



For unto you is born
this day in the city of David

a Saviour,
which is Christ the Lord.
Luke 2:11

Dear Friends,

December, 2015

The Advent Season is upon us and soon it will be Christmas Day! Music is such an important part of this beautiful season. Special musical programs are being planned or have already taken place. This wonderful time of year brings with it an exuberance of joy and enthusiasm to sing, sing, and sing. In our United Methodist Hymnals, there are plenty of Advent and Christmas songs; some more familiar than others, some liked more than others. But, all the songs convey some type of message, from Christ's promised coming to His birth and baptism. What are your favorite Advent and Christmas songs and why? Is it the melody? Is it the words? Or is it both?

One of my favorite Christmas songs is: **Once in Royal David's City:** *Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed, where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed; Mary, loving mother mild, Jesus Christ, her little child. He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all, and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall. With the poor, the scorned, the lowly lived on earth our Savior holy. Jesus is our childhood's pattern; day by day, like us he grew; he was little, weak, and helpless, tears and smiles like us he knew; and he feeleth for our sadness, and he shareth in our gladness. And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love; for that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heaven above; and he leads his children on to the place where he is gone. The words to this song were written by Cecil Frances Alexander in 1848 and the music was written by Henry J. Gauntlett in 1849.*

This song conveys a humbleness for me of the first Christmas. The simplicity and beauty of Mary giving birth to God's only Son, Jesus in a "lowly

cattle shed" sends a message that Jesus came for all people regardless of status, money, power or fame. Jesus, who is God and Lord of all, didn't want any distractions of his humble surroundings to interfere with his redemptive missionary work to the world. God, who is Love, is Savior, Lord, King, and Friend. As we hold onto Christmas in our hearts and share God's love to a world bathed in darkness and hatred, may we shine ever bright like the Christmas Star, ever bright like the Christmas lights, ever bright as we sing all these great Advent and Christmas songs.

I heard the bells on Christmas Day. Their old, familiar carols play, and wild and sweet the words repeat of peace on earth, good-will to men! (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

This Christmas, may you find your peace with God as you sing, sing, sing!

Merry Christmas, *Pastor Jean*

First Thursday of Advent

Waiting for Him

Psalm 24: 7-10

Think about what it is like to wait. We wait for our next birthday. We wait for someone to get out of the bathroom. We wait for Christmas. But, what was it like for God to wait?

God knew the world needed to be saved from sin, but he was careful to send Jesus at just the right time. Jesus will return to earth again some day. We don't know when. Only God the Father knows.

We do know that it will be at the exact, perfect time. He is waiting, patiently, for that time to come. On that day, when Jesus comes again, we will look up and see him. It will be like the best Christmas Day ever!



Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates!
Behold, the King of glory waits.
The King of kings is drawing near;
The Savior of the world is here.



Fourth Sunday of Advent

Christmas Goodness

James 2:1-8

There is an old story about Good King Wenceslas. The king and his helper went out the day after Christmas in the cold, bitter weather. The king saw a poor man gathering wood for a fire, so he and his helper brought food, drink, and more wood to the man's home. There's more to the story, some of it untrue. But this we know: King Wenceslas was a king known for his kindness and good works.

We can't do good things without Jesus' love flowing through us. That present God the Father gave us long ago, the gift of Baby Jesus, makes it possible for us to give the gift of God's love to everyone around us.

Brightly shone the moon that night
tho' the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight
gathering winter fuel.

