

An Invitation to Wait: 2016 Advent Resources

The human experience is composed of rhythms. Those who commute to work are governed by the traffic patterns and rhythms of rush hour. Our weather is in constant flux in accordance with the rhythm of the seasons. Students alternate between rigorous studies and times of break as aligned with the rhythm of the academic year. Even our cycles of sleeping and waking are dictated by internal Circadian rhythms.

The same is true for the church. Different times of the year are elevated for the people of God to celebrate, reflect, and grow in our journey towards Christ-likeness. Each ebb and flow of the church season helps us live into the rhythms of the Gospel with greater intentionality as we remember and reflect on the story of redemption that God has been writing throughout human history. Living in these rhythms sets us apart from the world in a way that reminds us of our true citizenship and our calling to be the aroma of Christ in a broken and hurting world.

Moreover, following the church calendar is a highly communal endeavor, for as we observe the particularities of liturgical rhythms we stand alongside our sisters and brothers in faith around the world who are likewise meditating on the Christian story and striving to live as citizens of the Kingdom. And so it is in the season of Epiphany that we point to the light and life of Jesus as we reflect on His time on earth and seek to follow His example. In Lent we take up a posture of repentance and confession as we prepare for the celebration of Holy Week. And in Pentecost we remember the gift of the Holy Spirit and the ongoing ministry of the church that is fueled by the invigoration of the third member of the Trinity.

November 27 marks the beginning of the 2016 Advent season. Over the following four weeks we take up the discipline of waiting, cultivating a posture of prayer and expectancy as we look toward Christmas and a celebration of the incarnation. The vocabulary of Advent is made up of words like longing, preparation, darkness, waiting, and promise. Rich theological themes that are fundamental to our understanding of what it means to live in the now and the not yet of our faith. Perhaps even more poignantly, the language of Advent speaks both a word of lament *and* hope that might resonate amid the injustices experienced personally and globally each and every day.

Amid all of this, there is something quite counter-cultural about sitting in the realities of Advent before rushing into a celebration of Christmas. There is much in our western world that is focused on instant gratification, rabid consumption, and an escapist-fueled hedonism that helps us avoid the pain of our present realities. These descriptors are only enhanced ten-fold during the holiday season. In the place of all this tinsel-wrapped sentimentality, the realities of Advent remind us to slow down, to not resist the darkness, and to reflect on the world before us. It is from this place of longing and expectation that we are ready to receive the light, the promise of the Christ Child.

The Campus Ministries team at SPU as cultivated a non-exhaustive list of resources and events that might encourage and challenge our collective movement through Advent. It will also be available on our website starting next week (www.spu.edu/cm). Whether or not you've ever observed Advent before, our hope is that each of us might be invited to journey toward Christmas with greater intentionality—both remembering the incarnation *and* awaiting the second coming. And as we do so, may we continue to see the Kingdom of God come in all of its fullness in, around, and through us.

Ideas for Prayer, Social Media Engagement, and Justice Work:

- Take up the daily prayer offices utilizing Phyllis Tickle's [Christmastide](#) or [Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals](#) (Shane Claiborne, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, Enuma Okoro)
- Utilize the [interactive prayer stations](#) of Rev. Theresa Cho
- Read the 2014 works of [#staywokeadvent](#), and consider how you might carry the engagement forward on social media for 2016
- Read past Advent reflections from [Sojourners](#), and be on the lookout for 2016 writings.
- Choose a way to engage with the [Advent Conspiracy](#), and encourage your church to do so as well
- Participate in the global [Advent Word](#) movement through daily posts and readings on social media
- *Denominational Resources for Prayers, Readings, Advent Calendars:*
 - o United Methodist Church
 - o From the lens of [Ignatian Spirituality](#)
 - o [Episcopal Church](#)

Events in the Seattle Area (non-exhaustive!):

- [Advent Evening of Prayer](#); Tuesday, December 6, 2016 | 7:00-9:00 pm | St. Joseph Church, Seattle
Presenters: Fr. Trung Pham, S.J. and Catherine Punsalan
- [This Dark December](#); Tuesday, December 6 | 7:00pm | University Presbyterian Church, Seattle
Join us for a special, meditative service in honor of those who experience grief amidst the festive season. It will be a time of scripture, music, silent reflection and prayer, to remember hurt and find healing.
- [Bethany Community Church Christmas Concert](#); Saturday, December 10 | 5 & 7pm

Books & Daily Meditations:

- [Silence and Other Surprising Invitations of Advent](#) (Enuma Okoro)
- [Goodness and Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas](#) (edited by Leach, Keane, and Goodnough):
- [Walking Through Advent](#) (e-book; Jan Sutch Pickard)
- [God with Us](#) (Produced by SPU's own Image Journal)
- [Night Visions: Searching the Shadows of Advent and Christmas](#) (Jan Richardson)

Readings for each Sunday in Advent: (borrowed from [Rachel Held Evan's Blog](#))

- **Week 1:** Isaiah 60, Isaiah 7:14 / "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" / Collect for the First Sunday of Advent, Book of Common Prayer
- **Week 2:** Isaiah 35, Isaiah 53) / "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus" / Collect for the Second Sunday of Advent, Book of Common Prayer
- **Week 3:** John 1:1-18 / "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent" / Collect for the Third Sunday of Advent, Book of Common Prayer
- **Week 4:** Mary's song: Luke 1:46-55, Zecharia's Song: Luke 1:68-79, Simeon's song: Luke 2:29-32 / "O Holy Night" / Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Advent, Book of Common Prayer
- **Christmas Day:** Luke 2:1-21 / "Joy to the World," "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" / Collect for Christmas Day, The Book of Common Prayer