

And is it true,
This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,
A Baby in an ox's stall?
The Maker of the stars and sea
Become a Child on earth for me?

And is it true? For if it is,
No loving fingers tying strings
Around those tissued fripperies,
The sweet and silly Christmas things
Bath salts and inexpensive scent
And hideous tie so kindly meant.

No love that in a family dwells,
No carolling in frosty air,
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells
Can with this single Truth compare...

—John Betjeman (1906-1984)

**The First Sunday in Advent
November 28, 2021**

Welcome to the season of Advent, the time dedicated to an eager anticipation of the birth of our Lord. Long, long ago the prophets longed for the birth of the Messiah. Isaiah said,

“It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the LORD
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be lifted up above the hills;
and all the nations shall flow to it” (Isa 2.2).

Now that the time has come, let us heed the words of the Prophet Isaiah:

**“O house of Jacob,
come, let us walk
in the light of the LORD” (Isa 2.5).**

Let us pray.

Father, in this time of anticipation, when we look forward to your coming in Bethlehem of Judea, and to your coming again in great glory at the end of the age, grant us, O Heavenly Father, grace to shun the power of evil; and clothe us with the light of your Son, Jesus Christ. May we grow in the light and rise to heavenly life, through Him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

“And the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus’” (Lk 1.30-31).

Hymn No. 218

ANGELS, FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY

A Reading from the Prophet Jeremiah:

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness’” (Jer 33.14-16).

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke:

“And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Lk 21-25-28).

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn No. 203

HARK, THE HERALD ANGELS SING

The Apostle Paul on the Incarnation:

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Gal 4.4-5).

Reflections on the Incarnation

“That Happy Certainty”

THE FIRST NOEL

*The first Noel the angel did say Was to
certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay; In fields where
they lay, keeping their sheep, On a cold winter's night that was so deep.*

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel!

*They looked up and saw a star Shining
in the east, beyond them far; And to the
earth it gave great light, And so it continued both day and night.*

*And by the light of that same star Three
Wise Men came from country far; To seek for a
King was their intent, And to follow the star where ever it went.*

*This star drew nigh to the northwest, O'er
Bethlehem it took its rest; And there it
did both stop and stay, Right over the place where Jesus lay.*

*Then entered in those Wise Men three, Full
rev'rently upon their knee, And offered
there, in His presence, Their gold and myrrh and frankincense.*

*Then let us all with one accord Sing
praises to our heav'nly Lord, That hath made
heav'n and earth of naught, And with His blood mankind hath bought.*

Receive the Lord's Blessing:

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope” (Rom 15.13).

Thanks be to God.