

Quiet Day - January 10, 2026
Epiphany: The Forever Coming of Christ
The Rev. Dr. Catherine Gregg

The Forever Coming of Christ

Christ is the light of the world that enables us to see things in their fulness. The effect of that light is to see Christ everywhere, in everything. The Christ Mystery is that God is incarnate not only as a human being, but present in all the cosmos, dwelling with us and in us. God is forever being born into in the human soul, into history, into the cosmos. Through the practice of contemplation, we make room for this mystery and begin to see the light shining through all things.

First Conference Readings

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

What has come into being in him was Life, and the Life was the Light of all people.

The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

The True Light, which enlightens everyone, has come into the world.

Pray for our eyes to see Light . . .

Place your hands around the light, and then gently touch your eyes with your warmed hands.

Light of the world, may I see your Light in one another and in all things.

Place your hands around the light again, and gently hold your hands over your heart.

Light of the world, may I know your light deep within my own being.

Second Conference Reading

*That in the elements of earth, sea and sky
we may see your beauty,
That in wild winds, birdsong and silence
We may hear your beauty,
That in the body of another and the intermingling of relationships we may touch your beauty
That in the moisture of the earth and its flowering and fruiting
We may smell your beauty,
That in the flowing waters of springs and streams we may taste your beauty,
These things we look for this day, O God,
These things we look for.*

JPNewell Sounds of the Eternal, p.41

Third Conference Reading

Put down that bag of potato chips, that white bread, that bottle of pop.

Turn off that cellphone, computer and remote control.

Open the door, then close it behind you.

Take a breath offered by friendly winds . . . they travel the earth gathering essences of plants to clean . . . give it back with gratitude.

If you sing it will give your spirit life to fly to the stars' ears and back.

Acknowledge this earth who has cared for you since you were a dream planting itself precisely within your parent's desire.

Let your moccasin feet take you to the encampment of the guardians who have known you before time, who will be there after time. They sit before the fire that has been there without time.

Let the earth stabilize your postcolonial insecure jitters.

Be respectful of the small insects, birds and animal people who accompany you.

Ask their forgiveness for the harm we humans have brought down upon them.

Don't worry.

The heart knows the way though there may be high-rises, interstates, checkpoints, armed soldiers, massacres, war, and those who will despise you because they despise themselves.

The journey may take you a few hours, a day, a year, a few years, a hundred, a thousand or even more

Watch your mind. Without training it may run away and leave your heart for the immense human feast set by their thieves of time.

Do not hold regrets.

When you find your way to the circle, to the fire kept burning by the keepers of your soul, you will be welcomed.

You must clean yourself with cedar, sage or other healing plant.

Cut the ties you have to failure and shame.

Let go of the pain you are holding in your mind, your shoulders, your heart, all the way to your feet.

Let go the pain of your ancestors to make way for those who are heading in our direction.

Ask for forgiveness.

Call upon the help of those who love you. These helpers take many forms: animal, element, bird, angel, saint, stone or ancestor.

Call your spirit back. It may be caught in corners and creases of shame, judgment, and human abuse.

You must call in a way that your spirit will want to return.

Speak to it as you would a beloved child.

Welcome your spirit back from its wandering. It may return in pieces, in tatters. Gather them together. They will be happy to be found after being lost for so long.

From: *For Calling the Spirit Back from Wandering the Earth in its Human Feet* by Joy Harjo

Schedule

9:30-9:40 Introduction

First Conference (9:40-10:40)

9:40-10:00 First session of reflections on the theme of the day

10:00-10:20 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!

10:20-10:40 First session of Silent Prayer in the Sanctuary.
(Or thoughtful meditation in the Music Center.)

Enter silently from 10:35 to 10:40

At 10:40 we will intone the bell and begin silent prayer.

Second Conference (10:40-11:40)

10:40-11:00 Second session of reflections on the theme of the day

11:00-11:20 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!

11:20-11:40 Second session of Silent Prayer in the Sanctuary.
(Or thoughtful meditation in the Music Center.)

Enter silently from 11:15 to 11:20.

At 11:20 we will intone the bell and begin praying.

Third Conference (11:40-12:40)

11:40-12:00 Third session of reflections on the theme of the day

12:00-12:20 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 12:15 to 12:20.

At 12:20 we will intone the bell and begin praying.

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

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.