

Pastoral Prayer 12-4-16
2nd Sunday of Advent, Year A
By Rev. Dr. Casey G. Baggott
Based on Luke 3:7-18
Communion Sunday

The gifts you offer at Christ's table of welcome, O God, are gifts more significant, more restorative, more nourishing and wholesome than any other gifts we receive. We are deeply grateful for the reach of your love that extends across time and space to find us here today, in your presence, to share in this sacred meal.

Prophets of old reminded us that those who look to you, to receive your gift of love, will be those who, in turn, will give of themselves gladly and willingly, in many places and among the many people you call your own. So help us to live lives of glad generosity, Eternal God, as we wait for the fulfillment in this Advent season, of the great hope of your Son's coming. Show us how to prepare a fitting place for Him. First, let us offer you, God, a thorough-going, heartfelt repentance, setting aside any arrogance or pride that weakens our resolve to see ourselves as we really are. Then, let us consider what you may wish to make of us – and what we may make of ourselves. Let us be guided always in our growth by the pattern you offer the world – a model of simplicity, humility, and selflessness. Let us now and always aspire to shape ourselves into followers worthy of your son, our Messiah. May we strive to demonstrate the pattern of faithfulness which he did – through lives marked by generosity, integrity, and contentment. Let us, in fact, aspire to a kind of greatness worthy of Christ's seekers and Christ's followers.

We look with wonder toward the day of his birth, for his presence then will be as real to us as a newborn's cry, and as tender as a new mother's tears of joy, as tangible as a crust of bread and a sip of wine. We pray as those who wait with sure and certain faithfulness. And we use now the very words of Your Son, as we sing his prayer together: *The Lord's Prayer*.