

Week 12: Advent

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Text: Anonymous, c. 750

- Originally a seven-verse Latin poem (“Veni, Veni, Emmanuel”) used as a Vespers call-and-response
- Formed a reverse acrostic spelling “ero cras”, meaning “I shall be present tomorrow”
- Later revised into a metrical version in the 12th century, with the first printed copy in Cologne in 1710
- Translated to English in 1851 by John Mason Neale, also known for “All Glory, Laud and Honor”, “Good Christian Men Rejoice”, and “Of the Father’s Love Begotten”, among others
- The first line was originally “Draw nigh, Draw nigh, Emmanuel”, but Neale revised it in 1861

Tune: Anonymous, c. 1450

- The tune VENI EMMANUEL was originally a chant tune used in French requiem masses
 - Anglican priest Thomas Helmore adapted it for use with this text in *The Hymnal Noted* in 1854
 - As a choirmaster, one of Helmore’s early students was composer Arthur Sullivan
 - Helmore maintained a lifelong interest in chant and plainsong, adapting many traditional chants including two sets of 12 carols for Christmas and Easter
1. This hymn reminds us of the Jewish prophecies foretelling Christmas through its use of Old Testament imagery and language, in particular speaking to God’s role as “deliverer” during Israel’s captivity under Egypt as well as the Romans. Do you think the church does a good job explaining the Old Testament roots of Christmas? Are any of the metaphors or images particularly meaningful to you?
 - a. “Dayspring” literally means the “sun rising”. See Luke 1:78-79, where Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, uses this term to refer to Jesus’ birth bringing light to the world.
 - b. “Rod of Jesse” refers to Isaiah 11:1, a prophecy referring to Jesus’ lineage from Jesse, the father of King David.
 - c. “Lord of Might” reminds us that Jesus is God, both powerful and righteous, as he led Israel out of Egypt and provided them with the law through Moses.

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

Text: Georg Weissel (1590–1635), 1623

- Son of Johann Weissel, judge and Bürgermeister in Doranau, Germany
- Lifelong pastor, authored roughly two dozen hymns, including “Macht hoch die Tür, die Tor macht weit”
- Translated by Catherine Winkworth in 1855 for her hymn collection *Lyra Germanica*
- A well-known translator of German hymns, Winkworth’s other works include “Now Thank We All Our God” and “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

Tune: Anonymous, 1789

- Named for a town in Cornwall, England, TRURO was first published in 1789 to accompany a hymn by Isaac Watts entitled “Now to the Lord a Noble Song”
 - The tune appears to be influenced by the style of George Frideric Handel; compare the opening line with that of ANTIOCH (“Joy to the World”), adapted from Handel by Lowell Mason
1. This hymn puts a unique perspective on Advent, looking forward to Christ’s presence inwardly as well as outwardly, as well as looking beyond Christmas, with the enduring presence of the Holy Spirit. How would we go about preparing our hearts to receive Jesus? What does this look like in practice?
 - a. The first verse paraphrases portions of Psalm 24, which tradition says was written by David on the occasion when the Ark of the Covenant was returned to the Temple in Jerusalem after 20 years of captivity under the Philistines.
 - b. Likewise, our hearts are temples (verse 2); need to be “set apart” for this purpose.
 - c. Recall Jesus expelling the money changers from the Temple...

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Text: John Francis Wade (1711–1786), 1743

- As a Catholic, fled to France to escape persecution in England after the failed Jacobite Rebellion

- Worked as a music copyist for the Roman Catholic College in Douai, France
- Some have argued the text contains coded Jacobite references to the birth of Bonnie Prince Charlie
- Translated in 1841 by Frederick Oakeley, a member of the “Oxford Movement” in London
- The original “Ye Faithful, Approach Ye” was reworked into the version we know today in 1845
- Oakeley eventually defected to the Catholic church, like many other members of the movement
- Other anonymous Latin verses were created over the years, with some translated into English and added to Oakeley’s version by William Thomas Brooke in 1885

Tune: John Francis Wade (1711–1786), 1743

- The tune ADESTE FIDELES was written alongside the original Latin text
 - Noted for its irregular meter (the text is likewise notable for being unrhymed)
 - The tune is also known as PORTUGUESE HYMN as the first manuscript was made for the English College in Lisbon, Portugal and later became popular in the chapel of the Portuguese embassy in London
1. Not strictly an “Advent” hymn, the text shares many of the same qualities of the earlier two, but rather than asking Christ to come to us, invites us to come to Christ. Which view would you say is more accurate — that we seek God, or He seeks us? Do we tend to focus on one over the other?
 - a. This is certainly a false dichotomy, both can be true at once
 - b. Verse 4 is reminiscent of 1 John 4:19, “We love because he first loved us.”
 - c. Can we rephrase to “We seek Him because He first sought us”?
 2. The second verse is a fairly obvious paraphrase of the Nicene Creed. How does it fit in with the other verses, and what does it contribute to the overall message of the hymn?
 - a. The deity of Jesus is central to the Christmas story: “True God of true God”, “King of Angels”, “*Christ the Lord*”