



Rev. T. Denise Anderson | Sanctified Art

**December 12, 2021**

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**Prelude**

**Call to Worship**

A voice calls out in the wilderness.

**It sings of a home for all.**

**It speaks of justice and peace.**

We could choose to ignore it.

**We could drown out that song.**

**We could choose not to listen.**

Instead, we come into this space.

**We let the world grow quiet.**

**We listen.**

A voice calls out in the wilderness.

Do you hear it?

**We hear it. In listening, we worship.**

Let us draw near to God.

Evan O'Donovan

Elder Cheryl Anne Cammann

**Hymn**

*All Are Welcome*

**#301**

**Advent Candle Lighting**

Kalu Family

**Call to Confession**

**Unison Confession**

**Expansive God, we know that the church is Your house, and Your house has room for everyone.**

**Yet, too often, instead of setting the table for our neighbors, we block the door. Instead of welcoming all, we judge others by our own standards. Instead of sharing our second coat, we hide it in the attic, holding on to fear instead of letting go with love. Remind us that Your home is a home for all, that truth requires hard work, that truth requires uncomfortable justice. Help us to be bold enough to see it and brave enough to live it. With hope we pray, amen.**

**Assurance of Forgiveness**

Family of faith, God sent prophets like John the Baptist to us because this work is not easy. Helping create a world where all might have a home, and all might be loved, and all might know peace, is an audacious goal. Fortunately for us, when we mess up—when we lose our way or forget our call—we are met with grace. God could not love us any more or any less than God already does.

So rest in this good news:

**We are at home with God—forgiven, claimed, and loved. The door is always open for us. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

## Hymn

*My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout*

#100

**Passing of the Peace**

Leader: The Peace of Christ be with you.

People: **And also with you!**

**Affirmation of Faith:** (excerpt from *Brief Statement of Faith* )

**We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God.**

**Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the broken-hearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.**

**Pastoral Prayer****Scripture**

*Luke 3:1-18:13*

*Zephaniah 3:14-20*

**Sermon**

Pastor Erin

## Hymn

*Jesus, Jesus O What a Wonderful Child*

#126

**Offering****Invitation****Offertory Song****Dedication****Blessing**

# Make Of My Heart A Stable

♩ = 106

Amanda Udis-Kessler

C Am F2 C Dm Em Am7 F2 G

8 C C Am F2 C Dm

8

Make of my heart a sta-ble, a house for the Ho-ly, a warm and stur-dy  
 Make of my life a sta-ble, a house for the Ho-ly, a warm and stur-dy  
 Make of our church a sta-ble, a house for the Ho-ly, a warm and stur-dy

14 Em Am7 F2 G C

14

place for hope/peace/joy/love to live and grow.  
 place for hope/peace/joy/love to live and grow.  
 place for hope/peace/joy/love to live and grow.

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## ***Artist Statement***

### ***A Closer Walk***

by Rev. T. Denise Anderson

inspired by Luke 3:1-18

As I meditated on the theme, Close to Home, I decided that what makes a place “home” for me is people. That realization informed my decision to explore this theme through portraiture—the depiction of people. The references for each of the depictions I’ve painted are actual Palestinians and Israelis. It’s important to me to bring this ancient story truly close to home as we consider the current geopolitical realities in the land of the Advent story. I encourage you to read more about the stories of those who inspired these depictions.

My depiction of John the Baptist is inspired by Abuna (meaning “Father”) Elias Chacour, who was the Archbishop of Akko, Haifa, Nazareth and All Galilee of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church (2006-2014). A Palestinian Arab-Israeli, Abuna Chacour is a well-respected activist and educator who established the Mar Elias Educational Institutions in Ibillin, which educate students of multiple religious backgrounds—Arab and Israeli—from kindergarten through high school. His life’s work embodies the courageous and prophetic pointing to a better way that I also see in John the Baptist.

John’s words in the text are so full of imagery that it’s impossible to fit it all in one image. The shape of his tunic recalls the base of the tree referenced in verse 9. In the background is an obvious path, recalling John’s clear instruction to his listeners. Share your belongings! Do not extort people! His counsel is so simple, yet apparently so hard to follow. The path leads to the sunrise on a new day, the colors of which allude to the fire of Jesus’ baptism. In his hand is a key, which is a symbol that you’ll see in my other works. For Palestinians, the key represents a longing and determination to return home from displacement.