



ST. PAUL'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

ADVENT PRAYER WALK

December 5, 2020
Capitol Square

**STATION #1 (ST. PAUL'S MEMORIAL GARDEN):
"Waiting for God" by Henri Nouwen**

The whole meaning of the Christian community lies in offering a space in which we wait for that which we have already seen. Christian community is the place where we keep the flame alive among us and take it seriously, so that it can grow and become stronger in us. In this way we can live with courage, trusting that there is a spiritual power in us that allows us to live in this world without being seduced constantly by despair, lostness, and darkness. That is how we dare to say that God is a God of love even when we see hatred all around us. That is why we can claim that God is a God of life even when we see death and destruction and agony all around us. We say it together. We affirm it in one another. Waiting together, nurturing what has already begun, expecting its fulfillment – that is the meaning of marriage, friendship, community, and the Christian life. Our waiting is always shaped by alertness to the word. It is waiting in the knowledge that someone wants to address us. The question is, are we home? Are we at our address, ready to respond to the doorbell? We need to wait together to keep each other at home spiritually, so that when the word comes it can become flesh in us.

STATION #2 (ENTRANCE OF CAPITAL SQUARE):
“What to Do in the Darkness” by Marilyn McEntyre

Go slowly
Consent to it
But don't wallow in it
Know it as a place of germination
And growth
Remember the light
Take an outstretched hand if you find one
Exercise unused senses
Find the path by walking in it
Practice trust
Watch for dawn.

STATION #3 (FOUNTAIN NEXT TO BELL TOWER):
“Making the House Ready for The Lord” 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.

STATION #4 (WOMEN’S MONUMENT):
“A Song of True Motherhood” by Julian of Norwich

God chose to be our mother in all things *
and so made the foundation of his work,
most humbly and most pure, in the
Virgin’s womb.

God, the perfect wisdom of all *
arrayed himself in this humble place.

Christ came in our poor flesh *
to share a mother’s care.

Our mothers bear us for pain and for death; *
our true mother, Jesus, bears us for joy and
endless life.

Christ carried us within him in love and travail, *
until the full time of his passion.

And when all was complete and he had carried us
so for joy, *

still all this could not satisfy the power
of his wonderful love.

All that we owe is redeemed in truly loving God, *
for the love of Christ works in us;

Christ is the one whom we love.

STATION #5 (WASHINGTON STATUE):
“Kindle Thy Light within Me” by Howard Thurman

Kindle Thy light within me, that all my darkness may be clearly
defined. Kindle Thy light within me, O God, that Thy glow
may be spread over all of my life; yea indeed, that Thy glow
may be spread over all of my life. More and more, may Thy
light give radiance to my flickering candle; fresh vigor to my
struggling intent, and renewal to my flagging spirit. Without
Thy light within me, I must spend my years fumbling in my
darkness. Kindle Thy light within in me, O God!

STATION #6 (CIVIL RIGHTS MONUMENT):
“Touched By An Angel” by Maya Angelou

We, unaccustomed to courage
exiles from delight
live coiled in shells of loneliness
until love leaves its high holy temple
and comes into our sight
to liberate us into life.

Love arrives
and in its train come ecstasies
old memories of pleasure
ancient histories of pain.
Yet if we are bold,
love strikes away the chains of fear
from our souls.

We are weaned from our timidity
In the flush of love's light
we dare be brave
And suddenly we see
that love costs all we are
and will ever be.
Yet it is only love
which sets us free.

STATION #7 (GOVERNOR’S MANSION):
Advent prayer from *Daily Prayer for All Seasons*

For our deepest and most holy longings we pray:
Renew us, O God.
For all who wander, who hunger, who thirst:
Renew us as people of service and compassion.
For this planet, our home:
Renew our will to be healers of creation.
For this and every nation:
Renew in all people the will for good and
the longing for peace.

**STATION #8 (OLIVER W. HILL BUILDING STEPS):
A Prayer by Archbishop Desmond Tutu**

In the Eucharist we offer the Bread,
that Bread which carries all the bewilderment, the anguish,
the blood, the pain, the injustice, the poverty, the hate,
The anger, the fear, the death, the bombs -
and we offer it all together with the perfect all-sufficient
sacrifice of the Lamb without blemish
for peace, for transfiguration, for compassion,
for Shalom-
at the heart of the world. Amen.

**STATION #9 (SOUTHEAST FOUNTAIN):
From essay entitled “The Present” in *Pilgrim at Tinker
Creek* by Annie Dillard**

When I face upstream I see the light on the water careening
towards me, inevitably, freely, down a graded series of terraces
like the balanced winged platforms on an infinite, inexhaustible
font. ‘Ho, if you are thirsty, come down to the water; ho, if
you hungry, come and sit and eat.’ This is the present, at last. I
can pat the puppy any time I want. This is the now, this
flickering, broken light, this air that the wind of the future
presses down my throat, pumping me buoyant and giddy with
praise.

**STATION #10 (CAPITOL STEPS):
Excerpted verses from “Canticle of the Turning” by Rory
Cooney (inspired by the Magnificat)**

My soul cries out with a joyful shout
That the God of my heart is great
And my spirit sings of the Wondrous things
That you bring to the ones who waits
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight
And my weakness you did not spurn

So from east to west shall my name be blest
Could the world be about to turn?

My heart shall sing of the day you bring
Let the fires of your justice burn
Wipe away all tears for the dawn draws near
And the world is about to turn!

From the halls of power to the fortress tower
Not a stone will be left on stone
Let the king beware for your
Justice tears ev'ry tyrant from his throne
The hungry poor shall weep no more
For the food they can never earn
There are tables spread, ev'ry
Mouth be fed
For the world is about to turn

My heart shall sing of the day you bring
Let the fires of your justice burn
Wipe away all tears for the dawn draws near
And the world is about to turn!

STATION 11 (SOUTHWEST FOUNTAIN):
“On the Mystery of the Incarnation” by Denise Levertov

It's when we face for a moment
the worst our kind can do, and shudder to know
the taint in our own selves, that awe
cracks the mind's shell and enters the heart:
not to a flower, not to a dolphin,
to no innocent form
but to this creature vainly sure
it and no other is god-like, God
(out of compassion for our ugly
failure to evolve) entrusts,
as guest, as brother,
the Word.

STATION #12 (ST. PAUL'S CHURCH STEPS):

**A prayer by Frederick Buechner (originally published in
The Hungering Dark)**

Thou on of the Most High, Prince of Peace, be born again into our world. Wherever there is war in this world, wherever there is pain, wherever there is loneliness, wherever there is no hope, come, thou long-expected one, with healing in thy wings.

Holy Child, whom the shepherds and the kings and the dumb beasts adored, be born again. Wherever there is boredom, wherever there is fear of failure, wherever there is temptation too strong to resist, wherever there is bitterness of heart, come, thou blessed one, with healing in thy wings.

Savior, be born in each of us who raises his face to thy face, not knowing fully who he is or who thou art, knowing only that thy love is beyond his knowing and that no other has the power to make him whole. Come, Lord Jesus, to each who longs for thee even though he has forgotten thy name. Come quickly. Amen.