

Advent Prayer: “Help Us in This Real Advent Time”
Advent 1: The Hanging of the Greens

Eternal and Immediate God,

In the season we mark as Advent,
and in our living in the real time of the coming of our savior,
You descend into our seasonal festivities,
our acts of decency toward the poor and one another,
and our expressions and enactments of family at Christmastime,
and you invite and elevate our spirits into the divine.

God of our Christmas memories,

Thank you for the sentiment that connects us to the eternal.
Thank you for Christmas songs and warm light on cold dark evenings.
Thank you for sacred images of a world now past, or that never was—
a mythologized world where Christmastime was always right.

Help us, in this real Advent time,
to reckon with remembrances of pain, disappointment and regret;
to be comforted by your compassion
as we remember with an insatiable longing all that we once had
which is now confined to the world of recollection and reflection.

God of the Christmastime we now inhabit and experience,

Help us, in this real Advent time,
to deal with the broken and the discouraging;
the baffling, the heartbreaking and the infuriating;
the aching and the apathy.

O God, in your Word throughout human history
you have specifically charged people of power and means
with caring for the powerless and poor;

you raise your mighty arm to put down the mighty from their thrones,
not for when they have merely inconvenienced those who are doing all right,
but in judgement against those who exploit and fail to care for the poor.

Thwart, we pray, the machinations of government and society
which act against your will for all humankind,
and magnify the efforts of those who work
for what is just and righteous in *your* eyes.

God of our Christmas hopes,

Our bodies weaken, our minds diminish,
our spirits tremble and our emotions fall to chaos.

Help us in this real Advent time
to cling to the truth and beauty in which you come to us.

You are the God who reaches across the universe to be with us;
You are the Christ who calls from the depths of eternity to be in our time;
You are the Spirit who pierces the membrane
between the earthly and the cosmic.

We praise and thank you, in the season of Advent as ever,
that as assuredly as you encompass the totality of all things
in your creating hands,
just as surely you hold each one of us closely and gently,
regarding us as loving parents regard their precious newborn child,
with hopes and dreams for what they will do and who they will be.

Let us be your children now, great and loving God,
even as you send your child to be one of us.

“O come to us, abide with us, our Lord, Emmanuel.”ⁱ

Keith Grogg
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ⁱ Phillips Brooks, “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” 1868.