder whether you will join in the music.
- I wonder how best we might carry its melody into our lives and our communities.

## Social Justice Affirmation

*(15<sup>th</sup> World Methodist Council, Nairobi 1986)*

We believe in God,  
creator of the world and of all people;  
and in Jesus Christ, incarnate among us,  
who died and rose again;  
and in the Holy Spirit, present with us to guide,  
strengthen and comfort.

**We believe. Lord, help our unbelief.**

We rejoice in every sign of God's kingdom:  
in upholding human dignity and community;  
in every expression of love, justice and reconciliation;  
in each act of self-giving on behalf of others;  
in the abundance of God's gifts entrusted to us, that all may  
have enough;  
in all responsible use of the earth's resources.

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to God's people on earth.**

We confess our sin, individual and collective,  
by silence or action:

the violation of human dignity based on race, class, age, sex, nation or faith;

the exploitation of people by greed or indifference;

the misuse of power in personal, communal, national and international life;

the search for security by military and economic forces that threaten human existence;

the abuse of technology which endangers the earth and all life upon it.

**Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

We commit ourselves individually and as a community to the way of Christ: to take up the cross; to seek abundant life for all humanity; to struggle for peace with justice and freedom; to risk ourselves in faith, hope and love, praying that God's kingdom may come.

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

## BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth, peace,  
goodwill among people.

And may the Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face to shine upon you,  
and be gracious to you;  
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you,  
and give you peace. Amen.