



Riverside
Congregational Church

December 5, 2021
Second Sunday of
Advent

Prayer of Invocation

(Anselm of Canterbury c.1033-1109)

O Lord my God, teach my heart where and how to seek you,
where and how to find you.

Lord, if you are not here but absent, where shall I seek you? But
you are everywhere, so you must be here, why then do I not
seek you?...

Prayer of Invocation

Lord, I am not trying to make my way to your height, for my understanding is in no way equal to that, but I do desire to understand a little of your truth which my heart already believes and loves. I do not seek to understand so that I may believe, but I believe so that I may understand; and what is more, I believe that unless I do believe I shall not understand. Amen!

“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry” (#156 vs 1-2)

On Jordan’s bank, the Baptist’s cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh:
Awake and listen for he brings
Glad tidings of the King of kings.

Let Every hear be cleansed from sin
Make straight the way for God within,
And so prepare to be the home
Where such a mighty guest may come.



Prayer of Confession

O God,

You have promised to make pathways straight
So your people may walk in joyful safety.

But in our arrogance, we create

Dangerous roads, secret ways

Based on privilege, which suit human standards, not yours.

Forgive us.

Prayer of Confession

You promise a way of justice and equity so that all may dwell in peace.

But the valley between rich and poor has become an impassible chasm:

We punish the poor. We make them sicker. We make them hungrier.
Forgive us.

Prayer of Confession

God, you rescued your children from the hands of their oppressors
And called all of them to delight in your glory on the level path
which leads home.

But we oppress our siblings,
Claiming “crooked” means not straight, not white, not male, not cis.
Forgive us for these corruptions of your good Word.

Come again! Make our hearts alive with your truth!

Prayer of Confession

Salvation belongs to you, O God. Forgive us our sin. Renew us, refresh us and help us rebuild our lives so that they are reflections of your love for all people. We pray in the name of the Almighty One. Amen.

Passing the Peace

Christ offers peace to all who will accept it. Share the love of God and encourage one another with hope as you greet one another in faith:

One: May the Peace of Christ be with you!

Many And also with you!

Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the rule of Caesar Tiberius—it was while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea; Herod, ruler of Galilee; his brother Philip, ruler of Iturea and Trachonitis; Lysanias, ruler of Abilene; during the Chief-Priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas—John, Zachariah's son, out in the desert at the time, received a message from God. He went all through the country around the Jordan River preaching a baptism of life-change leading to forgiveness of sins, as described in the words of Isaiah the prophet:

Luke 3:1-6

Thunder in the desert!
“Prepare God’s arrival!
Make the road smooth and straight!
Every ditch will be filled in,
Every bump smoothed out,
The detours straightened out,
All the ruts paved over.
Everyone will be there to see
The parade of God’s salvation.”



Sermon:
"The Way Home"
Rev. Bob Nolan

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel (#154)

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!



“O Come, O Come Emmanuel (#154)

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!



“O Come, O Come Emmanuel (#154)

O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
who order all things, far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and cause us in her ways to go.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!



“O Come, O Come Emmanuel (#154)

O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife and quarrels cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!





Pastoral Prayer
Rev. Bob Nolan

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom and the power, and the glory;

Forever and ever. Amen!

Call To Offering

Make way! Emmanuel is coming!

Make clearings of charity!

Make paths of justice!

Forge roads of equity!

May each one offer what they can

For our imminent, Sovereign God!

“Give Thanks” (#359)

Give thanks, with a grateful heart,
give thanks to the Holy One,
give thanks because he’s given Jesus Christ his Son
And now let the weak say, “I am strong,”
let the poor say, “I am rich,”
because of what the Lord had done for us
Give thanks!



Communion

Pastor: Let us gather around the table with the offering of bread and drink upon it and the promise of the Living Christ among us. This is the welcome table of God where all who seek to be at peace with their neighbor and all who seek the mercy of God in Christ are embraced. Come, for we are invited into this holy mystery. Come.

People: We are ready!

Communion

Pastor: Jesus said: “I am the bread of life. All who come to me shall not hunger, and all who believe in me shall never be thirsty.

People: We are hungry and thirsty. O Lamb of God, we come!

Communion

Pastor: We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took his authority as the Christ and offered the bread in thanksgiving and said . . .

People: “Take, eat. This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Communion

Pastor: In the same way, and by the same authority, Jesus offered the cup in thanksgiving and said,

People: “Take, drink. This is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.”

Communion

Pastor: Come, Holy Spirit. Come. Open our eyes to the mystery of Christ's presence in these ordinary things in these our ordinary lives. May they be for us the very essence of the living Christ in our midst. Through the broken bread

People: We participate in the Body of Christ.

Pastor: Through the cup of blessing . . .

People: We participate in the new life Christ gives.

Pastor : These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Let us share the bread and cup together!

Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving

Gracious and loving God, you have made us one in the body of Christ and nourished us at your table with holy food and drink. Thank you for feeding our hunger and relieving our thirst. Now send us into the world to do the work you have given us to do: to find the lost and lonely, to heal broken souls, to free prisoners, and make the powerful care. Grant us strength to persevere in resisting evil, and to proclaim in all we say and do your good news in Christ Jesus our Savior. Amen.

People, Look East (#161 vs 1-3)

People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest, is on the way.



People, Look East (#161 vs 1-3)

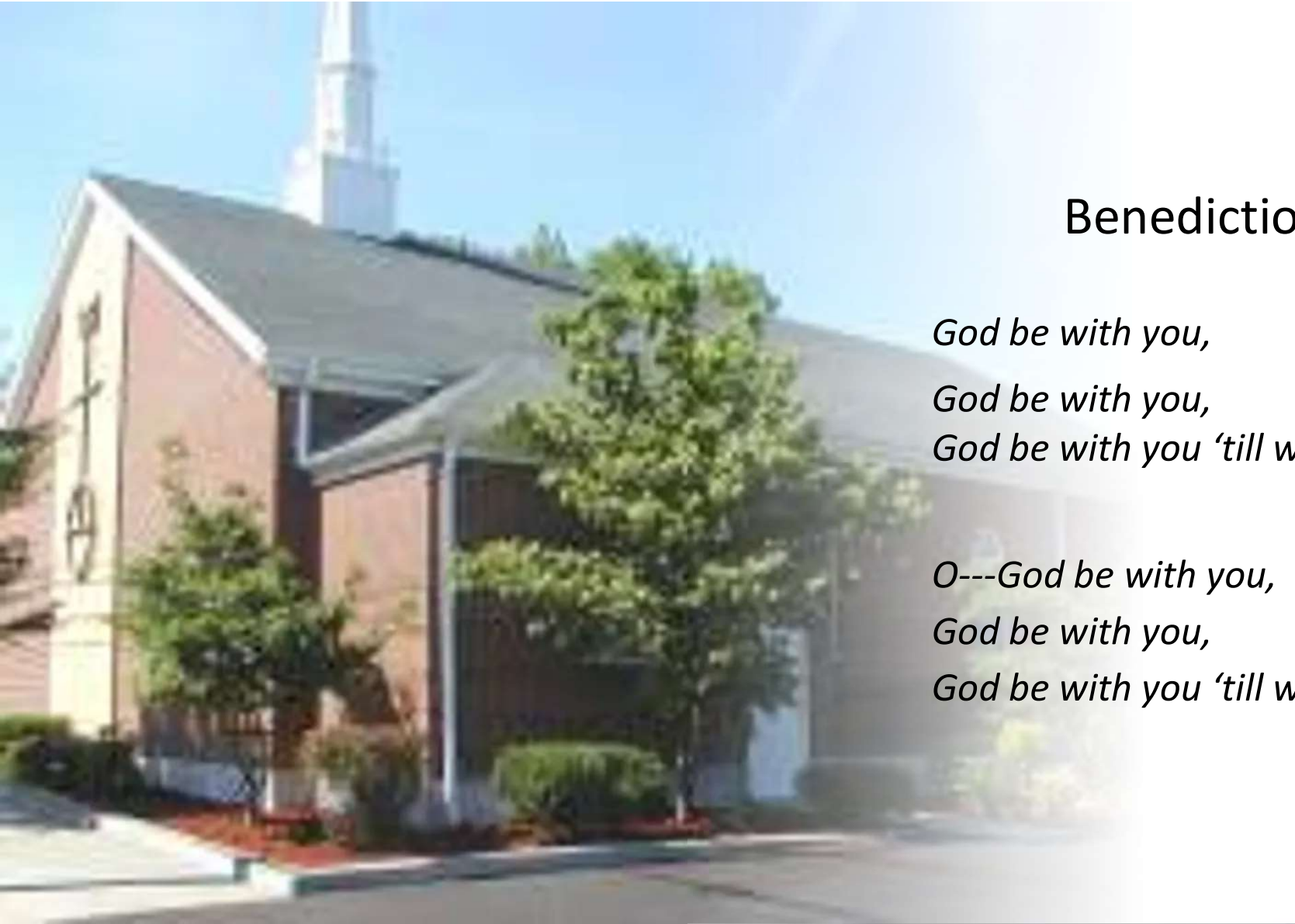
Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
One more seed is planted there:
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
That in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the rose, is on the way.



People, Look East (#161 vs 1-3)

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
One more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather,
Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the star, is on the way.





Benediction

God be with you,

God be with you,

God be with you 'till we meet again

O---God be with you,

God be with you,

God be with you 'till we meet again