



# Liturgies for the Lonely

## Advent

prepared by Slat's Toole

# Introduction

In the middle of 2020, during a global pandemic, I moved halfway across the country, to live in a city I didn't know well. While I do have connections and friends in my new location, finding a church community is difficult. As an introvert, the idea of showing up at a Zoom coffee hour where I don't know anyone is horrifying, and while I do get a sense of a community through online worship practices (and am grateful for all of the leadership that makes that happen), so many practices have shifted for safety reasons that it's harder to get to know the worship life of a church. There's so much I miss; I miss singing together, passing the peace, moving through the liturgical year moored by a community where I am known and cared for and where I know and care for others.

The last time I felt this kind of disconnection from the church was when I was in undergrad. I was an extraordinarily busy theater major who did not have time to become an active part of a church. During one Holy Week when I was in tech for a show, but longed to be in services throughout the week, I started to come up with rituals I could do at home. It didn't replace communal worship, but did help focus and direct me until I could restructure my life to be active in church again.

As we face closures for longer than any of us hoped, I have been hit hard at the idea of going through the liturgical year without a local church community and without some of the rituals that help me engage in these seasons. I am amazed and uplifted by the creativity and possibility in worshipping online, and at the same time know that part of me will be mourning as we move through the church year. (This will be the first year in my living memory that I will not be in a church, singing "Silent Night", as the day moves from Christmas Eve to Christmas Day. That will be hard.)

So I am creating rituals for myself to help me get through some of the key moments of the church year, starting with All Saints Sunday, Advent, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. I am making them available for others in case they are useful. They are designed for individual use-- feel free to adapt for relationships or families or roommates or whatever configuration you have, but there are so many resources for families out there already and fewer liturgical resources designed to be done alone. (It is less depressing to expand a resource to include more people than to simplify it to work for one!)

# Introduction

While I have experience in many Protestant denominations, my theological center is the Reformed tradition as practiced in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). These liturgies are based on a slightly adapted four-fold pattern of worship. A traditional four-fold pattern includes Gathering, Word, Response (or Table), and Sending. I've adapted the Response/Table portion as "Practice". The Practice portion seeks to be an active response, in the same spirit as offering or the Lord's Supper when we gather communally, and will draw on different spiritual practices throughout this series. Some portions of the liturgies will be the same every time to help establish a ritual, and some will change with the week or season. A list of suggested hymns will be included, along with a link to the Spotify playlist I've made for that season or day. The Scriptures (NRSV) are included on separate pages, and the psalm will include a musical setting option.

Every portion of these liturgies is adaptable, from words to hymn selection to scriptures to practices. Use this resource as best benefits you. That could mean going through the liturgy exactly as printed or with minor adjustments. That could be using the liturgy as a scaffold to build your own, or inspiration for how to incorporate worship into your daily life. That could be collaging together this liturgy with other daily prayer resources you know and love. I suspect for many of us, this pandemic is a time of discovery when it comes to how we connect to God, ourselves, and each other, so use this as a tool for curiosity.

If this work is useful to you and you have resources to spare, my Venmo is @callmeslats. More than making a profit, though, I want this to go to those who need it right now, so feel free to share with anyone this might help.

Grace, peace, and safety to you, wherever you are, in whatever season of life you find yourself,

Slats

# Preparing the Space

For me, creating a space for a ritual is almost as important as the ritual itself. Entering into a specific space signals us and helps us to engage in the specific activities we are used to performing in that space. In these times of social distancing, many of us have limited the number of spaces we are in, and our house/apartment/room becomes the space for almost all parts of our lives.

When I talk about preparing the space, I don't just mean the physical location where the ritual takes place. As we prepare the space, we use our senses to shift us out of our daily patterns of living and into a space of particular connection with God, like how walking into a sanctuary can refocus us towards worship.

If you have a space where you can permanently set up a worship space, that's great. If you don't (I don't), that's fine too. You don't need a lot of physical space to create this kind of ritual.

Your space will be unique to who you are and what is meaningful to you. Ultimately, you are preparing space that helps you slow down and connect with God. Here's a way to think through the different senses to help you discover what that may be like. If one of these draws you more, focus on that. If one isn't as relevant to you, let it go.

## Sight

What do you see as you worship? Are there symbols like a cross, chalice, or pitcher, that help you feel more connected to a worship space? Candles? Are there objects that are connected with faith communities or people who have nurtured you: a Bible received at confirmation, a rock you've carried since one conference or reaffirmation of baptism, a gift from a mentor?

## Hearing

What sounds help you focus and reset? What sounds put you in a posture of worship? For many of us, that might be music--creating your own playlist can be one way to think about what a particular day or season really means for you. Sounds of nature might bring you a feeling of peace. Or, perhaps sitting in silence, noticing the sounds of the world around you in a meditative way might be a way in to contemplation.



# Preparing the Space

## Touch

How does your body feel? Does it help you to wear the clothes you might normally wear to church, or something more comfortable that makes you feel cozy? Where, in your living space, does this ritual take place? At a table so you can easily write or draw? On a couch or bed so you can rest in this time of worship? On a meditation cushion that moves to towards prayer?

## Smell

For me, this is the most helpful and powerful sense in creating a ritual. Is there a scented candle, stick of incense, or oil for diffusing that you can associate with this (and only this) time? (Tip: if you want to play around with different scents to find the perfect one, have some coffee grounds on standby to act as a palate cleanser for your nose!) If you can associate a scent with behavior, it tends to be one of the quickest ways to get into the headspace for that ritual.

## Taste

Similar to smell, taste is a sense that is often overlooked and is tremendously powerful. While these liturgies do not include sacraments (which according to my tradition are meant to be celebrated in community), we can create a ritual around food or drink that helps us begin our worship. Perhaps it is a special kind of meal, or a specific tea that you only eat or drink before this ritual.

## For This Season

Advent is a season of waiting and preparation. While many of us decorate our homes in full after Thanksgiving (or maybe even after Halloween...), it can be a powerful practice to save some space that can be decorated throughout the season. Try starting with a simple worship space and adding to it throughout the season. Perhaps it is setting up a nativity scene and adding a character each week. Perhaps it is creating an Advent wreath and participating in the tradition of lighting an additional candle each week. (Or, if you don't have a wreath, adding one more candle to the worship space each week.) The colors most often associated with Advent are purple and blue (with rose/pink for the third Sunday), so incorporating these colors into your space is another way to celebrate the season.

# Music for the Season

While many of us are used to singing Christmas Carols throughout Advent, there are a number of incredible Advent hymns that can truly help us embrace the season. For the purposes of this liturgy, I have included hymns that I believe work throughout the season of Advent, as well as hymns that are particularly appropriate for each specific week. Weekly hymns are listed at the top of each week's liturgy, while the seasonal hymns are on this page. Feel free to mix and match from these lists throughout the season.

I suggest using verses from "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" at the lighting of the Advent wreath. The same spirit of singing one verse each week can be used with a number of the hymns below. If "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" does not resonate with you, take a look at the hymns marked with an asterisk. Verses from those hymns can easily serve the same purpose.

My playlist for the season can be found [on Spotify by clicking here](#).

## Hymns for the Season

[Come Now, O Prince of Peace\\*](#)  
[Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus](#)  
[Creator of the Stars of Night](#)  
[For You, O Lord, My Soul in Stillness Waits\\*](#)  
[Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence](#)  
[O Come, O Come, Emmanuel\\*](#)  
[Savior of the Nations, Come](#)  
[Watchman, Tell Us of the Night](#)  
[While We Are Waiting, Come\\*](#)

# The Liturgy – Week One

Hymn Suggestions for this week:

[“A Stable Lamp is Lighted”](#)

[“Now the Heavens Start to Whisper”](#)

## Gathering

*While lighting a candle and/or stick of incense:*

Let my prayer rise like incense before You,  
And the lifting up of my hands as an offering.

Opening Hymn

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

**I light this first candle for hope.**

*Either sing or speak these words:*

O come, O come, Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

## Word

Prayer for Illumination

Emmanuel, all signs say the time of Your arrival draws near, but it is so hard  
to recognize Your coming. Reveal Yourself to me now through Spirit and  
Word, that I might live this season in my soul. Amen.

Scripture

Isaiah 64:1-9

Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19

*For a musical setting, see page 10.*

Mark 13:24-37

Contemplation

*Spend time in contemplation and prayer after experiencing the Word. Adjust the  
space to what centers you. If that is silence, cultivate that silence. If that is music,*

# The Liturgy – Week One

*play something that brings you peace. Assume whatever physical posture allows you to open yourself to God. If it helps you to draw or write, do so. If it is better for you to be still, be still. Stay in this practice for at least five minutes--you may want to set a gentle alarm or note the number of songs you'll listen to in this time, to ensure you do not move on from this contemplation too early.*

## Practice: Hoping Against Hope

*The hope in these scriptures is not always gentle. This hope is violent and intense. It recognizes that some things need to be torn down for others to be raised up. What are some things that you would hope to see torn down? What are some things you would like to see built up in their absence? For a physical activity, write these things on differently colored pieces of paper. Rip them up, and then create a collage of something you would hope to see using the pieces.*

## Sending

Closing Hymn

*While extinguishing the candles and/or incense:*

**As I continue on, O Christ: be with me, before me, behind me, beneath me, above me, within me, around me. Amen.**



# Scripture – Week One

## Isaiah 64:1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,  
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—  
as when fire kindles brushwood  
and the fire causes water to boil—  
to make your name known to your adversaries,  
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!  
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,  
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.  
From ages past no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you,  
who works for those who wait for him.  
You meet those who gladly do right,  
those who remember you in your ways.  
But you were angry, and we sinned;  
because you hid yourself we transgressed.  
We have all become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.  
We all fade like a leaf,  
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.  
There is no one who calls on your name,  
or attempts to take hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us,  
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.  
Yet, O Lord, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.  
Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord,  
and do not remember iniquity for ever.  
Now consider, we are all your people.

# Scripture – Week One

## Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

*For a musical setting, sing the Taizé piece [“Wait for the Lord”](#) before beginning the reading and every time a refrain is indicated.*

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
you who lead Joseph like a flock!  
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth  
before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.  
Stir up your might,  
and come to save us!  
Restore us, O God;  
let your face shine, that we may be saved. *[Refrain]*

O Lord God of hosts,  
how long will you be angry with your people’s prayers?  
You have fed them with the bread of tears,  
and given them tears to drink in full measure.  
You make us the scorn of our neighbors;  
our enemies laugh among themselves.  
Restore us, O God of hosts;  
let your face shine, that we may be saved. *[Refrain]*

But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,  
the one whom you made strong for yourself.  
Then we will never turn back from you;  
give us life, and we will call on your name.  
Restore us, O Lord God of hosts;  
let your face shine, that we may be saved. *[Refrain]*

# Scripture – Week One

## Mark 13:24–37

‘But in those days, after that suffering,  
the sun will be darkened,  
and the moon will not give its light,  
and the stars will be falling from heaven,  
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in clouds” with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

‘But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.’

# The Liturgy – Week Two

Hymn Suggestions for this week:

[“Comfort, Comfort Now My People”](#)

[“Prepare the Way, O Zion”](#)

## Gathering

*While lighting a candle and/or stick of incense:*

Let my prayer rise like incense before You,  
And the lifting up of my hands as an offering.

Opening Hymn

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

I light this first candle for hope.

I light this second candle for peace.

*Either sing or speak these words:*

O come, thou Wisdom from on high, who orders all things mightily:  
to us the path of knowledge show; and teach us in her ways to go.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

## Word

Prayer for Illumination

O God my refuge and comfort, the peace that You offer feels so far beyond  
my grasp. Sink Your words into my soul, that I might find the peace that I  
cannot understand or explain. Amen.

Scripture

Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

*For a musical setting, see page 15.*

Mark 1:1-8

# The Liturgy – Week Two

## Contemplation

*Spend time in contemplation and prayer after experiencing the Word. Adjust the space to what centers you. If that is silence, cultivate that silence. If that is music, play something that brings you peace. Assume whatever physical posture allows you to open yourself to God. If it helps you to draw or write, do so. If it is better for you to be still, be still. Stay in this practice for at least five minutes--you may want to set a gentle alarm or note the number of songs you'll listen to in this time, to ensure you do not move on from this contemplation too early.*

## Practice: Preparing for Peace

*God's coming does not just happen; preparations must be made. And we tend to be much better at preparing for the worst instead of for the best. What might it look like to prepare for peace instead of expecting it to just appear? What parts of your life need to change in order to let peace in? If you were to prepare your life for peace in the same way that you prepare your home for company, you prepare for a long trip, or you prepare for the worst, what would that be like?*

## Sending

### Closing Hymn

*While extinguishing the candles and/or incense:*

**As I continue on, O Christ: be with me, before me, behind me, beneath me, above me, within me, around me. Amen.**

# Scripture – Week Two

## Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.



# Scripture – Week Two

## Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

*For a musical setting, sing the Taizé piece [“Prepare the Way of the Lord”](#) before beginning the reading and every time a refrain is indicated.*

Lord, you were favorable to your land;  
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.  
You forgave the iniquity of your people;  
you pardoned all their sin. *[Refrain]*

Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,  
for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful,  
to those who turn to him in their hearts.  
Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,  
that his glory may dwell in our land. *[Refrain]*

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;  
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.  
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,  
and righteousness will look down from the sky. *[Refrain]*

The Lord will give what is good,  
and our land will yield its increase.  
Righteousness will go before him,  
and will make a path for his steps. *[Refrain]*

# Scripture – Week Two

## Mark 1:1–8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,  
“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way;  
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight,’”

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

# The Liturgy – Week Three

Hymn Suggestions for this week:

“Gaudete”

“People Look East”

## Gathering

*While lighting a candle and/or stick of incense:*

Let my prayer rise like incense before You,  
And the lifting up of my hands as an offering.

Opening Hymn

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

I light this first candle for hope.

I light this second candle for peace.

I light this third candle for joy.

*Either sing or speak these words:*

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by thine advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
and death's dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

## Word

Prayer for Illumination

Playful God who delights to see us laughing, spark in me a lightness and  
liveliness as I partake in Your word. Let it lead me towards belief that songs  
of joy follow my weeping. Amen.

Scripture

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Psalms 126

*For a musical setting, see page 20.*

John 1:6-8, 19-28

# The Liturgy – Week Three

## Contemplation

*Spend time in contemplation and prayer after experiencing the Word. Adjust the space to what centers you. If that is silence, cultivate that silence. If that is music, play something that brings you peace. Assume whatever physical posture allows you to open yourself to God. If it helps you to draw or write, do so. If it is better for you to be still, be still. Stay in this practice for at least five minutes--you may want to set a gentle alarm or note the number of songs you'll listen to in this time, to ensure you do not move on from this contemplation too early.*

## Practice: Journeying Towards Joy

*Do something that brings you joy. That too is holy.*

## Sending

### Closing Hymn

*While extinguishing the candles and/or incense:*

**As I continue on, O Christ: be with me, before me, behind me, beneath me, above me, within me, around me. Amen.**

# Scripture – Week Three

## Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

# Scripture – Week Three

## Psalm 126

*For a musical setting, sing the Taizé piece “Prepare the Way of the Lord” before beginning the reading and every time a refrain is indicated.*

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,  
we were like those who dream. [Refrain]

Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with shouts of joy;  
then it was said among the nations,  
“The Lord has done great things for them.”  
The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced. [Refrain]

Restore our fortunes, O Lord,  
like the watercourses in the Negeb.  
May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.  
Those who go out weeping,  
bearing the seed for sowing,  
shall come home with shouts of joy,  
carrying their sheaves. [Refrain]



# Scripture – Week Three

## John 1:6-8, 19-28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’” as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

# The Liturgy – Week Four

Hymn Suggestions for this week:

[“The Canticle of the Turning”](#)

[“No Wind at the Window”](#)

## Gathering

*While lighting a candle and/or stick of incense:*

Let my prayer rise like incense before You,  
And the lifting up of my hands as an offering.

Opening Hymn

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

I light this first candle for hope.

I light this second candle for peace.

I light this third candle for joy.

I light this third candle for love.

*Either sing or speak these words:*

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;  
bid envy, strife, and discord cease;  
fill the whole world with heaven's peace  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

## Word

Prayer for Illumination

O Great Love, who is in and among all things even now, infuse my reading  
of Your word with Your wisdom, that I might more fully come to know the  
boundlessness of Your love. Amen.

Scripture

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Luke 1:46-55

*For a musical setting, see page 25.*

Luke 1:26-38

# The Liturgy – Week Four

## Contemplation

*Spend time in contemplation and prayer after experiencing the Word. Adjust the space to what centers you. If that is silence, cultivate that silence. If that is music, play something that brings you peace. Assume whatever physical posture allows you to open yourself to God. If it helps you to draw or write, do so. If it is better for you to be still, be still. Stay in this practice for at least five minutes--you may want to set a gentle alarm or note the number of songs you'll listen to in this time, to ensure you do not move on from this contemplation too early.*

## Practice: Living our Love

*To demonstrate and fully live God's love for us, Jesus came down to earth to be with us. The gift of companionship is a treasure, but in these days we cannot be with each other in the ways we are used to. What are ways you have experienced love in the past year without physical presence? What are ways you have shown love without physical presence? To make these invisible actions seem more present, choose something simple to create (like a paper star, or snowflake, or crane). Make one for each person who comes to mind that has shown you their love and care for you. Keep them in your worship space throughout the Christmas season as well to remember their presence with you.*

## Sending

### Closing Hymn

*While extinguishing the candles and/or incense:*

**As I continue on, O Christ: be with me, before me, behind me, beneath me, above me, within me, around me. Amen.**

# Scripture – Week Four

## 2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, ‘See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.’ Nathan said to the king, ‘Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.’

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built me a house of cedar?’

Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

# Scripture – Week Four

## Luke 1:46-55

*For a musical setting, sing the Taizé piece [“Magnificat”](#) before beginning the reading and every time a refrain is indicated.*

And Mary said,  
‘My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name. *[Refrain]*

His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. *[Refrain]*

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.’ *[Refrain]*

# Scripture – Week Four

## Luke 1:26–38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.'

But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' 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. 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. For nothing will be impossible with God.'

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.



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