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Scripture

Philippians 4:4-7

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Devotional

My earliest memories are from church. Sitting on my mom's lap, playing with the beads of her necklace while the minister preached. Nestled next to my dad as we sang the hymns together. Long before I understood what was being said in the sermon, the hymns became part of me. Advent always makes me think of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." As a child, I didn't understand the theology behind these words. But it struck me today that this instruction to rejoice happens while Israel is still in exile. Even in the midst of the gloomy clouds of night and the dark shadows, the call comes, "Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!" Advent hymns and Christmas carols shape our faith. They remind us that no matter how dark the world may seem, God is near, offering the Light of the World, which the darkness cannot overcome.

Prayer

Holy God, Creator of the stars of night, we give you thanks for the light that you continually offer to us. May we carry that same light into the world, giving hope to those in darkness. Amen.