



The Center
for Christian Spirituality



Overlooked

8:45 a.m. + December 24, 2023 + Fourth Sunday of Advent

Singing With Mary

"Magnify"

*My soul will magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoice in my savior.
See how his favor rests on me, I am blessed in the sight of the world.
For he has raised me up on high, the Mighty has done great things.
Mercy flows out to everyone, who walks in the fear of the Lord.
Magnify, magnify, magnify the Lord with me.*

*Come see his strength, his mighty power, has torn the proud from their illusions.
Thrones of importance cast aside, as the humble are raised up on high.
Come see the hungry satisfied, while the rich are all sent away.
For he has come to help his servant, remembering his promise of mercy.
Magnify, magnify, magnify the Lord with me.*

My soul will magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoice in my savior.

Preparing for Advent

from the Iona Community

Into our world as into Mary's womb...

Come, Lord Jesus.

Into the forgotten places, as into the stable...

Come, Lord Jesus.

*Into the lives of the poor, bringing hope;
Into the lives of the powerful, bringing caution;
Into the lives of the weary, bringing rest;
Into the lives of the wise, bringing restlessness;
And into our lives and longings, whatever our estate...*

Come, Lord Jesus

This is the good news: Christ is coming, and blessed are those who wait on the Lord.

Therefore come quickly, Lord.

Waiting in Hope

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

*Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming, as those of old have sung.
It came, a Floweret bright,
Amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.*

*Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it, the Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
She bore to us a Savior, when half spent was the night.*

*O Flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
Dispel in glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.
True man yet very God,
From sin and death now save us, and share our every load.*

Contemplating Scripture

Luke 2:1-7

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out from Caesar Augustus a decree that all the empire should be registered and taxed. This taxing first came to pass when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all were going to be registered and taxed, each to their own towns. Joseph also ascended from Galilee, out of the town of Nazareth into the Judea, into the City of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the house and lineage of David. He went to be taxed with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was great with child.

And it came to pass, in their being there, the days were fulfilled that she should bring forth. And she did bring forth her son – the Firstborn – and wrapped him around and laid him in the manger, because there was no place for them in the guest chamber.

Meditation

Songs of Response

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie,
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light,
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

*O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell,
O Come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!*

*Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel.
God with us, revealed in us, his name is called Emmanuel.*

“Emmanuel, Emmanuel”

Meditation

Song of Response

“The Kingdom of God”

*The Kingdom of God is within you,
The Spirit of Life is within you,
The Firstborn of God is within you,
Striving to emerge from your heart;
Emerging from the womb of your heart.*

Centering in Silence

During these minutes of silence, simply rest in God’s abiding and loving presence in this moment. You are in God and God is in you. Just be and relax. Center your attention in your heart and imagine your breath flowing in and out from your heart area. If it helps you to center, use a sacred prayer word such as Christ, Love, Abba, Jesus, or Spirit. Or follow the rhythm of your breath.

Singing God’s Closeness

“Emmanuel, Emmanuel”

*Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel.
God with us, revealed in us, his name is called Emmanuel.*

Holy Communion

Receiving a Good Word



Our Staff

Haley Brown – Ministry Assistant & Director of gastrochurch
Peter Johns – Associate Director

Rev. Rachel Sciretti – Associate Pastor
Rev. Dr. Michael Sciretti, Jr. – Pastor of The Center

*Thank you for worshipping with us today. Please register your attendance.
If you are worshipping online, please text the word center to (844) 474-0707
If you are worshipping in person, please text the word chapel to (844) 474-0707*

For information about The Center for Christian Spirituality and upcoming events, visit: www.TheCenterFCS.org.

Please register your presence in the notebooks in the foyer.

Centering Prayer

Today | The Chapel | after Contemplative Worship

Worship Response

Today | The Anchor House | 10:00 a.m.

Contemplative Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Tonight | The Anchor House Grounds | 6:00 p.m.

We will sing carols, hear the Christmas story, reflect on its meaning for us today, and light candles to celebrate the coming of Christ. It will be a lovely way to mark Christmas Eve.

Receiving the Grace of Epiphany: Our January Guided Silent Retreat

Saturday, January 6 | The Anchor House | 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

In our January Guided Silent Retreat, after a time of Centering, Michael will give a short presentation on the ancient as well as the inner meaning of the treasures of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Much of the symbolism has been lost but, once seen, will deepen your understanding and experience of this day and how it helps us to both receive and embody grace. As a part of this day, participants will experience extended communal silence, anointing with holy oil, and contemplative communion. For more information and to register, go to: <https://thecenterfcs.org/retreats>

Rafa - An Evening of Contemplative Prayer, Lament, and Healing

Sunday, January 7 | The Chapel | 6:00 p.m.

This is a new Contemplative Worship service that will be offered monthly on the first Sunday of the month that we are calling Rafa. Interestingly, rafa is the sound of two different Hebrew verbs. One means "to heal" or "to make whole," and the other Hebrew verb means "to relax, sink down, be quiet, let go, be still," such as in Psalm 46:10: "Be still, let go, and know that I am God." If you are seeking rafa – wholeness and quietness, healing and stillness – for yourself, for others, and for our world, join us on January 7 for a gathering of Contemplative Prayer, Lament and Healing. Through simple, meditative songs, short reflective readings, extended silence, communal intention, and contemplative communion, we'll quiet ourselves in body, mind and heart that we might be more open and receptive to the Beloved's life-giving, healing presence for us and the world. For those who seek it, we will also offer a time of healing prayer with anointing. For more information, go to: <https://thecenterfcs.org/rafa>

Giving to The Center

All of us are part of a never-ending process of giving and receiving. Life is not possible without this organic flow. What we co-create together here at The Center for Christian Spirituality is not possible without our conscious participation in this holy activity of freely receiving and freely giving. In this light, we invite you to financially give to The Center in response to what you have received today or throughout our contemplative offerings. Using the QR code will take you to a page where you can make a one-time offering or recurring gift. Thank you for your contribution and investment.

