



First Church Tucson Weekly Digest

“The Arriving Season”

By Paul Cho on November 30th, 2020

It is strange to think that we are in Advent season. I cannot seem to make up my mind on whether Advent feels like it is here too early or too late. Stranger still is what to make of a Christmas arrival during a pandemic. I am already torn by the fact that my family is so far away, even more so that meeting them is not an option this year. I am sure you can relate to the lost opportunity to hug a sibling, hold a grandchild, share memories while drinking tea or hot cocoa. Again, I shake my head at how much I had taken for granted.

In the life of the church too. We had such a joy holding our Advent by Candlelight last year that I was certain we would do it again. Nope. Not happening. You can be sure of the fact that we had drawn up multiple different versions of how we might hold a gathering this year in the midst of the pandemic, but as we all know, the outbreak is critical right now. As much joy as it would bring to join together in song and story, a single person becoming ill would spoil it.

With so much restriction, so much change, what can we look forward to? What exactly are we hoping will *Arrive* on Christmas? After all, this Advent season, otherwise known as the arriving season, would be pointless without a focus on what it is we are expecting.

We know the Sunday School answer. Jesus, the Christ, as a babe. Certainly, this is important. Despite what our commerce driven culture says, Christmas would not be Christ-mas without Jesus.

At the same time, I believe there is room still for additional inspiration. That is, when we take the meaning of Christ's arrival, not as a baby or God incarnate, but rather as the coming of Light (with a capital L), then what comes to use through Jesus is the Light that fills our hearts and our thoughts. In particular, I think of memories as a kind of light. We have all experienced just how much joy we can experience when we remember what we had once forgotten.

There is a saying, “It is darkest before the dawn.” Surely, we can resonate with the notion that we are living through some of the darkest times of our lives. Perhaps this year, we spend time preparing for a coming of all that fills us with hope, peace, love, and joy.

In the absence of the familiar holiday hustle and bustle, perhaps we might recall what we found most uplifting. After all, even if memories of past experiences are all we have, that is light enough for us. Thanks be to God for memories.

Remembering you,

-Paul Cho

P.S. What are some of your most inspiring Christmas memories? Share with us via email (office@firstchurchtucson.org) or visit bit.ly/fumcsubmit

Help a Child Hear from their Teacher

Do you remember how every Christmas, Olga Tafolla and others helped us share shoes with children in Agua Prieta, Mexico? Well, Women in Service at our church is still making a difference for families at Iglesia Fuente de Vida through a new educational ministry. Due to the pandemic, Agua Prieta kids receive school lessons indirectly via phone. Sadly, many families cannot afford the \$10 a month for phone service, and these children are unable to talk to their teacher. Please keep this ministry in your prayers and if able, contribute what you can.

Give online at www.bit.ly/fivetofumc or via PayPal to recipient address finance@firstchurchtucson.org. Alternatively, just mail a check payable to First United Methodist Church, with "Women in Service" or "Outreach" on the memo line, to FUMC, 915 E. 4th Street, Tucson, AZ 85719. Pastor Paul hopes we can raise \$1,000 to connect 100 children with their teacher for 10 months. Funds will flow directly to their destination, because they can be wired from an account in Douglas, AZ, to Fuente de Vida's church account.

God has His ways of working. Jessie Hansen told me she feels a deep connection with the Agua Prieta church, because Fountain of Life UMC, where she once belonged, contributed their sanctuary materials for a place of worship. We can rejoice that there are practical ways to help others despite the obstacles we face this holiday season.

~ Nan Rollings

"God gave us memory so that we might have roses in December."

~ James M. Barrie

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

~ Theodore Roosevelt



Gratitude this Thanksgiving
Sunrise photo from our house

Photo by Don Rollings

Christmas Tree and Nativity scene on
display at night to light up our little
corner. Grateful for the season of
hope.

Photo by Julie Cho



THIS WEEK'S
ANNOUNCEMENTS & GATHERINGS

The 5 Love Languages for Advent Study

Join us on Zoom for our Advent Study on the 5 Love Languages; Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Quality Time, Gifts, and Physical Touch. Sessions start at 10:30am (12:00pm in Korean) following the Sunday Morning Live! stream. Follow the link

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/97274927766?pwd=bVlqNmZjTk84bHFHd0JRS0U5R0c4Zz09>

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Recruiting Weekly Digest Contributors

Have you come across an inspiring story? Perhaps you were able to capture a fascinating shot. We invite you to submit a story, a photo, or anything you feel would be in the best interest of our church. We will work to add them into our Weekly Digest. Submit your story or picture at <https://bit.ly/fumcsubmit>

Women on a Spiritual Quest

*WSQ is joining in the Advent Study on Sundays this season.
Monday gatherings are cancelled.*

Exploring Biblical Wisdom

Gather for group Lectio Divina as we seek spiritual formation through scripture reading, reflecting, and sharing the Spirit that lives in each of us. **Tues @ 11AM.**
<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/98179862680?pwd=ck15OU5KbWUyY0NwOUNxbzJkOUVBUT09>

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Music Workshop - Virtual Choir Orientation

Join with Paul this week to learn about how you can participate in the Christmas Virtual Choir. **Wed @ 5:30PM.**

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/92978304567?pwd=Mmo4UWZtc012TUxzVS9VYXlpVU1iZz09>

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Progressive Christianity Book Study

Explore the richness of progressive Christian thought through literature. **Thurs @ 2PM.**
<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/98015738087?pwd=eGFpVWRCUnZraWxUU1d0anRiU2pFQT09>

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Korean Language Ministry

금 주일 오전 10시에 Zoom에서 연합 예배로 드립니다.

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/97274927766?pwd=bVlqNmZjTk84bHFHd0JRS0U5R0c4Zz09>

ZID: 972 7492 7766

PW: 6226481

금 오후 7시에는 기존 Zoom 방에서 성경말씀 묵상 나눔이 있습니다.

The Longest Night Virtual Worship Service

Save the date! On December 21st, Reconciling Ministries Network will hold a worship service livestream on Facebook and Youtube focusing on grief and loss as well as mystery, possibility, and the beauty of darkness. **Mon @ 6 PM**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/344665103018106/permalink/573089380175676/>

Support the Ministries at First Church Tucson

Now is the time to give courageously to ministries that matter to you.

Visit this [link](#) or go to www.bit.ly/givetofumc to set up online donation.

You may also send gifts via Paypal to recipient address: finance@firstchurchtucson.org

And as always, you can mail in checks to the church office. Alternatively, have your IRA advisor automatically make payments from your IRA to the FUMC checking account.

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Hae Sook Hong (Nov 30)
Bok Namgung (Dec 3)
Nan Rollings (Dec 3)
Bruce Billings (Dec 5)
Luna Lopez (Dec 5)

[If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please let us know so we can update our records!]

SONG FOR **THOUGHT**

“How Firm a Foundation”

“K”

by **Lorena Suarez**

Director of Music Ministries on November 27, 2020

The hymn *How Firm a Foundation* was published in 1787 by English minister John Rippon in a hymnal called *Selection of Hymns from the Best Authors*, known also as “Rippon’s Selections”. The text is attributed simply to “K”. Some believe the writer of this hymn was Robert Keen. Keen was the leader of music at Rippon’s church.

The hymn was set to the folk American tune called *Foundation*. This pentatonic melody was first published in Joseph Funk’s *A Compilation of Genuine Church Music* in 1832.

How Firm a Foundation encourages us to rely on God’s strong foundation and to look for calm, hope, and joy every day. Enjoy!

Lyrics:

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

"Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismayed,
for I am thy God and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand."

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply.
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine."

"The soul that on Jesus still leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!"

Suggested recording:

Chelsea Moon with the Franz Brothers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8O5RyGRmx8>

LECTIO DIVINA PRAYER GUIDE

for Individuals and Families

CENTERING - *Practice Square Breathing*

- Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds,
- Exhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds.
- Repeat as necessary.

SONG OF PRAISE

Select a song of your choice, or
Refer to this week's Song for Thought

OPENING PRAYER - *Psalm 19:14*

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

READING

Isaiah 64:1-9

REFLECTING

Take a minute or two in silence.
Allow your thoughts to rest on a word, a phrase, a memory from this passage.
Journal or share your thoughts from this moment of meditation on the passage.

RESPONDING

Respond to the reflection through the guidance from the Holy Spirit.

MINUTE MEMOIR - by Paul Cho

In light of the devastation this war with the Coronavirus has caused, we can relate to this prayer the prophet Isaiah offers. With so much loss, grief, anguish, and turmoil, all we hope for is God to somehow show up and stop it all. At the same time, the fragility of our existence serves as a reminder to be reconciled with God.

One unique perspective Isaiah offers us is that a repentant heart is like clay, soft and malleable, not stubborn nor brittle. It is a call for us to let go of our ways, to become teachable once more and be filled with the expectant hope that the Holy Spirit can still, mold us into the image of Christ.

At the same time, we are called to be molded by the hands of God, our Potter, and not by the fear or greed driven wisdom of this world. We are to be molded into Christ being, not just anything. With Christ as our mold, may God transform us into ways in which we might offer God's love and mercy to all around.

RESTING

Dwell in your reflection and response.
Take time to offer God praise and glory.
Repent and seek forgiveness.

Offer joys and the concerns, adding in your personal prayers.
Lastly, offer a thanksgiving for God's grace and mercy.

CLOSING PRAYER *Wesley Covenant Service Prayer*

I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,
exalted for you, or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.



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