



Advent Reflection for Sunday, December 19
Chelsea Haynes

You can listen to the reading and reflection by clicking [here](#).

Zephaniah 3:14-17

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;

shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,

O daughter Jerusalem!

The Lord has taken away the judgments against you,

he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;

you shall fear disaster no more.

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

Do not fear, O Zion;

do not let your hands grow weak.

The Lord, your God, is in your midst,

a warrior who gives victory;

he will rejoice over you with gladness,

he will renew you in his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing

What speaks to me in this passage is the promise of being pulled from a negative state of being, with judgment, enemies, and fear; to a positive state with gladness, love, and even singing. I slip from a positive state of being into a negative one all too often. It's unsettling to think how quickly it happens. It could be a negative encounter, an unexpected task or two, a depressing headline, or conflict getting

out the door. And whatever "it" is, it sends me from a solid OK to a completely overwhelmed, anxiety ridden state of being - in other words, definitely not OK, though nothing tangible or substantive has actually changed about my life. For some reason the transition back to feeling positive, or at least OK doesn't happen so quickly or easily and my negative thinking and feelings feed on themselves and grow. That is the point in which it would serve me well to have more faith in God to turn away the enemy of negativity and renew me to a positive mindset. Faith is hard in those moments, but I will keep trying. I will try to not let my hands go weak. I think Advent, if we can find the space and time to slow down, offers us a way to connect with that faith and have it more accessible for the challenging moments. When we move nonstop from task to task, everything that comes up can feel like a crisis. I'll admit that at the time of writing this I haven't yet found very much space and time to slow down this Advent, but there's still time and I'm still hopeful.

Chelsea lives in Windsor Terrace with her husband Travis, their children Henry and Mildred, and Vonte the cat. The family has attended Holy Apostles since Fall 2016. Chelsea is a member-at-large on the Bishop's Committee. Chelsea enjoys outdoor activities in all seasons, yoga & pilates (when she finds the time), baking, and simple knitting projects.

