MONDAY, DECEMBER 21

DO YOU SEE THE DOVE?

On December 21, 1956, the Montgomery public transportation system was legally integrated. Finally, justice seemed within reach in the form of simply being able to take a seat. More than a year prior, Rosa Parks was famously arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white person. The resulting boycott set the stage for the civil rights actions of the later 1950s and 1960s. Today we remember the power of peaceful resistance in the face of injustice.

Did you notice the dove in the image, circling over the stable? The universal symbol of peace and promise, the dove holds deep cultural meaning. At the end of the Great Flood, Noah sends forth a dove and, when it returns with an olive branch, Noah knows the end of the flood is near. A dove appears at the baptism of Christ. Today, the author of the Song of Songs uses the image of the dove, along with many other images of the natural world to describe a time of peace:

For see, the winter is past,
the rains are over and gone.
The flowers appear on the earth,
the time of pruning the vines has come,
and the song of the dove is heard in our land.
The fig tree puts forth its figs,
and the vines, in bloom, give forth fragrance.
Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one,
and come!

SONG OF SONGS 2:11-13

We are promised a time when the world will exalt and shout for joy at God's goodness and peace, and yet it can seem we are still so far away from that time. Our buses may be integrated, but our systems are still imperfect, still biased. Justice and peace are not yet fully realized.

Advent is a time to reflect and consider how we are working to bring to life the Kingdom of God today. How are we supporting justice, equality and inclusion for our sisters and brothers? If the Prince of Peace were born today, would he be able to recognize his kingdom in our hearts or in our world? A common protest chant for decades has been "No justice, no peace." As people of God, how are we working for the world around us to know justice and to know peace?