

# Embodied Advent

Created by  
Wayfolk Arts and Emmaus Church



This project was produced by  
Wayfolk Arts and Emmaus Church and made  
possible through a Vital Worship Grant from  
the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship,  
Grand Rapids, Michigan, with funds provided  
by Lilly Endowment Inc.



# Before you begin...

The following pages contain weekly Advent readings, breath prayers, practices, and song refrains. Engage them on your own, with family, neighbors, or friends.

We crafted these practices imagining all the time in the world. You may not have that sort of time. This is an invitation. These are guidelines. Feel every freedom to change or skip parts to meet the needs of your day(s).

We hope these practices offer you a path to encounter the coming Christ during this Advent season.



# What does it mean for a practice to be “embodied”?

Sometimes words dominate our spiritual practices, and our bodies don't get as much of a chance to participate in our worship.

This booklet is full of *embodied* practices for Advent—practices that engage different parts of our bodies. We hope this gives you a chance to more fully engage worship with your *whole* selves--hearts, minds, *and* bodies.





# Week 1 | Longing

## Sunday

*(Have a candle or advent wreath to light.)*

### **Opening Liturgy:**

Walking in darkness, we lay down our cares—  
Our wants, the wars of our world,  
What we see and hear,  
What we touch and taste,  
Even what we feel—  
We lay these down at your feet.  
In this darkness protect and surround us.  
Fill us with your holy presence.  
Remind us we are not alone.

*(Pause)*

From out of the darkness,  
there shone a great light.

*(A candle is lit.)*



## Sunday (cont.)

### **Prayer for Illumination:**

Lord,

Your Word lights our path.

You are our light and our salvation.

Whom shall we fear?

As we wait in darkness,

may your Word be a light to us.

### **Read: Luke 1:5-25**

Hope is often a difficult thing, sometimes hope is a tricky thing, and sometimes it is an unbelievable thing. Sometimes hope is so hard to accept that even when an angel of the Lord tells you that something you've longed for is going to happen you cannot believe it. But in Zechariah's case, it's also very understandable. Though Zechariah and Elizabeth had longed for a child, the monthly rhythm of hope and pain had worn them down where it seemed obvious it would never happen.



## Sunday (cont.)

Like Abraham and Sarah who were skeptical when they were told they would have a child, Zechariah is understandably confused. But prolonged unfulfilled hope can do that, such that when someone close to me finally had a positive pregnancy test after battling infertility – they still could not believe it, because hope, and waiting in and for that which you long for, can be difficult, if not impossible.

This struggle to hope can be to the level where even when an angel shows up to a Priest in the sanctuary of the Lord – in a place where you would expect to hear from God, where it would be logical to encounter God's presence – even then you have to ask a question. Now, to Zechariah's credit, he doesn't just tell the angel that it can't be true, but he understandably asks for a point of clarity and how this will happen. It is this question, and the resulting muteness that





## Sunday (cont.)

Zechariah endures, that leads him into more waiting and another threshold, another period of waiting, now to both have a son and to regain the ability to speak.

Hope is often a difficult thing, sometimes hope is a tricky thing, and sometimes it is an unbelievable thing. Hope, and the requisite waiting that accompanies it, is hard. Waiting can crush your spirit as you wait, challenge your resolve, and cause deep pain and scars making it difficult, if not impossible to hold onto hope. And yet, that is what we are invited into in this season of Advent and in the life of faith. Advent is a season of waiting, or hoping, of expecting the coming of the king, the in-breaking of the birth of Messiah, the entrance of Emmanuel, God with us. Advent is a season of remembering Christ's coming and of waiting and hoping for Christ to come again.



## Sunday (cont.)

In that knowledge, we can hope. We can hope in the little things in life, and have our ultimate hope in Christ. We can hope for healing, for restoration, for fulfillment of those hopes, for God's peace and wholeness. We can hope knowing that God is God. We can hope in Christ and in Christ's return. We can hope.

### **Ending Liturgy:**

This day and on to night,

Be our light in the darkness.

This day and on to night,

Hold us in our fears and our longings.

This day and on to night,

May we be reminded of the light of heaven.

The cry breaking into the still of night.

The advent of hope.

*References: Ps 18:28, Ps 27:1, 1 Jo 1:5, Mic 7:8, Is 9:2, Jo 1:5*



## Sunday (cont.)

### **Sung Refrain:**

*(tune: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)*

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.



# Week 1 | Longing

## Midweek Practice

### Materials:

*jar with lid, dirt, seed paper, water*

**Breathe In:** This present mercy

**Breathe Out:** Longing

**Read:** Luke 1:5-25

### Embodied Practice:

Advent is a time when we lean into those longings of promises yet to be fulfilled. This advent season, what are you longing for, awaiting with eager expectation? On the seed paper, write some words or draw a representation of your longings, and plant them in the mason jar. Remember your longings and hold them prayerfully as you water these seeds in the days to come.



## Midweek Practice (cont.)

### **Sung Refrain:**

*(tune: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)*

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.



# Week 2 | Gratitude

## Sunday

*(Have a candle or advent wreath to light.)*

### **Opening Liturgy:**

Walking in darkness, we lay down our cares—

Our wants, the wars of our world,

What we see and hear,

What we touch and taste,

Even what we feel—

We lay these down at your feet.

In this darkness protect and surround us.

Fill us with your holy presence.

Remind us we are not alone.

*(Pause)*

From out of the darkness,

there shone a great light.

*(A candle is lit.)*



## Sunday (cont.)

### **Prayer for Illumination:**

Lord,

Your Word lights our path.

You are our light and our salvation.

Whom shall we fear?

As we wait in darkness,

may your Word be a light to us.

**Read:** Luke 1:26-56

In this passage we once again hear of Gabriel declaring the news that there will be an unexpected pregnancy and birth, but this time not as God's grace overcomes infertility and answers a long unmet hope, but in a miracle accomplishing the otherwise impossible of Mary, a virgin, conceiving. And while Gabriel's declaration was met with reasonable confusion from Zechariah's, Mary's confusion is even more warranted. And yet, even more remarkable is her faithful response:



## Sunday (cont.)

“Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” In a world where pregnancy out of wedlock was not simply something that would bring immense shame, but possible death, Mary’s faithfulness embodies the above and beyond love of God and an above and beyond trust in God. Mary uses the words of the faithful throughout scripture – “Here am I,” to answer this call.

Mary also seems to understand the radical nature of this calling. When she goes to visit Elizabeth while she is pregnant with John, John leaps in the womb and Elizabeth knows who the child is that Mary is carrying and rejoices. Mary then sings a song of praise to God, and she names and acknowledges that God has “looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant” in choosing her, someone of no status or stature, to bear the Messiah. Even more, as her song continues, she





## Sunday (cont.)

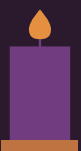
recognizes that God's choice in calling her flips the script – “he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly...”

Mary realizes that it is God's radical act of love and grace that allows and prompts her radical act of faithful obedience and that conveys how God's grace and love are in-breaking into the world. The very act of God coming to Mary and having her bear the Messiah is an act of justice, a call to justice, and shows how God had remembered Israel and, as Mary notes, is faithful to the promises made to Israel. Through this we see the steadfast covenant love and faithfulness of God in coming to redeem and save in unexpected ways, through a fully human Son born to a virgin showing unexpected radical faithfulness. “Here am I, the servant of the Lord.”



## Sunday (cont.)

This posture – “Here am I, the servant of the Lord,” from Mary echos the words of Isaiah, “Here am I, send me.” Mary offers this response to this absurd, unbelievable, grace filled calling, a calling God was faithful to Mary in, protecting her in and through that journey, and God calls us into this same posture. Now it is unlikely that God’s specific call to us may be as earth-shattering as the one given to Mary, but it in the moment it may strike us as just as absurd, or as impossible, as a virgin giving birth to the “son of the Most High” who will have “the throne of David.” In this call, no matter if it be the call we all share as those who have died and risen with Christ to love of God and love of neighbor, or it be the specific callings we are given to live that out faithfully in the world, we are invited to respond, with Mary, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord,” and trust, that whatever God may be calling us to, in this moment on our journey of life, we are not alone,



## Sunday (cont.)

but surrounded by the people of God and led by the Spirit to step out in radical faithfulness knowing that the Lord walks with us.

### **Ending Liturgy:**

This day and on to night,

Be our light in the darkness.

This day and on to night,

Hold us in our fears and our longings.

This day and on to night,

May we be reminded of the light of heaven.

The cry breaking into the still of night.

The advent of hope.

*References: Ps 18:28, Ps 27:1, 1 Jo 1:5, Mic 7:8, Is 9:2, Jo 1:5*



## Sunday (cont.)

### Sung Refrain:

*(tune: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)*

O come, O Wisdom from on high,  
Who ordered all things mightily;  
To us the path of knowledge show  
And teach us in its ways to go.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.



# Week 2 | Gratitude

## Midweek Practice

### Materials:

*envelope, stamp, greeting card, pen*

**Breathe In:** This present mercy

**Breathe Out:** Impossibility

**Read:** Luke 1:26-56

### Embodied Practice:

The story of the incarnation is a story of community. With a weighty burden laid on her, Mary found support and encouragement in her cousin Elizabeth. Reflect on moments that your community has come alongside you in times of stress – those still living and those that have died, people you have known and characters that have inspired you. Choose someone that held you up in a hard season, and take time to write a note of



## Midweek Practice (cont.)

gratitude in the provided greeting card. A stamped envelope is provided if you choose to send it.

### Sung Refrain:

*(tune: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)*

O come, O Wisdom from on high,  
Who ordered all things mightily;  
To us the path of knowledge show  
And teach us in its ways to go.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.



# Week 3 | Lament

## Sunday

*(Have a candle or advent wreath to light.)*

### **Opening Liturgy:**

Walking in darkness, we lay down our cares—  
Our wants, the wars of our world,  
What we see and hear,  
What we touch and taste,  
Even what we feel—  
We lay these down at your feet.  
In this darkness protect and surround us.  
Fill us with your holy presence.  
Remind us we are not alone.

*(Pause)*

From out of the darkness,  
there shone a great light.

*(A candle is lit.)*



## Sunday (cont.)

### Prayer for Illumination:

Lord,

Your Word lights our path.

You are our light and our salvation.

Whom shall we fear?

As we wait in darkness,

may your Word be a light to us.

**Read:** Luke 1:57-80

Within the season of Advent, as we wait to celebrate and remember Christ's coming, we also hold the tension of waiting and the tension of Christ's coming again. Today's passage is a passage of waiting, of waiting concluded, of waiting foretold, and a declaration of what we are waiting for. In this story we encounter the culmination of Zechariah and Elizabeth's waiting, we see dawn breaking in and light coming to those in darkness, as they have a long-awaited son. In this passage Luke recounts how John is





## Sunday (cont.)

circumcised in accordance with the law, and then they faithfully name him John as Gabriel has instructed. Zechariah then announces a prophecy for both John and Jesus that could be received as putting undue pressure on both his son and his soon-to-be born relative in Jesus. Yet, it is also a faithful declaration of what is coming and of the fulfillment of that which has been eagerly anticipated.

In Zechariah's Spirit-led prophecy, he proclaims that God is looking favorably on God's people and is raising up a savior from the house of David, as he foretells what Christ will do. He then goes on to declare how his son will prepare the way of the Lord and proclaim the grace, the salvation, and the forgiveness that Jesus will bring. This is a prophecy of the fulfillment of Israel's waiting. Their waiting for a savior, their waiting for the fulfillment of what the prophets spoke of



## Sunday (cont.)

throughout the Old Testament. Their waiting for salvation from their enemies. Their waiting for the mercy promised. Their waiting to see God's faithfulness to the covenant that was promised to the Lord's covenant people.

And we know this prophecy was fulfilled, this waiting was also met, not necessarily in the way that many of God's covenant people expected, but Christ did indeed come. John the Baptist paved the way for this Messiah, this Savior that God had sent, and Jesus did redeem God's covenant people. We see this redemption as this mighty servant from the house of David fulfilled the prophecy and brought in salvation, fulfilling the covenant given to Abraham, as Christ came, saved God's people, and broke in the tender mercy of God, as "the dawn from on high [broke] upon us, [gives] light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, [guides] our feet into the way of peace."



## Sunday (cont.)

And now, in this Advent we wait. In this Advent season, and in the now and the not yet of this prophecy, we wait. Because in this time, in between the fulfillment of the prophecies that Christ has already fulfilled, and in preparation of the final fulfillment of Zechariah's Prophecy, we live in this second Advent. We wait to see the fulfillment of dawn breaking in from on high, for there to be light in darkness, and for our feet to be led and guided in the way of peace. So, just as Zechariah and Israel waited for the Messiah and God's covenant faithfulness, and just as John faithfully proclaimed that Christ was coming and that the in-breaking of that dawn and new light, so too are we invited, called, to wait for the covenant fullness of Christ's return and participating in the in-breaking of that dawn and new light. In this waiting, we are called to participate, called to trust in the covenant faithfulness and love of our God, and called to be



## Sunday (cont.)

faithful witnesses and participants with Christ, led, like Zechariah, by the Spirit. Because, as we wait for final fulfillment of this prophecy, as we wait for Christ's return in this second Advent, we are called to participate in the kingdom in-breaking. We are called to bring light where there is darkness, and we trust the Spirit to guide our feet in the way of peace as we faithfully walk together in the journey of life.

### **Ending Liturgy:**

This day and on to night,  
Be our light in the darkness.

This day and on to night,  
Hold us in our fears and our longings.

This day and on to night,  
May we be reminded of the light of heaven.

The cry breaking into the still of night.

The advent of hope.

*References: Ps 18:28, Ps 27:1, 1 Jo 1:5, Mic 7:8, Is 9:2, Jo 1:5*



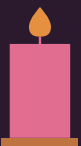
## Sunday (cont.)

### Sung Refrain:

*(tune: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)*

O come, O Bright and Morning Star,  
and bring us comfort from afar!  
Dispel the shadows of the night  
and turn our darkness into light.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.



# Week 3 | Lament

## Midweek Practice

### Materials:

*tea light, matches*

**Breathe In:** This present mercy

**Breathe Out:** Loss

**Read:** Luke 1:57-80

### Embodied Practice:

The advent season is often loud with the pressure to be filled with a joyful spirit. In this practice, we turn away from this pressure and acknowledge our loss and sorrow. What loss are you grieving this Advent? This could be the loss of a loved one, a missed opportunity, a personal failure, or seasonal sorrow. God is at the heart of lament. Take a moment to breathe into the presence of God, and light a candle as a reminder that “the dawn from



## Midweek Practice (cont.)

on high will break upon us to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.”

### Sung Refrain:

*(tune: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)*

O come, O Bright and Morning Star,  
and bring us comfort from afar!  
Dispel the shadows of the night  
and turn our darkness into light.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.



# Week 4 | Connection

## Sunday

*(Have a candle or advent wreath to light.)*

### **Opening Liturgy:**

Walking in darkness, we lay down our cares—  
Our wants, the wars of our world,  
What we see and hear,  
What we touch and taste,  
Even what we feel—  
We lay these down at your feet.  
In this darkness protect and surround us.  
Fill us with your holy presence.  
Remind us we are not alone.

*(Pause)*

From out of the darkness,  
there shone a great light.

*(A candle is lit.)*





## Sunday (cont.)

### **Prayer for Illumination:**

Lord,

Your Word lights our path.

You are our light and our salvation.

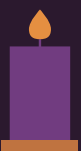
Whom shall we fear?

As we wait in darkness,

may your Word be a light to us.

### **Read: Luke 2:1-20**

Within the first 2 chapters of Luke's gospel there are plenty of stories that invite us to expect the unexpected: the long infertile couple conceives, a virgin is pregnant with the Messiah – the Son of God nonetheless, her fiancé remains faithful to her, and now they are traveling to Bethlehem. While they are in Bethlehem we are again met with the unexpected as the Son of God, the King of Kings, the Messiah, is not born in a palace with medical experts all around, but in a manger, seemingly with only Mary and Joseph present,



## Sunday (cont.)

and then this newborn baby, suddenly out in the world, is laid in a manger. God comes, in flesh, Emmanuel, God with us, a fully human baby – frail to the touch, delicate to hold, needing food from his mother to survive, unable to move himself, to take care of himself, to do pretty much anything. And yet, this is how God shows up – as a frail, helpless, crying baby in an outside manger, to an unwed couple, in this small town of Bethlehem in the most absurd and unexpected way.

Then – as if the style, location, and all-around situation for this birth isn't enough – the very first people to be told that Jesus has been born is a group of shepherds. The message doesn't go out to the other rulers and powers that a king has been born. But rather angels, messengers of God, go and declare this news before these shepherds who pulled the night shift that the Messiah is born,



## Sunday (cont.)

and the angels praise God. Then these unlikely first recipients of the good news head into Bethlehem and they find Mary and Joseph and the newborn Jesus and declare to others the message they had received, glorifying God for what the Lord had done.

In all of this, God does, shows, and executes the unexpected. Christ comes as a frail, helpless child, to two socially unimportant parents, in a middle of nowhere town, born in a manger, and the first people to be told of the amazing arrival of the Messiah are some sleep deprived shepherds visited by a host of angels who then rush to the manger, see the Messiah, and declare that news to others. The only part of this that seems what you would expect for the birth of the Son of God is the angels proclaiming the news and glorifying God, and still – so often – how God acts is *not* how we expected God to act.



## Sunday (cont.)

Yet, despite Christ's very arrival making this point, and despite Christ's life, death, and resurrection continuing to make this point, we still seem to think we know exactly what God will do. Now, we do know that God will always be consistent with who God is and God's promises, covenant, and faithfulness, and we know that God will be the same Lord we encounter in scripture. But that doesn't mean we understand every nuance of how God will act, we don't know exactly how God will show up in every situation, how God will move, or what the Spirit will do. We often think we know what God is going to do, where we will "find" Christ, who the message of the good news should go to, but God just keeps pushing back on our assumptions.

And so, on this Christmas Eve, as we look to the celebration of Christmas tomorrow, we receive an invitation to expect the unexpected, to recognize



## Sunday (cont.)

that we don't know exactly what God is going to do. Yes, we pray and seek to discern what God is calling us to do. Yes, we try to follow God's lead. And yet, at the same time – we need to recognize, accept, and learn to expect the unexpected, and with the angels be faithful messengers of the grace and love of God even when it may not be to whom, for whom, with whom, or where we expected to be.

### **Ending Liturgy:**

This day and on to night,  
Be our light in the darkness.

This day and on to night,  
Hold us in our fears and our longings.

This day and on to night,  
May we be reminded of the light of heaven.  
The cry breaking into the still of night.  
The advent of hope.

*References: Ps 18:28, Ps 27:1, 1 Jo 1:5, Mic 7:8, Is 9:2, Jo 1:5*



## Sunday (cont.)

### Sung Refrain:

*(tune: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)*

O come, thou branch of Jesse's stem,  
Unto thine own and rescue them!  
From depths of hell your people save,  
And give them victory o'er the grave.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.



# Week 4 | Connection

## Midweek Practice

### Materials:

*cookie mix provided (see recipe  
for additional ingredients)*

**Breathe In:** This present mercy

**Breathe Out:** Loneliness

**Read:** Luke 2:1-20

### Embodied Practice:

During Advent we turn towards connection: connection to loved ones, connection to traditions, connection to God. Who are you longing to connect or reconnect with? Maybe it's a housemate, a family member, a friend, or even yourself. Food is one thing that helps us foster connection. Using the ingredients and recipe provided, prepare cookies. Think of those people



## Midweek Practice (cont.)

who you long to connect with. Perhaps invite someone to bake with you. Share the cookies with a neighbor or bring them to a gathering.

### Sung Refrain:

*(tune: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)*

O come, thou branch of Jesse's stem,  
Unto thine own and rescue them!  
From depths of hell your people save,  
And give them victory o'er the grave.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.





# Week 5 | Prayer

## Sunday

*(Have a candle or advent wreath to light.)*

### **Opening Liturgy:**

Walking in darkness, we lay down our cares—  
Our wants, the wars of our world,  
What we see and hear,  
What we touch and taste,  
Even what we feel—  
We lay these down at your feet.  
In this darkness protect and surround us.  
Fill us with your holy presence.  
Remind us we are not alone.

*(Pause)*

From out of the darkness,  
there shone a great light.

*(A candle is lit.)*



## Sunday (cont.)

### Prayer for Illumination:

Lord,  
Your Word lights our path.  
You are our light and our salvation.  
Whom shall we fear?  
As we wait in darkness,  
may your Word be a light to us.

**Read:** Luke 2:21-40

Christmas day has passed, we've celebrated the day of Christ's birth, and yet, our church calendar still marks that we are in Christmastide, celebrating Christ's arrival, the fulfillment of the waiting, and the faithfulness of God, because the birth of Christ is not the end of the story, not by a long shot.

In today's text we pick up with Mary and Joseph, as only about a week into parenthood these sleep-deprived parents travel to the temple in Jerusalem from Bethlehem, for Jesus to be circumcised.



## Sunday (cont.)

And in the midst of this everyday faithful act, as Jesus went in the temple to receive the mark of the Covenant, the seal of God, still something else was also happening. Luke recounts to us the story of Simeon, a man we are told is righteous and devout, who was anticipating God's Covenant Faithfulness to Israel, and was told he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. And so this ordinary faithful follower of God, led by the Spirit, goes to the temple at the same as Jesus is there for circumcision, showing once again that so often seeming coincidences are God's ways of remaining anonymous. Within this amazing coincidence, Simeon sees the newborn Messiah, takes this small baby in his arms, and praises God for being faithful and showing the messiah bringing salvation. Luke tells us that all of this amazed Mary and Joseph, and while I'm sure that this random person picking up their son would've been troubling enough, he makes this declaration



## Sunday (cont.)

to God, and then blesses them and declares who Christ would be. Then, as if this wasn't enough, Anna, a prophetess who never left the temple, also declares who he is and speaks about the redemption Christ would bring.

Simeon. Anna. Normal people in normal moments. In this passage we see God's faithfulness in the mundane, every day, small moments of life. We see a promise to Simeon fulfilled through Mary and Joseph's faithfulness to the law and Simeon's "coincidental" visit to the temple and coincidental praising God and blessing the amazed and confused parents. We see a prophetess' declaration of who Jesus is and the pronouncement of the child who would redeem Israel.

You. Me. Normal people in normal moments. In our journey of life, we continue to see God's faithfulness in the mundane, every day, small moments. Sometimes we see this in big and



## Sunday (cont.)

obvious ways, other times we see this in small ways that we may not even fully recognize in the moment. Sometimes God's faithfulness and presence is obvious in the mundane and other times it may feel absent, far away. Yet, just as the Lord was faithful to Simeon, so too is the Lord faithful to us, present with us, and walking with us in the good, the bad, and the mundane in life. In the same way, we are called to walk with one another, showing up, potentially at seemingly coincidental moments, but led by the Spirit, to also walk with one another in all of life.

So as the calendar turns to a new year, a year that will be filled with good, bad, and mundane, let us hold to the promise that God walks with us and to the call to walk with each other on this road of life.



## Sunday (cont.)

### Ending Liturgy:

This day and on to night,  
Be our light in the darkness.

This day and on to night,  
Hold us in our fears and our longings.

This day and on to night,  
May we be reminded of the light of heaven.  
The cry breaking into the still of night.  
The advent of hope.

*References: Ps 18:28, Ps 27:1, 1 Jo 1:5, Mic 7:8, Is 9:2, Jo 1:5*

### Sung Refrain:

*(tune: O Come, O Come,  
Emmanuel)*

O come, O Key of David, come  
And open wide our heavenly home.  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
And close the path to misery.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.



# Week 5 | Prayer

## Midweek Practice

### Materials:

*colored markers/pencils/crayons, blank pieces of paper, templates*

*Optional: explore <https://prayingincolor.com>*

**Breathe In:** This present mercy

**Breathe Out:** Waiting for thanksgivings

**Read:** Luke 2:21-40

### Embodied Practice:

Simeon & Anna were people waiting for the coming of Christ. They prayed prayers of thanksgiving, blessing, and for those in need of prayer. Who or what needs your prayers today? Praying in color is a form of creative prayer. Follow the steps on the next page to pray in color. You can do this alone or in the presence of others.



## Midweek Practice (cont.)

1. On a piece of blank paper (or using one of the templates provided) write your name for God. If you are using a template do this in the center. If you are creating your own prayer in color, draw a shape or some doodles around your name for God. Examples of names for God: *Mother God, Creator God, Father God, Merciful God, Gathering God.*

2. Add marks and shapes and colors to your name for God. While you color keep the name you chose for God in your mind. Invite God to be part of your prayer time. If words come to you, pray them. Or, spend time with God in silent prayer.

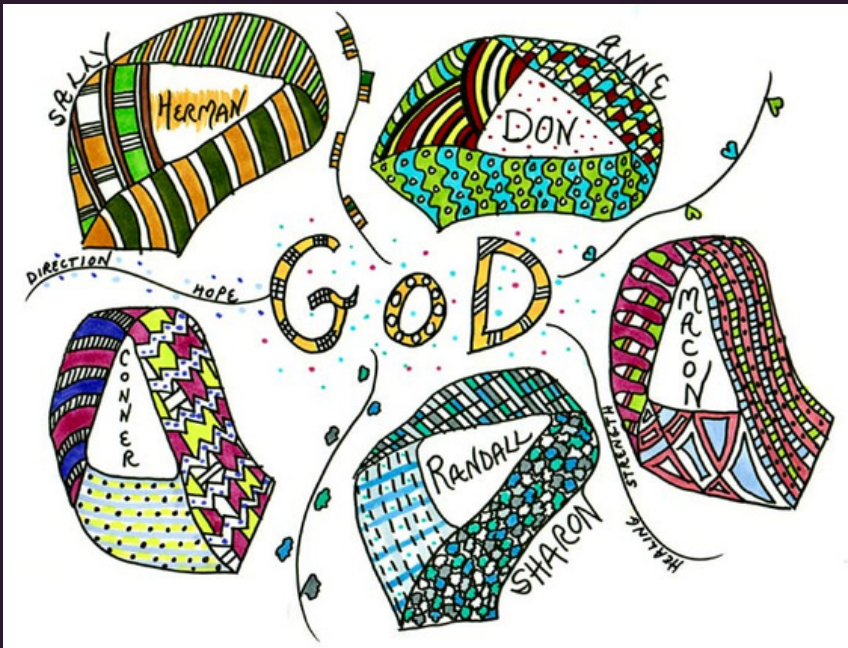
3. Add names of people or places to the other spaces on your paper or inside the provided template's shapes. Add shapes, doodles and colors to those names. As you draw, offer these names to God.





## Midweek Practice (cont.)

4. When you are finished coloring your prayer, take a breath and say “Amen.”



## Midweek Practice (cont.)

### Sung Refrain:

*(tune: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)*

O come, O Key of David, come  
And open wide our heavenly home.  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
And close the path to misery.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.



# Week 6 | Abundance

## Sunday

*(Have a candle or advent wreath to light.)*

### **Opening Liturgy:**

Walking in darkness, we lay down our cares—

Our wants, the wars of our world,

What we see and hear,

What we touch and taste,

Even what we feel—

We lay these down at your feet.

In this darkness protect and surround us.

Fill us with your holy presence.

Remind us we are not alone.

*(Pause)*

From out of the darkness,

there shone a great light.

*(A candle is lit.)*



## Sunday (cont.)

### **Prayer for Illumination:**

Lord,

Your Word lights our path.

You are our light and our salvation.

Whom shall we fear?

As we wait in darkness,

may your Word be a light to us.

### **Read: Matthew 2:1-12**

Epiphany is a day celebrated in the church on January 6th that has historically recognized both the baptism of Christ and the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as seen in the visit of the Magi. In today's text we receive Matthew's account of the Magi and their journey to see Christ, their journey on this long road, following a star, to see the king. Along their long hopeful journey to see the Messiah and bring their gifts to the king, while following this star they take a detour on their way to see this newborn king to



## Sunday (cont.)

see another king. The Magi stop at King Herod's palace to help with directions and encounter this other king who instructs them to come and tell him when they find Christ so that he can go and worship the Messiah as well.

But, as God reveals to the Magi, sending them home by another road, Herod does not want to worship Jesus. Herod is not on the same hopeful journey as the Magi. The end of Herod's journey is not to worship *the* king. Herod is not going with joy to offer his gifts to the king like the Magi, but to claim and protect his power, to worship himself. Nevertheless, the Magi continue their hopeful journey to offer their gifts to Jesus after visiting Herod. Matthew recounts that when the Magi find him, they were overwhelmed with joy to offer their gifts to the Messiah.

This tension of the two approaches we encounter here, first, of the Magi joyously and hopefully



## Sunday (cont.)

journeying to find the king and offer their gifts to him and worship, and second of Herod, seeking to find the Messiah, not to worship Christ, but to worship his own power, his own control, sets up a helpful comparison.

The Magi and Herod provide an example of how what we love, what we worship – shapes who we are, our core identity. As Jamie K. Smith puts it, “Our wants and longings and desires are at the core of our identity, the wellspring from which our actions and behavior flow. Our wants reverberate from our hearts, the epicenter of the human person.” In this passage we see this embodied – as the Magi go on this journey to offer their gifts to the King, and their focus and desire is to worship Christ and offer him their gifts. On the flip side Herod’s desires are to worship himself, to serve his own purposes, with his love focused inwards rather than on God.



## Sunday (cont.)

It is this tension that we enter into as well. Advent has passed, the king has come, and yet, we are still on a journey, offering our gifts to the king and for the kingdom. In this time, while we wait for Christ to come again, while we are called to participate in the kingdom in-breaking now, we are called to direct our loves to the king, to offer our gifts to the king, rather than ourselves, our purposes, or our power. In this posture, surrender, and worship of Christ, all that we do flows out of love of the King and our journey of growing more and more into Christ-likeness, of following Christ, and being transformed by Christ. So, as we continue on this road of life, let us seek after the king and offer all of ourselves, all of our gifts to him, the one who overwhelms us with joy.



## Sunday (cont.)

### Ending Liturgy:

This day and on to night,  
Be our light in the darkness.

This day and on to night,  
Hold us in our fears and our longings.

This day and on to night,  
May we be reminded of the light of heaven.  
The cry breaking into the still of night.  
The advent of hope.

*References: Ps 18:28, Ps 27:1, 1 Jo 1:5, Mic 7:8, Is 9:2, Jo 1:5*

### Sung Refrain:

*(tune: O Come, O Come,  
Emmanuel)*

O come, desire of nations, bind  
All peoples in one heart and mind.  
Bid all our sad divisions cease,  
And be thyself our King of peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.





# Week 6 | Abundance

## Midweek Practice

### Materials:

*tiny bottle of oil*

**Breathe In:** This present mercy

**Breathe Out:** Scarcity

**Read:** Matthew 2:1-12

### Embodied Practice:

At the end of this season of Advent we turn to the road ahead. It's hard to know where it will lead. We set out into a new year. Much like the holy family leaving their home country, we might not know what lies ahead. What challenges, joys, struggles, fears, joys, tears, and waystones we will find along our way? We cannot know. Yet they – like us – ward off the scarcity of the unknown with the fullness and abundance of the advent story,



## Midweek Practice (cont.)

the song of angels singing, the sight of the prophets kneeling, the feeling of the nearness of neighbors and family, the goodness of food shared, and the rich fragrance of offerings and praise. For our final embodied practice, we invite you to anoint the hand or forehead of a neighbor with the sign of the cross or the star. May this oil and this sign be a remembrance of the abundance of this advent journey as you set out into this year anew.

### **Sung Refrain:**

*(tune: O Come, O Come,  
Emmanuel)*

O come, desire of nations, bind  
All peoples in one heart and mind.  
Bid all our sad divisions cease,  
And be thyself our King of peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.







Embodied Worship © 2023 by Emmaus Church & Wayfolk Arts is licensed  
underCC BY-NC-ND 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>