

*Third Sunday of Advent*  
*December 12, 2021 – Order of Worship*

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**TIME OF REFLECTION**

“Oft hope is born when all is forlorn.”

~J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973) in *The Return of the King*

“There is no power without prayer, and there is no power in prayer without a resolve to endure all things for the sake of Jesus.”

~Jack Miller (1928-1996), missionary and church leader

“I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.”

~Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968), civil rights activist

“Jesus beckons me to follow him to that place of weakness where I risk the vulnerability of a child so that I might know how strong my Father is and how much he loves me. But truth be told, I would rather be an adult. I’d rather be in a place where I can still pull things together if God doesn’t show up, where I risk no ultimate humiliation, where I don’t have to take the shallow breaths of desperation. And as a result, my experience of my heavenly Father is simply impoverished.”

~Gary Haugen, founder of International Justice Mission

“Some observers predicted that this new secularism [in America] would ease cultural conflict... That was naïve. ...[I]t’s...making America’s partisan clashes more brutal.... As Americans have left organized religion, they haven’t stopped viewing politics as a struggle between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ Many have come to define us and them in even more primal and irreconcilable ways.”

~Peter Beinart in “Breaking Faith” in *The Atlantic* (April 2017)

“God’s vengeance did not fall on the sinners, but on the only sinless one, the Son of God, who stood in the place of sinners, Jesus Christ bore the vengeance of God... That was the end of all false thoughts about the love of a God who does not take sin very seriously. God hates and judges [his enemies] in the only righteous one, the one who prays for forgiveness for God’s enemies. Only in the cross of Jesus Christ is the love of God to be found.”

~Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), German theologian and pastor, executed for his opposition to Hitler

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## *Worship through the Word*

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**SERMON** – “The Coming of the King” – *Abrm McQuarters*

**SERMON PASSAGE** – *Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 (ESV)*

<sup>1</sup> Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

<sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that her warfare is ended,  
that her iniquity is pardoned,  
that she has received from the Lord's hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup> A voice cries:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all flesh shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

<sup>9</sup> Go on up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good news;  
lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;  
lift it up, fear not;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
“Behold your God!”

<sup>10</sup> Behold, the Lord God comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
behold, his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.

<sup>11</sup> He will tend his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms;  
he will carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead those that are with young.