



The candle of love tells what we are worth:  
 God loves us so much, God came to the earth!  
 An angel brought news of a child who would be  
 The One who would save us and set us all free.

## The Blessing of the Light

*Please kneel or be seated*

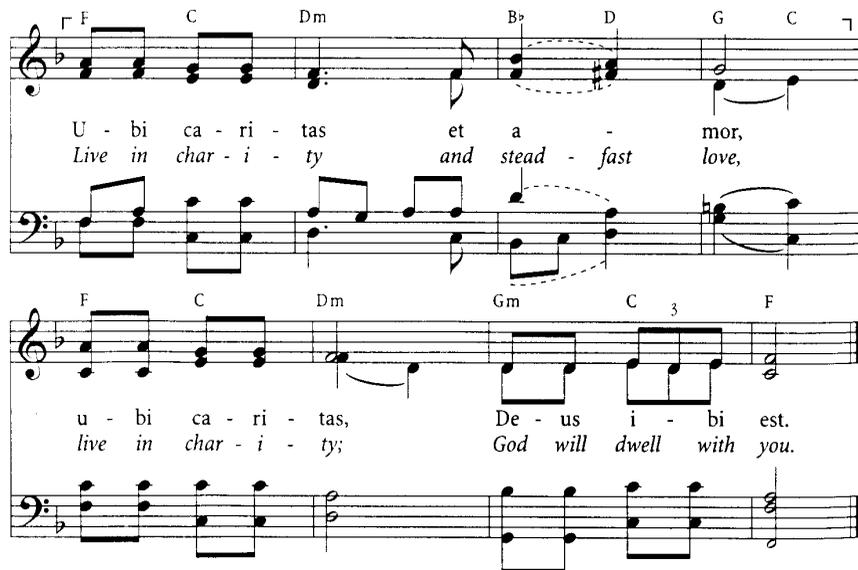
Priest: 

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: 

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*Cantor sings the refrain. The congregation then repeats.*



U - bi ca - ri - tas et a - mor,  
 Live in char - i - ty and stead - fast love,

u - bi ca - ri - tas, De - us i - bi est.  
 live in char - i - ty; God will dwell with you.

Priest: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, creator of light and darkness. In this holy season, when the sun's light is swallowed up by the growing darkness of night, you renew your promise to reveal among us the splendor of your glory enfleshed and visible to us in Jesus Christ your Son.

*All sing the refrain*

Priest: You have ordained the ministries of angels and mortals in one holy communion:  
grant that as these holy messengers always serve you in heaven so, at your  
command, they may help and defend us here on earth.

*All sing the refrain*

Priest: Strengthen us in our weakness. Support us in our stumbling efforts to do your  
will and free our tongues to sing your praise. For to you all honour and blessing  
are due, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen

*All sing the refrain*

**First Reading:**

Acts 12: 5-11

Reader: A Reading from the Book of Acts

While Peter was kept in prison, the church prayed fervently to God for him. The very night before Herod was going to bring him out, Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while guards in front of the door were keeping watch over the prison. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his wrists. The angel said to him, "Fasten your belt and put on your sandals." He did so. Then he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." Peter went out and followed him; he did not realize that what was happening with the angel's help was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. After they had passed the first and the second guard, they came before the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went outside and walked along a lane, when suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hands of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

Reader: The word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn:** #531 "ON EAGLES WINGS"

*All sing*

You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord,  
Who abide in his shadow for life,  
Say to the Lord: "My refuge, my rock in whom I trust!"

*Refrain: And he will raise you up on eagle's wings,  
bear you on the breath of dawn, Make you to shine like the sun,  
and hold you in the palm of his hand.*

Snares of the fowler will never capture you,  
And famine will bring you no fear: Under his wings your refuge, his faithfulness your  
shield. *Refrain.*

You need not fear the terror of the night,  
Nor the arrow that flies by day; Though thousands fall about you, near you it shall not  
come. *Refrain.*

For to his angels he's given a command to guard you in all of your ways; Upon their  
hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. *Refrain.*

## **Second Reading:**

Matthew 25.31-40

Reader: A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew

Jesus said: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you, a stranger, and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

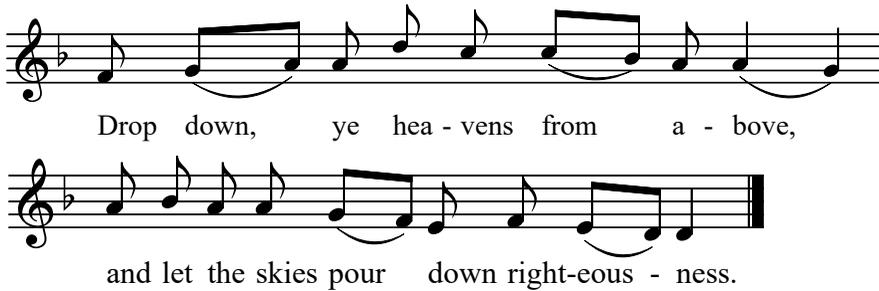
Reader: The word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

**Reflection** - Fr. Daniel Brereton

## Advent Prose

*All Sing*



Drop down, ye hea - vens from a - bove,  
and let the skies pour down right-eous - ness.

Cantor: Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity forever: thy holy cities are a wilderness, Sion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation: our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee.

*All sing the Antiphon*

Cantor: We have sinned, and are as an unclean thing, and we all do fade as a leaf: and our iniquities, like the wind have taken us away; thou hast hid thy face from us: and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

*All sing the Antiphon*

Cantor: Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know me and believe me: I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour: and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.

*All sing the Antiphon*

Cantor: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, my salvation shall not tarry: I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions: Fear not, for I will save thee: For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Redeemer.

*All sing the Antiphon*

## The Prayers

Priest: Lord it is night. The night is for stillness.

All: **Let us be still in the presence of God.**

Priest: It is night after a long day.

All: **What has been done has been done; what has not been done has not been done; let it be.**

Priest: The night is dark.

All: **Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you.**

Priest: The night is quiet.

All: **Let the quietness of your peace enfold us, all dear to us, and all who have no peace.**

Priest: The night heralds the dawn.

All: **Let us look expectantly to a new day, new joys, new possibilities. In your name we pray. Amen.**

## **Act of Faith**

Priest: Dear friends, God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. It is for love that Jesus came, to set us free from whatever imprisons us. I invite you therefore in the name of the Lord, to take a moment of silence, to consider what it is that has you in its grip – guilt or a grudge; apathy or addiction; fear or frustration; an old wound or an old belief. Whatever it is that is keeping you from walking in freedom, call on the Lord to set you free. Then come forward to the altar and light a candle – a sign of the light that breaks into every prison reminding us we are in the hand of a God more powerful than anything else that grips us.

**Musical piece:** “AIR FOR ADVENT”

## **Concluding Prayer**

Priest: Emmanuel, God with us, our world waits in darkness longing for your light. In the midst of darkness, enkindle our love. As we long to be set free from past sins.

All: **Be with us.**

Priest: As we long to be healed of old wounds giving us emotional, spiritual and physical pain.

All: **Be with us.**

Priest: As we long to be forgiven broken promises, released from broken hearts and raised up from broken spirits,

All: **Be with us.**

Priest: As we seek an open way amidst locked doors and dead ends.

All: **Be with us.**

Priest: As we walk forward in faith, leaving the past behind us.

All: **Be with us.**

Priest: Fulfill the deepest longings of your people and dispel the darkness in our hearts and in our world.

All: **Let your Word ignite the hope the world needs to bring to life your love and justice.**

Priest: We ask this in the name of Love Himself, Jesus Christ.

All: **Amen.**

Priest: Gathering all our cares into one, let us pray,

All: **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Hymn: #143 - "ANGELS FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY"**

*All sing*

(v 1, 2, 5)

Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
you who sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
come and worship, come and worship  
worship Christ, the new-born King.

Shepherds in the field abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing; yonder shines the infant Light:  
come and worship, come and worship  
worship Christ, the new-born King.

Though an infant now we view him, he shall fill the eternal throne,  
gather all the nations to him; every knee shall then bow down:  
come and worship, come and worship  
worship Christ, the new-born King.

## **Dismissal**

Priest: Go forth in the power and freedom of God's love.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

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