



Is there a name for that particular feeling that rises within us as darkness settles on Christmas Eve and the sanctuary begins to glow with the light of a hundred candles? I'm not sure how to describe the emotions I feel at that moment each year as the opening strains of "Silent Night, Holy Night" reach my ears and my soul. It's a quiet joy, a fierce love, an anxious wondering, a sweet relief. It's memory, truth, beauty, gratitude, wonder. "The hopes and fears of all the years" rolled into a simple ritual that is somehow so profound.

The power of music seems to defy explanation. The mystery and majesty of God is perhaps best able to reach us in art....in those glimpses that go beyond words, flow charts, simple answers. Whether we enjoy making music ourselves or simply appreciate the beauty of hearing it, music touches our souls in a unique way. It's been said that "those who sing, pray twice," for there is something about the power and holiness of music that reminds us that God is closer to us than the air we breathe. And there is something about allowing ourselves to be swept up in the swell of the organ, or the boom of a bass line, or the fullness of singing that feels a bit like what Paul was talking about when he said, "Rejoice always! And pray without ceasing."

This Advent, will you join me in praying twice? Whether it's through music or getting in touch with some other kind of art that moves your spirit, will you seek ways to slow down and make room for the Spirit to stir in your soul? We will be exploring songs of the season during our worship services on Sunday mornings and there will be other opportunities to honor stillness and awe this December. You are invited to join us for World AIDS Day, Sustaining Activism for the Long Haul, weekly Taize worship, the children's Christmas pageant and more. Our season will culminate with a choral offering of portions of Handel's Messiah during morning worship on Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup> and Christmas Eve worship on Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm.

Together we will join the ancient chorus as we create space for God to speak a new word into our spirits. Angels we shall hear on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains; heaven and nature will sing; and as angels bend near the earth to touch their harps of gold we will accompany them. Welcoming the Christ Child once again as we stand at the edge of the manger in awe. Love will be born again this Christmas. And we all invited to join the mighty chorus. Shall we?

*Pastor Caela*