



## Let Us Go to the House of the Lord

by Bill Berry

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*Bill Berry writes about the changing nature of church. He hosts [Jazz Church](#) every Sunday and follows the God of his Understanding through music.*

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What do you do if you grew up in the black church, attended Sunday School every Sunday until you were almost through high school, and then something happened? I can't put my finger on it exactly. It was a loooooong time ago.

A few things happened. I didn't care for Martin Luther King, Jr. because he wasn't militant enough for me. But then he was assassinated. I don't know.

Maybe I had already started pulling away. Five years earlier, my church didn't participate in the 1963 March on Washington. I didn't understand anything at that age, especially why.

As I became old enough to think for myself, I moved away from the church. Years later, there was a time when we were thinking about



going back. We attended services at a few black churches in the Palo Alto area, but none really appealed to me.

We attended one service featuring a visiting pastor from New York. His name was Preston Washington. I first met Preston as a student at Williams College, and I revered him! Curtis Manns, a former Assistant Dean at the college, let me know he would be visiting. It was great seeing Preston again after so many years, and his sermon was awe-inspiring. I would have loved going to his church. Alas, that was not to be. There was the distance and then time. Preston was taken away from us way too soon.

When I visited a local church from my childhood denomination, the Church of God in Christ, it just didn't feel the same. When I went to a local baptist church, the service felt too sterile.

That's the thing. Style of worship is very particular and important. I was looking for what I had, what I walked away from, and couldn't find it, probably because it didn't exist any longer. Maybe it exists only in my head?

There's one thing from church that is still with me, though: It's the music, especially songs like "[Let Us Go to the House of the Lord](#)" (this recording was how I began the first episode of #JazzChurch last year). Listening again just now, I hear that I was emotional then too. Good emotions!

#StillSearching...

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Advent Scripture Reference Lectionary  
[Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19](#); [Isaiah 4:2-6](#); [Acts 1:12-17, 21-26](#)

Advent Hymn Reflection  
"[Lo! He Comes With Clouds Descending](#)"  
Arranged by John Rutter, performed by the Cambridge Singers



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