

## **Immaculate Heart of Mary**

### **Advent Evensong II**

**Dec. 7, 2021 – 5 pm**

**Anthem (Paul)** - Come, God-With-Us (stanza 2 of “Savior of the Nations Come”)

### **Prayer (Marianne)**

Father, prepare our hearts to celebrate your birth joyfully! We thank you for faithfully doing what you promised long ago when you sent your Son to earth so that we might have the chance to become part of your family. Let the promise of your second coming inspire us to live with hope and purpose.

As we wait for your plan to unfold, give us the patience we need. Remind us of the peace we can access when we take time to still ourselves before you and remember that you are God. We thank you that you are both sovereign and gracious.

Help us to find rest in the midst of what feels like chaos in our world. Amen

**Antiphon (Paul)** – Advent Wreath Lighting – 2<sup>nd</sup> week in Advent - *Marianne to light wreath as Paul sings*

**Hymn (Paul)** – W407 Unexpected and Mysterious

### **Poem (Marianne)**

Making the House Ready, by Mary Oliver

Dear Lord, I have swept and I have washed but  
still nothing is as shining as it should be  
for you. Under the sink, for example, is an  
uproar of mice it is the season of their  
many children. What shall I do? And under the eaves  
and through the walls the squirrels  
have gnawed their ragged entrances but it is the season  
when they need shelter, so what shall I do? And  
the raccoon limps into the kitchen and opens the cupboard  
while the dog snores, the cat hugs the pillow;  
what shall I do? Beautiful is the new snow falling

in the yard and the fox who is staring boldly  
up the path, to the door. And still I believe you will  
come, Lord: you will, when I speak to the fox,  
the sparrow, the lost dog, the shivering sea-goose, know  
that really I am speaking to you whenever I say,  
as I do all morning and afternoon: Come in, Come in.

**Carol (Paul) – W398 People Look East**

**Poem (Marianne)**

Advent, by Janet Morley

Your coming is like freedom to the prisoner,  
like the return of those long captive.  
You are the movements of the dance I had forgotten,  
you are the face of satisfied desire.

My soul is stirred for you, my beloved,  
I cannot contain my heart;  
for you have seen my longing,  
and your eyes are dark with love.  
Your love is stronger than death,  
your passion more relentless than the grave.  
You will but speak the word,  
and I shall be healed;  
Though your touch is the touch of a stranger,  
yet is your voice my home.

**Psalm (Paul and congregation) – G110 Psalm 126: God Has Done Great Things for Us**

**Reading (Marianne) – Isaiah 40:1-5**

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

**Hymn (Paul)** – W392 On Jordan’s Bank

**Anthem (Paul)** – Veiled in Darkness (Advent book p. 199)

**Reflection (Marianne)**

In this second week of Advent, John cries out that in order to prepare the way of the Lord, “every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low.” But what exactly does that mean for all of us, as we wait for the celebration of the birth of our Lord?

In order to truly immerse ourselves into Advent, we need to identify those valleys and mountains that stand in the way of preparing our hearts for Christ. We need to ask ourselves, what are the valleys and mountains that are in our lives that make it harder for us to celebrate Advent? What is standing in the way for us to truly open ourselves to Christ?

Do we find ourselves in a valley of sadness or hurt from Christmases past? Are we in a low place because we can’t forgive others or we find that we can’t forgive ourselves? This Advent, we need to ask ourselves if we indeed are in these “valleys” of life, if the road we travel brings us down into these places. If the answer is yes, then we are called to rise up from these valleys. If we can’t do it alone, then we need to ask others for help. When we start to fill in these valleys with forgiveness and peace, Advent will have a much different meaning to us.

Maybe we find mountains blocking our way to Christ, things that we feel are insurmountable. Pain, suffering or the loss of a loved one can all be mountains that we feel we can never get over. If we find these mountains of sorrow ahead of us, use this Advent season to make the first step to get above these roadblocks. If by Christmas we’re not to the top, we’re still closer than when we started out! Closer to Christ and what he brings to the world.

So, one full week of Advent has already passed. One more candle of the Advent wreath has been lit. May this season continually remind us of how we are called to make changes in our lives, to make straight the path of the Lord. In this second week of Advent, we ask ourselves this question: What changes must I make within me during this holy season, which will make me a herald of Christ in the world today?

**Piano (Rich)** – Lo, How A Rose E’er Blooming



## **Prayer (Marianne)**

Let us pray.

Father, in this season of Advent, we prepare our hearts for your coming.  
You are the vine, we are the branches.  
Come and tend us, prune us, clean us.

Discard in us everything that does not bear fruit.  
Nourish in us everything that bears much fruit.

As we celebrate your coming as a vulnerable baby  
our hearts await your glorious return as the eternal King.

Nurture in us expectant hearts, O Lord.  
Cultivate in us a deep longing for more of you  
until that day when you burst through the heavens  
and flood our horizons with your glorious splendor.

For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, throughout all ages and  
generations. Amen

**Carol (Paul and congregation) – W387 O Come Divine Messiah**