

CANTATA MESSAGE: "O Come" as interlude message
GOES WITH CANTATA: "Oh, Come, Let Us Adore Him" arranged by Larry R. Beebe
MESSAGE WRITTEN BY: Rev. Kim James
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"O Come, Let Us Adore Him" . . . "O Come, All Ye Faithful" . . .
"O Come" is the Christmas invitation we hear over and over again this time of year.

Christmas invitations are like other invitations.
Some you eagerly want to accept.
Others—you know right away that you don't want to go.
Yet other invitations are more intriguing.
You might be interested if you knew more—
if the inviter gave more information about what would happen at the event,
what you should wear,
who else would be attending,
and what benefit you might gain by going.

"O Come, Let Us Adore Him" sounds like we're being asked to come
so we can do something for someone else.
"O Come, All Ye Faithful" sounds like we're being challenged—
maybe even with a little bit of guilt.
Are you really faithful?
Faithful enough to come and do?
Faithful enough to come and give of your time, your talents, and your treasure—
as a loyal volunteer?
Like a little drummer boy?

Well, yes. You *are* being asked to come faithfully and give of yourself as you are able . . .
to worship and adore our Lord.

But you are *also* being asked to come in another way . . .

I think the reason God came to earth as a poor baby born in a stable was to break down barriers--
so everyone would know they are welcome.
You don't have to come bearing expensive gifts.
The wise men did because they could.
But if you don't have gifts to bring, then come anyway.

Come bearing your need.

In Isaiah 55, the prophet wrote God's invitation this way:
"Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;
and you that have no money, come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.
Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Incline your ear, and come to me; listen so that you may live" (vv. 1-3a).

Likewise, in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 11, Jesus said,
 “Come to me,
 all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,
 and I will give you rest.
 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;
 for I am gentle and humble in heart,
 and you will find rest for your souls.
 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (vv. 28-30).

And, in First Peter 2, we hear the invitation,
 “Come to [Christ], . . .
 and . . . let yourselves be built into a spiritual house . . .
 For . . . once you were not a people,
 but now you are God’s people,
 once you had not received mercy,
 but now you have received God’s mercy” (vv. 4-10).

When we come to Christ with empty hands or burdened backs
 or with no sense of belonging or purpose—
 we find the things we need at the manger.

In a poor baby, born in a barn,
 God became so accessible to us—
 so that, like the shepherds, we don’t have to worry how we look or how we smell
 or how much money we have.
 We don’t have to be perfect or trouble free.

All we have to do is come.

And when we come to the Christmas manger,
 bearing our need,
 we will receive the gifts of salvation,
 our thirsts will be quenched,
 our hungers will be satisfied,
 our burdens will be lifted,
 our purpose will be discovered,
 and we will find our place in Christian community.

And then we will be able to worship.
 We will be able to come and adore.
 We will have hearts full of love to offer our savior.

O come, all ye faithful, and all those who would like to be.
 O come, let us adore him!
 But, most of all, come!