

Cheyenne Boon:

Good morning and welcome to morning prayers. Today's service will begin with a responsive reading found in the black Appleton Psalter book, Psalm number 143 on page 72. Please rise in body or spirit to read responsively by whole verse.

Cheyenne Boon:

Oh Lord, hear my prayer, give ear to my plea, as you are faithful. Answer me, as you are beneficent.

Congregation:

Do not enter into judgment with your servant, for before you no creature is in the right.

Cheyenne Boon:

My foe hounded me. He crushed me to the ground. He made me dwell in darkness like those long dead.

Congregation:

My spirit failed within me. My mind was numbed with horror.

Cheyenne Boon:

Then I thought of the days of old, I rehearsed all your deeds, recounted the work of your hands.

Congregation:

I stretched out my hands to you, longing for you like thirsty earth.

Cheyenne Boon:

Save me from my foes, oh Lord. To you, I look for cover.

Congregation:

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Let your gracious spirit lead me on level ground.

Cheyenne Boon:

For the sake of your name, oh Lord, preserve me. As you are beneficent, free me from distress.

Congregation:

As you are faithful, put an end to my foes, destroy all my mortal, enemies for I am your servant.

Cheyenne Boon:

You may be seated.

Choir:

(Singing)

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

(Singing)

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary. And they shall walk and not faint.

The holiday season is upon us, as well as advent. As some of you all know, who I've gotten to know here at the Memorial Church, I am a country boy, if you cannot tell by my accent. And growing in a Southern town of North Carolina, I just experienced Thanksgiving, and I'm looking forward to Christmas.

My mother had 14 sisters and brothers, and my father had 15 sisters and brothers. A lot, right? And I can just see now my grandmother in her three story house preparing food for Christmas and Thanksgiving, can smell and see the chopped kale and collards, and the freshly peeled sweet potatoes, and the pumpkin pie. I can smell the aromas.

But one thing that I always look forward to experiencing during the holiday season was Grandmother's black eyed peas. Oh yes, this country boy couldn't wait to run into the kitchen to get a big bowl of Grandmother's black eyed peas and homemade biscuits. I'm sorry to make you all hungry so early in the morning. But one thing would catch my attention when I would go into the kitchen. It would be this gorgeous, grand, white Crockpot.

I asked my grandmother, "I'm ready for the beans now." She said, "Baby, no, you have to wait a little longer." Me being the young man that I was at that time, I was like, "No way, Mom. I am ready now. I can't wait for these black eye peas. I'm ready now. I can't wait to taste those beans. I need you to put those beans on my plate now."

Excuse me. In today's society, we live among a people who have become prone to instant gratification. Everything has to come quickly. Everything has to fall in our hands without waiting, seeking, wrestling, questioning. And I'm a witness at times that I don't want to wrestle with challenges. I want things to work out quickly. I want things to be resolved instantly. I'm not going to stand here as a preacher and try to act like I know it all, and that I have this faith that everything is going to work out. There is sometimes when things just don't happen as soon as we would like. I don't mind waiting.

Is there someone in the house this morning that says, "I need God to hurry up in my marriage, dealing with my educational career, dealing with my career, dealing with my job, COVID-19. I need you to hurry up,"? It's hard to wait in a world that's fragmented. It's hard, difficult to wait when everything around you is seemingly crumbling. The text talks about a people in Babylonian exile who are waiting, waiting on God to deliver, waiting on God to restore. But sometimes we have to have Crockpot faith. I waited. I waited until I was able to dine and enjoy what had happened in that pot.

During this season of Advent, we wait and expect the coming of God to enter into time. While we wait, we hold on to hope. While we wait, we stand on the promises of God. While we wait, we yet preach. While we wait, we yet seek God's face. While we wait, we yet stand for love and justice. While you wait, while I wait while, we wait, we yet press, we yet sing. (Singing).

Please stand as you are able and let us pray. Holy and most merciful God, waiting is not easy, but we believe your words, that they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. God, as we wait in this season of Advent, we expect you to break and enter into time, to heal our wounds and to touch our world.

Together let us recite the prayer that Jesus taught us saying, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day the daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those through trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Now let us sing the hymn, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, hymn number 91 found in your crimson Harvard Hymnal.

Congregation:

(Singing)

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

Drop down ye heavens from above and let the sky pour righteousness. Let the Earth open and let it bring forth a savior. Until then, we wait. And as you leave this place, but never away from God's presence, remember, as you wait, God is present with you. Amen.