



Gather

Wednesday 18th December



Christmas – Gathering Evergreens from the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. Print after Winslow Homer (American, 1836–1910). Publisher: Harper & Bros., New York, USA (1858)

Scripture: Psalm 85.8-13

- 8 I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, *
for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to him.
- 9 Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, *
that his glory may dwell in our land.
- 10 Mercy and truth have met together; *
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
- 11 Truth shall spring up from the earth, *
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.
- 12 The Lord will indeed grant prosperity, *
and our land will yield its increase.
- 13 Righteousness shall go before him, *
and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

To reflect

Gather – to bring together. Gathering, what are you gathering or what gathering are you part of this Season? Perhaps like in the magazine image above you've been gathering greenery to decorate your house, gathering a tree or gathering decorations from the places you have stored them. Or perhaps the gathering that most easily comes to mind today is gathering with people – friends, family, work colleagues, fellow church members for meals, drinks, carolling and talk.

Gathering is in our readings from this Sunday – Zephaniah, calling the people to repent and lament, not to be complacent. Zephaniah (and Luke) tell us not to fear, for the coming of the one prophesied will gather in the outcasts, end oppression and we will be gathered in and brought home.

How will you see the hope of God with Us – Emmanuel in your gatherings of all kinds this day?

Advent Antiphon: O Adonai

O Lord *

**O Prince of the House of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush,
and delivered to him the law on Sinai:
Come, deliver us with outstretched arm.**

The Grandeur of God by Gerald Manley Hopkins

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil

Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

Taken from Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poems and Prose (Penguin Classics, 1985)

To Listen (these and other suggestions can be found on a Spotify playlist at

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0F5bU2sf4OiOtQY3q78Rj2?si=a99cbbf61e7d4587>)

- 'Gather Us In (Here in this Place)' by Marty Haugen. This song speaks of everyone being gathered before God, loved by God whilst darkness is washed away by new light.
- 'O Adonai' by Roderick Williams, one version is by The Chapel Choir of Pembroke College, Cambridge. A contemporary setting of the Advent Antiphon for this day.
- 'Advent Gathering Song' by James Chepponis, one version is by Schola Cantorum and John J. Miller. This song with a refrain of 'Come Emmanuel' brings together several themes of Advent.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.