

In this moment we open the doors of our hearts to the Spirit,
inviting us to become more than we can ask or imagine.

*Take a deep breath in...
and then breathe out fear...
and breathe in courage...
and out again, inviting hope.*

In this moment we open the doors of our hearts,
filling it with compassion for all those who are struggling.

We remember and pray for...

... those who are suffering economic hardship, and insecurity in
basic needs;
may abundance be shared.

... those who are suffering mentally, finding it difficult to cope;
may paths open and hope return.

... those who are suffering illness or injury;
may healing abound.

... those who are suffering loneliness and isolation;
may companionship and solace arrive.

... those who are suffering discrimination, fear and violence;
may they know respect, respite, and safety.

May the Advent of Compassion be born in us, reside within us,
move outward from us, to meet the needs of the world,
making a house for the Holy that is each and every child of God.

A Song of the Home

What is the heartsong of our family? What song do we sing together at Christmas? Is it in the hymnal? Do we hear it on the radio? Is it "Silent Night" or "The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy"? "Niño Lindo" or "Mary, Did You Know?" "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" or "This Little Light of Mine"?

Let us sing that song together, as we close our worship as a family.

A Blessing

May God's Door of Welcome swing open just a little bit more. May Jesus' humble first dwelling remind you of the plenty you already know. And may the Spirit lead you into more possibility and hospitality that you can imagine, making room in The Inn for all. May it be so.

The 1st Sunday after Christmas: "Dwelling"
December 26, 2021

Developed in the 14th century, the word "dwell" became known as a "lingering" or "abiding." It had connections to "in-habit"—another word developed at that time. After an Advent/Christmas season of focusing on housing the holy, how will we linger and abide in this habit of hospitality? What habits did you invite into your heart in this season that you desire to take with you into the new year?

Collect Prayer

Oh God whose light no darkness could overcome,
we pray to you in gratitude this day
for the gift of the Christ Child,
whose birth brings the good news
that you are always here with us.
May your love be born within each of us this day,
that we might bear your love in this hurting world.
We pray this with the utmost joy
for the wonders of your grace and love.
Amen

We know we are worshiping together today, even though we are in our own homes. We sing this song, we say these words, and we do these actions together with our friends from First Church, and with the church across the world and through time. With that in mind, we begin with a song that has been sung in many languages, in many churches, since its publication around 1750.

A Song of the Church

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;

*O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

True God of true God, Light from Light Eternal,
lo, he shuns not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father, begotten not created;

*O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;

*O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;

*O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

Lighting the Advent Wreath and the Christ Candle

Today we light the Christ Candle once again that illumines the
Door of Welcome.

May this light shine in our hearts, in our lives,
and in our community.

May Christ's Light awaken us to possibilities and lead us to
greater hospitality.

There IS room in this Inn, a House for the Holy.

An Epistle Reading

Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to [Abba God] through him.

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it.

A Prayer Poem

"Homes for the Holy"

by John van de Laar

It's a radical thing to claim
if you really think about it:
that God inhabits humanity;
that the Eternal Divine would dwell
in temporal human hearts, minds, and bodies;
But that is the unavoidable truth
that Christmas dares to proclaim.

The great mystery is that this indwelling
is not a once-off, never-to-be-repeated event;
Yes, Christ is God incarnate,
but so is the cosmos!
And since the Divine Spirit lives in us too,
so are we!
We are homes for the Holy!

As this truly awesome reality sinks into our souls,
we hear the Spirit's whisper:

that we can live in the power of this truth;
that we can host God's holy presence
not just in this season, but always!
And we can carry the Divine presence,
grace, and compassion
to all who need to find a home
within the Divine Life.

Dwelling in God's Word

Read the scripture or the poem again, slowly this time. Find a word or phrase that catches your eye or moves your heart...slowly repeat it...pray your thoughts, desires, needs, and feelings from your meditation...enjoy the presence of God. If you are with others, share with one another what word or phrases you have focused on.

Prayer

In this moment we open the doors of our hearts,
letting go of all we do not need.

*Take a deep breath in...
and then breathe out regret...
and breathe in forgiveness...
and out again, inviting peace.*