

Beloved of Christ Jesus, blessings in the name of the One who was,
and the One who is,
and the One who is to come. Amen.

A decade or so back, Anne Lamott wrote a book titled Help, Thanks, Wow, The Three Essential Prayers.

As the subtitle describes, she suggests that nearly all our prayers are distilled from these three:

Help, God, I need your help,
Thanks, relishing our gratitude, and
Wow, expressing to God our awe and wonder.

I love this simplicity

and I use these one word prayers often, daily.

And, yes, it is true, Help, gets a little more action.

Today I'd like to nominate another, at least for this season of Advent.

And that word, that prayer, that cry, is Come.

Similarly simple and short, and packed with power. Come.

Come, Lord Jesus, like my family of origin prays at nearly every meal around the table.

Come, God of Daybreak, God of Shadows,
like our focus this year for Advent here at Hope.

Come, Savior of the Nations, Come,
like we'll hear in today's Cantata and we'll sing later in the service.

Advent literally means, in Latin, To Come, ad venire, similar to Spanish.

And the coming that we focus on in Advent is multi-fold: the coming of baby Jesus, and the second coming.

We can pray: Come, as a baby born again this season,

come and be born in our hearts,
born in our communities,
born in the trouble-spots of violence and pain,
born where justice and mercy, where peace and ceasefire are most needed,

born in the blah, the bored, the not-feeling-it, yearning to feel again,

And we can also pray, Come, like in our gospel, Come again, Jesus, we need you.

The suffering, the pain, the signs are all around us, and in this time,
in a spirit not of fanaticism, not of irresponsibility, but of anticipation, we cry Come,
trusting the horizon of God's care, alert, curious, open, imaginative, for how God comes.

And did you hear on the lips of the prophet Isaiah that cry to Come?

"O that you would tear open the heavens and come down."

I learned this week that the Hebrew verb we read as tear open

almost always refers to the ritual practice of rending a garment, culturally, think grief, think mourning.

I've often read this as the prophet pragmatically pleading for God to intervene, to fix things.

Isaiah, it seems, is so much more tender, inviting God to come close and grieve along with us.

My friends, in this time, this feels so very right: Come close, God, grieve with us.

Dear ones, this morning we pray Come!

Come into our worship, into our music.

Come, O Holy one, into the stretching as our community widens to welcome new members with
their experiences of you, their faithfulness, their questions.

Come, we pray, into our living.

Create us again, mold us, shape us, O God, we are yours. Come.

Amen.