



# PRACTICING ADVENT

AN ADVENT GUIDE  
GOD WITH US

**KATY** FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# PRACTICING ADVENT

Advent is a season of waiting and anticipation, but that does not mean it's a season of doing nothing. Instead, in our waiting we are invited to seek out God's presence and to engage into God's world. And so, this guide is meant to help us **practice** Advent together.

Our sermon series this year is focusing on the incarnation of God made known to us in the birth and life of Jesus. Over the course of these few weeks, we'll explore what it means that God became human and why that's such good news. In short – what did it matter and what does it matter that God is with us? Each week we'll look at one angle of this.

A word about the rhythm and pattern of this guide. It is meant to make us pause. In our frantic schedules (especially this time of year!), it can become easy for us to look for quick tidbits, life hacks, and fast information. Even some of our devotional materials simply want us to look for a small nugget of inspiration for the day instead of practicing the slow way of formation.

So, to the best of your ability, receive the invitation to slow down this Advent. If you have never spent time in silent prayer – be patient. It is through the slow and consistent pattern that God speaks to us. May this guide provide you space to center your heart and mind on the Word Made Flesh. And over the course of this season, through these short guides, may we together hear the voice of the Divine in our lives so that we may come to truly know this good news: **God is with us!**

# PRACTICING ADVENT

This guide is structured around silent prayer, scripture, thoughtful quotes, and repetition.

Though it's hard for many of us, try not to rush too quickly to reading and thinking. The silence in this guide is important to the practice of waiting. Even if you only have 5 minutes to give, make sure some of it is spent in stillness.

You likely won't hear anything. It will likely be hard to focus. You might even get a bit bored in the silence. Author and Pastor Rich Villodas offers these four tips for silent prayer:

- Focus on relationship not technique
- Normalize boredom
- Reframe distractions
- Remember that God is always waiting with open arms

The quotes are meant to provoke and stimulate thinking. Sometimes they may feel like a complete thought to consider, and sometimes they may leave you wanting more. They have been lumped into themes as we consider the incarnation.

Like the Word Made Flesh dichotomy of the incarnation, each week we'll sit with a kind of dichotomy present in the idea of God with us.

- Week 1 - Expectation/Surprise
- Week 2 - Everywhere/Here
- Week 3 - Mighty/Vulnerability
- Week 4 - Particular/Universal

# WEEK 1

## EXPECTATION/SURPRISE

You can't blame the first people who missed Jesus. For God showed up in ways that surprised everyone. And yet, when it comes to us today - how do we look and wait for God?

What if Jesus was to return not in a cloud of majesty or with a loud bang... but in a soft whisper and an unassuming posture?

Would we know it was Jesus? Would we be able to see Jesus?

If how God entered into our world in Jesus was any indication, then perhaps it will mean we have to look for God not in the loud, but in meekness. Not at the top, but down at the bottom. It will require of us to be **watchful. Attentive.**

And like the first Christmas, our expectation may turn into surprise as we find where **God is with us** today.

As we begin our Advent journey, may you take your time. Pause. Read Slowly. Don't look for answers too quickly. Let the Spirit speak and be patient in your waiting.

# WEEK 1 - DAY 1

**2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

## **Scripture | Isaiah 64:1-4**

### **Devotional**

Advent, in particular, is a season that teaches us to do something that is very hard for us to do: wait. It teaches us how to wait for the Advent or arrival of Christ into our world, not just way back then in Biblical times, but now - those places where we long for his presence and need his intervention. Waiting for Christ's coming into the place of our lives where we need him most right now ushers us into a special kind of waiting that is alert and watchful, full of anticipation and yet patient. The prophetic witness of John the Baptist calls us to become intentional about creating the conditions that ease Christ's coming into our lives - alone and together. To remove whatever hindrances and obstacles there might be to Christ's presence. To make straight whatever is crooked in us. To smooth out the rough places so that the salvation of God can become evident in our own lives."

**Joan Chittister**

### **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen.

**2 min - Conclude with silence**

# WEEK 1 - DAY 2

**2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

**Scripture | Luke 1:41-43**

## **Devotional**

“Our assumptions hinder our spiritual journey in all kinds of ways, and the antidote to assumption is surprise. The surprise of Christ's incarnation is that it happened in Mary's day as it is happening in your lack of resources, your overcrowded lodging, your unlit night sky, your humble surroundings. It's a surprise that life can come through barren places. It's a surprise that meek nobodies partake in divine plans. It's a surprise that messengers are sent all along the hidden journey of life to let you know you are not alone. It's a surprise that you will be given everything you need to accomplish what you've been asked to do. It's a surprise that nothing can separate you from the love of God.”

**Scott Erickson**

## **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**2 min - Conclude with silence**

# WEEK 1 - DAY 3

**2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

## **Scripture | John 1:1-14**

## **Devotional**

"All ideas and images of God must surrender to the supreme revelation of God as seen in Jesus Christ. Christ alone is the perfect definition of who God is. The conclusion we are to draw from John's theopoetics at the beginning of the fourth Gospels is this: God is like Jesus. God has always been like Jesus. There has never been a time when God wasn't like Jesus. We haven't always known this, but now we do."

**Brian Zahnd**

## **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**2 min - Conclude with silence**

# WEEK 1 - DAY 4

## 2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God

### Prayer for Presence

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

### Scripture | Psalm 80

#### Devotional

I cannot tell you  
how the light comes.  
What I know  
is that it is more ancient  
than imagining.  
That it travels  
across an  
astounding expanse  
to reach us.  
That it loves  
searching out  
what is hidden,  
what is lost,  
what is forgotten  
or in peril  
or in pain.  
That it has a fondness

for the body,  
for finding its way  
toward flesh,  
for tracing the edges  
of form,  
for shining forth  
through the eye,  
the hand,  
the heart.  
I cannot tell you  
how the light comes,  
but that it does.  
That it will.  
That it works its way  
into the deepest dark,  
that enfolds you,

though it may seem  
long ages in coming  
or arrive in a shape  
you did not foresee.  
And so  
may we this day  
turn ourselves toward it.  
May we lift our faces  
to let it find us.  
May we bend our bodies  
to follow the arc it makes.  
May we open  
and open more  
and open still  
to the blessed light  
that comes.

Jan Richardson, *How The Light Comes*

### Space for Reflection

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

### The Lord's Prayer

## 2 min - Conclude with silence



# WEEK 1 - DAY 5

**2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

## **Scripture | Luke 1:8-12**

## **Devotional**

A transformation was required for the townspeople to hear the proclamation of divine birth coming from the mouths of failed religion school shepherds. A transformation was required for the shepherds to believe they had been invited to be preachers of divine birth to their families neighbors. It was all very... unexpected. So it is with you as well, that divine proclamation will come through very unexpected ways. The Giver of life hides revelation in the things we ignore because it is the work of humbling ourselves and asking to have eyes to see and ears to hear that truly transforms our hearts.

**Scott Erickson**

## **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**2 min - Conclude with silence**

## WEEK 2 EVERYWHERE/HERE

Eugene Peterson translates John 1:14 as  
"The Word became flesh and blood,  
and moved into the neighborhood."

Incarnation is not just a theological idea about God, but a practical pattern to be followed.

How God entered into our world, to be among us, to serve alongside us, and to share in our joys and pain also become the pattern for us to be with each other in this world.

And so this week, we will consider the impact of incarnation on our lives. What does it mean for how we live? What might God want to speak to us in this season so that we live incarnationally in our community?

May you take your time. Pause. Read Slowly. Don't look for answers too quickly. Let the Spirit speak and be patient in your waiting.

# WEEK 2 - DAY 1

**2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

**Scripture | Matthew 4:12-17**

## **Devotional**

"The incarnation of Jesus should inform our activity in the world. The Christian faith is a faith that is always placed - in creation, in history, in time. And it continues to be a faith of embodied presence. Both presence and place matter. If there is any possibilities for human flourishing in a dislocated, isolated world, it begins when God's love is embodied in us and enacted through us. Just as God took on flesh in the person of Jesus in order to dwell among us and to identify with us, we as the body of Christ are to incarnate into the places we live."

**Lance Ford and Brad Brisco**

## **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen.

**2 min - Conclude with silence**

# WEEK 2 - DAY 2

**2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

## **Scripture | Acts 2:1-13**

## **Devotional**

"Incarnation is translation. When God in Christ became man, divinity was translated into humanity...the first divine act of translation thus gives rise to a constant succession of new translations. Christian diversity is the necessary product of the incarnation."

**Andrew Walls**

## **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**2 min - Conclude with silence**

# WEEK 2 - DAY 3

**2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

**Scripture | Jeremiah 29:4-7**

## **Devotional**

"The truth is we are not created to be placeless wanderers. The Garden of Eden, the promised land, the city on a hill, the house with many rooms, the streets of gold: the Christian story is a story of places - the most tangible places - from beginning to end. We are made to inhabit. Even the missionary who treks half way around the world does so to settle somewhere in particular and there to dwell for the sake of the gospel. The story of the incarnation is the story of God en-fleshed in a particular place at a particular time and within a very specific community. So too for us, the call of God is to be in a particular place and there to embody the presence and grace of God. It's a call to locality."

**Simon Carey Holt**

## **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**2 min - Conclude with silence**

# WEEK 2 - DAY 4

**2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

## **Scripture | Psalm 85:8-13**

### **Devotional**

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are  
back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among  
brothers [and sisters],  
To make music in the heart.

**Howard Thurman**

### **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**2 min - Conclude with silence**

# WEEK 2 - DAY 5

## 2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God

### Prayer for Presence

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

### Scripture | Luke 1:46-56

### Devotional

“God became flesh and launched his movimiento [movement] among those who were despised and rejected by both their Roman colonizers and the elite of their own people. Jesus didn’t go to the big city and seek recruits among the religious, political, and economic elite.... He started in what today would be East LA, the Artesia Community Guild, or Spanish Harlem. To change the system, Jesus had to start with those who were excluded from the system....

Although the good news of Jesus is for the whole human family, it goes first to the poor and all who are marginalized. Like a loving father [or mother], God loves all [God’s] children equally, but shows special concern for those of his [or her] children who suffer most.... Riling under the double burden of Roman colonialism and economic and spiritual oppression by the elites of their own people, [the underclass of Jesus’ day] needed first to hear the announcement of God’s liberation. Though they were seen as weaker in the eyes of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and ruling elite, Jesus considered them indispensable; though they were thought to be less honorable, Jesus gave them greater honor. Jesus gave greater honor to those who lacked it (1 Corinthians 12:22–25). He went first to those “outside the gate” of institutional power and authority.”

**Robert Chao Romero**

### Space for Reflection

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

### The Lord’s Prayer

## 2 min - Conclude with silence

## WEEK 3

# MIGHT/VULNERABILITY

When the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, God entered into our hardship.

What does it mean for God **Almighty** to be born as a vulnerable infant?

What does it mean for the might and strength of God to run into temptation, hardship, and stress?

In our third week, we'll take time to consider the seemingly opposing attributes of God's might and humanity's vulnerability. How does the incarnation of God impact how we see and understand our own humanity?

May you take your time. Pause. Read Slowly. Don't look for answers too quickly. Let the Spirit speak and be patient in your waiting.



# WEEK 3 - DAY 1

**2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

**Scripture | Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11**

## **Devotional**

"God's accompanying of creatures in their suffering is sheer grace, unexpected companionship in the depths of affliction. the presence of another in the experience of suffering is a gift; the presence of the compassionate God in the experience of suffering is a gift precious beyond words.

Jesus prayed, spoke, acted, and suffered as a real human being. In the memorable phrase of Gregory of Nazianzus, 'that which he has not assumed, he has not healed.' If God in Christ does not enter into solidarity with the hell of our human condition, we remain without deliverance and without hope... the full humanity of Jesus is the precondition of the inclusiveness of his salvation."

**Daniel Migliore**

## **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen.

**2 min - Conclude with silence**

# WEEK 3 - DAY 2

**2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

**Scripture | Hebrews 4:14-16**

## **Devotional**

“But God knows what it’s like to live in flesh. . . . If God too lived in a body, then God knows the ache of growing pains and the feeling of goosebumps on a brisk day and the comfort of a warm embrace. He felt the gurgle of a hungry stomach and the annoying prick of a splinter after a day of hard work. He wept over the death of a friend. Ours is a God who sneezed and rubbed His eyes when He was sleepy. Ours is a God who knew longing, heartbreak, excitement, frustration—the full range of what it means to be human . . . [and] live in a body.

So when my own body drags me down, when my muscles ache, when my worries keep me up at night, when my fear for the future leaves me motionless, when I feel lonely and exhausted and burdened, I do not worship a God who is far off.

This is a God who knows my humanity inside and out. God has counted every hair on my head (Matthew 10:30) and bottled up every tear I have shed (Psalm 56:8). Not simply because the Word formed us (Genesis 1:27), knit us together in our mothers’ wombs (Psalm 139:13), was there from the very beginning . . . but because God wore our skin.”

**Kate Bowler**

## **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

## **The Lord’s Prayer**

**2 min - Conclude with silence**

# WEEK 3 - DAY 3

**2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

**Scripture | Isaiah 9:2-7**

## **Devotional**

"If Jesus embodied mightiness through an overcoming physicality, He would've appeared in a golden onesie, ripped like a CrossFit trainer, kicking the can of anyone in His way. But instead we find a humble servant wrapped in human vulnerability who is obedient to the vulnerability all the way to death, even if it happens to be death on a cross. Jesus is mighty not because of His capacity to overcome hardship but because of His willingness to go through human hardship, like we have to do. It is this compassionate empathy that has the power to transform the human heart."

**Scott Erickson**

## **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**2 min - Conclude with silence**

# WEEK 3 - DAY 4

## 2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God

### Prayer for Presence

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

### Scripture | Luke 1:12-20

### Devotional

"I know that Christians are Easter people. We are supposed to favor the story of the resurrection, which reminds us that death is never the end of God's story. Yet I have never found that story even half as compelling as the story of the Incarnation.

It is nearly impossible to believe: God shrinking down to the size of a zygote, implanted in the soft lining of a woman's womb. God growing fingers and toes. God kicking and hiccupping in utero. God inching down the birth canal and entering this world covered in blood, perhaps into the steady, waiting arms of a midwife. God crying out in hunger. God reaching for his mother's breasts. God totally relaxed, eyes closed, his chubby little arms raised over his head in a posture of complete trust. God resting in his mother's lap. . .

God trusted God's very self, totally and completely and in full bodily form, to the care of a woman. God needed women for survival. Before Jesus fed us with the bread and the wine, the body and the blood, Jesus himself needed to be fed, by a woman. He needed a woman to say: "This is my body, given for you. . ."

**Rachel Held Evans**

### Space for Reflection

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

### The Lord's Prayer

## 2 min - Conclude with silence

# WEEK 3 - DAY 5

**2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

**Scripture | John 3:16-17**

## **Devotional**

"God entered into our world not with the crushing impact of unbearable glory, but in the way of weakness, vulnerability, and need. The world does not understand vulnerability. Neediness is rejected as incompetence, and compassion is dismissed as unprofitable. But in this weakness and poverty the shipwrecked at the stable would come to know the love of God."

**Brennan Manning**

## **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**2 min - Conclude with silence**

## WEEK 4

# PARTICULAR/UNIVERSAL

When the Word became flesh, God was a human.

A 1st Century Palestinian man.

A son of a carpenter.

A Jewish rabbi.

Born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, and died in Jerusalem.

And yet, we call this Jesus of Nazareth - The Messiah. The Christ. A Savior for all the world.

Our fourth week Advent will conclude on Sunday with Christmas Eve. This week we'll sit with what some call "the scandal of particularity." When the Word became Flesh, and moved into the neighborhood, what does it mean? Is God limited by becoming human? Or does Jesus' humanity open us up to something of the Divine?

May you take your time. Pause. Read Slowly. Don't look for answers too quickly. Let the Spirit speak and be patient in your waiting.

# WEEK 4 - DAY 1

**2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

**Scripture | Ephesians 2:13-16**

## **Devotional**

"When Christians call Jesus fully human, their claim is not simply that he is a human but that he is the embodiment, norm, and promise of a new humanity in relation to God and to others."

**Daniel Migliore**

## **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen.

**2 min - Conclude with silence**

# WEEK 4 - DAY 2

**2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

**Scripture | Colossians 1:15-20**

## **Devotional**

“Jesus became incarnate to reveal the image of the invisible God. The personal Incarnation is the logical conclusion of God’s love affair with creation. Do you know why I say this? Do you know why I can believe this? Because I see it in human beings: over a period of time, we all become what we love. God in Jesus became what God loves - everything human. Just show me what you love, and I’ll show you what you’re going to be like five years from now. Show me what you give time to, what your treasure is, what you give energy to and I’ll show you what you’ll become. God had to become human once the love affair began, because - strictly speaking - love implies some level of likeness or even equality. The incarnation was an evitable conclusion, not an accident or an anomaly. It shouldn’t have been a surprise to us. God was destined and determined, I believe, to become a human being, but it’s still a big deal. When the impossible gap is overcome from God’s side, and by God’s choice, even if it was from the beginning.”

**Richard Rohr**

## **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

## **The Lord’s Prayer**

**2 min - Conclude with silence**



# WEEK 4 - DAY 3

**2 min - silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

## **Scripture | John 1:14**

## **Devotional**

"The Hebrew word for 'flesh' (basar), when used in the OT, normally signifies human vulnerability and mortality. God is never spoke of in the OT as "flesh". Flesh and God are as different as weakness and power. That God has become flesh in Jesus signifies that the Almighty has entered into human frailty. This does not mean that the Almighty has undergone a reduction of power but that the Almighty has embraced everything frailty entails, by living it - to the point of crucifixion, and that the Almighty has been glorified in that frailty. The incarnation is not a doctrine about a lone individual. Instead, it tells how God in Jesus Christ enters into solidarity with vulnerable people. His history is inseparable from theirs. He comes in direct contact with sinners, the sick, the blind, the lame, the poor, lepers, prostitutes, the demon-possessed, political criminals, Roman collaborators, and even corpses. They and he mingle as he lives, is crucified, and is buried with them. Just as the Son love his Father, he also loves these neighbors. They in turn become identified with his "self". All this happens "for us and our salvation," as the earliest creeds, such as the Nicene Creed (AD 325) affirm"

**Craig Keen**

## **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**2 min - Conclude with silence**

# WEEK 4 - DAY 4

**2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

**Scripture | Hebrews 1:1-4**

## **Devotional**

"Don't try to explain the Incarnation to me! It is further from being explainable than the furthest star in the furthest galaxy. It is love, God's limitless love enfleshing that love into the form of a human being, Jesus, the Christ, fully human and fully divine.

Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, Christ, the Maker of the universe or perhaps many universes, willingly and lovingly leaving all that power and coming to this poor, sin-filled planet to live with us for a few years to show us what we ought to be and could be. Christ came to us as Jesus of Nazareth, wholly human and wholly divine, to show us what it means to be made in God's image."

**Madeleine L'Engle**

## **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**2 min - Conclude with silence**

# WEEK 4 - DAY 5

**2 min - Silence, stillness, and centering before God**

## **Prayer for Presence**

Holy God, in this moment of prayer, free me from the distractions of the day so that I may be deeply present to you and myself, for the sake of the world around me.

## **Scripture | Psalm 126**

### **Devotional**

Come, thou long expected Jesus,  
born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us,  
let us find our rest in thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation,  
hope of all the earth thou art;  
dear desire of every nation,  
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,  
born a child and yet a King,  
born to reign in us forever,  
now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By thine own eternal spirit  
rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all sufficient merit,  
raise us to thy glorious throne.

**Charles Wesley**

## **Space for Reflection**

In response to the scripture reading and/or devotional, spend a few quiet minutes praying, reflecting, or writing.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**2 min - Conclude with silence**

# RESOURCES

## Practicing Advent

1. Rich Villodas, *The Deeply Formed Life*, Waterbrook, 2020, pgs 21-28

## Week 1 - Expectation/Surprise

1. Joan Chittister, *The Liturgical Year*. Thomas Nelson, 2010, p. 60
2. Scott Erickson, *Honest Advent: Awakening to the Wonder of God-with-us Then, Here, and Now*. Zondervan, 2020, pgs. 91-93.
3. Brian Zahnd, *The Anticipated Christ: A journey through Advent and Christmas*, Spello Press, 2022, pg 147.
4. Jan Richardson, *Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons*, Wanton Gospeller Press, 2015. pgs. 59-60.
5. Scott Erickson, *Honest Advent: Awakening to the Wonder of God-with-us Then, Here, and Now*. Zondervan, 2020, pgs. 167-168

## Week 2 - Everywhere/Here

1. Lance Ford and Brad Brisco, *Next Door As It Is In Heaven: Living Out God's Kingdom In Your Neighborhood*, NavPress, 2016, pgs. 11-12.
2. Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement In Christian History: Studies in Transmission of Faith*, Orbis Books, 1996, pgs. 27-28.
3. Simon Carey Holt, *God Next Door: Spirituality and Mission in the Neighbourhood*, Acorn Press, 2007, kindle location 1399.
4. Howard Thurman, *The Mood of Christmas & Other Celebrations*, Friends United Press, 1985. pg. 23.
5. Robert Chao Romero, *Brown Church: Five Centuries of Latina/o Social Justice, Theology, and Identity*, IVP Academic, 2020, pgs. 36, 39-40.

# RESOURCES

## **Week 3 - Mighty/Vulnerability**

1. Daniel L. Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology, 3rd Edition, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishings Company, 2014, pgs. 138, 180.
2. Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie, Good Enough: 40ish Devotionals for a Life of Imperfection, Convergent Books, 2022, pgs. 156, 157–158.
3. Scott Erickson, Honest Advent: Awakening to the Wonder of God-with-us Then, Here, and Now. Zondervan, 2020, pgs. 167-168
4. Rachel Held Evans with Jeff Chu, Wholehearted Faith, HarperOne, 2021, pgs. 3–5, 6.
5. Brennan Manning, A Glimpse of Jesus: The Stranger to Self-Hatred. HarperCollins e-Books, 2010, p. 138

## **Week 4 - Particular/Universal**

1. Daniel L. Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology, 3rd Edition, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishings Company, 2014, p. 181.
2. Richard Rohr with Mike Morrell, The Divine Dance: The Trinity and Your Transformation, Whitaker House, 2016, p. 174-175
3. Craig Keen, Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology, Beacon Hill Press, 2013, p. 257.
4. Madeleine L'Engle, Bright Evening Star: Mysteries of the Incarnation, Harold Shaw Publishers, 1997, pgs. 9–11.
5. Charles Wesley, The United Methodist Hymnal : Book of United Methodist Worship. Nashville, Tenn. :United Methodist Pub. House, 1989.

**FOR A DIGITAL COPY OR MORE INFORMATION  
ABOUT ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS EVE  
AT KATY FIRST VISIT:**

**[KATYFIRST.ORG/ADVENT](https://KATYFIRST.ORG/ADVENT)**





# ADVENT SCHEDULE



KATY FIRST  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

- DEC. 3 — 11 AM — ADVENT 1 SERVICE  
DEC. 3 — 5 PM — CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING  
DEC. 4 — 6 PM — MMF CHRISTMAS SHOW  
“CALLING ALL ANGELS”  
DEC. 10 — 11 AM — ADVENT 2 SERVICE  
DEC. 10 — 5 PM — CELEBRATION SINGERS’ COFFEE  
HOUSE  
DEC. 11 — 6 PM — LPS CHRISTMAS PROGRAM  
DEC. 17 — 11 AM — ADVENT 3 SERVICE - BELLS, CHOIR &  
CONGREGATION MUSIC CELEBRATION  
DEC. 21 — 7 PM — LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE  
DEC. 24 — 11 AM — ADVENT 4 SERVICE

DECEMBER 24 — CHRISTMAS EVE

3PM — FAMILY & CHILDREN

6PM CANDLELIGHT & COMMUNION

# CHRISTMASEVE

**3 PM** Family & Children

**6 PM** Candlelight & Communion



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