

Wednesday, December 12th, 2012

The Rev. Dr. Edward Newberry '71, Pastor of Memorial Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC.
Distinguished Alum '12

Scripture:

Psalm 147: 1-11

- 1 Praise the Lord!
 How good it is to sing praises to our God;
 for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.
- 2 The Lord builds up Jerusalem;
 he gathers the outcasts of Israel.
- 3 He heals the brokenhearted,
 and binds up their wounds.
- 4 He determines the number of the stars;
 he gives to all of them their names.
- 5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;
 his understanding is beyond measure.
- 6 The Lord lifts up the downtrodden;
 he casts the wicked to the ground.
- 7 Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;
 make melody to our God on the lyre.
- 8 He covers the heavens with clouds,
 prepares rain for the earth,
 makes grass grow on the hills.
- 9 He gives to the animals their food,
 and to the young ravens when they cry.
- 10 His delight is not in the strength of the horse,
 nor his pleasure in the speed of a runner;
- 11 but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him,
 in those who hope in his steadfast love.

Devotional:

The 147th is the second of the last five Hallelujah Psalms. Praise the Lord is the marvelous refrain. Old Testament scholar, James L. Mays writes "Psalm 147 begins with praise of praise itself." But true praise is for the Holy One of power and compassion. Sovereignty is expressed not just with creation, but also God's care for the outcasts, brokenhearted, downtrodden of Israel. Being counted among the needy blessed by God, we cry Hallelujah.

Reformed theologian Cornelius Plantinga reminds us that “Advent is a time when Christians draw alongside the Hebrews of the Old Testament. We share the longing of the people of God for the anointed one.” We join the great refrain of praise in Advent. We sing gladly because we trust God and entrust ourselves to divine grace. We rejoice with hope in God’s steadfast love witnessed in God’s visitation to this earthly realm in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Prayer:

Gracious God, along with our ancestors in the faith we pray fervently, “O come, O come Emanuel, and ransom captive Israel.” With amazing grace, free us from our captivities and restore the glad hope we can have because Christ comes to us and to the world. May our hearts and minds receive your gift of Jesus. Amen.