

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.

Week Two: Releasing

Scripture Reading: *Luke 3:1-18*

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.

Step 2: Releasing- I invite you to put your fists up in front of you chest and breath in. As you exhale, take your arms down, pointing your fists down and away from you, opening them, as if make a motion of throwing away the trash. Repeat this with your breathing. You are invited to release unhelpful expectations or attachments, anxiety, and resentments, asking God to take that which you need to release.

OR

Hold your closed fists in front of you, palms down. As you exhale, slowly open your hands. As you inhale again, return to the closed fists, repeating the opening of your hands on the exhale. You are invited to release unhelpful expectations or attachments, anxiety, and resentments, asking God to take that which you need to release.

Prayer: O God of freedom, there are so many other things that we cling to and that demand our focus. We fear the disruption of change and hold fast to the very things that cause us grief. Yet your promise assures us that we find all we need in you. Be with us and all your people in this season and guide us so that we may set aside all that distracts us from you. In the name of the Holy One who was, is, and is to come. **Amen.**

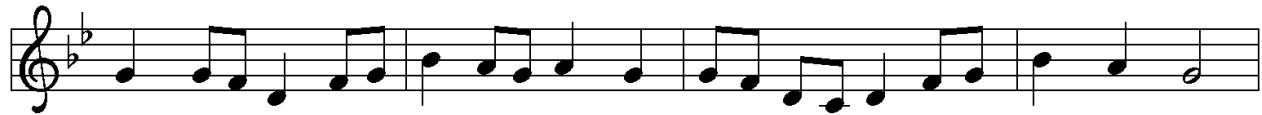
The light shines in the darkness, **and the darkness does not overcome it.**

Song: "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

ELW 254



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long-ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

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