

# “Journeying with God”

Psalms 89:1-4 & 19-26, Matthew 1:18-25, Psalm 85:1-2 & 8-13,

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God made a promise with humanity, a covenant, to bless all people. God's promise is sure, steadfast and eternal. God will always bless all people. Our part of the promise is to share blessings, multiple blessings, fill the cosmos with blessings. Blessings will expand for eternity.

Our quest to bless everyone is often referred to as our journey. We journey to realize the transformative wonder of God's grace that completely forgives us of every mistake and imperfection. We journey into the healing, perfection, and glory of God's grace. We journey into the mending of every relationship by God's grace. We journey to expand our ability to receive and share love. We journey to discover how to listen to others, expand our compassion, to care and serve. We journey to be filled with God's abundant joy. We journey to discover our true self, a beloved child of God, a masterpiece in progress. God is always with us. God guides us on our journeys. God always provides steadfast love, salvation, and a safe sanctuary.

Our executive presbytery wrote, “The traditional spiritual posture of Advent is waiting for God to enter the world in the birth of Jesus. In this year like no other, I have been wondering: what if, instead of us waiting for God, we might imagine that, actually, God is waiting for us? Waiting for us to realize that God is already here among us and within us. Waiting for us to align our wills with the divine will that is woven into the fabric of the universe. Waiting for us to be born anew and grow into the likeness of Christ. I wonder if God is waiting for us.”

Jeff's prayer for us is: “Unslumbering God, at an unexpected hour you sent an unlikely liberator to an undeserving world. Keep us faithful in unguarded moments and alert in uncertain times, so that we may seek your unmeasured grace, serve you with undivided hearts, live together in unbroken community, and greet you with unending praise; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our undying Life, in whom we know your unfailing justice, unfathomable grace, and unlimited love. Amen”

The psalmist and our choir sing of God's steadfast love that propels us on our journeys. They encourage us to journey on.

## **Psalms 89:1-4 & 19-26 NRSV**

“I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. You said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David: ‘I will establish your descendants forever and build your throne for all generations.’ Then you spoke in a vision to your faithful one and said: “I have set the crown on one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people. I have found my servant David; with my holy oil I have anointed him; my hand shall always remain with him; my arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not outwit him, the wicked shall not humble him. I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him. My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him; and by my authority he will grow in power. I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers. He shall cry to me, ‘You are my God, and the Rock of my salvation!’”

## **Anthem “Soft the Evening Shadows Fall”**

Soft the Evening Shadows Fall, still journey on;  
Darkness soon be over all, still journey on.  
Weary now and travel-worn, Night must come before the morn:  
Where will Mary's Son be born? Still journey on.

Shepherds hasten from the fold: This God has done.  
Here in human form behold, This God has done.  
Christ the Lord of David's line, born a Savior and a sign  
King immortal, child divine, this God has done.

Lord of all, enthroned above, God sent his Son.  
Gift of everlasting love, God sent his Son  
He himself a ransom gave, Bowed himself to cross and grave,  
Came himself to seek and save: God sent his Son.

So the Christmas story tell; Still journey on.  
At the last shall all be well; Still journey on.  
Love be ours, and joy and praise,  
one with Christ to walk his ways, God sent his Son  
In His service all our days, Still journey on.

### **Joseph's Compassion**

Joseph is a righteous man. A person who strives for right relationships with all people, equal, mutually beneficial, loving, joyful relationships. The easy choice for an easier life was to distance himself from Mary. Joseph is not selfish instead he wants the best for Mary.

Joseph is compassionate, caring, encouraging and supportive. Joseph is humble, eager to serve. Joseph prayer life enabled him to listen to God and believe in God's outrageous plan of salvation for all. Joseph is pliable, willing to be transformed into living God's will.

Ponder how you will journey into grandeur righteousness and compassion. How will you be pliable to God, listen for God's guidance, believe that God's love will perfect and glorify the cosmos and you? Joseph is with us to guide us in taking the next step on our journey.

### **Matthew 1:18-25 NLT**

This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. As Joseph considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet: "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus."

### **Anthem "Cover Him Joseph"**

Cover him, Joseph, the evening is cold.  
Night mists have fallen, the day has grown old.  
Tired the people who toss in their sleep  
Weary the shepherds still watching their sheep.  
Tender the mother, gracious and mild,  
God in his mercy has given this child.

Cover him, Joseph, he's still a wee boy.  
Hope binds us daily to heavenly joy;  
Far in the future some dark days may loom  
Strengthen his life for the moments of gloom  
Gentle the mother, gracious and fair,  
God in his mercy will answer her prayer.

### **Salvation, Peace, Love Righteousness**

God saves us from fear, hate, division and violence. God restores us. Righteousness and peace will kiss. Righteousness, compassionate, loving, growing relationships will be restored with all people. Peace is shalom, completeness, tranquility, harmony, wholeness, wellbeing, prosperity, and abundant life. Righteousness and peace will kiss. No matter how much damage we do to our relationships, nothing, not fear, hate, violence, revenge, disdain, absolutely nothing, will hinder God from restoring righteous, peaceful, loving relationships between all people. Imagine your family, our country, our world, all living in harmony, building each other up, striving for the most excellent way of love. Our restoration with righteousness and peace kissing inspires us to sing alleluia. Living in harmony causes truth to flourish and an abundance of blessings. As our righteous, peaceful, loving relationships are restored we learn to share. There will be abundance for everyone. We will rejoice and sing alleluia.

The psalmist sings God's love song for the world to hear. God's steadfast love will be recklessly, abundantly poured out upon all people. God's love restores us and restores every relationship. God sent us love in human flesh, Jesus. Alleluia.

### **Scripture Psalm 85:1-2 & 8-13 NLT**

"Lord, you poured out blessings on your land! You restored the fortunes of Israel. You forgave the guilt of your people—yes, you covered all their sins. I listen carefully to what God the Lord is saying, for God speaks peace to God's faithful people. But let them not return to their foolish ways. Surely God's salvation is near to those who revere God, so our land will be filled with God's glory. Unfailing love and truth have met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed! Truth springs up from the earth, and righteousness smiles down from heaven. Yes, the Lord pours down God's blessings. Our land will yield its bountiful harvest. Righteousness goes as a herald before God, preparing the way for God's steps.

### **Anthem "Brazilian Christmas Carol"**

Sing alleluia - angels sing  
Jesus is born on Christmas Day

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping 'til the morning new  
Saw the glory, heard the story of a gospel true.  
Angels singing, Nowells ringing Christ the savior is born.  
Thus rejoicing, praises voicing on this Christmas morn.

Gloria in excelsis deo, Hail the Savior's birth  
Gloria in excelsis deo, peace and goodwill on earth

Why this jubilee, What glad tidings be,  
Which inspire your song?  
Come, on bended knee, Come, this night and see,  
Christ the newborn King.

Alleluia, hear earth to heaven reply:  
Now ye hear of endless bliss,  
Christ was born for this.

Sing alleluia - angels sing  
Jesus is born on Christmas Day

### **Alleluia**

Alleluia Jesus is continually being born in your heart. Alleluia the Kingdom of God is continually coming to earth. Alleluia we are forgiven. Alleluia we will be healed, perfected, complete, and glorified. Alleluia we will enjoy fantastic relationships with everyone. Alleluia every love, joy and delight is resurrected for us to enjoy forever. Alleluia our love and joy will expand forever. Alleluia God is with us.  
Alleluia Amen!