

A CONCERT OF PRAYER

by

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ADVENT

Merciful God, we bring before you our lives, even the things in our lives that are displeasing to you, to this time of prayer, where we may reflect on your word of truth.

Straighten out the areas in our lives that hinder people from discerning your way, O God. Smooth the rough edges of our witness so that anything that prevents people from hearing your word is cleared away.

Many people walk through shadowed valleys at this time of year, weighed down by painful obligations. Forgive us when we fail to become involved with the needs of others by pleading seasonal busy-ness.

Advent God, you call on us to prepare the way for Jesus' birth, and yet, each year it seems that we spend more time making preparations for our own pleasure than preparing for Jesus to be born anew in our hearts and lives--in our families, our communities, and our nation.

Therefore, as we prepare our homes, will you help us to prepare our hearts and minds? We know that we can get so involved in decorating, and buying gifts, and ordering food, and writing cards, that we have no energy left to celebrate the reason for such activity--the birth of your son, Jesus.

Help us to get it right. We want to prepare our homes; we want also to prepare our hearts.

O come to us, abide with us, our Lord, that we may be truly prepared for the joy of Christmas. Amen.