



The In-Between Way: Rejoice

8:45 a.m. + December 15, 2024 + The Third Sunday of Advent

*In the rich valley of the resurrection
The jubilate deo will resound
A jubilant rejoicing in perfection.*

*But even here the echo of that sound
Of perfect praise enriches our brief song,
A canticle that's taken up around*

*The world. The voices of the weak are strong
In God's enduring praise. He knows their cause,
And he will vindicate the poor, who long*

*To see his justice come and his good laws
Prevail at last. Till then their jubilation
Will shake the powers that be and give them pause*

*To tremble in the midst of exploitation
And glimpse in others all the joy they've missed,
Till love himself comes as a revelation.*
Psalm 66 from David's Crown by Malcolm Guite

Crossing the Threshold

Singing our Welcome

"Veni Immanuel" (O Come, Immanuel)

*Veni, veni,
Veni, veni, Immanuel;
Veni, veni,
Veni Immanuel.*

Lighting the Advent Candle

No matter what troubles overwhelm us today, Isaiah reminds us that in all of our preparation and passionate pursuit of God's coming kingdom, we must not forget that God's salvation has come and is coming. "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3). With joy you will remember that God's salvation is already present among us.

Faced with the troubles and the suffering of the world, we choose to live in joyful presence to God and one another. We will not turn away from the pain and the hurt in our world, and we will not stop rejoicing in God, whose salvation fills us to overflowing that God's love might flow through us and flood our troubled world with hope, peace, and joy.

We light this candle of joy as a sign of our commitment to be present to ourselves, our friends, our families, and our neighbors that in sharing our vulnerable lives we might share in the glorious joy of God's salvation together.

Singing our Welcome

"Veni Immanuel" (O Come, Immanuel)

*Veni, veni,
Veni, veni, Immanuel;
Veni, veni,
Veni Immanuel.*

Praying a Psalm

contemplative adaptation of Psalm 106 (Nan Merrill)

*Breath of the Merciful, teach us the way of compassion,
that we may heed the cries of the poor;
That we may be merciful to those
who live in the bonds of prison, illness, and loneliness;
And, may we be strong voices in support of justice;
may we offer forgiveness as a healing balm.
Your Word is joy to our hearts,
O, Creator of the Dance.
May we become bearers of joy,
we who are invited to share in the Cosmic Dance!
We pray for the gift of wisdom,
that the motivations of our heart might be made pure,
That we may recognize the perfect timing of all things
and know the seasons of the heart.
May we walk with faith all the days of our life –
confident in your Divine Presence, even in times of trouble,
and with assurance for what is and all that is to be.
May we have faith in the unfolding of our lives,
and radical trust in the universe!
Awaken us to the Oneness of all things,
to the beauty and truth of Unity.
May we become aware of the interdependence of all living things,
and come to know You in every thing, and all things in You.
For as we attune to your Presence within us,
we know not separation, and joy becomes our dwelling place.*

Song of Response

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

*Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.*

*Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit, rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.*

Contemplating Scripture

Luke 1:39-46

*In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry,
"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.
And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?
For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy.*

*And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment
of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”*
And Mary sang:

Singing the Words of Mary

“Magnify”

*My soul will magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoice in my savior.
See how his favor rests on me, I am blessed in the sight of the world.
For he has raised me up on high, the Mighty has done great things,
Mercy flows out to everyone who walks in the fear of the Lord.*

*Magnify. Magnify.
Magnify the Lord with me.*

*Come see his strength, his mighty power, has torn the proud from their illusions.
Thrones of importance cast aside as the humble are raised up on high.
Come see the hungry satisfied while the rich are all sent away.
For he has come to help his servant remembering his promise of mercy.*

Meditation

Singing the Words of Mary

“Magnify”

*Magnify. Magnify.
Magnify the Lord with me.*

Silence

During these minutes of silence, simply rest in God’s abiding and loving presence in this moment. You are in God and God is in you. Just be and relax. Center your attention in your heart and imagine your breath flowing in and out from your heart area. If it helps you to center, use a sacred prayer word such as Jesus, Abba, Spirit, Light, or Love.

Moving to the Table

“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.
Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*O Come, thou 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 thee, O Israel.*

*O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thy justice here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death’s dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*O Come, Desire of nations bind, all peoples in one heart and mind.
From dust thou brought us forth to life; deliver us from earthly strife.
Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

Communion

Receiving a Good Word



Our Staff

Haley Brown – Associate Director of The Anchor House
Courtney Garrison – Ministry Assistant
Peter Johns – Associate Director of Contemplative Worship

Zachary Montasser – Violinist
Rev. Rachel Sciretti – Associate Pastor
Rev. Dr. Michael Sciretti, Jr. – Pastor of The Center

Today's Music

"Veni Immanuel" – John L. Bell, *"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"* - Charles Wesley & Rowland Prichard
"Magnify" – Peter Johns, *"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"* - Traditional

For information about The Center for Christian Spirituality and upcoming events, visit:

www.TheCenterFCS.org.

Please register your presence in the notebooks in the foyer.

If you have a prayer request or seeking support, please contact Rachel Sciretti, rsciretti@chapelwood.org.

Centering Prayer

Today | The Chapel | after Contemplative Worship

Advent Community Gathering

Today | The Anchor House | 10:00 a.m.

Join us for some good food and fellowship with friends from our contemplative community after worship in The Anchor House

gastrochurch fundraiser: Hogwarts Christmas Feast

December 21 | Westminster United Methodist Church | 7:00 p.m.

You are invited to the 8th Annual Hogwarts Christmas Feast benefiting gastrochurch. This fundraiser is vital to the work gastrochurch does of feeding people physically and spiritually across Houston, as it usually raises half of the gastrochurch annual budget. Opportunities to attend, volunteer or become a sponsor can be found using the QR code. We hope you'll join us as we gather around these magical tables for a time full of light, love and joy!



The Service of the Longest Night

December 22 | The Chapel | 6:00 p.m.

The Service of the Longest Night is held on the Sunday evening closest to the Winter Solstice, the longest night of the year. The "longest night" has also become an expression for the spiritual journey of grief and loss. Our time together will be especially appropriate for those who have experienced a significant loss this past year. In this time of worship, you are invited to quiet refuge of prayer, music, remembrance, and Holy Communion.

Contemplative Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 24 | The Anchor House Grounds | 6:00 p.m.

We will sing carols, hear the Christmas story, reflect on its meaning for us today, and light candles to celebrate the coming of Christ. It will be a lovely way to mark Christmas Eve.