



Make Ready for Holy Disruption

Introduction

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": planning, organizing, and ordering supplies for various gatherings and worship services. 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 series based on the Service of Word and Prayer in All Creation Sings (pp. 42–45) 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. Each week's liturgy will focus on one step. Although worshipers can benefit from each service individually, each step builds upon the ones preceding. Together they form a spiritual discipline that reminds us (as does the liturgical year itself) that discipleship is always a process requiring intentional practice. Advent, the first season of the church year, 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 One: Breathing

Greeting

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
the love of Christ that guards our hearts and minds,
and the joy and consolation of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Opening 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.**

Silence

Word

Genesis 2:4b-7

⁴These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

In the day that the LORD^[b] God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no vegetation of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground, ⁶but a stream would rise from the earth and water the whole face of the ground— ⁷then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground^[c] and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Psalm 40:3-7

³He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.

Many will see and fear
and put their trust in the LORD.

⁴Happy are those who make
the LORD their trust,
who do not turn to the proud,
to those who go astray after false gods.

⁵You have multiplied, O LORD my God,
your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us;
none can compare with you.

Were I to proclaim and tell of them,
they would be more than can be counted.
6 Sacrifice and offering you do not desire,
but you have given me an open ear.
Burnt offering and sin offering
you have not required.
7 Then I said, "Here I am;
in the scroll of the book it is written of me.

Isaiah 40:1-5

3 He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear
and put their trust in the LORD.
4 Happy are those who make
the LORD their trust,
who do not turn to the proud,
to those who go astray after false gods.
5 You have multiplied, O LORD my God,
your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us;
none can compare with you.
Were I to proclaim and tell of them,
they would be more than can be counted.
6 Sacrifice and offering you do not desire,
but you have given me an open ear.^[b]
Burnt offering and sin offering
you have not required.
7 Then I said, "Here I am;
in the scroll of the book it is written of me.

Hebrews 11:1-3

Now faith is the assurance^[a] of things hoped for, the conviction^[b] of things not seen. ² Indeed, by faith^[c] our ancestors received approval. ³ By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

Silence

Reflection

Prayer

In Romans Paul tells us, “The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God” (8:26-27).

*Prayers reflect the wideness of God’s mercy for the whole world—
for the church universal, its ministry, and the mission of the gospel;
for the well-being of creation;
for peace and justice in the world, the nations and those in authority, the
community;
for the poor, oppressed, sick, bereaved, lonely;
for all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit;
for the congregation, and for special concerns.*

Savior, we wait for you; **hear us as we pray.**”

Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Blessing

The God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus, for whom we wait.
Amen.