

# Sunday, December 20, 2020

## Fourth Sunday of Advent

### Love

#### 2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16

<sup>1</sup> After the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup> he said to Nathan the prophet, “Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.”

<sup>3</sup> Nathan replied to the king, “Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the Lord is with you.”

<sup>4</sup> But that night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying:

<sup>5</sup> “Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? <sup>6</sup> I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. <sup>7</sup> Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”’”

<sup>8</sup> “Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. <sup>9</sup> I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. <sup>10</sup> And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning <sup>11</sup> and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

“The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you:

...

<sup>16</sup> Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”

#### Candle Lighting

Today we light the fourth candle of Advent, the candle of Love. (*Light Candle*)

We live on the brink every day. We stand on the threshold between this world and the next one. We live and move between the ordinary and divine, between the mundane and the mystery. Too often, we forget to look up and see the angels in our living room. We forget that the love we give and live is a sign of eternity, God with us, right now. We forget that company is coming.

We light this candle with love in our hearts for the promise of proximity, the nearness of God. Even when we forget to listen, to lean into that presence, God is as close as our own breath. This, in a confused and confusing world, is a love that passes all understanding. It is the love that knows that company is coming.

We light this candle for Love.

#### Response

O Come, O Come Emmanuel.

#### Prayer

Jesus, may your love so fill our hearts that we enact it to everyone around us. Your love alone is capable of changing this world. Amen.