

## Pastoral Prayer:

We gather here, O God, as your little ones, people who do not deserve your grace or attention but have been overwhelmed by your unmerited favor. We are not a great Church; much of what we do and are lies in the ceremony of this hour, in this building where our memories of the community are stored, in the rituals of recognition and fellowship that keep us alive from year to year. Some of us are tired some are afraid. Some are even skeptical. But we gather today in love and repentance to confess our sins and feel your forgiveness in our hearts as we enter this Advent season. Even as the people of God, we need to experience ~~of~~ our ~~for~~ weakness before your holiness, our finiteness before your unlimited power.

Come, Spirit of the living God, and fall fresh on us,  
 Come, O Christ, whose Very

Coming is judgment  
on those in whose midst  
you arrive, and Christen  
and prepare us for the  
Father's presence. Grant  
that every man and woman  
and child among us may  
begin this day a time of  
serious self-examination  
so that by Christmas we  
shall be appropriately  
humbled and ready to re-  
ceive and acknowledge your  
lordship in every part of our  
lives, in every thought of our  
beings. Let the ~~word~~ start  
that flows over Bethlehem  
when Christ was born shine  
more in our troubled skies  
and give hope to millions  
who dwell in darkness, doubt  
and sin, for you are indeed a  
God of grace and kindness.