

## Triune Advent Devotional 2025



**What Would Make the World a Better Place?**

### What is Advent?

Advent is a four-week season in the church's year that leads up to Christmas Day. It is a time of expectant waiting and reflective preparation – waiting on the birth of the Child of God and simultaneously preparing ourselves for His return.

Advent is a very old practice in the life of the church. No one knows the date of the first observance of Advent, but we do know that it comes all the way from Medieval times.

The Medieval church gave us many wonderful gifts such as stained glass windows, depicting Biblical scenes for those who could not read. It gave us beautiful paintings and sculpted reliefs, helping us to visualize the Scriptures. It gave us Mystery, Miracle, and Morality plays – dramas that enacted Biblical stories and moral teaching. The Medieval church gave us illuminated texts, beautiful renderings of the Bible, which were hand printed. And it gave us the seasons of the church year, like Advent.

In this collection of devotional thoughts and interviews, we celebrate the stories and thoughts of the people at Triune Mercy Center. We celebrate art and the gift of getting to know one another as we contemplate the grand story in which we find ourselves.

In these pages you will find people who are waiting on GOD. These same people are the ones Christ came to walk and live alongside as He taught us how to make the world a better place.

Each day has a reading, a carol, and a work of art. These are things we believe make the world a better place. We invite you to spend a few minutes reading, thinking, and singing each day as we wait together.

Peace to you. And joy, and hope, and love.

---

Cover Art by Hillbilly – Acrylic on plexiglass

\*Click on a link below to advance to that day's reading

**While we wait on the coming of Christ  
this Advent season, we contemplate:**

**What would make the world  
a better place?**

[November 30](#)

[December 16](#)

[December 1](#)

[December 17](#)

[December 2](#)

[December 18](#)

[December 3](#)

[December 19](#)

[December 4](#)

[December 20](#)

[December 5](#)

[December 21](#)

[December 6](#)

[December 22](#)

[December 7](#)

[December 23](#)

[December 8](#)

[December 24](#)

[December 9](#)

[Christmas Day](#)

[December 10](#)

[December 11](#)

[December 12](#)

[December 13](#)

[December 14](#)

[December 15](#)

# The First Day of Advent

November 30, 2025

## Clarke Bolt

The world would be a better place if everyone increased their capacity for empathy tenfold. In what I consider to be the “lonely age,” although we are technically more connected than ever, there seems to be a growing lack of empathy between individuals and sometimes entire groups of people. It seems more comfortable for us to have an “*other*,” someone to define ourselves against and oftentimes someone to blame everything on. Even though my understanding is that Jesus teaches us everyone has a seat at the table, it can be easier to compartmentalize certain truths to fit our own worldview.

When someone is just a username or a picture (or the embodiment of a certain movement or point of view that you disagree with), it’s easy to mold them into whatever you want them to be. That makes it easier to place them under fire for views or decisions that you don’t have a full understanding of due to a lack of context. When we do this, we do a disservice not only to that person but to the community at large. Everyone is broken, everyone comes from a broken environment, and everyone experiences the world through a broken lens. Because of that, everyone has a unique but all too similar story – stories that are filled with pain, suffering, love, loss, and perseverance. Even if the stories differ in content, they remain connected due to our shared experience of being broken human beings.

As kings of our own little skull-sized kingdoms, it’s easy to think we’re right and that there is no other way to do things. But I personally believe that most people are at least trying to do the best they can even if they fail over and over again. And that people hold views because they see them as the truth and/or the best available option at that time. I want to emphasize that I’m not excusing reprehensible behavior. All actions have consequences and there always needs to be accountability for anything that

causes harm or wrongs a fellow neighbor. And certain views that exclude people from the table are wrong and need to be called out. But when we sit down with someone, break bread with them, listen to their story and withhold judgement, it’s nearly impossible not to have a greater shared understanding of each other and a greater sense of connection. Sometimes we can’t do that when we are not in proximity to someone, but we can at least take a step back and try to critically think about what got them to the place they’re at and what experiences caused them to hold the views they hold now. We can sit down and spend time with our brothers and sisters who we disagree with and hold love, empathy, accountability, and a shared understanding without sacrificing our calling to stand for justice. And if we all did this more often, the world would surely be a better place.



KT

Acrylic

# O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Em Am D G D  
 O come, O come Em - man - u - el, And  
 O come, Thou Rod of Jes - se, free, Thine  
 O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer, Our

4 G C D7 Bm Em  
 ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el, That  
 own from Sa - tan's ty - ran - ny, From  
 spi - rits by Thine a - dvent here, Dis -

7 Am Em A7 D Em  
 mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here, Un -  
 depths of Hell Thy peo - ple save, And  
 spere the gloo - my clouds of night, And

10 D Bm Am D G  
 til the Son of God ap - pear. Re -  
 give them vic - t'ry o - 'er the grace.  
 death's dark sha - dows put to flight.

13 D Em Bm G Am D Em D  
 joice, re - joice! Em - man - u - el, shall

17 G C Am Bm Em  
 come to Thee, O Is - re - ell

## Matthew 1:1-17

1 Jesus Christ came from the family of King David and also from the family of Abraham. And this is a list of his ancestors. From Abraham to King David, his ancestors were:

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and his brothers (Judah's sons were Perez and Zerah, and their mother was Tamar), Hezron;

Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon, Boaz (his mother was Rahab), Obed (his mother was Ruth), Jesse, and King David.

From David to the time of the exile in Babylonia, the ancestors of Jesus were:

David, Solomon (his mother had been Uriah's wife), Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram;

Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, and Jehoiachin and his brothers.

12-16 From the exile to the birth of Jesus, his ancestors were:

Jehoiachin, Shealtiel, Zerubbabel, Abiud, Eliakim, Azor, Zadok, Achim;

Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, Jacob, and Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus, who is called the Messiah.

17 There were 14 generations from Abraham to David. There were also 14 from David to the exile in Babylonia and 14 more to the birth of the Messiah.

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

# The Second Day of Advent

December 1, 2025

A Poem by Raymond June



To make the world a better place before I die,

focus on small,

consistent actions that positively

impact those around you and the

environment.

This can involve practicing kindness,

Reducing your environmental footprint,

And advocating for positive change in your community.

Remember that even small acts can help sustain the world.

Pen & Ink

Raymond June

## In The Bleak Midwinter

In the bleak mid - win - ter, Fros - ty wind made moan,  
God, heav'n can - not hold him, Nor earth sus - tain;  
An - gels and arch - an - gels May have ga - thered there,  
What can I give him, Poor as I am?

Earth stood hard as i - ron, Wa - ter like a stone;  
Heav'n and earth shall flee away When he comes to reign;  
Che - ru - bim and se - ra - phim Thro'ged the air;  
If I were a she - pherd I would bring a lamb,

Snow had fall - en, snow on snow, Snow on snow,  
In the bleak mid - win - ter A sta - ble place suff - iced The  
But his mo - ther on - ly In her mai - den bliss, Yet  
If I were a wise man I would do my part,

In the bleak mid - win - ter, Long a - go.  
Lord God Al - migh - ty, Je - sus Christ.  
Wor - shiped the Be - lov - ed With a Kiss.  
what I can I give Him Give my heart.

## The Third Day of Advent

December 2, 2025

### Bailey and Helen Sheorn

When asked to contribute to Triune's Advent Devotional, I thought of little things we can each do to make the world a better place. Bailey and I worked on this together to think of how we can help.

Always...

Be polite to everyone.

Ecology saves the world. Learn to use it.

Tell the truth!

Teach others.

Exercise your relationship with God.

Realize you don't know everything.

Worship daily – in small ways or large.

Others are important.

Respect the Earth and each other.

Love your neighbors.

Do the right thing.



Bailey Sheorn

Crayon

## O Come, All Ye Faithful

152

F B $\flat$  C F C F B $\flat$  F C Dm

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant; O  
 2 † Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion, †  
 3 † Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing, †

C G C F C F C G7 C

come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;  
 sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heaven a - bove;  
 Je - sus, to thee be all glo - ry given;

F Gm F C7 F C F Dm Gm C

come and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels;  
 glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the high - est;  
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing;

*Refrain*

F C F C7 F C F C7 F C7

O come, let us a - dore him; O come, let us a - dore him;

F C7 F C G7 C F B $\flat$  F C F

O come, let us a - dore him, Christ, the Lord.

WORDS: Attr. John F. Wade (1711-1786); tr. Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880)  
 MUSIC: John F. Wade's *Cantus Diversi*, 1751

ADESTE FIDELES  
 Irregular

**Matthew 1:18-19**

<sup>18</sup> This is how Jesus Christ was born. A young woman named Mary was engaged to Joseph from King David's family. But before they were married, she learned that she was going to have a baby by God's Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Joseph was a good man and did not want to embarrass Mary in front of everyone. So he decided to quietly call off the wedding.

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

## The Fourth Day of Advent

December 3, 2025

### A Short Interview with Hillbilly

OWEN: Alright. Hillbilly, what would make the world a better place?

HILLBILLY: If I wasn't in it.

OWEN: I don't believe that for a minute. My world would not be a better place without you. You make my world bigger and richer.

HILLBILLY: Ok then. If politicians weren't in it.

*(We both laugh.)*

HILLBILLY: The world would be a better place if people would take homelessness seriously and help to save the homeless people.

Every single person can become homeless just like I did. You get sick, a doctor misdiagnoses you, you lose your rent money. A lot of homelessness can be the result of abuse. Yeah. We have many on the streets that abuse drugs. We also have many families and single women where the husband left them out on the street.

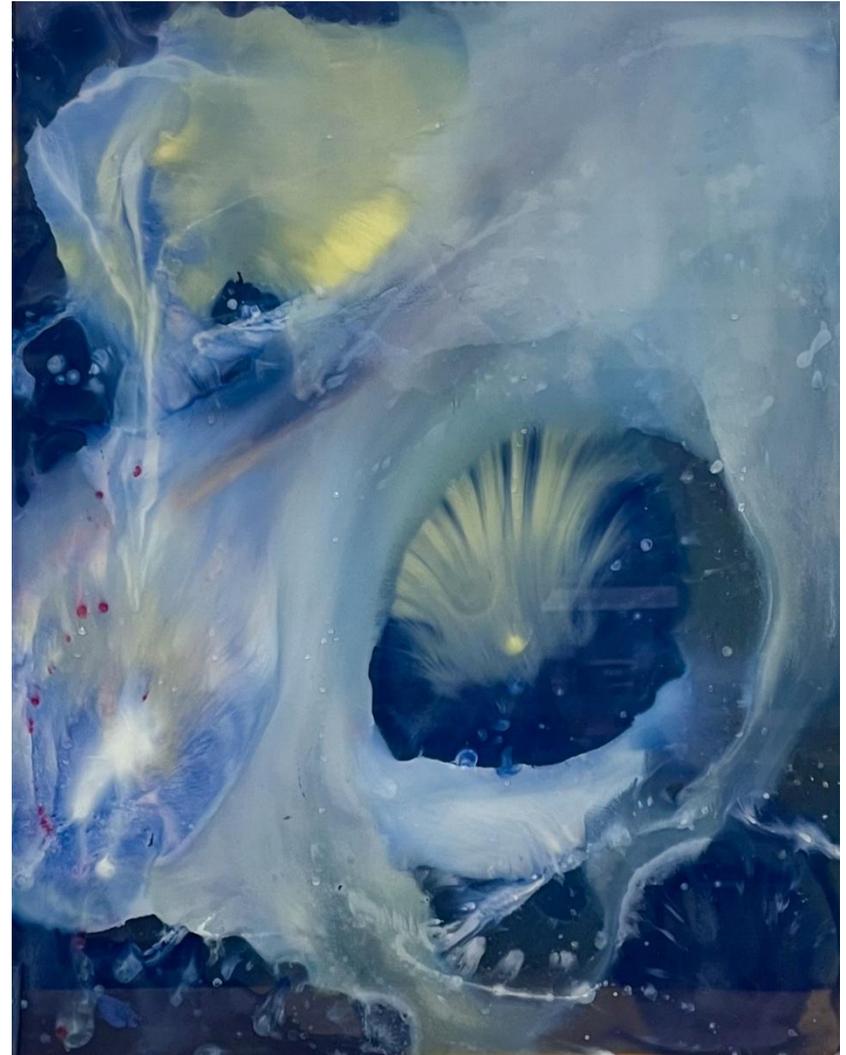
Take homelessness seriously and put these people back to work.

OWEN: That's good. Thanks for your thoughts. You're a wise man.

How do you want your name listed?

HILLBILLY: Ernest Eugene, Charles Flody, George Washington, P, Roosevelt, Charles, Kenneth, Esther the third, Snowden, Hillbilly.

Ask me again. I'll tell you the same.



Hillbilly

Acrylic on plexiglass

# Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Charles Wesley

Rowland Hugh Prichard

Come, Thou long-expect-ed Je-sus, Born to set Thy peo-ple free;  
Born Thy peo-ple to de-liv-er, Born a child and yet a King,

From our fears and sins re-lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.  
Born to reign in us for-ev-er, Now Thy gra-cious king-dom bring.

Is-rael's strength and con-so-la-tion, Hope of al-the earth Thou art;  
By Thine own e-ter-nal Spir-it Rule in al-our hearts a-lone;

Dear de-sire of ev-'ry na-tion, Joy of ev-'ry long-ing heart.  
By Thine all-suf-fi-cient mer-it Raise us to Thy glo-rious throne.

©MichaelKrochak.com

## Matthew 1:20-21

<sup>20</sup>While Joseph was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream. The angel said, “Joseph, the baby that Mary will have is from the Holy Spirit. Go ahead and marry her. <sup>21</sup> Then after her baby is born, name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

## The Fifth Day of Advent

December 4, 2025

Patricia "Lee" Mason

MORE JUSTICE

Less Pain, Less Suffering Hunger Despair Sleeping "Rough"  
Inequities Shattered Dreams Lacking Confidence Moving in  
ISOLATION

MERCY FOR ALL.

Permanent Housing

Comfort

Healthy Food

Rest

Reclaimed Dreams

Equity

MOVING FORWARD

SEEK JUSTICE.

Show Mercy

Treat ALL Justly and with Respect

Be Hopeful

Apply GOD's Word

Love your Neighbor,

Care for the Poor,

Feed the Hungry

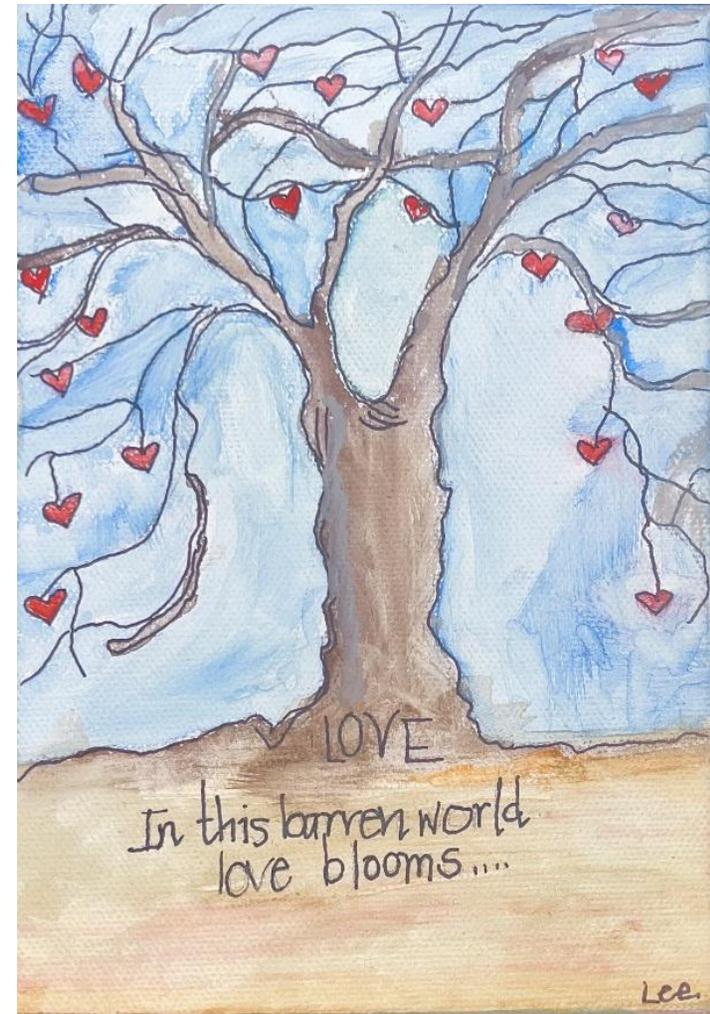
Clothe the Naked.

Participate in Active, Compassionate Responses: Join G.O.A.L.  
(Greenville Organized for Acc0untable Leadership).

Support Triune Mercy Center.

Take ACTION.

Make JUSTICE Happen!



Lee Mason

Acrylic

# Hark! The Herald Angel Sings

Charles Wesley

Mendelssohn



Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King;  
Christ, by high - est heaven a - dored; Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord;  
Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righ-teous-ness!



peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners re - con - ciled!"  
late in time be - hold him come, off-spring of a vir - gin's womb.  
Light and life to all He brings, risen with heal - ing in His wings.



Joy - ful, all ye na - tions rise, join the tri - umph of the skies;  
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail in - car - nate De - i - ty,  
Mild He lays His glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



with an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.  
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.



Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King!"

## Matthew 1:22-25

<sup>22</sup> So the Lord's promise came true, just as the prophet had said, <sup>23</sup> "A virgin will have a baby boy, and he will be called Immanuel," which means "God is with us."

<sup>24</sup> After Joseph woke up, he and Mary were soon married, just as the Lord's angel had told him to do. <sup>25</sup> But they did not sleep together before her baby was born. Then Joseph named him Jesus.

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

## The Sixth Day of Advent

December 5, 2025

Jonathan Trexler

What would make the world a better place?

Having spent fifty years of life observing others, and reflecting on my own choices I have made, there is one single word that strikes me immediately. Just one word, to make the world a better place. Grace.

Grace toward each other. Grace, and by extension at times, forgiveness, allows us to strive to improve who we are and how we interact with each other and the world. It's so easy to pass judgment on those who have made mistakes in life, until you are one of those who have made mistakes in life. The inflexible nature of us can get chipped away when we start to practice grace in our daily lives.

Our nation is particularly in need of grace. We are a divisive society who has forgotten the value of decorum and listening to others. Our politics are polar extremes with a lot of talking and not much listening. Greed has always been a motivating factor for decision making. We see that now in many facets of our society. We have insurance companies who are more concerned about profits. Their profits have been extreme, but it seems like more is never enough. Some grace is needed. Some "courteous goodwill" – as defined in the Oxford Dictionary. We need to exercise the use of it, and sometimes, even more difficultly, learn to accept it when it is offered to us.

Parents know all about grace. Some families have grace inherent

while others lack it. When there is no grace in a marriage, the relationship cannot thrive. We are all imperfect, and this is why grace is so important.

Growing up Lutheran I was always taught "Grace alone." Salvation through grace. Good works are nice, but grace is not a result of our work.



Bronwyn White

Acrylic

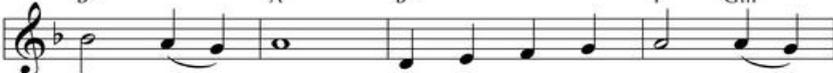
## Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence 347

Capo 3: (Bm) Dm (G) B $\flat$  (D) F (Bm) Dm (C) E $\flat$



1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and  
 2 King of kings, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on  
 3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van-guard  
 4 At his feet the six - winged ser - aph, cher - u - bim, with

(G) B $\flat$  (F $\sharp$ ) A (G) B $\flat$  (D) F (Em) Gm



trem - bling stand; pon - der noth - ing earth - ly  
 earth he stood, Lord of lords, in hu - man  
 on the way, as the Light of light de -  
 sleep - less eye, veil their fac - es to the

(Bm) Dm (C) E $\flat$  (G) B $\flat$  (D) F



mind - ed, for with bless - ing in his hand  
 ves - ture, in the bod - y and the blood,  
 scend - eth from the realms of end - less day,  
 pres - ence, as with cease - less voice they cry,

(B) D (Em) Gm (Bm) Dm (A) C



Christ our God to earth de - scend - eth,  
 he will give to all the faith - ful  
 that the powers of hell may van - ish  
 "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,

(Bm) Dm (Em) Gm (F $\sharp$ m) Am (Bm) Dm



our full hom - age to de - mand.  
 his own self for heaven - ly food.  
 as the shad - ows clear a - way.  
 al - le - lu - ia, Lord most high!"

The flowering of English hymnody in the 19th century included the rediscovery, translation, and versification of ancient Christian hymns, such as this text from one of the earliest existing Christian liturgies. It is set here to an adaptation of a 17th-century French melody.

## Matthew 2:1-6

**2** When Jesus was born in the village of Bethlehem in Judea, Herod was king. During this time some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup> and said, "Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

**3** When King Herod heard about this, he was worried, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. **4** Herod brought together the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses and asked them, "Where will the Messiah be born?"

**5** They told him, "He will be born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet wrote,

**6** 'Bethlehem in the land of Judea, you are very important among the towns of Judea. From your town will come a leader, who will be like a shepherd for my people Israel.' "

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

# The Seventh Day of Advent

December 6, 2025

## Bill Sharpton

The world would be a better place if we could reduce the vast amount of suburban lawns. Lawns require a large amount of care in the form of water, pesticides, fertilizer, herbicides and maintenance. All these items produce a heavy cost to the environment. Heavy pesticide use can run off into city water systems. Large amounts of water and weekly cutting are required to keep lawns in the beauty column. The vast amount of water required puts a terrific toll on city water systems. Weekly maintenance with mowers, leaf blowers, and weed eaters dump a lot of carbon in the air. The end result is beautiful but extremely costly to climate change.

Another major disadvantage of lawns is that the wild creatures we enjoy and like to have in our lives will not be here in the future if we take away their food and their habitat. Our wild creatures do not inhabit or eat non-native grasses. Most grasses used in lawns such as Bermuda grass, Centipede, Zoysia, Fescue, and Kentucky Bluegrass are not native to North America. Therefore, the toll on our insects, birds and other creatures is terrible. Birds, bees, and butterflies rely heavily on native grass species for their food source.

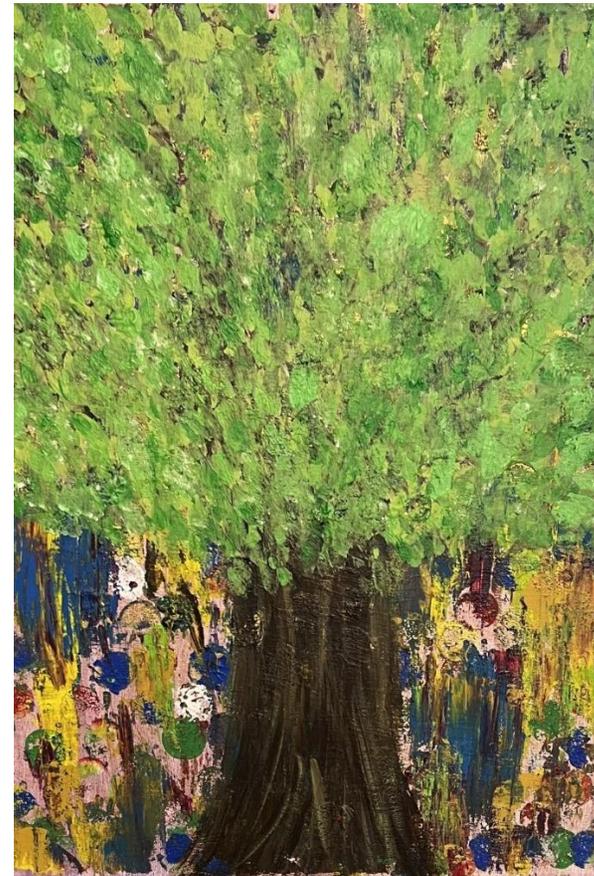
Birds only feed their chicks insects during nesting season. Songbirds that enrich spring mornings have been in decline for the past sixty years.

Remove or reduce lawns and the best replacement option is native plant species. Native grasses such as Switch Grass, Little Bluestem, Pink Muhly Grass, Wild Rye, etc. Native perennials such as black-eyed susan, cone flower, asters, etc. and native ferns such as lady fern and Christmas fern provide a great ground cover and are extremely easy to care for. Ferns provide ground cover for animals and insects. Naive shrubs and small native trees are an

option. Other alternatives for lawns are rocks and gravel in selected areas. Mulch is another alternative. Pine straw, ground wood shavings, and harvested leaf mulch work well.

The types of lawn replacements mentioned do not need large amounts of water during the growing season. One of the best watering alternatives is drip irrigation. Drip irrigation sends water directly to roots of plants whereas overhead sprinklers waste 25 to 50% of the water used due to evaporation.

Given the negative impact that lawns have on wildlife, human health, and the environment it will make the world a better place if we replace lawns.



Jillian Cummings

Acrylic

# 190 Angels from the Realms of Glory

WORDS: James Montgomery, 1816  
MUSIC: Henry T. Smart, 1867

REGENT SQUARE  
87.87 with Refrain

1. An - gels from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er  
2. Shep - herds, in the field a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your  
3. Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions  
4. Saints, be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, watch - ing long in

all the earth; ye who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry  
flocks by night, God with us is now re - sid - ing;  
beam a - far; seek the great De - sire of na - tions;  
hope and fear; sud - den - ly the Lord, de - scend - ing,

Refrain  
now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth;  
yon - der shines the in - fant light; Come and wor - ship,  
ye have seen His na - tal star;  
in His tem - ple shall ap - pear;

come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.

## Matthew 2:7-10

<sup>7</sup> Herod secretly called in the wise men and asked them when they had first seen the star. <sup>8</sup> He told them, "Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, let me know. I also want to go and worship him."

<sup>9</sup> The wise men listened to what the king said and then left. And the star they had seen in the east went on ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> They were thrilled and excited to see the star.

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

## The Eighth Day of Advent

December 7, 2025

### Linda Looney

The question “What would make the world a better place?” brings to mind a new book by Loretta Ross. The book is entitled Calling In: How to Make Change with Those You’d Rather Cancel.

Ross has fifty years of experience working for human rights. She started out as a young rape survivor and single mother. She worked and studied her way up to teaching college and being inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame in 2024.

Loretta Ross’ professional career started when she worked for a group supporting rape survivors. One of her early challenges was a request to meet with a group of rapists in prison who hoped to change their ways. Ross writes of her feeling of indignation, anger and fear as she came to agree to meet with these men.

Over time, she was able to help the men talk about their own victimization as children and their shame and regrets.

Later on, Ross worked with a dropout from a white supremacist organization. She met with wives and mothers of KKK members. She also worked for reproductive justice in several organizations.

Through the book, Ross writes about needing to recognize her own very human failings and blind spots. Starting out, Ross had a real talent for angry responses to people’s opinions. With more experience and reflection, she learned that cutting people off defeated her goal of building coalitions. She learned to say “Tell me more” to inquire as to their good intentions and to show respect that folks are trying to protect and support their loved ones. She found ways to show that their concerns are important.

For myself, finding ways to keep any conversation going is a challenge. I especially appreciate Ross’ book because she offers so many approaches to difficult conversations. She has come up with many sentences that create space for respectful exploration.

I plan to spend more time taking notes and going back over what she has to say.



Alkebu Boyles

Acrylic

# It Came Upon The Midnight Clear

Edmund H. Sears

Richard S. Willis

It came up - on the mid - night clear, That glo - rious song of old From  
Still thro' the clo - ven skies they come with peace - ful wings un - furled And  
Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suf - ferred long Be -  
For lo! the days are has - t'ning on, By proph - ets seen of old When

an - gels bend - ing near the earth, To touch their harps of gold. "Peace on the  
still their heav'nly mus - ic floats O'er all the wea - ry world. A - bove its  
neath the an - gle strain have rolled Two thou - sand years of wrong. And men at  
with the ev - er cir - cling years comes round the age of gold when peace shall

earth. good will to men. From heav - en's all gra - cious King." The  
sad and low - ly plains They bend on hov - 'ring wing. And  
war with men hear not the love - song which they bring. O  
o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling. And

world in sol - emn still - ness lay To hear the an - gels sing.  
ev - er, o'er its Ba - bel sounds, The bles - sed an - gels sing.  
hush the noise, ye men of strife, And hear the an - gels sing!  
the whole world send back the song which now the an - gels sing.

©MichaelKrawchuk.com

## Matthew 2:11-12

<sup>11</sup>When the men went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they knelt down and worshiped him. They took out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and gave them to him. <sup>12</sup>Later they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, and they went back home by another road.

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

# The Ninth Day of Advent

December 8, 2025

## A Discussion with Michael Graham

OWEN: Michael, What would make the world a better place?

MICHAEL: If we could do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

OWEN: What do you mean by that?

MICHAEL: We tend to create hierarchies and pecking orders and that can lead, and usually does, lead to terrible results where people stand on the heads of other people.

But if you don't want people to stand on your head, maybe you wouldn't do that to anyone else.

So pay attention, pay close attention to yourself and everyone around you. Put yourself always in number two position and God in number one position.

If you're in number two position, you're much more likely to do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

I believe it.

OWEN: I believe you're right.

MICHAEL: To me, that works out really well when it comes to work.

OWEN: How does it work out in everyday life?

MICHAEL: In real life, I think it's important to do a certain amount of what I would loosely call yoga-breathing.

It's so good to take a deep breath sometimes before you say something.

Maybe two or three deep breaths.

And that gives you time to find out where you are, hopefully a little bit of who you are, and who the other person is.

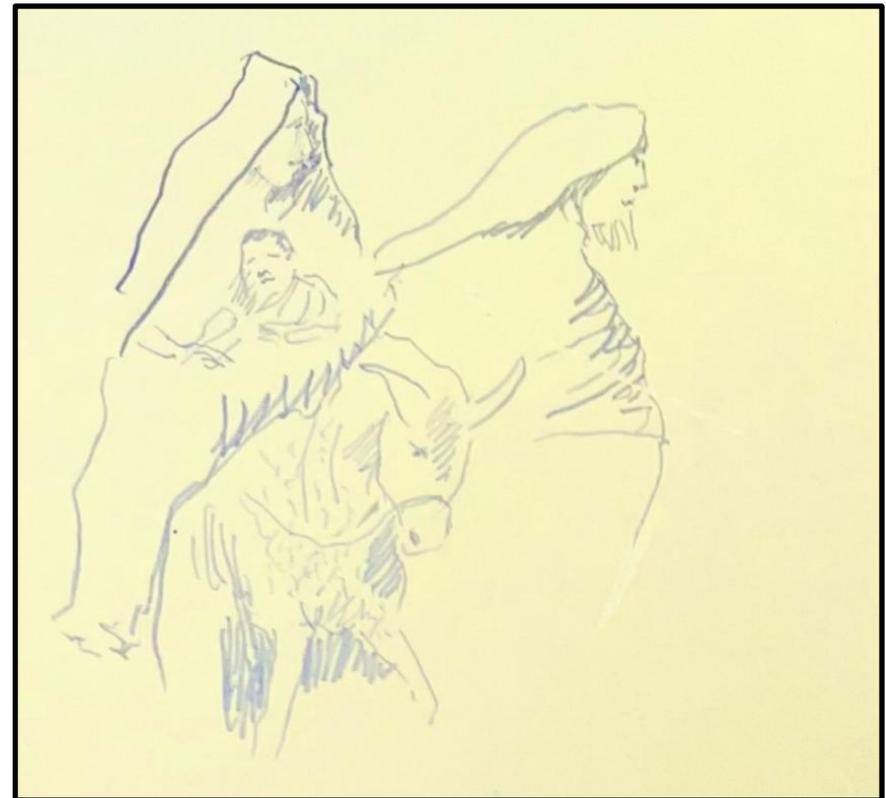
Close observation is key.

I like Aristotle, not Plato.

Plato was the idealist.

Aristotle was the natural scientist.

OWEN: Very interesting. Thanks Michael.



Michael Graham

Pencil

# Of the Father's Love Begotten 108

DIVINUM MYSTERIUM

1. Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten, ere the worlds be - gan to be,  
2. O that birth for - ev - er bless - ed, when a vir - gin, full of grace,  
3. O ye heights of heav'n, a - dore Him, an - gel hosts, His prais - es sing,  
4. Christ, to Thee with God the Fa - ther, and, O Ho - ly Ghost, to Thee,

He is Al - pha and O - me - ga; He the source, the end - ing He,  
by the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing, bore the Sav - ior of our race;  
pow'rs, do - min - ions, bow be - fore Him, and ex - tol our God and King;  
hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing and un - wearied prais - es be:

of the things that are, that have been, and that fu - ture  
and the Babe, the world's Re - deem - er, first re - vealed His  
let no tongue on earth be si - lent, ev - 'ry voice in  
hon - or, glo - ry, and do - min - ion, and e - ter - nal

years shall see ev - er - more and ev - er - more!  
sa - cred face, ev - er - more and ev - er - more!  
con - cert ring, ev - er - more and ev - er - more!  
vic - to - ry, ev - er - more and ev - er - more!

WORDS: Marcus Aurelius C. Prudentius, 4th cent.; tr. John Mason Neale, 1851

8.7.8.7.8.7.7

MUSIC: Plainsong, 13th cent.

## Matthew 2:13-15

<sup>13</sup>After the wise men had gone, an angel from the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up! Hurry and take the child and his mother to Egypt! Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is looking for the child and wants to kill him.”

<sup>14</sup>That night, Joseph got up and took his wife and the child to Egypt, <sup>15</sup> where they stayed until Herod died. So the Lord's promise came true, just as the prophet had said, “I called my son out of Egypt.”

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

# The Tenth Day of Advent

December 9, 2025

## A Conversation with Jillian Cummings

OWEN: Jillian, What would make this world a better place?

JILLIAN: Oh, I think, honestly, from my experience, more creativity and meeting people where they are.

No judgment and just meeting people where they are.

If someone is happy, if someone is sad, asking questions isn't required of you. Just giving them an ear and the reciprocity of treating people the way you wanna be treated.

For me, creativity has really branched into a whole new world. It's connected me to new communities and new people that have shown me a whole different side of life that I didn't know before.

So, yeah, I think more of just being kind and meeting people where they are and go create something if you've got nothing else to do.

OWEN: Have you ever had somebody meet you where you are?

JILLIAN: Absolutely.

Especially in the last six months of my life over and over and over again.

I grew up meeting people all the time where they were. But having it given back to me is amazing. I need to be able to grow and heal in my own space. That has done more for me than any medication or any amount of therapy ever will.

So, a lot of that has taken place in Triune since I've been here.

OWEN: Tell tell me what that means?

JILLIAN: Flesh it out. Meet people where they are.

OWEN: What does that look like?

JILLIAN: For people meeting me where I am. And not judging me.

I'm a single mom with four kids.

There are certain times where my body doesn't wanna do things or I have to change plans.

And instead of people getting upset with me or talking before they understanding my situation or judging me for not doing what they think I should do, they're able to just say, "Hey. I'm here."

And even if they can't help, it's totally fine. You know?

Offer support in a space that you are able to offer it. And don't worry about it if you can't do anything for me but give me your time and your ear and your smile. Don't give me something if it hurts you to give it.

But meeting people where they are means a lot. I know what I can give and when I can see what you need, I wanna help.

I've had people give me their time and their ear and food and all sorts of other things – with no judgment.

And that's done way more for me than condemning words and disapproving looks, you know?



Jillian Cummings

Acrylic

# The First Noel

Traditional

C Am G Dm C F C G<sup>7</sup> C Dm

The first no - el, the an - gel did say, was to cer - tain poor  
 They look - ed up and saw a star shin - ing in the  
 And by the light of that same star three wise men  
 This star drew nigh to the north west, o'er Beth - le -  
 Then en - tered in those wise men three, full rev - er - ent -  
 Then let us all with one ac - cord sing prais - es

6 C F G<sup>7</sup> C G C G C Am G Dm C F

shep - herds in fields as they lay, in fields wherethey lay keep - ing their  
 east be - yond them far, and to the earth it gave great  
 came from coun - try far. To seek for a King was their in -  
 hem it took its rest, and there it did both stop and  
 ly up - on thier knee, and fered there in His pre -  
 to our heav - en - ly Lord who hath mad~~e~~ heaven and earth of

12 C G<sup>7</sup> C Dm C F G<sup>7</sup> C G C G C Am

sheep on a cold win - ter's night that was so deep. No - el, no -  
 light, and so it con - tin - ued both day and night.  
 tent, and to fol - low the star where - ev - er it went.  
 stay right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.  
 sence their gold and myrrh and frank - in - cense.  
 naught, and with His blood hu - man - kind hat**h**ought.

18 Em C F C Am Em F C G<sup>7</sup> C G<sup>7</sup> C

-el, no - el, no - el. Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

## The Eleventh Day of Advent

December 10, 2025

**Anna Romano**

When I feel small and insignificant, I think back to the people I have met over the years. I enjoy hearing people's stories, their struggles, and their successes. Too often, the world feels so heavy and confined. Listening is a gift that can help ease pain and fear. And, as I listen, I see the things that make this world a little brighter.

One particular memory often comes to my mind. I was walking towards Triune's dining room, smiling at people sitting on the brick wall, and wishing them a good day. One man sat with his head down low, studying his coffee cup, not looking up. It happened years ago, but I still remember him clearly – his dark, suntanned skin, the long scruffy beard, and small scruffs of gray hair stuffed under a knit cap.

"Good morning," I said. His head popped up, and a smile emerged, spreading from ear to ear. His eyes turned from a dim blank stare into shining stars pointed straight at me. The sudden transformation caused my spirit to soar. But our interaction had just begun.

"Has anyone told you that God loves you today?" His enthusiasm nearly knocked me off my feet.

"No," I replied a little hesitantly.

"Well, I just did!" He called out to me, his face bright with excitement. After thanking him, I walked inside, unsure of what had just happened.

And that was that. We never met again, and I never learned the man's name. But his simple smile and heartfelt greeting made my world a little better that day.



Lee Mason

Acrylic

# O Holy Night

Adolphe Charles Adams

O Ho - ly Night! The stars are bright-ly shi - ning, It is the  
Led by the light of faith se - rene-ly beam - ing, With glow-ing  
Tru - ly He taught us love for one a - noth - er, His law is

6  
night of our dear Sav-iour's birth. — Long lay the world in sin and er - ror  
hearts by His cra - dle we stand. — O - ver the world a star is sweet-ly  
love and His gos - pel is peace. — Chains He shall break, the slave is our

13  
pin - ning, Till He ap - peared and the soul felt its worth. —  
gleam - ing, Now come the wise - men from O - ri - ent land. —  
broth - er, And in His name all op - pres - sion shall cease. —

18  
— A thrill of hope the wea - ry world re - joi - ces, For  
— The King of kings lay thus in low - ly man - ger; In  
— Sweet hymns of joy in grate-ful chor - us raise we, With

©MichaelKravchuk.com

## Matthew 2:16-18

<sup>16</sup>When Herod found out that the wise men from the east had tricked him, he was very angry. He gave orders for his men to kill all the boys who lived in or near Bethlehem and were two years old and younger. This was based on what he had learned from the wise men.

<sup>17</sup>So the Lord's promise came true, just as the prophet Jeremiah had said,

<sup>18</sup>“In Ramah a voice was heard  
crying and weeping loudly.  
Rachel was mourning  
for her children,  
and she refused  
to be comforted,  
because they were dead.”

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

# The Twelfth Day of Advent

December 11, 2025

## A Short Talk with Lawton “Jessie” German

JESSIE: Jesse is my middle name.

OWEN: I never knew that.

Alright, Jesse. What would make this world a better place?

JESSIE: Jesus.

OWEN: And what do you mean by that?

JESSIE Well, the way I see it right now, we got governments.

They can't control nothing.

And, the way I see it, when Jesus comes back and sets up his kingdom, the world will finally be a better place. There ain't gonna be no peace until He comes back.

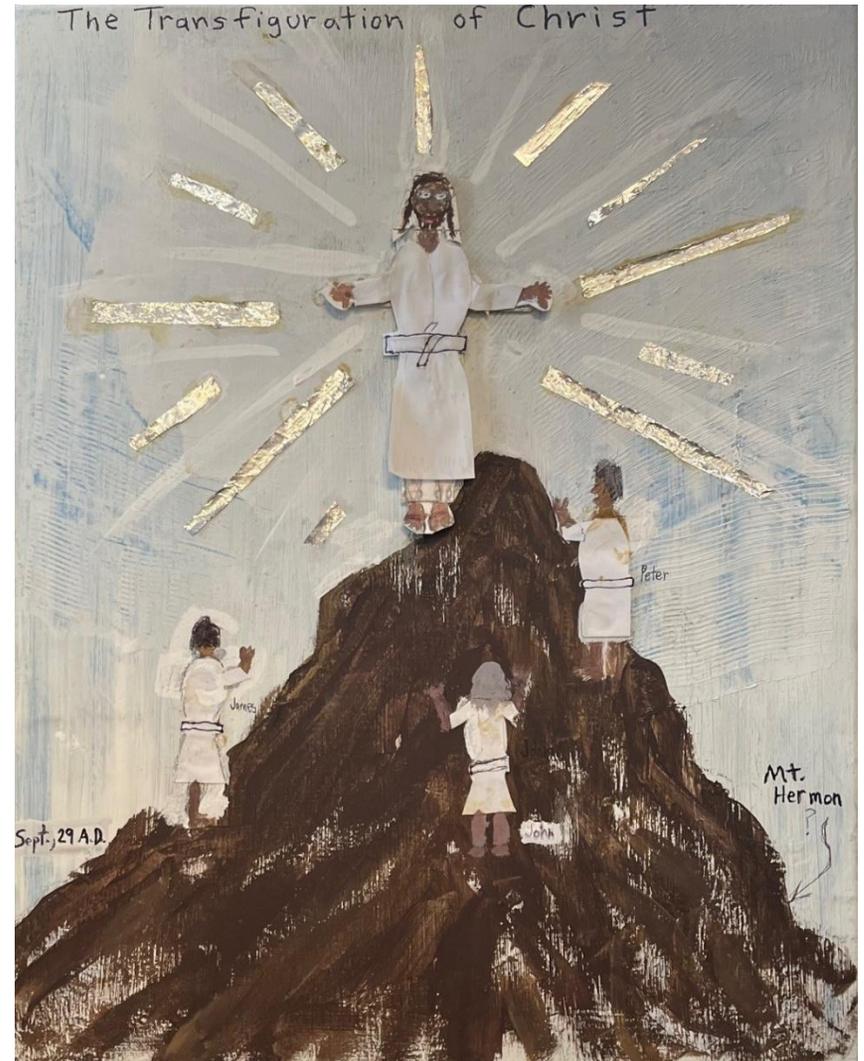
You know?

OWEN: Jessie, thank you very much for your answer.

JESSIE: You're welcome.

OWEN: I look forward to that day.

JESSIE: Me too.



David Mercier

Acrylic

# Joy to the World

ANTIOCH

G. F. Handel, 1742

Arr. Lowell Mason, 1836

Isaac Watts, 1719

1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth re-ceive her  
2. Joy to the earth! The Sav-ior reigns: let all their songs em-  
3. No more let sins and sor-rows grow, nor thorns in-fest the  
4. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na-tions

King; let ev-ery heart pre-pare him room, and  
play; while fields, and floods, rocks, hills, and plains re-  
ground; he comes to make his bless-ings flow far  
prove the glo-ries of his righ-teous-ness and

heav'n and na-ture sing, and heav'n and na-ture  
peat the sound-ing joy, re-peat the sound-ing  
as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
won-ders of his love, and won-ders of his  
(1.) and heav'n and na-ture sing,  
(1.) and

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na-ture sing,  
joy, re-peat, re-peat the sound-ing joy,  
found, far as, far as, the curse is found,  
love, and won-ders, won-ders of his love.

heav'n and na-ture sing,

## Luke 1:1-13

**1** Many people have tried to tell the story of what God has done among us. **2** They wrote what we had been told by the ones who were there in the beginning and saw what happened. **3** So I made a careful study<sup>[a]</sup> of everything and then decided to write and tell you exactly what took place. Honorable Theophilus, **4** I have done this to let you know the truth about what you have heard.

**5** When Herod was king of Judea, there was a priest by the name of Zechariah from the priestly group of Abijah. His wife Elizabeth was from the family of Aaron.<sup>[b]</sup> **6** Both of them were good people and pleased the Lord God by obeying all that he had commanded. **7** But they did not have children. Elizabeth could not have any, and both Zechariah and Elizabeth were already old.

**8** One day Zechariah's group of priests were on duty, and he was serving God as a priest. **9** According to the custom of the priests, he had been chosen to go into the Lord's temple that day and to burn incense,<sup>[c]</sup> **10** while the people stood outside praying.

**11** All at once an angel from the Lord appeared to Zechariah at the right side of the altar. **12** Zechariah was confused and afraid when he saw the angel. **13** But the angel told him:

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

# The Thirteenth Day of Advent

December 12, 2025

Cynthia Waddell

Young Montessori school students around the world learn a very basic lesson early in their journey: **Handwashing**. Here's an **over-simplified** lesson.

1. Wash hands in warm water.
2. Use soap and lather up. Wash the wrists also.
3. Rinse hands.
4. Dry well with a clean towel.

Handwashing is a Montessori practical-life lesson with steps that can improve a child's order, concentration, coordination, and independence. It is the most basic personal care practiced at any age. In addition to personal hygiene, handwashing promotes a healthy state of mind and provides a source of stress relief. The warmth of the water running over your skin and the smooth feel of the lathering soap running through our fingers are both physically soothing. The sound of the trickling water can be an auditory escape from the noisy "traffic" occupying our thoughts. The act of handwashing can symbolize washing away unpleasantness and beginning anew. Like-wise, simply holding a person's hand can reduce stress and anxiety.

So let's talk 'hands' and some of the many iterations of the word.

**Hold my hand · Prayer hands · Helping hand · Lend a hand · In good hands · Hands on · All hands on deck · Hand in hand · Take someone's hand · To know someone like the back of your hand · Laying on of hands · Hand of applause · Hand-fed · Hand across the aisle · Handy**

The world would be a better place if everyone had a hand [...**see above and insert here**]. Our time on earth overflows with human conditions and emotions: fear, pain, sadness, confusion, hunger,

sickness, loneliness, and anger. Just maybe, a neighbor's (or a stranger's) hand, in the midst of any condition is the key to survival, as well as a reminder that God **ALWAYS** holds us in His hands. In John 10:28, referring to his followers, Jesus promises, "I give them eternal life and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand".

Dear Lord, give us strength to hold our neighbor's hand. Help us to remember that your hand is always near to hold, to guide, to comfort, and to extend your everlasting love. Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen



Clark

"Chesed" is the word we translate as loving-kindness in the Bible.

Pen & Ink

# Away In A Manger

James Murray

A - way in a man - ger, no crib for His bed, the  
The cat - tle are low - ing, the ba - by a - wakes, but  
Be near me, Lord Je - sus, I ask Thee to say close

5  
lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down His sweet head. The  
lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing He makes. I  
by me for - ev - er, and love me, I pray; Bless

9  
stars in the sky — looked down where He lay, the  
love Thee, Lord Je - sus, look down from the sky, and  
all the dear chil - dren in Thy ten - der care, and

13  
lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.  
stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is night.  
fit us for heav - en to live with Thee there.

©MichaelKravchuk.com

## Luke 1:13-17

Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayers. Your wife Elizabeth will have a son, and you must name him John. <sup>14</sup> His birth will make you very happy, and many people will be glad. <sup>15</sup> Your son will be a great servant of the Lord. He must never drink wine or beer, and the power of the Holy Spirit will be with him from the time he is born.

<sup>16</sup> John will lead many people in Israel to turn back to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> He will go ahead of the Lord with the same power and spirit that Elijah had. And because of John, parents will be more thoughtful of their children. And people who now disobey God will begin to think as they ought to. This is how John will get people ready for the Lord.

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

# The Fourteenth Day of Advent

December 13, 2025

## An Interview with Russ Reed

OWEN: Russ, What would make the world a better place?

RUSS: Well, I come from the section of life that's the 12 steps and the 12 traditions.

And it works in an upside down triangle where the most important person is the one who needs the most.

And, I think if everybody thought that way, the world would be better. You know? And it reminds me of the words of Jesus where the last be first and the first will be last.

But I'm all about helping the guy who walks in the door who needs the most help.

Whether it's through just sitting and talking or helping them accomplish a goal.

You know, that's what makes me happy – when I could share my story and help somebody else.

So I think if more people share their experiences with somebody struggling, we'd be in a far better place.

OWEN: I like that.

Very good.

Anything else?

RUSS: Nothing else.

OWEN: Russ, I appreciate your time.

RUSS: Thank you, sir.

OWEN: And I love that you invest yourself in helping others. I think you're doing a fine job at making this world a better place.



Russ Reed

Mixed Media

## Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

1. Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath  
 2. I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, the rose I have in  
 3. The shep - herds heard the sto - ry, pro - claimed by an - gels  
 4. This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet - ness fills the  
 5. O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man

sprung, of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing, as men of old have  
 mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the vir - gin moth - er  
 • bright, how Christ, the Lord of glo - ry, was born on earth this  
 air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the dark - ness ev - 'ry -  
 woe; O Sav - ior, King of glo - ry, who dost our weak - ness

sung. It came, a flow'r - et bright, a - mid the  
 kind. To show God's love a - right she bore to  
 • night. To Beth - le - hem they sped and in the  
 where, True man, yet ver - y God, from sin and  
 know, bring us at length, we pray, to the bright

## Luke 1:18-25

<sup>18</sup>Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know this is going to happen? My wife and I are both very old."

<sup>19</sup>The angel answered, "I am Gabriel, God's servant, and I was sent to tell you this good news. <sup>20</sup>You have not believed what I have said. So you will not be able to say a thing until all this happens. But everything will take place when it is supposed to."

<sup>21</sup>The crowd was waiting for Zechariah and kept wondering why he was staying in the temple so long. <sup>22</sup>When he did come out, he could not speak, and they knew he had seen a vision. He motioned to them with his hands, but did not say a thing.

<sup>23</sup>When Zechariah's time of service in the temple was over, he went home. <sup>24</sup>Soon after this, his wife was expecting a baby, and for five months she did not leave the house. She said to herself, <sup>25</sup>"What the Lord has done for me will keep people from looking down on me."

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

# The Fifteenth Day of Advent

December 14, 2025

## A Conversation with Amanda Vaughn

OWEN: Alright, Amanda. What would make the world a better place?

AMANDA: I think a lot of positive role models.

A lot of new beginnings and new changes.

And, right now I'm pretty sad with what I see that's going on with the homeless.

It's horrible out here on the street, man.

There's a lot of drugs. There's a lot of abuse, mental and physical.

Whether or not they're on something or doing whatever they're doing, they still need help.

OWEN: Tell me about one of your role models – or have you ever been a role model to somebody else?

AMANDA: If I have, I wouldn't know because I'm generally just myself.

OWEN: So have you had good role models?

AMANDA: Yeah.

I talk to a lot of encouraging people, like you.

I mean, you know, a lot of people do help and like to help with a lot of positive things.

OWEN: Like like what? What could a role model do that would help?

AMANDA: They stop with whatever they've got going on.

You know what I mean?

And they help they change the situation and make it better.

OWEN: So they stop whatever they're involved in and give you their attention.

Amanda: Yeah.

And a lot of people don't do that. A lot of people take things for granted.

I don't.

I see things for what they're worth.

And I've always been a person that tries to understand what people are going through and where they're coming from.

I try to put myself and my mental being in the same place as other people to see why they go through what they go through or why things are what they are.

I don't know why I do that to myself, but I do because sometimes I don't understand the concept of what they've really got going on and why they continue to let it go on.

So, it's been a crazy journey for me.

Especially trying to not only help myself, but help people too.

So it's crazy.

It's crazy.

You know, with me being out here. I was in a bad abusive situation too.

I even got stabbed twice.

And I was supposed to be in a safe home, but the safe home never even picked me up from the hospital.

So, I mean, I've been out here going on five years.

OWEN: Wow.

AMANDA: So when I tell you I've been in a really bad situation, it's been really bad.

I mean, they even stole my car.

And now I'm trying to do the housing and I keep getting denied everywhere I turn.

So there's always something negative going on.

But I think that if you keep your heart and your soul protected and keep it in Jesus and just know that He's got a plan for you, everything's gonna be alright.

You know, my favorite verse is Jeremiah 29:11.

OWEN: Oh, yeah?

AMANDA: He's got plans for me to prosper me, not to harm me.

So, I mean, you just have to believe in that and you have to believe that things will be better.

If they're not better now, they will be later on.

You just got to keep trying.

So I'm hoping that a lot of people see that.

I hope they see Jesus in everything.

That's what I hope for.

Because a lot of them lose hope out here.

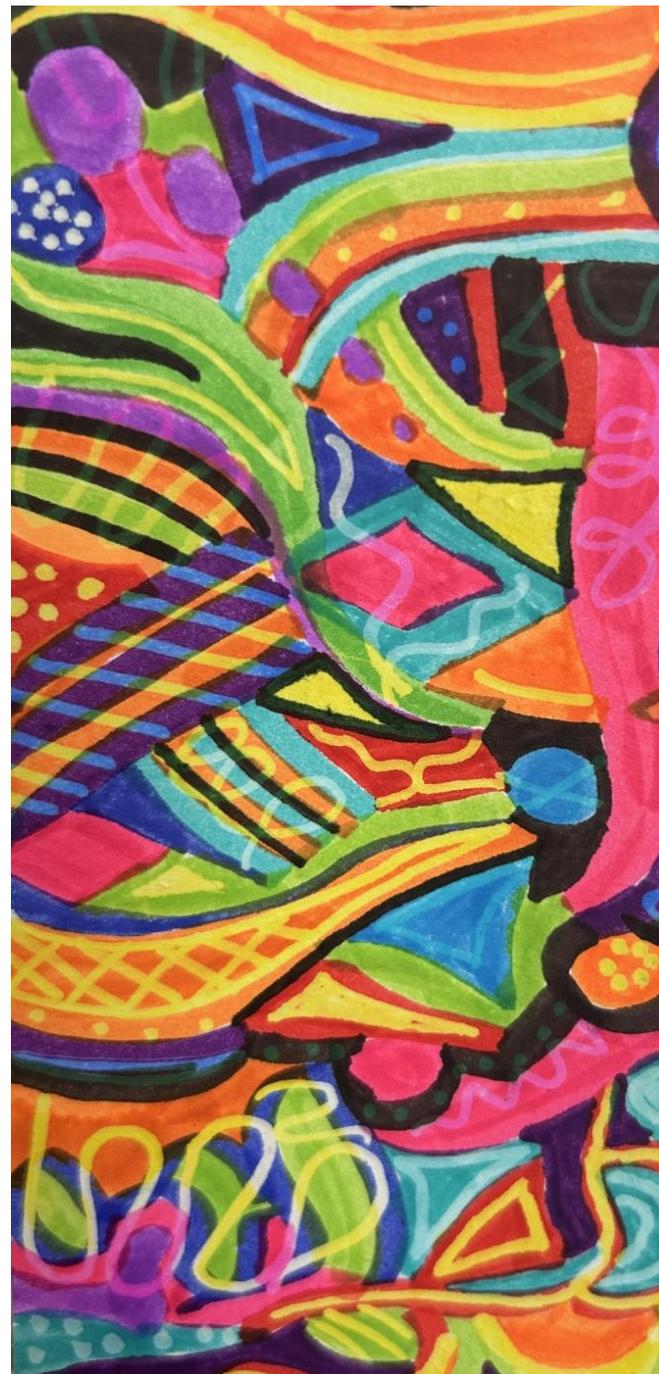
OWEN: That's a good idea.

AMANDA: Don't lose sight of Jesus.

OWEN: The world would be a lonely place without GOD.

Amanda, thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me.

I am definitely going to remember you.



Bambi Roy

Acrylic

# 121 O Little Town of Bethlehem

1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!  
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y and, gath - ered all a - bove,  
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given!  
 4 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by.  
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.  
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heaven.  
 cast out our sin and en - ter in; be born in us to - day.

Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light;  
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,  
 No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,  
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad ti - dings tell;

the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.  
 and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all on earth.  
 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.  
 O come to us; a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!

Though he was famed during his lifetime as a great preacher, no sermon Phillips Brooks ever preached has been heard or read by as many people as have sung this carol he wrote in December 1868 for the Sunday School children of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.

TEXT: Phillips Brooks, 1868  
 MUSIC: Lewis Henry Redner, 1868

ST. LOUIS  
 8.6.8.6.7.6.8.6  
 (alternate tune: FOREST GREEN)

## Luke 1:28-38

<sup>26</sup> One month later God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth in Galilee <sup>27</sup> with a message for a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to Joseph from the family of King David. <sup>28</sup> The angel greeted Mary and said, “You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you.”

<sup>29</sup> Mary was confused by the angel's words and wondered what they meant. <sup>30</sup> Then the angel told Mary, “Don't be afraid! God is pleased with you, <sup>31</sup> and you will have a son. His name will be Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of God Most High. The Lord God will make him king, as his ancestor David was. <sup>33</sup> He will rule the people of Israel forever, and his kingdom will never end.”

<sup>34</sup> Mary asked the angel, “How can this happen? I am not even married!”

<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come down to you, and God's power will come over you. So your child will be called the holy Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Your relative Elizabeth is also going to have a son, even though she is old. No one thought she could ever have a baby, but in three months she will have a son. <sup>37</sup> Nothing is impossible for God!”

<sup>38</sup> Mary said, “I am the Lord's servant! Let it happen as you have said.” And the angel left her.

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

# The Sixteenth Day of Advent

December 15, 2025

## A Brief Talk with Joe Lowenstein

OWEN: Joe, What would make the world a better place?

JOE: Honesty, sustainable ability, perfectionism, minding your own business, going by your way like you used to do.

You know?

Nobody cares for nobody else.

People helping each other out, working hard, having a good work ethic will make a better place and everything.

You know?

Not relying on government assistance or relying on anything.

You know?

OWEN: Tell me a story about one of those.

JOE: Well, I'll tell you a story.

You know, I work a few jobs.

I do a full time job, which I work on the weekend, and I do a part time job, which I work during the week.

And it is great, you know.

I don't have to worry about anything and then if I need money I could borrow from credit.

I pay it back little by little and I'm alright.

OWEN: Joe, I appreciate you talking to me. And I'm glad you're fortunate enough to have a job. I'm glad you come to the Art Room.

JOE: You're welcome.



Dan Weathers

Photograph

## 193 Sing We Now of Christmas

Unison  
Em

1 ♪ Sing we now of Christ - mas, No - el, sing we here!  
2 ♪ An - gels called to shep - herds, "Leave your flocks at rest,  
3 In Beth - le - hem they found him; Jo - seph and Ma - ry mild,  
4 ♪ From the east - ern coun - try came the kings a - far,  
5 ♪ Gold and myrrh they took there, gifts of great - est price;

A Em A Em/B B Em

Hear our grate - ful prais - es to the Babe so dear.  
jour - ney forth to Beth - le - hem, find the lamb - kin blest."  
seat - ed by the man - ger, watch - ing the ho - ly child.  
bear - ing gifts to Beth - le - hem guid - ed by a star.  
there was ne'er a place on earth so like par - a - dise.

Refrain

Sing we No - el, the King is born, No - el!

Em A Em A Em/B B Em

Sing we now of Christ - mas, sing we now No - el!

## Luke 1:39-45

<sup>39</sup> A short time later Mary hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea. <sup>40</sup> She went into Zechariah's home, where she greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, her baby moved within her.

The Holy Spirit came upon Elizabeth. <sup>42</sup> Then in a loud voice she said to Mary:

God has blessed you more than any other woman! He has also blessed the child you will have. <sup>43</sup> Why should the mother of my Lord come to me? <sup>44</sup> As soon as I heard your greeting, my baby became happy and moved within me. <sup>45</sup> The Lord has blessed you because you believed that he will keep his promise.

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

# The Seventeenth Day of Advent

December 16, 2025

## A Short Talk with Dwight Jeter

OWEN: Dwight, What would make the world a better place?

DWIGHT: This homeless situation.

He need to have stable housing, you know. We need to have food. We need a home to take pride in.

OWEN: What would help us move toward eliminating homelessness?

DWIGHT: A lot of people will try to eradicate a lot of the drug situations. But people are homeless for different reasons.

Doing drugs.

A lot of lost jobs and stuff.

A lot of people are wandreing around like Moses in the wilderness, you know?

I did that for years.

Aimless. Wandering. No idea where I was going.

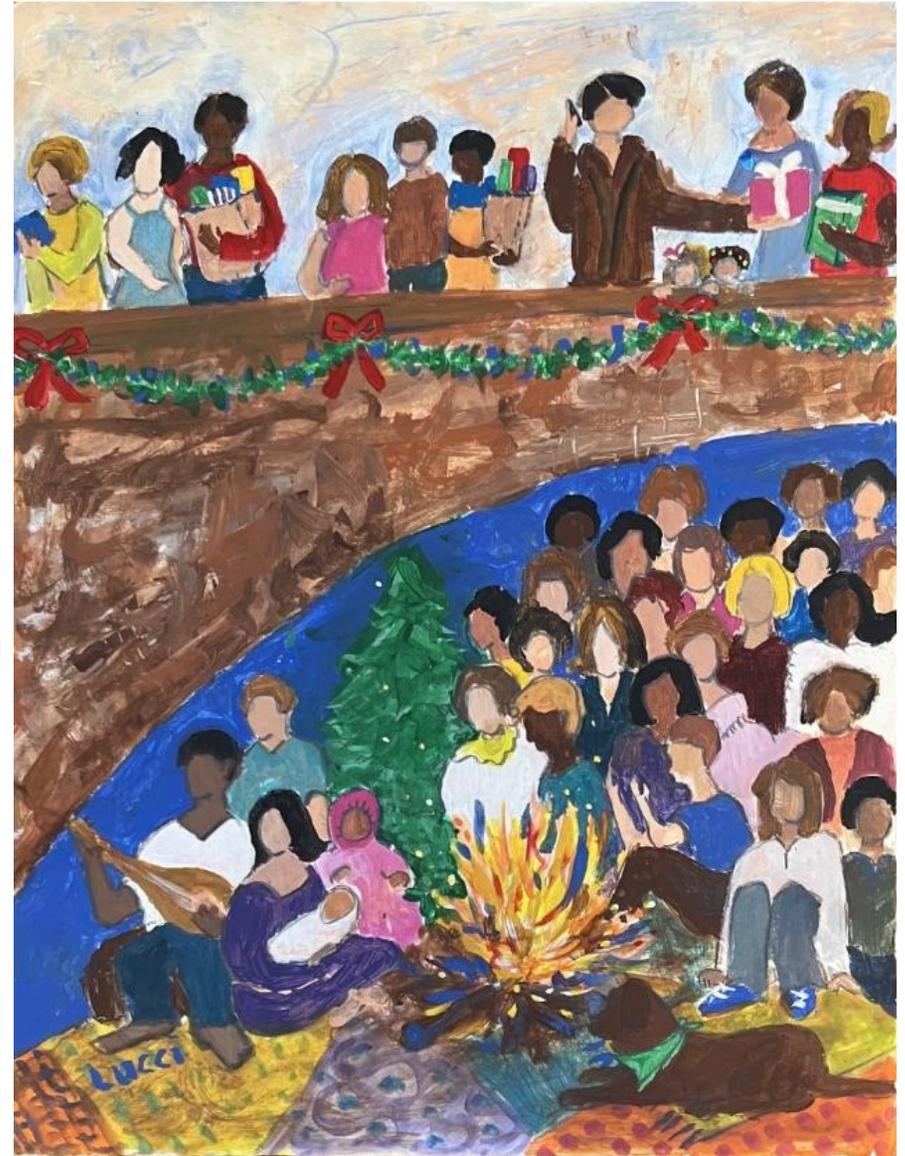
I wish we didn't have to learn things the hard way. I wish we could wake up and reallize there's an easier way to live. A better way.

You know, I don't have any pictures of myself when I was younger.

Lost all of my family pictures.

No way to get them back.

All I've got is what I remember.



Lucce

Acrylic

JESUS CHRIST

# 116 Good Christian Men, Rejoice

IN DULCI JUBILO

1. Good Chris-tian men, re - joi ce      with heart and soul and voice!  
 2. Good Chris-tian men, re - joi ce      with heart and soul and voice!  
 3. Good Chris-tian men, re - joi ce      with heart and soul and voice!

Give ye heed to what we say: News! News! Je-sus Christ is born to - day!  
 Now ye hear of end-less bliss: Joy! Joy! Je-sus Christ was born for this!  
 Now ye need not fear the grave: Peace! Peace! Je-sus Christ was born to save!

Ox and ass be - fore Him bow, and He is in the man - ger now.  
 He has o - pened heav - en's door, and man is best for - ev - er - more.  
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain His ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day!      Christ is born to - day!  
 Christ was born for this!      Christ was born for this!  
 Christ was born to save!      Christ was born to save!

WORDS: Latin carol, 14th cent.  
MUSIC: German carol, 14th cent.

6.6.7.7.7.8.5.5

## Luke 1: 46-56

<sup>46</sup> Mary said:

With all my heart  
I praise the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> and I am glad  
because of God my Savior.

<sup>48</sup> God cares for me,  
his humble servant.

From now on,  
all people will say  
God has blessed me.

<sup>49</sup> God All-Powerful has done  
great things for me,  
and his name is holy.

<sup>50</sup> He always shows mercy  
to everyone  
who worships him.

<sup>51</sup> The Lord has used  
his powerful arm  
to scatter those  
who are proud.

<sup>52</sup> God drags strong rulers  
from their thrones  
and puts humble people  
in places of power.

<sup>53</sup> God gives the hungry  
good things to eat,  
and sends the rich away  
with nothing.

<sup>54</sup> God helps his servant Israel  
and is always merciful  
to his people.

<sup>55</sup> The Lord made this promise  
to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and his family  
forever!

<sup>56</sup> Mary stayed with Elizabeth  
about three months. Then  
she went back home.

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

# The Eighteenth Day of Advent

December 17, 2025

## A Conversation with Kenneth Dawson

OWEN: Kenneth, What would make the world a better place?

KENNETH: Well, if you're gonna make a better place, people are gonna need to combine together and help each other. Too many people are still trying to put down each other, you know? Get together and that might change the way we live.

OWEN: If everybody gets together and helps instead of hurt?

*(Kenneth shakes his head in agreement.)*

Can you give me an example of a time when somebody did that for you? Or when you've been a part of a group that's helped somebody else?

KENNETH: Well, yeah.

I can do that.

When I first came to here, I didn't I didn't know nobody.

I got in with Triune, and, you know, they helped me to where I'm at now.

You know, they helped me with a place.

You know, they help me out a lot.

Triune is a good place for a person to get a start.

It's fantastic.

OWEN: Kenneth, I appreciate your time.

I appreciate your friendship too.

KENNTHE: Yes.



D. Sharese Woodward

Acrylic

# Go Tell It On The Mountain

Go, tell it on the moun - tain, O-ver the hills and ev - ry where;

Go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born.

While shep-herds kept their watch-ing Over si - lent flocks by night, Be -  
The shep-herds feared and trem-bled When lo! A - bove the earth, Rang -  
Down in a low - ly man-ger Our hum-ble Christ was born, And

hold, through-out the heav - ens There shone a ho - ly light. —  
out the an - gel chor - us That hailed our Sav - ior's birth: —  
God sent us sal - va - tion, That bles - sed Christ-mas morn: —

©MichaelKravchuk.com

## Luke 1:57-66

<sup>57</sup>When Elizabeth's son was born, <sup>58</sup>her neighbors and relatives heard how kind the Lord had been to her, and they too were glad.

<sup>59</sup> Eight days later they did for the child what the Law of Moses commands.<sup>[1]</sup> They were going to name him Zechariah, after his father. <sup>60</sup> But Elizabeth said, "No! His name is John."

<sup>61</sup> The people argued, "No one in your family has ever been named John." <sup>62</sup> So they motioned to Zechariah to find out what he wanted to name his son.

<sup>63</sup> Zechariah asked for a writing tablet. Then he wrote, "His name is John." Everyone was amazed. <sup>64</sup> At once, Zechariah started speaking and praising God.

<sup>65</sup> All the neighbors were frightened because of what had happened, and everywhere in the hill country people kept talking about these things. <sup>66</sup> Everyone who heard about this wondered what this child would grow up to be. They knew the Lord was with him.

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

## The Nineteenth Day of Advent

December 18, 2025

### A Quick Minute with Otis White

OWEN: Otis, What would make the world a better place?

OTIS: Well, I think the world would be a better place if we had a lesser population with better people.

Better minded people or whatever.

OWEN: Better minded people in what way?

OTIS: Well, with empathy.

OWEN: Have you ever had anybody show empathy to you? Or have you ever shown empathy for somebody else?

OTIS: I have.

OWEN: Give me an example.

OTIS: Well, somebody's looking for a bit of compassion or there's some mental confusion, you know? People have questions. They don't have all the answers.

And then you might have at least one answer to one of their questions. And another guy might have another answer, based on their experience and what they've been through. People have to take the time to share what they've been through to help others navigate this whole thing better.

Having questions isn't bad. It's worse to keep the answers to yourself.

OWEN: Otis, I appreciate your time, buddy.

OTIS: Always.

OWEN: Absolutely.



Otis White

Mixed Media

# Angels We Have Heard on High 113

GLORIA

1. An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,  
 2. Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?  
 3. Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;  
 4. See with - in a man - ger laid Je - sus, Lord of heav'n and earth!

and the moun - tains in re - ply ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains:  
 What the glad - some ti - dings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?  
 come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.  
 Ma - ry, Jo - seph, lend your aid, sing with us our Sav - ior's birth.

Glo - ri - a,

in ex - cel - sis De - o! Glo - ri - a,

ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!

WORDS: Traditional French carol, 18th cent.; tr. *Crown of Jesus*, 1862

7.7.7.7.Ref

MUSIC: Traditional French melody, 18th cent.; arr. Edward S. Barnes, 1937

## Luke 1:67-80

<sup>67</sup>The Holy Spirit came upon Zechariah, and he began to speak:

<sup>68</sup>Praise the Lord,  
the God of Israel!

He has come  
to save his people.

<sup>69</sup>Our God has given us  
a mighty Savior  
from the family  
of David his servant.

<sup>70</sup>Long ago the Lord promised  
by the words  
of his holy prophets

<sup>71</sup>to save us from our enemies  
and from everyone  
who hates us.

<sup>72</sup>God said he would be kind  
to our people and keep  
his sacred promise.

<sup>73</sup>He told our ancestor  
Abraham

<sup>74</sup>that he would rescue us  
from our enemies.

Then we could serve him  
without fear,

<sup>75</sup>by being holy and good  
as long as we live.

<sup>76</sup>You, my son, will be called  
the prophet of God Most High.

You will go ahead of the Lord  
to get everything ready  
for him.

<sup>77</sup>You will tell his people  
that they can be saved  
when their sins

are forgiven.

<sup>78</sup>God's love and kindness  
will shine upon us

like the sun that rises  
in the sky.

<sup>79</sup>On us who live  
in the dark shadow  
of death

this light will shine  
to guide us

into a life of peace.

<sup>80</sup>As John grew up, God's Spirit  
gave him great power. John lived  
in the desert until the time he  
was sent to the people of Israel.

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

# The Twentieth Day of Advent

December 19, 2025

## Meeting Frank Nixon

OWEN: Okay, Frank. What would make the world a better place?

FRANK: I would say patience, tolerance, and brotherhood.

OWEN: Can you give me an example of when someone was patient or tolerant of you or of when you were patient or tolerant of another person?

FRANK: Well, I have I would say I might have a higher level of learning than someone else. And you have to realize that everybody's not at the same place in life.

So therefore, when I have to break things down in a way that they can understand what I'm trying to say, that is when I show patience.

OWEN: So, taking the time to explain yourself.

FRANK: Yeah. For the comprehension. Patience means taking time. It means that person is worth you time.

OWEN: Fantastic.

Frank, thank you very much for breaking it down for me. I appreciate your time and insight.

And it was very nice to meet you.



Lori Reynolds

Acrylic

# Gentle Mary Laid Her Child 115

TEMPUS ADEST FLORIDUM

1. Gen - tle Mar - y laid her Child low - ly in a man - ger;  
2. An - gels sang a - bout His birth; wise men sought and found Him;  
3. Gen - tle Mar - y laid her Child low - ly in a man - ger;

there He lay, the un - de - filed, to the world a stran - ger;  
heav - en's star shone bright - ly forth, glo - ry all a - round Him;  
He is still the un - de - filed, but no more a stran - ger;

such a Babe in such a place, can He be the Sav - ior?  
shep - herds saw the won - drous sight, heard the an - gels sing - ing;  
Son of God, of hum - ble birth, beau - ti - ful the sto - ry;

Ask the saved of all the race who have found His fa - vor.  
all the plains were lit that night, all the hills were ring - ing.  
praise His name in all the earth; hail the King of glo - ry!

WORDS: Joseph S. Cook, 1919

MUSIC: *Piae Cantiones*, 1582; arr. Ernest Macmillan, 1930

7.6.7.6.D

## Luke 2:1-7

<sup>2</sup> About that time Emperor Augustus gave orders for the names of all the people to be listed in record books. <sup>2</sup> These first records were made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

<sup>3</sup> Everyone had to go to their own hometown to be listed. <sup>4</sup> So Joseph had to leave Nazareth in Galilee and go to Bethlehem in Judea. Long ago Bethlehem had been King David's hometown, and Joseph went there because he was from David's family.

<sup>5</sup> Mary was engaged to Joseph and traveled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a baby, <sup>6</sup> and while they were there, <sup>7</sup> she gave birth to her first-born son. She dressed him in baby clothes and laid him on a bed of hay, because there was no room for them in the inn.

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

## The Twenty-First Day of Advent

December 20, 2025

### Meeting Miguel Navarro

OWEN: Miguel, What would make the world a better place?

MIGUEL: My personal opinion is to reach out for each other. Help out each other. Be very kind and be help each individual no matter who you are. Accept people for who they are and all that.

OWEN: Very good.

Can you give me an example of a time that somebody reached out to help you or a time that you reached out to help somebody else?

MIGUEL: Of course.

I remember one time I was struggling. I was struggling with money and everything. And I had some brand new individual offer to help me out.

I mean, there was one day where I had, like, zero money on my EBT. And basically, someone came out of the blue like, “Hey. I know that you’re kinda struggling and all the thing. Can I help you out?”

So I was like, “Yeah. Sure.”

And this guy gave me, like \$20. It was a Godsend.

And he didn’t charge me no fee or nothing.

Of course, the next week I met the person and I said to him, “Thank you very much.”

And I had my EBT with me so I asked, “Would you like anything to eat or drink?”

He was like, “Yeah. Because I kinda ran out of my paycheck.”

So we walked to the QT and I bought him some food – like \$30 worth of food that he needed. And I said “Thank you for helping me out last week. This week, it’s my turn to help you out.”

And we’ve been best buddies ever since. And we still help out each other the best we can.

OWEN: Miguel, that’s a great story.

I really appreciate you telling me your story today.

MIGUEL: Yeah.

OWEN: It’s very nice to meet you.



Christy Lee Peaks

Acrylic

# Good King Wenceslas

John Mason Neale, 1853

13th Century Spring Carol

$\text{♩} = 175$

1. Good King Wen - ces - las looked out on the Feast of Ste - phen,  
 2. "Hi - ther, page, and stand by me, if you know it, tell - ing,  
 3. "Bring me food and bring me wine, bring me pine logs hi - ther,  
 4. "Sire, the night is dark - er now, and the wind blows strong - er,  
 5. In his mas - ter's steps he trod, where the snow lay dint - ed;

When the snow lay round a - bout, deep and crisp and e - ven.  
 You - der pea - sant, who is he? Where and what his dwell - ing?"  
 You and I will see him dine, when we bear them thi - ther."  
 Fails my heart, I know not how; I can go no long - er."  
 Heat was in the ver - y sod which the saint had print - ed.

Bright - ly shone the moon that night, though the frost was cru - el,  
 "Sire, he lives a good league hence, un - der - neath the mount - ain,  
 Page and mon - arch, forth they went, forth they went to - ge - ther,  
 "Mark my foot - steps, my good page, tread now in them bold - ly,  
 There - fore, Christ - ian men, be sure, wealth or rank pos - sess - ing,

When a poor man came in sight, ga - thering win - ter fu - el.  
 Right a - gainst the for - est fence, by Saint Ag - nes' fount - ain."  
 Through the cold wind's wild la - ment and the bit - ter wea - ther.  
 You shall find the wint - er's rage freeze your blood less cold - ly."  
 You who now will bless the poor shall your - selves find bless - ing.

Public Domain  
 Courtesy of the Cyber Hymnal™

# Luke 2:8-14

<sup>8</sup>That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. <sup>9</sup>All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them. The shepherds were frightened. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said, "Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. <sup>11</sup>This very day in King David's hometown a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay."

<sup>13</sup>Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God. They said:

<sup>14</sup>"Praise God in heaven!  
 Peace on earth to everyone  
 who pleases God."

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

## The Twenty-Second Day of Advent

December 21, 2025

A Story by Anna Romano – “Luna Looks for Home”

The sun crept up slowly, and its rays poured through the windows. Luna’s head popped up as someone approached the door. The door opened with a whoosh, and out the cat went! The air was cool and crisp against her black fur; the earth shifted softly under her paws. Luna headed for the trees, wondering what might lie hidden within. What treasures would she find in this new realm? Who lived among the greens? Luna picked up the pace and began her exploration.

Not long into her journey, a sunny spot appeared through the brush. Surrounded by trees and strange life, the glittering grass seemed a great place to nap. Luna set her head down for a snooze. The sun crept higher into the sky. Then, the cat suddenly awoke. She looked around, and nothing was in the same place! Panic flew through her skin.

“What to do?! Which way do I go?!” Determined, Luna started looking for her home.

A few paces ahead, Luna spied a willow tree. Its light green leaves almost touched the ground, as they hung from long arching branches. The flexible canopy appeared calm and strong, so she decided to ask for directions.

“Willow Tree, which way is home?” the cat cautiously inquired.

“Hmm...what is this ‘home’ you speak of?” asked the distinguished tree.

“It has a roof, rooms, and walls with cozy windows to look out of.”

“I do not understand what you described,” the willow tree responded. “All I know is this grass here and the stream that runs beside it.”

Luna’s ears leaned back against her head. She looked down at the ground, disheartened. *I must find home.* She thought. *I know nothing else. I can’t live here forever.* She picked herself up and scampered off.

Luna frantically searched but remained lost and afraid. Then she heard a sweet singing drifting from above. She spied a Blue Bird guarding his nest in a nearby oak tree. One look at the cat and the bird dashed, assuming it was in danger of becoming Luna’s next snack. But the cat had no interest in the bird; her knotted stomach could not concentrate.

Luna softly spoke, “Oh, mighty Oak, how are you today? Do you happen to know which way is home?”

The massive tree looked down her trunk, and her dark green leaves gave a slight shiver. “What a polite cat! I appreciate your sentiment, but I don’t know how to help with your predicament. What is this ‘home’ you speak of?”

Dismayed, Luna’s green eyes shone bright, and her heart filled up with tears. “Surely with your wisdom, I thought you would know.” She whispered to the tree apologetically. “Home is where my belly remains full and my toys are kept safe. I can sleep reassured that when I wake up, everything is where I left it.”

“That sounds like a miraculous place! I wish it worked like that ‘round here. My leaves fall to the ground, and my acorns are plucked to feed the critters who climb all over me.”

Luna’s head hung low. “So, you can’t tell me the way home?”

“I’m sorry, young kitten, but I have not left this spot for over 100 years.”

Luna left the oak tree in her wake as she sauntered through the woods. With an empty tummy and not enough sleep, she continued on her journey. Suddenly, a beautiful bush burst into sight, its long, thin branches grabbing all attention.

“What’s your name?” asked the cat. Curiosity overpowered her senses.

“They call me Belladonna,” sang the plant, as it showed off its idyllic purple flowers. Her dark berries looked enchanting among the leaves, and Luna’s stomach grumbled.

“Come, eat.” Belladonna offered. The hungry cat began to reach, but then she flinched as something bit her.

“Ow!” She yelled, shocked and confused. A small caterpillar shuffled out from behind her. “Don’t eat those, you stupid cat! Don’t you know why she’s called Deadly Nightshade? Those poison berries will bring about death! Go on, now. Off with you!”

Luna stared hard at the caterpillar, then suddenly blurted, “I’m trying to find home. Can you help me?”

The caterpillar just smirked. “I’m off to molt and prepare for a short slumber. Please do not follow me!”

Luna’s heart sank as the sun started its descent behind the tree line. She staggered forward searching for someone who could help her. Luna came across a dogwood tree with its white blossoms blooming abundantly. A petal wafted toward the ground and brushed against the cat’s ear. Luna felt the dogwood’s strong presence; a delicate strength and sense of resilience emanated from its roots.

“Why so sad, my little friend?” the tree inquired with care.

“I can’t find home. It’s getting late. And I have no idea where I’m going.”

“What is this home you speak of?” the tree asked with honest concern.

The cat responded, her voice trembling, “Home is peaceful, a place of rest and recovery.”

“Well,” said the tree, “I have that here. Why don’t you stay with me?”

“I can’t,” replied Luna. “Home is so much more. And I did not understand until I lost it. Yes, home has a roof, solid walls, and a comfy seat at the window. But it also is safe where no one steals my things, and there’s always food on the table. And home is where I can rest in peace and recover from the frets of the day. Oh! I wish I were home! But I don’t know the way.”

The dogwood smiled at the humbled cat. “Your journey seems to have helped you see that home encompasses many things. I think I know someone who can help you.”

Luna soared into the air, excited and relieved. “Oh, thank you!” she cried, “I promise to never forget how you helped me!”

What the dogwood did next, Luna could never fully describe. A wondrous tone echoed through its leaves, and a rainbow appeared in the sky. The cat spied a small chrysalis settled among the branches. Its hardened curves started to separate as a butterfly struggled to break free. Once unrestricted by the protective chamber, the butterfly spread its bright blue wings. It fluttered a few times in the air before settling in the grass for a conversation with the little black cat.

“I can help you, little Luna. A home should be as you described, comfortable and safe. I hope you realize how fortunate you are to have found such a place.”

“Yes,” the cat solemnly replied, “I will never run away again.”

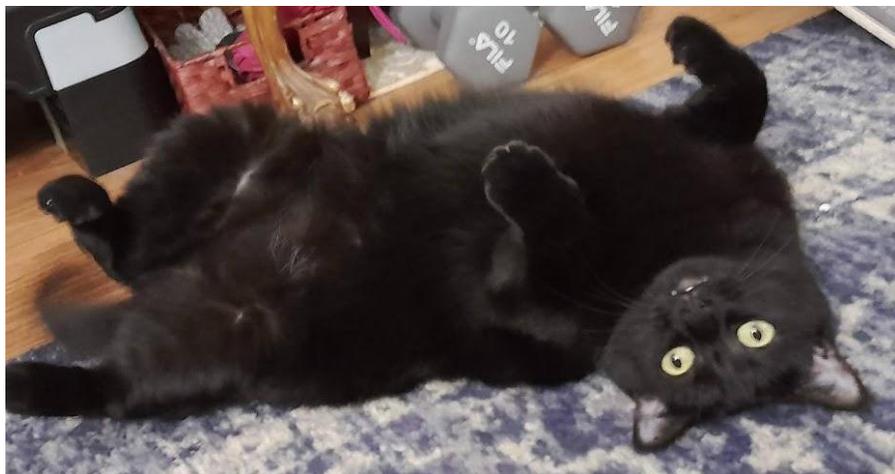
The blue butterfly led the way. As they walked, Luna studied its wings. She marveled at the complexity. Yet, something familiar also appeared.

“You helped me earlier,” Luna announced, “when I came across Deadly Nightshade. But you’ve changed so much! Why the enormous transformation?”

“We all must grow. It hurts sometimes. But usually, it is worth the pain.”

Luna kept silent the rest of the way, deep in contemplation. And when she saw the front door, she ran ahead, yelling back to the butterfly, “Thank you, my friend. I will never take home for granted again! For home is where I am loved unconditionally.”

Luna did not forget the promise she made to the great dogwood tree. She made a cross out of its bark and wore it around her neck. She looked to the cross to help guide her during any difficult circumstance. And, true to her word, the little black cat cherished her home every day after.



Anna Romano

Photograph of Luna

(Anna’s story was a submission from the writing group that meets at Triune each Wednesday.)

## Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Polish Carol

1  
In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for His bed a cat - tle stall; ox - en  
Flocks weresleep - ing; shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing new saw the

5  
low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ the babe is Lord of all. Swift are  
glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, ti - dings of the gos - pel true. Thus re -

9  
wing - ing an - gels sing - ing, no - els ring - ing, ti - dings bring ing: Christ the  
joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing greet the mor - row: Christ the

13  
babe is Lord of all! Christ the babe is Lord of all!  
babe was born for you! Christ the babe was born for you!

## The Twenty-Third Day of Advent

December 22, 2025

A Story by Trevor Barton – “The Mechanic and the Morning Light”

Brother Juniper walked barefoot at sunrise beside Triune Mercy Center, the morning light brushing the city in soft reds, yellows and blues. His patched brown t-shirt hung loosely, and his feet whispered along the cracks in the sidewalk, which was already warm with the promise of August heat. Beside him walked Manuel, his friend from Berea, an undocumented man with calloused hands and a quiet laugh who worked seven days a week at a dusty little garage behind a pawn shop and a gas station that always had the cheapest gas.

Juniper listened more than he spoke. He always did when he was with Manuel.

“I fixed up that old Toyota for Miss Fannie Lou last week,” Manuel said, a smile tugging at the corners of his face. “Didn’t charge her. Just changed the oil, patched the tire, gave it a prayer and a full tank.”

Juniper nodded. He saw how Manuel lived in the upside down kingdom without needing to name it. No trumpet sounds. No selfies. Just goodness in grease-stained hands.

“Didn’t charge her,” Juniper repeated softly. “You’re the richest poor man I know.”

Manuel chuckled and kicked a bottle cap into the curb. “Can’t take the money with you, Hermano. But you can take an open heart.”

They stopped at the corner by the wall where Juniper usually prayed. And there, pushing up gritty and golden through the concrete, was a single dandelion. Manuel knelt beside it, touched it gently, reverently.

“Look at this little rebel,” he said. “Doesn’t know it’s not supposed to grow here.”

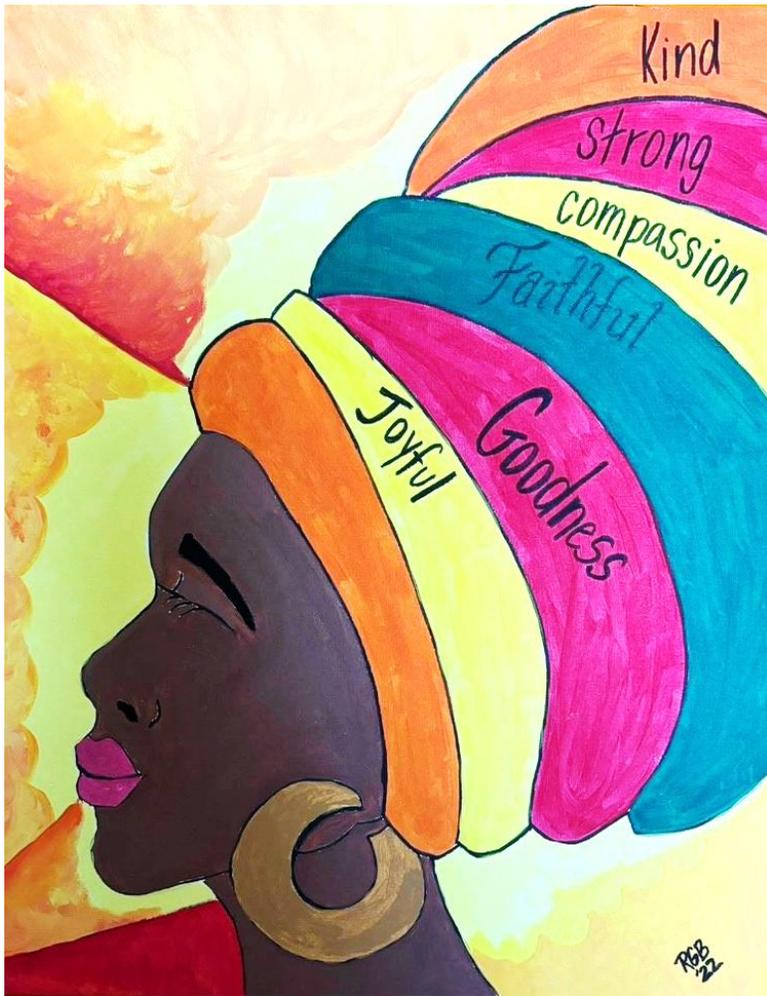
Juniper stared at Manuel as if seeing him for the first time. He thought of how Manuel worked without papers but with honor, how he repaired broken engines and broken people alike, how he gave away more than he kept, how he lived in shadows but carried his own light.

“You’re the dandelion,” Juniper said. “Rooted deep in hard places. Blooming where you weren’t invited. Breaking concrete with beauty.”

Manuel stood, brushed off his hands, and laughed again. “Nah, Hermano. I just fix cars.”

But Juniper would remember. Juniper, the barefoot scribe of the streets, would write it all down: how love hides in plain sight, how the kingdom comes in overalls and oil stains, how the sun always rises on the documented and the undocumented.

And how sometimes, a hero walks beside you in silence.



Robin Barton

Acrylic

## Carol of the bells

[www.singing-bell.com](http://www.singing-bell.com)

Hark! how the bells, sweet, sil - ver bells, all seem to say, throw cares a - way  
 Christ - mas is here, bring - ing good cheer, to young and old, meek and the bold.

Ding dong ding dong, that is their song, with joy - ful ring, all ca - rol - ing  
 One seems to hear words of good cheer from e - very - where fil - ling the air

Oh! how they pound, rai - sing the sound, o' - ver hill and dale, tel - ling their tale

Gai - ly they ring — while peo - ple sing — songs of good cheer — Christ - mas is here.

Mer - ry, mer - ry, mer - ry, mer - ry Christ - mas Mer - ry, mer - ry, mer - ry, mer - ry Christ - mas

On, on they send, on with - out end, their joy - ful tone to e - very home

Ding dong ding dong ding dong ding dong dong Bong!

## The Twenty-Fourth Day of Advent

December 23, 2025

Owen Robertson

It's hard to decorate when you're on the street.

Quite often you have to think of the city's decorations as your own. The Christmas trees and Holly & Ivy-ed lampposts become something of a communal decking of the halls. Even though that same community doesn't think to include you as a part of its festivities.

They try their best to ignore you or to step quickly by with a hurried, muttered, "Merry Christmas."

This year, she decided to try a little decorating of her own. She found a small tree. Tiny. And set it up in an empty coffee can in her tent.

She made a paper star in the Art Room at Triune. Decorated it with glue and glitter. Not bad if she said so herself.

She placed it on the top of her tiny Christmas tree and the tree immediately bent all the way over — the star touching the ground. Images of "A Charlie Brown Christmas" flooded her mind and mixed with the tears flowing down her face.

She cried for only a moment. Then she thought, "Maybe that's the way it ought to be. That's Christmas. Heaven bending over to kiss the earth."

The night was cold but inside her tent was warm.

Merry and bright.



Owen Robertson

Mixed Media

# HOW GREAT OUR JOY

SATB Choir with Echo Chorus or Quartet, unaccompanied

Traditional

Arr. by William D. Hall

In a moderate two

The musical score is written for SATB choir and piano accompaniment. It is in 2/2 time and consists of 30 measures. The score is divided into several sections:

- Measures 1-6:** SATB choir, *mf*. Lyrics: "While by my sheep I watched at night, Glad ti-dings brought an"
- Measures 7-12:** Echo chorus (quartet), *p*. Lyrics: "an-gel bright. How great my joy, great my joy!"
- Measures 13-14:** SATB choir, *f*. Lyrics: "Joy, joy, joy!"
- Measures 15-16:** Echo chorus (quartet), *p*. Lyrics: "Joy, joy, joy!"
- Measures 17-18:** SATB choir, *f*. Lyrics: "Praise we the Lord in"
- Measures 19-24:** Echo chorus (quartet), *p*. Lyrics: "heav'n on high! Praise we the Lord in heav'n on high!"
- Measures 25-30:** TTBB choir, *mf*. Lyrics: "There shall be born, so he did say, in Beth-le-hem a"

## Luke 2:15-21

<sup>15</sup>After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about." <sup>16</sup>They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay.

<sup>17</sup>When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the angel had said about him. <sup>18</sup>Everyone listened and was surprised. <sup>19</sup>But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant.

<sup>20</sup>As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about him. Everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had said.

<sup>21</sup> Eight days later Jesus' parents did for him what the Law of Moses commands. And they named him Jesus, just as the angel had told Mary when he promised she would have a baby.

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

## Christmas Eve: The Twenty-Fifth Day of Advent

December 24, 2025

Portion of a Poem by Michael Phillips

Suddenly I, who long ago  
stood before Joshua,  
the commander of My great army,  
opened my eyes to see them  
that had brought Me to Bethlehem.  
They stared at me in awe,  
wondering at what they saw.  
So this is human life,  
here amidst the straw.

I saw the wooden beams above my head  
and heard the sheep bleating near my bed.  
And then one by one they came,  
looking down upon my fragile frame.  
Shepherd boys, with ruddy faces full of joy,  
filled with a peace they could not explain.  
One by one from my sight they disappear,  
and then she picked me up and drew me near,  
as she softly sang a simple refrain.  
So this is human life,  
cuddled in loving arms.

From my earliest days,  
I remember star-lit nights  
and the two of them  
talking the night away.  
Me, wrapped in a blanket  
'til the light of day.  
On and on, sunrise to sunset,  
'til at last in some desert town  
we stopped to settle down.

They seemed to want for so much more.  
I took my first steps upon that dusty floor.  
So this is human life,  
walking from here to there.

And as stronger I did grow,  
we walked together to and fro,  
and I remembered this land  
and a people long ago,  
who walked under the care  
of my loving hand.  
Then one day at last,  
he spoke with a happy smile,  
“What’s done is past.”  
And away we journeyed  
from the land of the Nile.  
I ran and skipped along the way,  
as they talked of home  
and of a better day.  
And then as to Judea we drew near,  
Father suddenly seemed filled with fear.  
And in his sleep he had a dream,  
and so to Galilee we did go.  
To the city of Nazareth,  
and there I did grow.  
And there we made our home.

It was there My Father God  
made Me strong in the Spirit.  
He filled Me with His wisdom.  
He covered Me with His grace.  
Joseph taught Me how to hammer  
and how to saw,  
how to sand and how to shape.  
He had strong hands and gentle face,  
and there was no nonsense in the place.

No play while there was work to be done,  
even for God's own son.

But O how I loved the Sabbath  
and the reading of My Word.  
When I was twelve the feast days came,  
and to Jerusalem we journeyed for the same.  
O how the days flew by,  
questions filling the air,  
as in the temple, in the midst of teachers there,  
I saw their hearts and spoke the Holy Word,  
and they were astonished at what they hear.  
Mother and Father had headed home,  
and thought Me with them,  
and had to return and come back to Jerusalem.  
They found Me in the temple as I read.  
And Mother, disappointed with Me, said,  
"Why have you done this to us?"  
And perhaps for the first time, yes,  
I spoke to her, what I already knew,  
that I was about My Father's business.  
They looked at Me, their words were few.  
They could not understand My readiness.  
But this was human life,  
hearts short of breath.  
And so I went with them,  
back to Nazareth.



Lori Reynolds

Acrylic

CHRISTMAS  
SILENT NIGHT

Translated by John Freeman Young (1820-1885)

Franz Gruber (1787-1863)

*Tranquillo* (♩ = 112)

1. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! All is calm,  
*p* 2. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake  
 3. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Son of God,

all is bright. Round yon Vir - gin Moth - er and Child,  
 at the sight; Glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,  
 love's pure light! Ra - diant beams from Thy ho - ly face,

Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, Sleep in heav - en - ly  
 Heav'n - ly hosts sing Al - le - lu - ia; *mf* Christ, the Sav - ior is  
 With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy

peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace,  
 born! *pp* Christ, the Sav - ior is born!  
 birth! Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth!

from *Christmas Carols and Hymns for School and Choir*, 1910

## John 1:1-13

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the one who is called the Word.

The Word was with God and was truly God.

<sup>2</sup> From the very beginning the Word was with God.

<sup>3</sup> And with this Word, God created all things. Nothing was made without the Word.

Everything that was created <sup>4</sup> received its life from him, and his life gave light to everyone.

<sup>5</sup> The light keeps shining in the dark, and darkness has never put it out.

<sup>6</sup> God sent a man named John, <sup>7</sup> who came to tell about the light and to lead all people to have faith.

<sup>8</sup> John wasn't this light. He came only to tell about the light.

<sup>9</sup> The true light that shines on everyone was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup> The Word was in the world, but no one knew him, though God had made the world with his Word.

<sup>11</sup> He came into his own world, but his own nation did not welcome him.

<sup>12</sup> Yet some people accepted him and put their faith in him. So he gave them the right to be the children of God.

<sup>13</sup> They were not God's children by nature or because of any human desires. God himself was the one who made them his children.

What Would Make the World a Better Place?

# Christmas Day

December 25, 2025

## John 1:14

<sup>14</sup>The Word became  
a human being  
and lived here with us.  
We saw his true glory,  
the glory of the only Son  
of the Father.  
From him the complete gifts  
of undeserved grace and truth  
have come down to us.



Michael Graham

Pencil

## I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

Trad.  
arr. Christian Morris

I heard the bells on Christ - mas day Their old fa - mi - liar  
I thought how, as the day had come, The bel - fies of all  
And in des - pair I bowed my head: "There is no peace on  
Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: "God is not dead, nor  
Till, ring - ing, sing - ing, on its way, The world re - volved from

ca - rols play, And wild and sweet the words re - peat Of  
Chris - ten - dom Had rolled a - long th'un - bro - ken song Of  
earth," I said, "For hate is strong and mocks the song Of  
cloth he sleep; The wrong shall fail, the right pre - vail, With  
night to day, A voice, a chime, a chant su - blime, Of

peace on earth, good will to men.  
peace on earth, good will to men.  
peace on earth, good will to men."  
peace on earth, good will to men."  
peace on earth, good will to men! will to men!