**Advent 2022**

**Resources for Discussion and Reflection**

Prepared by the Lutheran-Catholic Covenant Commission of the

Northeastern Ohio Lutheran Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America &

Catholic Diocese of Youngstown

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**First Sunday of Advent November 27**

 **Isaiah 2:1-5 Psalm 122**

**Romans 13:11-14 Matthew 24:37-44**

**DAY IS NEAR**

You’ve arrived. You check in. You wait. A short wait can seem like an eternity. Isaiah speaks of “days to come.” Paul says that “the day is near.” Jesus makes clear that “about that day and hour no one knows.” Our readings for this first Sunday in Advent draw our attention to the day of Christ’s coming – more than a “day,” a “time” not marked by hours and minutes but the dawn of a new “time” for which we are to be “ready.” A time that brings peace among the nations and the Lord’s fulfillment of salvation. In baptism, you’ve “arrived.” At the cross you “check in.” At the empty tomb you “wait.” Now is the time of Advent.

**REFLECT**

* How patiently are you waiting? What does it mean to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” while you wait?
* Jesus describes people going about their normal daily activities, unaware of what was coming. How does knowing what is coming shape how you go about your normal daily activities? What changes as a result?
* During this time of waiting, what small things can you do to foster ecumenical relationships in your community in preparation for the “days to come”?

**PRAY**

God of every time and age, help us to faithfully wait with patience and expectation for the coming of your Son, filling our time living honorably among your people and doing the work of beating swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, bearing your peace to all people. Amen.

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**Second Sunday of Advent December 4**

 **Isaiah 11:1-10 Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19**

 **Romans 15:4-13 Matthew 3:1-12**

 **LIVING IN RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS**

By now, we are usually deep in preparations for the Christmas feast—shopping, decorating, baking, preparing for holiday gatherings, sending cards, and singing carols. But are we equally deep in preparations for the coming of the reign of God? This Advent season calls us to reform our lives so that we are ready to greet the king when he returns. And what does that reformation of our lives look like? Repentance for our sins, commitment to peace and justice work, concern for the poor among us—a true conversion of heart, a metanoia, an about-face to bring our lives into harmony with God’s values. The prophet Isaiah reminds us that the messiah shall come from the Davidic dynasty, and that the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. This messiah shall judge the poor with justice. Isaiah reminds us that when this messiah rules, the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and there will be no harm or ruin on all God’s holy mountain. All God’s creatures will peacefully coexist as they did in the garden of Eden. The justice that the Messiah brings is about not only social issues but also about a peaceful world, where all God’s creatures are in right relationship with each other. Justice, then, is not only about anonymously righting wrongs that have been done to faceless others, but also seeing ourselves in relationship with those others.

**REFLECT**

* What does your Advent spiritual reformation look like?
* How can you grow in loving relationships with family? Friends? Poor? Creation?

**PRAY**

O Root of Jesse, O Peace, stir up your power within us, that in this time we may await with abundant expectation the fulfillment of your eternal presence in creation, for you live and reign among us, Maker, Savior, and Giver of life, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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**Third Sunday of Advent December 11**

 **Isaiah 35:1-10 Psalm 146:4-9**

 **James 5:7-11 Matthew 11:2-11**

 **FINDING THE WAY**

Political strife, wars, catastrophic storms, violence - weface all these in one wa*y*or another every day. Perhaps we don't experience them firsthand, but we hear about it from TV news, in newspapers, and online daily. Just hearing or reading about these events can be stressful and frightening. With all this chaos around us, it is easy to feel despair and helplessness. In Scripture, both the Old and the New Testaments, we learn that no matter what is happening around us, the Lord is with us; we do not walk alone through this life. We read that the Lord has prepared a way for us, through whatever “wilderness**”** we aretravelling. The Lord has provided us with help: daily reading of the Bible, prayer, worship, examples of the saints who have gone before us, and those who are travelling with us. As the old spiritual says, “Let's keep our eyes on the prize."

**REFLECT**

* How do you find your way?
* How do you know youare on the right road?

**PRAY**

Holy God, your prophets have long spoken of the one who would come to save us. Now the promise is fulfilled; now your kingdom has come near. Send us as messengers of your way, to go and tell all the world of the wonders we have seen and the good news we have heard in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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**Fourth Sunday of Advent December 18**

 **Isaiah 7:10-16 Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18 / Psalm 24:1-6**

 **Romans 1:1-7 Matthew 1:18-25**

 **WAITING FOR JESUS**

For children, the longing of Advent ends on Christmas day with manger, carols, celebrations, and gifts. We experience great joy until a few days pass and we sense a long wait ahead of us once again. This is the way of Advent, the joy of Jesus among us, yet not fully. Joy gives way to more longing. But we remember God *is* Emmanuel - God with us. The greater celebrations help us see God breaking into our lives. Our joy is deep. But so is our longing. We wait for peace. We wait for justice. We wait for joy. We wait for Jesus.

**REFLECT**

* When do you have the most difficulty waiting? When is waiting a joy?
* What names for God are most helpful to you in times of struggle? In times of joy?
* What does the name Emmanuel (God with us) mean for you today?

**PRAY**

Eternal God of power and grace, who comes to us in surprising ways – in angel appearances, in defeat of all that would harm or destroy us, and in resurrection from the dead – show us the face of Immanuel in our time. Bring us from fear to awe, in the name of the Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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For more prayers, resources, and information on the history of the

Lutheran Catholic Covenant, visit:

**www.lccovenant.weebly.com**



Visit the website of the Northeastern Ohio Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

**www.neos-elca.org**

Visit the website for the Catholic Diocese of Youngstown:

**www.doy.org**