

Advent Devotional December 22, 2023

Scripture

Psalm 130

- 1 *Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD.*
- 2 *Lord, hear my voice!*
Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplications!
- 3 *If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities,*
Lord, who could stand?
- 4 *But there is forgiveness with you,*
so that you may be revered.
- 5 *I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,*
and in his word I hope;
- 6 *my soul waits for the Lord*
more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.
- 7 *O Israel, hope in the LORD!*
For with the LORD there is steadfast love,
and with him is great power to redeem.
- 8 *It is he who will redeem Israel*
from all its iniquities.

Devotion

The Rev. Kelsy Brown '10

Every Advent I hope to spend December preparing for Christmas with holy reflection on what it means for Jesus to be born among us. Instead more often than not, I spend this season waiting for the other shoe to drop.

You know what I am talking about: the perfect Christmas gift won't arrive until after the holidays, the weather that keeps friends and family apart, the lead for the Christmas Eve service gets sick at the last minute, or family traditions keep getting put off until later. These are the small things that somehow become big things.

We can't forget about the hard stuff when everything goes off the rails, like when we are celebrating Christmas in the midst of grief, we get bad news from the doctor, or broken relationships make the holidays complicated.

Then there are the big things that stop us in our tracks—worries about yesterday, sins that haunt us, fears for the future, hate, war, judgment. These are like false prophets telling us the opposite of what Christmas is all about—hope in our Savior who brings love, grace and truth.

Our Psalm tells us to watch for these moments . . . but not the way you might expect. It isn't because we are supposed to fix it in order to get back to that perfect Christmas, but to notice how Jesus shows up when everything falls apart. The first Christmas included a young pregnant couple without a place to

sleep, a king who was willing to kill all children to keep power, and a God who came to be among us in the chaos. This is where we find Christmas hope.

It will be like this every Christmas until Jesus comes again. So instead of stressing out about things that don't go right, I am going to remember the hope I have in Jesus because these are the exact moments when God always shows up.

Prayer

Jesus, when it all feels like my world is falling apart, remind me that you came in the chaos and you will come again in my chaos. Help me live into that hope. Amen.