



Waiting with Wonder

ADVENT REFLECTIONS

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT: THE WONDER OF HOPE

Advent is a season when we celebrate the light of Jesus coming into the world. This light gives us hope and shows us the way.

In our service this week for the first Sunday of Advent we reflected on the story of Moses, when God appeared to him in the form of fire. Here's the story:

Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. He led the flock to the west end of the wilderness and came to the mountain of God, Horeb. The angel of God appeared to him in flames of fire blazing out of the middle of a bush. He looked. The bush was blazing away but it didn't burn up. Moses said, "What's going on here? I can't believe this! Amazing! Why doesn't the bush burn up?" God saw that he had stopped to look. God called to him from out of the bush, "Moses! Moses!" He said, "Yes? I'm right here!" God said, "Don't come any closer. Remove your sandals from your feet. You're standing on holy ground." Then he said, "I am the God of your father: The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob." Moses hid his face, afraid to look at God.

Exodus 3:1-6 (The Message)

This story reminds us that God often meets us in the places we don't expect. In the ordinary, simple moments. In the places where we feel lost. In the parts of our lives that feel like they're running on empty. God has a simple request for Moses – to take his shoes off. It's an image that really makes you wonder about who God is. God doesn't ask Moses to climb higher, or know more, or even to prove himself. God asks Moses to become more present, to feel the earth beneath him.

During this Advent season, ask what might be preventing us from being more present to God? What might keep us from receiving the light of Jesus and experiencing hope? Take a moment to light the first Advent Candle on your wreath (purple). As you gaze into the flame, reflect on the following questions:

- What shoes do I need to take off so I can connect with God more honestly?
- Where might God already be calling my name?
- Where is the light quietly burning in my life, waiting for me to turn aside and see?

Then read the following poem (on page 2) as a prayer:

The Child of Wonder by Macrina Weiderkehr

My bare feet walk the earth reverently
for everything keeps crying,
Take off your shoes
The ground you stand on is holy
The ground of your being is holy.

When the wind sings through the pines
like a breath of God
awakening you to the sacred present
calling your soul to new insights
Take off your shoes!

When the sunrises above your rooftop
coloring your world with dawn
Be receptive to this awesome beauty
Put on your garment of adoration.
Take off your shoes!

When the Red Maple drops its last leaf of
summer
wearing its "burning bush" robes no longer
read between its barren branches, and
Take off your shoes!

When sorrow presses close to your heart
begging you to put your trust in God alone
filling you with a quiet knowing
that God's hand is not too short to heal you
Take off your shoes!

When a new person comes into your life
like a mystery about to unfold
and you find yourself marveling over
the frailty and splendor of every human being
Take off your shoes!

When, during the wee hours of the night
you drive slowly into the new day
and the morning's fog, like angel wings
hovers mysteriously above you
Take off your shoes!

Take off your shoes of distraction
Take off your shoes of ignorance and blindness
Take off your shoes of hurry and worry
Take off anything that prevents you
from being a child of wonder.

Take off your shoes;
The ground you stand on is holy.
The ground you are is holy.

When you have finished reading the prayer spend some time sharing together about how it made you think and feel. Share with one another what shoes you feel you need to remove this Advent.