

Advent Worship Materials

Updated: December 15, 2015

As we celebrate the Advent season this year, various NBA leaders are sharing advent worship resources.

- **Rev. Belva Brown Jordan**, former chair of the NBA Board of Trustees, and associate professor and associate dean, Claremont School of Theology, shares an Advent Prayer.
 - **Angela Whitenhill**, convener for the NBA Mental Health and Congregational Care Affinity Group research and design team, shares an Advent Meditation for the Activist Community.
 - **Rev. Dr. Ben Bohren**, mission specialist for NBA XPLOR, shares an Advent Call to Worship Litany, Affirmation of Faith, and Communion Meditation.
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An Advent Prayer (original by Rev. Belva Brown Jordan)

O God of Breath and Light,
we draw near in this season of Advent,
filled with hope for the promise of breath and light
that is to come.

Breath that will fill our lungs
as we practice the sacred act of breathing deeply
taking into our being strength
to face this day and the days to come.

Breath that will fill our eyes with the light
we need to practice the sacred act of seeing
what is possible in this world filled with
brokenness, uncertainty, and pain.

O God of Breath and Light,
we draw need in this season of Advent,
practicing the sacred act of waiting
full of anticipation
for the breath and light you promise
to breathe into this world. Amen.

An Advent Meditation for the Activist Community (original by Angela Whitenhill)

L: In the midst of mass shootings, international unrest and domestic terrorism...

R: *We wait.*

L: In the face of divisive politics, distracting consumerism, and pervasive fear...

R: *We wait.*

L: Even as our society encourages prideful debates over the sanctity of identity, the openness of our borders, and the value of human life...

R: *We wait. We wait in confidence, knowing that the hand of the living God will move...that the spirit of the one who promised to give life and give it abundantly will come...*

L: We wait. In the midst of our modern 400 years of silence...crying out for change, crying out for peace, crying out for our dignity to be realized...

R: *We wait.*

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L: And even when we feel we can't breathe, when our hearts and minds are suffocated by the constant ignorance, hate, and fear that seek to destroy our very existence...

R: *We wait... We persevere... We fight. For we have nothing to lose but our chains.*

Unison: **And so we wait...our hearts anticipating the move of the living God to transform our current situation, to restore our broken relationships, to piece together our fragmented system and to bring Emmanuel...Christ with us...to walk these streets with us...to hold these signs with us...to write these demands with us...to refuse to play the game with us...And so we wait...**

Call to Worship Litany (*adapted by Rev. Dr. Ben Bohren, from a work by Gloria Gaither*)

L: Right from the beginning, God's love has reached,

R: *And from the beginning, humanity has struggled to understand.*

L: But Love went on reaching, offering itself. Love offered the eternal,

R: *...we wanted the immediate.*

L: Love offered deep joy,

R: *...we wanted thrills.*

L: Love offered freedom,

R: *...we wanted license.*

L: Love offered communion with God's own self,

R: *...we wanted to worship at the shrines of "personal power and things."*

L: Love offered peace,

R: *...we wanted approval for our wars.*

L: Even yet, Love went on reaching.

R: *And still today, after more than two thousand years, patiently, lovingly, Christ is reaching out.*

L: Right through the chaos of our world, through the confusion of our minds; God is reaching... longing to share with us... the very being of God.

Unison: **God's love still is longing; God's love still is reaching, right past the shambles of our minds. And the Word of the Maker became Mary's little son. And God's love reached right to where we are.**

A Christmas Affirmation of Faith (*source unknown*)

We believe Jesus is the Son of God.

We affirm that this joyous gospel

Was birthed in Bethlehem

Where Deity was cradled in a manger.

We believe that this child was a supreme gift;

A package of Divine Love bundled in servant clothes

And tagged simply, "To ALL people: Love, God."

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We believe that this baby was not out of this world,
But God at work with us in this world.

We join with those who received Jesus there.
And without reservation, we receive Jesus now
And proclaim this day that
He is the greatest Gift of all.

Advent Communion Meditation *(original by Rev. Dr. Ben Bohren)*

I had not seen Janet in about two years. She was one of those dynamic youth in my church and stayed very active during her college years as well. We had shared deeply of faith and life, but now, we had just 45 minutes while I was on a flight layover in her town. We had just 45 minutes; what would that time be like?

In two minutes, we were off to the “real stuff of life.” There was deep sharing, and we quickly looked at each other and knew we were not at a surface level. Suddenly tears came for both of us: tears of love and joy that our connection was still at that level of pure grace.

It was an intimate time; two persons reaching out and connecting in love.
How long since you’ve had an intimate conversation with God? You know, honest talk; not surface stuff.

This communion table is certainly one of those places to have that kind of talk. God has already reached out in love; in Bread and Cup...in Grace and Peace. And in this Advent time, we are reminded that God truly reaches out in the Child of Bethlehem...Emmanuel: God is with us.

God’s part has been done...now it’s our turn to do ours. God’s heart is listening to our heart.
