Make Ready for Holy Disruption: A Contemplative Advent Midweek Series
Advent carries two simultaneous visions of our expectations: we await yet again the birth of the babe in the manger, and we also await Christ's coming again to fulfill all things. We often prepare for Advent by "getting ready." Yet preparing for the coming of Christ is not a matter of having everything under control. Christ's arrival disrupts—disrupts injustice, sin, and brokenness in a society in which we are deeply embedded. A prayer for Christ to come to us is a prayer for a holy disruption of our lives that we cannot control and that we might struggle to accept.

This midweek Advent is built around three steps to help us recognize our resistance to God's inbreaking and prepare for God's holy disruption: breathing, releasing, receiving, and rejoicing. Each week's liturgy will focus on one step of this process. Together they form a spiritual discipline that reminds us that discipleship is always a process requiring intentional practice. Advent reminds us to return to our sense of longing for and expectation of God's coming into our world. In this worship series we pay attention to opening ourselves to the holy disruption of God's inbreaking promise.

<u>**Week One: Breathing**</u>
Scripture Reading: *Genesis 1:1-5; 2:7*
In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Word of God, Word of life.
Thanks be to God.

Message/Practice by Pastor Becky Sells

Step 1: Breathing-Sit with both feet on the ground, back and neck straight, shoulders back, eyes closed. Slowly breathe into the diaphragm (so that the chest remains still but the abdomen expands) for 4 counts, hold for 2 counts, exhale for 4 counts, hold for 2 counts. Repeat for a total of 5 breaths.

 Prayer: O God—sweeping Wind, life-giving Breath, cleansing and guiding Spirit—you are the source of all we are and all we can become. Your power roars and skips among the galaxies and flows delicately within our every cell, sustaining all life. You breathe mercy over us and teach us with truth and wisdom. Be with us and all your people in this season and guide us so that we find comfort and confidence in your coming promise. In the name of the Holy One who was, is, and is to come. **Amen.**

The light shines in the darkness.
And the darkness did not overcome it.

1 O liv-ing Breath of God, wind at   the   be-gin-ning   up-on the   wa - ters;
2 O liv-ing Breath of God, by whose pow'r the Son came   to birth a - mong us;
3 O liv-ing Breath of God, bear-ing   us   to life through bap-tis-mal   wa - ters;

O   liv-ing Breath of   God,   bear-ing   the   cre - a - tion   to   won-drous birth:
O   liv-ing Breath of   God,   who   to   the   cre - a - tion gives life   a - new:
O   liv-ing Breath of   God,   sigh-ing with cre - a - tion   for   free-dom's birth:

Refrain

Come now, and fill   our   spir   -   its;   pour out your gifts a - bun - dant.

O   liv-ing Breath of   God,   Ho-ly   Spir-it,   breathe in   us   as we   pray.

Text: Osvaldo Catena, 1920-1986; tr. Gerhard M. Cartford, b. 1923
Music: VÅRVINDAR FRISKA, Swedish folk tune
Tr. © 1998 Augsburg Fortress