

Make Ready for Holy Disruption: A Contemplative Advent Midweek Series

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 four steps to help us recognize our resistance to God's inbreaking and prepare for God's holy disruption: breathing, releasing, receiving, and rejoicing. 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 3: Receiving and Rejoicing Scripture Reading: *John 1:1-23*

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 your chest and breathe in slowly for 4 seconds, hold 2-4 seconds. Then as you exhale slowly for 4 seconds, take your arms down, pointing your fists down and away from you, opening them, as if make a motion of throwing away the trash. Hold this for 2-4 seconds. Repeat this with your breathing again. *(If you are in close proximity to others: Hold your closed fists in front of you on your lap, 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.

Step 3: Receiving/Rejoicing

Now I invite you to place your open palms hands over your heart as you breathe, noticing the warmth and presence of God as you breathe in and out slowly. Now as you breathe out, open your arms, palms up resting them in your lap, as if leaves opening up to receive the light. As you inhale, close your fist as receiving the goodness of God. Then as you exhale open your hands to receive what God wishes to give you. Then as you inhale, close your hands, receiving the gift God gives you. And repeat this closing hands as you breathe in savoring God's gifts and presence with you, and then as you exhale, open your hands back up to receive, and as you inhale cherish God's Spirits tending to you for a while (at least 4-5 repetitions).

Now I invite you to place your hands back over your heart, one on top of the other and inhale God's gift and presence to you in gratitude. (Saying a prayer of thanks with our bodies fully present.) And then when you are ready, inhale this goodness once more, and as you exhale, I invite you to open your arms, your face and your heart upward with the light of Christ present within glowing up and outward to those people and places around you, you radiating with new life and joy. As you inhale, you can breathe in with God, touching your lips, and exhaling by opening your arms and face to rejoice and share the goodness of God.


1st Prayer: Generous God, you provide all that we need. We thank you that you do not give us what we want, but what you, in your wisdom, desire for us. Open us to the miracles surrounding us every moment, and teach us to expect your coming throughout each day. Pour out upon us your overflowing mercy, justice, and peace. Teach us to trust your abundance so thoroughly that we share all that we have received from you, for the healing of the world and the proclamation of your name. In the name of the Holy One who was, is, and is to come. **Amen.**

2nd Prayer: God of all that is good, source of all joy, we praise you for the gladness that comes to us in your promise. We celebrate the holy disruption that dismantles sin and brings new life and new beginnings. Holy God, in whom all creation delights, receive our thanks and our joy as an offering. Move within us and use us to reflect hope into the world, and to carry good tidings of great joy to every place we go. In the name of the Holy One who was, is, and is to come. **Amen.**

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

Hymn: “Christ, Be Our Light”

ELW 715



1 Long - ing for light, we wait in dark - ness. Long - ing for
 2 Long - ing for peace, our world is trou - bled. Long - ing for
 3 Long - ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long - ing for
 4 Long - ing for shel - ter, man - y are home - less. Long - ing for
 5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,
 hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone
 wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,
 warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,
 hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants




your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.
 has pow'r to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.
 bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.
 shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.
 to one an - oth - er, signs of your king - dom come.

Refrain



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the



dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.

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