

Lighting of the Advent Candle: The Candle of Love

I dream of music that makes my heart swell.
I dream of trees that take my breath away.
I dream of sunrises that wrap me in light.
I dream of family dinners that feel like home.
I dream of church services that give me hope.
I dream of love as what we always return to
So today, as we draw near to Christmas day,
we light the candle of love.

(The candle of Love is lit)

May this light burn bright as a reminder
that God is here
and God is love.

**We are not alone. Thanks be to God for a love like that.
Amen.**

Call to and Prayer of Confession

**God of Good News,
You say to me, "You are highly favored," but I struggle to
see how that could be. You say to me, "Do not be afraid,"
but I am afraid all the time.
You say to me, "Even the impossible is possible, just look
at Elizabeth!"
But hope slips through my hands like water.
The impossible still feels impossible.
Today we pray:
Teach us to sing like Mary.
Teach us to laugh like Elizabeth.
Teach us to trust like the angels.
Forgive us when we can only do one at a time, or none at
all. Amen.**

Words of Assurance & Grateful Living **John 13:34**

"A new command I give you: love one another. As I have
loved you, so you must love one another."

Gloria Patri

God's Word is Proclaimed

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:26-46
Sermon: Rev. Kendra VanHouten
"Those who Dream ... are not alone"

The Church Responds to God

Offerings

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in
heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us
our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not
into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is
the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen.**

Benediction

those who dream... are not alone (love)

He never said to me, "I feel so alone,"
But I could tell every time we talked on the phone. For you can hear
loneliness move through the line. It sounds like quiet and feels like tired.

But I never brought it up.
I pretended we were fine, Passing stories like chess pieces Until he'd
resign.

And as I look back, if I could do it again,
I'd get on a plane and say to him—
You are made from nothing but love,
Inside and out, you are more than enough.
And if I could build you a home out of beautiful things, I'd write all day
and sing and pray.

But I cannot build your home, Or make you love your own.

All I can do,
Is open my door and turn on the light, So if you walk by you might stop
inside. And if you did, there you would find The light is on.
The table is set.
The music is loud.
The bed is soft.
The food is warm.
What's mine is yours.

For no amount of space or time, Or grief or doubt,
Or pain can subside
The fact that I am by your side. Love and I will always abide.

I learned that from God. I learned that from you. Love doesn't go away.
I'm here to stay.

So like Mary and Elizabeth, This door is open.

You didn't have to say you were lonely. I could hear it in your voice.

***The liturgy, poems, and artwork are taken from Sanctified Art.com
Advent Worship Series.**

THOSE
WHO
DREAM



**Fourth Sunday of Advent:
December 20, 2020**

God Gathers the Church

Gathering Music & Welcome

Call to Worship

I knew joy, but when I heard the laugh of my child,
Suddenly, joy was overflowing.

I knew love, but when you held my hand,
Suddenly, love was overflowing.

I knew God, but when you showed me grace, when you
forgave me,

when you loved me,
when you raised me,

Suddenly, God was overflowing.

So, let us worship Holy God together

As a reminder that God is here and we are never alone.

This is community.

This is the body of Christ.

Welcome home.

Luke 1:26-45

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

¹ I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.² I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.³ You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David:⁴ 'I will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations.'"

¹⁹ Then you spoke in a vision to your faithful one, and said: "I have set the crown on one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people."²⁰ I have found my servant David; with my holy oil I have anointed him; ²¹ my hand shall always remain with him; my arm also shall strengthen him. ²² The enemy shall not outwit him, the wicked shall not humble him. ²³ I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him. ²⁴ My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him; and in my name his horn shall be exalted. ²⁵ I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers. ²⁶ He shall cry to me, 'You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation!'