

December 9, 2023

7th Day of Advent

Fling Wide the Door (ELW 259)

Fling wide the door, unbar the gate;
the King of glory comes in state;
the Lord of lords and King of kings,
the Savior of the world who brings
his great salvation to the earth.
So raise a shout of holy mirth
and praise our God and Lord,
Creator, Spirit, Word.

“Fling wide the door!” The opening lines from this hymn paint a picture of exuberant, radical welcome. There is no hesitation as if opening the door with just a crack to see who might be ringing the doorbell. The writer is joyfully and fully opening the house, town, or perhaps even his/her heart to receive the beloved guest. We can only do that in a state of unconditional love and trust of the one who is arriving.

When our grandchildren stop over to visit, I often see them through the front window, as they approach the front door. I will go to the door, open it wide, greet them with a hug and a kiss, escort them in, and do my best to welcome them ‘home’. I can celebrate their arrivals because I know what they love (cookies in the cookie jar), what they expect to see and do (sit in the hot tub or lounge on the dock), and what they need to be comfortable (a comfy chair and a listening ear).

As we enter into this time of Advent, looking forward to and preparing for the Christmas “visit” of the Christ child, I invite us to wonder together what might make Jesus feel welcomed, even as he welcomes us with a radical grace and love vastly beyond our simple hospitality.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, we long to welcome you with open arms and hearts every day, but especially now as we prepare to celebrate your birth. Help us to listen to your story deeply, so that we can learn and move confidently into our preparations for your arrival. Amen.

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