

# A Quieter Christmas

Wherever I Go, You Are There

December 18, 2022

Prelude

Welcome

Call to Worship

In the time of our sorrowing, God is there  
**there in the embrace of loved ones**  
there in words spoken with compassion  
**there in the quiet places of the heart,**  
**in recalled, treasured memories.**

Yes, God is there – and God is here.  
Come, gracious One,  
in quiet hope,  
in gentle assurance,  
in tender mercy,  
with healing to make us whole.

## Choral Anthem

*Breath of Heaven – Words and music Chris Eaton and Amy Grant*

## Prayer

## Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd,  
I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters,  
he restores my soul.

He guides me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

We Sing: *Love Came Down at Christmas*

1. Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, Love divine;  
Love was born at Christmas,  
star and angels gave the sign.
2. Worship we the Godhead,  
Love incarnate, Love divine;  
worship we our Jesus:  
but wherewith for sacred sign?
3. Love shall be our token,  
love be yours and love be mine,  
love to God and neighbours,  
love for plea and gift and sign.

*Together in Song 317. Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830-94 alt. Public Domain.*

## A Lament

We Sing: *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*

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| 1. Infant holy,<br>infant lowly,<br>for his bed a cattle stall;<br>oxen lowing,<br>little knowing<br>Christ the babe is Lord of all;<br>swift are winging<br>angels singing,<br>nowells ringing,<br>tidings bringing,<br>Christ the babe is Lord of all,<br>Christ the babe is Lord of all. | 2. locks were sleeping,<br>shepherds keeping<br>vigil till the morning new<br>saw the glory,<br>heard the story,<br>tidings of a gospel true;<br>thus rejoicing,<br>free from sorrow,<br>praises voicing,<br>greet the morrow,<br>Christ the babe was born for you,<br>Christ the babe was born for you. |
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*Together in Song 292. Polish Carol (?13<sup>th</sup> cent.). Edith Gellibrand Reed 1885-1933 Translation from The Kingsway Carol Book © E. G. Reed by permission HarperCollins Publishers. Public Domain.*

## Readings:

### *Isaiah 40:1-5; 10-11*

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.  
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her  
that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.  
A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
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.  
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all flesh shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

See, the Lord God comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
his reward is with him  
and his recompense before him.  
He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms  
and carry them in his bosom  
and gently lead the mother sheep.

## *John 4: 15-20*

Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you. “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”

Choir:     *God’s Love Here Dwells – Jennifer Hughes*

Homily

Song:       *The Turning Point of Time*

1.   The stillness of anticipation  
      cradles tiny Bethlehem;  
      silent now in preparation  
      for the miracle of birth.  
      All creation, hushed, expectant,  
      waits a baby’s cry;  
      born in all simplicity  
      at the turning point of time.  
      Born in all simplicity  
      at the turning point of time.

2. Be silent, earth, before the myst'ry  
of the long-awaited birth.  
All the hopes of human hist'ry –  
longings, yearning, dreams, desires –  
gathered in a single moment,  
focussed in a child;  
born in all simplicity  
at the turning point of time.  
Born in all simplicity  
at the turning point of time.
  
3. A nascent star, in celebration  
blazes over Bethlehem;  
crucible of all creation,  
where the human and divine  
are refined in simple beauty  
in the new-born child;  
born in all simplicity  
at the turning point of time.  
Born in all simplicity  
at the turning point of time.  
Words Neil Quintrell

*Music Douglas Simper*

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Prayer

Memorial candles

We Sing: *Away in a Manger*

1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;  
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
2. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from on high,  
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.
3. Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay  
close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
and fit us for heaven to live with you there.

*vv. 1-2 Anon. ? 1885 v3, Anon. ? 1892. Public Domain.*

We Sing: *A Christmas Blessing*

May the feet of God walk with you,  
and his hand hold you tight.  
May the eye of God rest on you,  
and his ear hear your cry.  
May the smile of God be for you,  
and his breath give you life.  
May the Child of God grow in you,  
and his love bring you home.

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Choral Blessing: *Deep peace of the running wave to you — Rosemary Nairn*

*You are welcome to stay for as long as you need to in this space.  
When you are ready you are invited to refreshments in the Leaver Lounge.*