

Hanging of the Greens

Cassandra: A reading from the prophet Isaiah, chapter 41: When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the LORD will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive; I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane and the pine together, so that all may see and know, all may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this, the Holy One of Israel has created it.

Cassandra: the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Cassandra: In the days to come the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hill; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say:

"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that God may teach us God's ways and that we may walk in God's paths."

--Isaiah 2:2-3 alt.

Cassandra: and with what shall we bring into God's house?

(branches, greens, wreaths are brought forward) **Bring branches of cedar and holly, bring evergreens and a pine tree, hang wreaths and garlands. Make the church fragrant with the smell of living things and our holy play. In acts of hanging greens and listening to the words of prophets and seers let us make our hearts and this space a place of inward and outward preparation for the One who comes to give us second birth.**

Cassandra: O long-expected Jesus, Emmanuel, our King and Savior,

All: Come and save us, O Lord, our God.

Hymn: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (stanzas 1-2) sung during the arranging of the greens, garlands, and poinsettias

Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the Ruler of glory may come in.

Who is the Ruler of glory?

The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle!

Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors! That the Ruler of glory may come in.

Cassandra: Who is this Ruler of glory?

The Lord of hosts, the Lord is the Ruler of glory!

— Psalm 24:7-10

Cassandra: People of God, we stand at the entrance of the church and at the doorway to the Christian year on this *first* Sunday of Advent. Let us mark the entrance to the church building and our hearts and minds as portals for Christ to enter. *(wreaths can be hung on front doors)*

All: Come, Lord Jesus! Come, Lord Jesus!

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (stanza 5)

Cassandra: Here in this place we prepare for the coming of the Lord. Here we will remember his Advent, his birth in Bethlehem, weak and helpless as an infant. And here we rekindle our prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus" as we await his coming as the bright and morning star. *Prayer:* O Dayspring, Brightness of the Light eternal and Sun of justice,

Come, and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, deliver them. Come, enliven and illumine our hearts, again.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (stanza 6) *(tree lights and star can be turned on)*

Hang symbols and signs of Christ — ruler, prophet, priest. Hang stars, crosses, triangles, the "alpha" and the "omega" to remind us of his identity, his story, and of the holy Trinity. *(hanging of a couple of ornaments or chrismons)*

Cassandra: Through the hanging of ornaments and chrismons, remind us of who You are and Whose we are. O King of the Jews and of the Gentiles, the Cornerstone that makes us all one with You:

Come and deliver us whom You formed out of the dust of the earth. Come and end our strife and bring your peace.

Hymn: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (stanza 7)