

## ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 19, 2013

The Rev. Eric McIntosh '12, Pastor, St. James Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.

### SCRIPTURE

#### ZEPHANIAH 3:14-20

14 Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;  
shout, O Israel!  
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,  
O daughter Jerusalem!

15 The LORD has taken away the judgments against you,  
he has turned away your enemies.  
The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;  
you shall fear disaster no more.

16 On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:  
Do not fear, O Zion;  
do not let your hands grow weak.

17 The LORD, your God, is in your midst,  
a warrior who gives victory;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness,  
he will renew you in his love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing

18 as on a day of festival.  
I will remove disaster from you,  
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

19 I will deal with all your oppressors  
at that time.  
And I will save the lame  
and gather the outcast,  
and I will change their shame into praise  
and renown in all the earth.

20 At that time I will bring you home,  
at the time when I gather you;  
for I will make you renowned and praised  
among all the peoples of the earth,  
when I restore your fortunes  
before your eyes, says the LORD.

### DEVOTIONAL

What time is it? It is time to claim our identity. We are the daughter of Zion. For us, it is a time to rejoice. It is a time to sing aloud! It is time to do it with all our hearts! But we live in a time of war. Our service men and women are in the middle of Middle East uprisings. But our government is more divided than ever before. But the state of our economy is such that millions are fighting for their financial lives! The soul of America is lost some say. Even though we have an African American

President, we seem to be no closer to a post racial society than we were 50 years ago, when Martin Luther King Jr. proclaimed a dream that was heard and shared around the world. But the poor are getting poorer and the rich are getting richer. How then is it time to sing, and rejoice and exult with all hearts?

Now is the time! America is groaning, longing for us to sing. All of creation is groaning and longing to see the manifestation of the the sons of God. What time is it? It is time for the Daughter of Zion rejoice! It is time for the redeemed of the Lord to say so! Say what, indeed what should we say?

We should sing the reality of Advent! It is Advent time! It is time to celebrate the coming of the Lord. Even more it is time to celebrate that in the power of the Holy Spirit, he is here right now!

What time is it? It is time to sing! Sing, because Immanuel, God with us, forgives us. Rejoice, because while in the middle of war, God with us, will clear away our enemy. Why exult? Because God will rejoice over us, in our midst, and gather the outcast, and save the lame, and deal with our oppressors!

It is time! Advent is a time to know that Immanuel, God with us is not only coming, he is already here and his presence will transform the world!

So what time is it? It's time to sing, rejoice, and exult with all our heart and the world needs to see it, hear it, from us if it is going to be transformed!

## **PRAYER**

O Lord, the world around us is falling apart. But you O Lord are with us. Cause us to be bold enough to sing, and rejoice right now, in the midst of turmoil, confusion, and strife. Cause us to remember what you have done, to discern and feel the power of your presence right now, and to sing the world unto discipleship, unto salvation! In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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