

ADVENT EVENING PRAYER: **DECEMBER 15, 2022**
ADVENT III + Hark! + Listen! God is Coming

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 42:1-9

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one, in whom I delight!
I have put my Spirit upon you;
that you may bring forth justice to the nations.

You do not cry out or raise your voice
or make yourself heard in the street;
So gentle that you do not break a bruised reed,
Or quench a wavering flame;
Faithfully you will bring forth true justice.
You will neither grow faint nor be crushed
until justice is established on earth,
for the islands await your teaching!

Thus says God, the Lord,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who gave shape to the earth and what it produces,
who gave life to its peoples
and spirit to its inhabitants:

I, the Lord, have called you to serve the cause of right;
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have appointed you to be a covenant people,
a light to the nations,
to open the eyes of the blind,
to free captives from prison,
and those who sit in darkness from the dungeon.

I am the Lord! This is my name!
My glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to idols.

See how former predictions have come true.
And now I declare new things!
before they spring forth, I tell them to you.

SOLO - Time for quiet and reflection using the questions below.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. *What is the “dungeon” or “prison” you find yourself in?*
2. *What kinds of prisons hold the people around you? (literal and metaphorical)*
3. *How does God call us to bring light to those trapped in the dark of the dungeon?*

PRAYER STATION and CANDLE-LIGHTING

After the soloist concludes, we invite you to participate in a prayer station. Prisons can be cruel places, void of humanity or chances for redemption, and yet we lock people in them all the time, both as a society and in how we treat each other. But God’s declared intent is liberation, restoration, freedom for all. To lift us out of the prisons that hold us.

When you are ready, you may come forward to reach down and take your stone from the bowl of water, symbolizing our dark dungeon. Dry it carefully with a towel, with gentleness of God’s healing, and then, as God holds us, close your palm around it, holding it tight, and say a prayer for all those still suffering, imprisoned, and abandoned.

Place your stone on one of the raised platforms surrounding the bowl, symbolizing God’s rescue, lifting up those in captivity. Then, light a candle. Kneel before God in prayer, for freedom we already have, and for freedom still needed by us and others.

PRAYER*

Gathering our many prayers into one, let us pray together.

**God of starlight, every part of us is trying to seek you:
our bodies that carried us into this space, our heads bowed in prayer,
our hearts that keep whispering, “There is more than just this.”
We are seeking you. So meet us halfway.
Find us in the maze. Quiet the rest of the world.
Open the door to us. Speak words of hope. Amen.**

The light shines in the darkness.

And the darkness has not overcome it.

Continue worship with The Annunciation on page 8 of the songbook.

** Adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.*