

Some Ideas about Being with the Silence

We have different relationships with silence. Some of us are quite comfortable with it. Others of us don't know what to "do" with it. Since this service invites you to five minutes of silence, here are a few suggestions for those of you who find silence somewhat challenging.

You can read through the Advent Reflections below, stop at one that speaks to you, and sit with wherever it takes you.

You can look back at a word, phrase, or image from this worship service that touched you, and repeat that or imagine that.

You can focus on your breathing, counting your breaths, just breathing in your normal rhythm, feeling the pew holding your body, resting in this present moment, noticing any thoughts that come up and letting go of them, watching them move on like clouds.

You can focus on something in the sanctuary, and let yourself enjoy it.

You can think of a person or a place who needs compassion and healing right now. As you breathe, breathe in whatever suffering they are feeling, and breathe out compassionate, healing energy for them.

You can open yourself to feeling God's Spirit alive in you, and notice whatever that Spirit might be offering you.

Advent Reflections

The season of Advent means there is something on the horizon the likes of which we have never seen before. So stay. Sit. Linger. Tarry. Ponder. Wait. Behold. Wonder. There will be time enough for running. For rushing. For pushing. For now, stay. Wait. Something is on the horizon.

(Jan Richardson)

Jesus came to us as a child so that we might come to understand not only that nothing we do is insignificant, but that every small thing we do has within it the power to change the world.

(Joan Chittister, OSB)

There is more to life than merely increasing its speed.

(Mahatma Gandhi)

Morning opens wide before us
like a door into the light.

Just beyond, the day lies waiting
ready to throw off the night, and we stand upon its threshold
poised to turn and take its flight.

We receive God's graceful moment,
while the day is fresh and still;
ours to choose how we will greet it,
ours to make it what we will.

Here is given perfect freedom,
every hope in love to fulfill.

(Kathy Galloway)



Thank you for the night, the sign that day is done,
that life is meant to rest and sleep to come.
Thank you for the quiet as silence scatters sound,
while God, in both, is waiting to be found.
Thank you for the night, a measure of your care.
In darkness, as in light, you, Lord, are there.

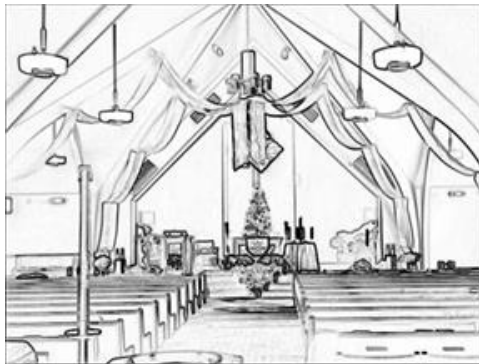
(John Bell)

God to enfold you, Christ to uphold you,
Spirit to keep you in heaven's sight;
so may God grace you, heal and embrace you,
lead you through darkness into the light.

(John Bell & Graham Maule)

Maybe we should start making Advent lists – they'd be like Christmas lists, but instead of listing things we want Santa to bring us we could write down things we want Christ to break in and take from us. In the hopes he could pickpocket the stupid junk in our houses, or abscond with our self-loathing or resentment... maybe break in in the middle of the night and take off with our compulsive eating or our love of money. That's how God works sometimes. Not through the things we are prepared for but through the things we don't expect.

(Nadia Bolz-Weber)



Hope's home is at the innermost point in us, and in all things. It is a quality of aliveness. It does not come at the end, as the feeling that results from a happy outcome. Rather, it lies at the beginning, as a pulse of truth that sends us forth. When our innermost being is attuned to this pulse it will send us forth in hope, regardless of the physical circumstances of our lives. Hope fills us with the strength to stay present, to abide in the flow of the Mercy no matter what outer storms assail us. It is entered always and only through surrender; that is, through the willingness to let go of everything we are presently clinging to. And yet when we enter it, it enters us and fills us with its own life — a quiet strength beyond anything we have ever known.

(Cynthia Bourgeault)

Crisis, change, all the myriad upheavals that blister the spirit
and leave us groping –
they aren't voices simply of pain but also of creativity.
And if we would only listen,
we might hear such times beckoning us to a season of waiting,
to the place of fertile emptiness
Waiting does provide the time and space necessary for grace
to happen.
Spirit needs a container to pour itself into.
Grace needs an arena in which to incarnate.
Waiting can be such a place, if we allow it.

(Sue Monk Kidd)

Life's waters flow from darkness.
Search the darkness, don't run from it.

(Rumi)

