

Songs for the Waiting: A Video Advent Devotional

This handout supplements a daily Advent devotional that is available to watch on: Friendship Haven channel 16 each day at 3:15pm and 6:30pm, and is available each day at 9am on the Facebook page of “First Presbyterian Church Fort Dodge,” and on our website: fpcfd.org/advent Use these Scripture passages and reflection questions to gain a fuller Advent experience.

Monday 11-30. Forgive and Forget? Psalm 137. “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” verse 1. Reflection: In what ways are you experiencing captivity and exile in your life right now? What do you need to surrender to God in order to heal from the wounds of your past?

Tuesday 12-1. Wisdom Personified. Proverbs 3:13-20. “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” verse 2. Reflection: Who embodies wisdom for you? How have you counted on these people for counsel, guidance, and encouragement in your life? In what ways might you serve as the embodiment of wisdom for someone else that you know?

Wednesday 12-2. Making Idols. Exodus 32:1-14. “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” verse 3. Reflection: What idols have you created, even inadvertently, that make you forget the nature and work of God in your life? What steps can you take to remove those idols and offer God your full surrender?

Thursday 12-3. More Than Meets the Eye. 1 Samuel 16:1-13. “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” verse 4. Reflection: How do the stories of the ugly duckling, the selection of David as king, and Jesus’ own questionable heritage address any issues you have with low self-esteem or poor self-image?

Friday 12-4. Claiming the Future. Exodus 12:1-14. “People, Look East,” verse 1. Reflection: Consider the last time you planned or attended a bridal or baby shower. Think about how those celebrations anticipate future events. How does worship do the same? How is Advent also a celebration of something that has not yet happened?

Monday 12-7. What Comes Down Will Rise Up. John 12:24-26. “People, Look East,” verse 2. Reflection: What fears do you have related to living a life of self-emptying and self-sacrifice? Which of the above challenges for Advent are easiest for you to consider? Which ones are hardest?

Tuesday 12-8. The Power of the Son. John 1:1-14. “People, Look East,” verse 3. Reflection: In what ways are you living in darkness right now? What does it mean to you to think of the light of Jesus as a kind of light that illuminates your darkness?

Wednesday 12-9. The Return of the King. Matthew 25:31-46. “Come, Thou Almighty King,” verse 1. Reflection: Is there anything liberating or challenging to you about the notion that the “Almighty King” is always on the side of the oppressed? How do you interpret the idea of Christ’s returning in final victory?

Thursday 12-10. What? Me, Holy? 1 Peter 1:3-16. “Come, Thou Almighty King,” verse 2. Reflection: What is your first perception of what the word *holy* means? Is it difficult for you to think of yourself as being called to holiness? How can the coming of Christ help you lead the kind of holy life to which God has called you?

Friday 12-11. Be the Gift. Isaiah 40:1-11. “Come, Thou Almighty King,” verse 3. Reflection: When have you done an act of service for someone else, only to be the one touched by the experience? How might you be the gift for someone else this season?

Monday 12-14. Choose or Refuse. Revelation 3:20. “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus,” verse 1. Reflection: What would it mean to make this prayer of Freeborn Garrettson your Advent prayer? “Lord, I submit; make me as thou wouldst have me to be”?

Tuesday 12-15. Hopefully. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-20. “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus,” verse 2. Reflection: How might the story of Jesus’ birth give you a sense of hope, to “sort through and soothe” your conflicted life? How can you be a source of hope for someone else today?

Wednesday 12-16. The Gift of Silence. Luke 1:5-25, 57-80. “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming,” verse 1. Reflection: Does your perception of Zechariah’s nine months of silence change when you think of it as a prescription from God rather than a sentence from God? How might you begin to incorporate more silence into your life during the remainder of this Advent season and beyond?

Thursday 12-17. God’s Answer to Suffering. Isaiah 64:1-4. “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming,” verse 2. Reflection: What sort of “night” do you see in the world around you? Have you ever identified with the kind of struggle that Steve Jobs related to the minister? What does it mean to you that Jesus was born into a dark and suffering world?

Friday 12-18. Personal, Not Digital. Luke 2:1-7. “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming,” verse 3. Reflection: What do you think of Dr. Small’s assessment of the effects of digital technology on us? Do you see any of those symptoms in your life? How can you be more present to those around you this season and in the coming year?

Monday 12-21. She Said Yes. Luke 1:26-38. “To a Maid Engaged to Joseph,” verse 1. Reflection: How can you begin to exhibit the kind of obedience Mary displayed? Have you ever thought of yourself as having the potential for “bearing” a word of God? How difficult is it for you to think of yourself with that kind of capability?

Tuesday 12-22. God’s Ultimate Playlist. Luke 1:39-56. “To a Maid Engaged to Joseph,” verse 2. Reflection: How does seeing the uncanny, outlandish dimensions of this story help you experience the story of Mary and Elizabeth in a more powerful way? What other connections can you make among the songs of Miriam, Hannah, and Mary?

Wednesday 12-23. The Call of Christmas. Luke 2:8-14. “To a Maid Engaged to Joseph,” verse 6. Reflection: With what excuses do you try to convince yourself that you are not worthy of God’s call on your life? What actions will you take to overcome those excuses and say yes to God today?

Thursday 12-24. Christmas Eve: A Most Unusual Gift. Luke 2:15-20. “Silent Night,” verse 1. Reflection: What does Jesus want to “turn upside down” in your life? Where can you spread the light of Christ’s hope and peace in a despairing world?

Created by Chaplain Jennifer Owen, Pastor Sara Hill, and Gabriel Alves. Filmed by Mary Alves.
Inspired by the book *Songs for the Waiting: Devotions Inspired by the Hymns of Advent* by Magrey R. DeVega