

O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL



This Sunday we begin Advent. It is my hope and desire that you will spend some time in prayer. To get you started I am offering a morning prayer for this season.

Healing God,

Come to my hidden corners,  
Open the doors to my soul rooms  
That are tightly locked.

**(Refrain)**

**Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.  
Shine through the darkness. Christ, be our light!  
Shine in your church gathered today.**

Awaken in me.  
Bring to life all my deadness.  
Enthuse the depressed emotions.  
Re-energize my inner weariness.

**(Refrain)**

Bathe the grime of my ego-centeredness.  
Clarify my confusions.  
Fire my neglected loves.  
Brush off my dusty dreams.

**(Refrain)**

Nurture my spiritual hungers.  
Ease my sore relationships.  
Deepen my sense of self-esteem.  
Stir up my connection with the world.

**(Refrain)**

Tenderly gather in your arms  
All that still needs healing,  
All that remains wounded and wanting.  
May I grow each day into greater wholeness  
With a stronger, purer inner freedom.

**(Refrain)**

What is Advent? Advent is a season of four weeks which opens the church year. Advent comes from two Latin words: *ad-venire*, "to come to." Joyce Rupp, a writer, spiritual "midwife", conference speaker, and member of the Servite community says, "Advent is a season for exiles. It is a time for waiting, a time of yearning for light to dispel the darkness. Advent is rooted in the experience of exile described in the Old Testament. Far from their homeland, the people cried out for a savior to deliver them from a great darkness. The Messiah would light their way home. Advent expresses this yearning to return home."

We, in the West, are like exiles as well. Our culture has given in to values of greed, consumerism, selfishness, and apathy. Yet, another part of us feels out of place in a materialistic, power centered system. A sense of homelessness exists in our hearts. Something in us always needs to be called home. We need to see what or who we lack inside.

Advent is a time to reclaim what we lost in our hearts. This season is not meant to be a cozy, self satisfied time in which we wait for "Baby Jesus" to be born. The birth of Jesus is a historical event. Advent focuses instead on our own place of exile and whether or not this Savior who was born and lived on our earth has made a difference in our lives.

Some questions to ponder during Advent:

What am I waiting for?

Advent rooted in exile and homecoming, what does it say to me?

Where am I in exile?

May your Advent be a time of waiting, preparing, and yearning.

In His Love,  
Pastor Jeff  
Advent 2016