

# Quiet Day 13 December 2025

## Advent: Journeying from Lamentation to Light

9:30 - 9:40 Introduction

9:40 - 10:55 First Conference

9:40 - 10:15 First session of reflections on the theme of the day

10:15 - 10:35 First session for thoughtful, conversational prayer: Restrooms, refreshments, stroll the grounds, reflect in the church. The entire campus is open to us. Please maintain quiet. Please keep talking to a minimum and please talk quietly. Thank you!

10:35 - 10:55 First session of Silent Prayer in the Sanctuary. (Or thoughtful meditation in the Music Center.)  
[Enter silently from 10:33 to 10:35 At 10:35 we will intone the bell and begin silent prayer.]

---

10:55 - 11:40 Second Conference

10:55 - 11:10 Second session of reflections on the theme of the day

11:10 - 11:30 Second session for thoughtful, conversational prayer: Restrooms, refreshments, stroll the grounds, reflect in the church. The entire campus is open to us. Please maintain quiet. Please keep talking to a minimum and please talk quietly. Thank you!

11:30 - 11:50 Second session of Silent Prayer in the Sanctuary. (Or thoughtful meditation in the Music Center.)  
[Enter silently from 11:18 to 11:20. At 11:20 we will intone the bell and begin praying.]

---

11:50 - 12:30 Third Conference

11:40 - 11:50 Third session of reflections on the theme of the day

11:50 - 12:20 Third session for thoughtful, conversational prayer: Restrooms, refreshments, stroll the grounds, reflect in the church. The entire campus is open to us. Please maintain quiet. Please keep talking to a minimum and please talk quietly. Thank you!

12:20 - 12:40 Third session of Silent Prayer in the Sanctuary. (Or thoughtful meditation in the Music Center.)  
[Enter silently from 12:18 to 12:20. At 12:20 we will intone the bell and begin praying.]

12:40 - 1:00 Eucharist. All are welcome.

## Advent: Journeying from Lamentation to Light

Lamentation is the groaning deep within us that cannot be easily assuaged. It is that part of us that knows that all is not well, and truly wonders if all will ever be well. Only in acknowledging and expressing this deep longing can we know the God who loves us at these depths, and who is faithful to bring us into the hope of light and life, and the felt experience of that salvation. The journey through advent honors the pain of the brokenness of the world in which we live and attunes us to the shafts of light that shine for those who are watching and waiting for Emmanuel – God with us.

## From Lamentation to Light

### *First Conference Readings*

*Sometimes I feel like a motherless child.  
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child  
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child  
A long ways from home  
A long ways from home  
True believer  
A long ways from home*

*Sometimes I feel like I'm almos' gone  
Sometimes I feel like I'm almos' gone  
Sometimes I feel like I'm almos' gone  
And a long, long way from home  
A long, long way from home*

*African-American Spiritual*

### *Second Conference Readings*

*I'm just a poor wayfaring stranger  
Traveling through this world below  
There's no sickness, no toil, no danger  
In that bright land to which I go  
I'm going there to see my father  
And all my loved ones who've gone on  
I'm just a-going over Jordan  
I'm just a-going over home*

*I am overwhelmed with troubles  
and my life draws near to death;  
You have put me in the lowest pit  
In the darkest depths  
You have taken from me my closest friends  
And have made me repulsive to them  
I am confined and cannot escape;  
My eyes are dim with grief.  
Darkness is my closest friend.*

*Psalms 88*

*I know dark clouds will gather 'round me  
I know my way is hard and steep  
But beauteous fields arise before me  
Where God's redeemed, their vigils keep  
I'm going there to see my mother  
She said she's meet me when I come.  
So I'm just going over Jordan  
I'm just a-going over home.*

*Lyrics unknown source*

### *Third Conference Reading*

*I heard the bells on Christmas day  
their old familiar carols play  
in music sweet the tones repeat  
"there's peace on earth, good will to men."*

*And in despair I bowed my head  
"there is no peace on earth" I said  
"for hate is strong, and mocks the song  
of 'peace on earth, good will to men'."*

*Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:  
"God is not dead, nor does God sleep,  
for Christ is here; the Spirit near  
brings peace on earth, good will to all."*

*O souls amid earth's busy strife,  
the Word of God is light and life;  
O hear God's voice, make God your choice,  
hail peace on earth, good will to men.*

*Then happy, singing on your way,  
your world will change from night to day;  
your heart will feel the message real,  
of peace on earth, good will to all.*

*Nothing could be more down to earth or more humbling than this Boundless Presence, which just is. It doesn't have to prove itself. It doesn't have to acquire anything. It just is . . . . .*

The essence of Centering Prayer is consenting to God's presence and action within. The seven stages of Centering Prayer outlined below dispose us towards ever-deepening self-surrender. These seven stages might be called the process of Centering Prayer. I summarize them as follows:

1. **Silence** is consenting to God's presence – what Jesus calls the Kingdom of God – within and among us. External silence supports this movement.
2. **Solitude** flows from interior silence. Disregarding our interior dialogue leads to “resting in God” (St Gregory the Great) and to consciousness without particular content.
3. **Solidarity** is the awareness of increasing oneness with God, with the whole human family, and with all of creation.
4. **Service** is following the ever-present inspirations of the Spirit not only during the time of formal prayer, but in the details of everyday life. It is a spontaneous expression of solidarity: God in us serving God in others.
5. **Stillness** is what Jesus called “prayer in secret” (Matt. 6:6). This is the experience of God's presence beyond rational concepts, beyond preoccupation with one's personal thoughts and desires.
6. **Simplicity** is the integration of contemplation and action, a growing capacity to live in the midst of duality – the ups and downs of daily life – without losing the non-dual perspective. Contemplation is not the same as action. They are distinct but they are not separate.
7. **Surrender** is the total gift of self to God, a movement from union to unity. It marks the beginning of what Jesus calls “eternal life” as an abiding state.

As we are moved through the stages of grace, our perspective changes in regard to Centering Prayer, the contemplative life, and God. In between the steps there may be delightful plateaus as well as dark nights, all of which have physical, mental, and spiritual consequences. The most transforming dark nights seem to be primarily psychological states, and the darkest of all is the purely spiritual suffering that arises from just being a creature, apparently unequipped for the hazards and trials of this life, but going through them with invincible confidence in God's love.

---