

Advent Devotional December 14, 2022

Scripture

Psalm 147:1-11; 17

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.*

*17 He hurls down hail like crumbs—
who can stand before his cold?*

Devotional

The Rev. Walter Canter, DMin student

The choir director at my childhood church had a large collection of neon colored hula hoops. He would spread them around the floor in haphazard patterns and have his elementary school aged singers run in and sit inside a hula hoop. I believe it was primarily a plot to keep us from poking one another, but my favorite use of the hula hoops (aside from actual hula hooping) was to sing “Allelu! Allelu! Allelu! Alleluia! Praise Ye The LORD!” (When I use the verb ‘sing’ here, I mean something more along the lines of ‘rhythmically scream at the top of our adolescent lungs.’) When we ‘sang’ the Allelus, we were allowed to jump into another adjacent hula hoop. It was glorious mayhem, especially when one of us would get too excited and jump into the next hoop on “Praise Ye The Lord!” instead of “Alleluia!” The result was full contact children’s choir, and it was glorious.

Psalm 147 is all about the joy of returning home, rebuilding, and reconciling wrongs, and like the psalms that surround it, it begins and ends with “Hallelujah!” which means “Praise the Lord!” but, in the middle there’s a hail storm (v. 17). As you rejoice your way through Advent remember that sometimes songs of praise are messy and chaotic (especially in the middle). Embrace the beauty of God in these messy songs and know that God is gracious, and your song of praise, however it sounds, however it looks today, is fitting.

Prayer

Awesome God!

Let me praise you today.

Allelu! <insert your own dance move of prayer>

Allelu! <insert the same dance move of prayer>

Allelu! <insert the same dance move of prayer>

Alleluia! <amp; it up by switching up your move and going all out>

Amen.