

SEEKERS CHURCH
A Church of the Saviour Community

Advent 2021
Restore Us, O God

GATHERING

ENTRANCE

REFLECTION

In our secret yearnings we wait for your coming, and in our grinding despair we doubt that you will. And in this privileged place we are surrounded by witnesses who yearn more than do we and by those who despair more deeply than do we. Look upon your church ... in this season of hope which runs so quickly to fatigue and in this season of yearning which becomes so easily quarrelsome. Give us the grace and the impatience to wait for your coming to the bottom of our toes, to the edges of our fingertips. We do not want our several worlds to end. Come in your power and come in your weakness in any case and make all things new.

Walter Brueggemann, *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth: Prayers of Walter Brueggemann*
(Minneapolis: Fortress Press)

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

The vocabulary of Advent is made up of words like longing, preparation, darkness, waiting, and promise: rich theological themes that are fundamental to our understanding of what it means to live in the now and the not yet of our faith. Perhaps even more poignantly, the language of Advent speaks both a word of lament *and* hope that might resonate amid the injustices and brokenness we witness and experience daily.

Seattle Pacific University Office of University Ministries, "Advent 2017: Restore,"
<https://spu.edu/administration/office-of-university-ministries/oum-news/2017/restore-2017>

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The days grow short, and all creation groans in anxious expectation.

People: In our hearts, we yearn for Your presence, Holy One,
coming to restore the goodness of our reality.

Leader: We gather now as best we can,
searching for new signs of hope even as we lament.

People: Give us the grace and impatience to work for justice
even as we await your coming fresh among us.

Leader: Holy Spirit, we know you make your home among us,
transforming all creation.

All: Restore us, O God, for we would be a sign of hope in these dark days.

OPENING PRAYER

HYMN

WORD FOR THE CHILDREN

SILENCE

PRAYERS

CONFESSION

Leader: Holy One, you call us to live and love
in your presence now and in your promise yet to come.

People: We confess that, though we long for your coming,
we doubt you will come.
Restore us, O God.

Leader: You call us to wait in darkness
and prepare for the coming of your great Light.

People: We confess that in our holiday tiredness
we settle for our own small, twinkling lights.
Refresh us, O God.

Leader: You call us to long impatiently with our whole being
for you to come and make all things new.

All: We confess that, in unbearable pain and unfixable situations,
our impatience is for salvation right now.
Revive us, O God.

INDIVIDUAL PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE

Leader: The Holy One, with us now and still coming,
loves us, hears our prayers, and gives us grace to wait
amid all the injustices and brokenness.
We are forgiven and restored.

All: Amen.

THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE

INTERCESSION AND PETITION

COMMITMENT

All: O Holy One, we come today
to claim our relationship with you.
We pray for the commitment to grow together,
sharing the gifts you give us with others
here and in the wider world.

Forgive us for the hurt we have inflicted
and help us forgive those who have hurt us.

Give us strength and discipline
to nurture our relationship with you;
to care for every part of your creation;
to foster justice and be in solidarity with those in need;
to work to end all war, and violence, and discord;
and to respond joyfully when you call,
freely giving our selves as you have shown the way.

We open our hearts to you and your creation
in the name of Jesus, who is the Christ. Amen.

HYMN

THE WORD

SCRIPTURE

SERMON

SILENT REFLECTION

OFFERING

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*Seekers Church
276 Carroll Street
NW Washington DC, 20012*

COMMUNION

PREPARATION

Leader 1: This is the table of the heavenly feast,
the joyful celebration of the people of God.

Leader 2: We gather now as one body, joined around the table.
Here we celebrate God's presence among us,
united in Christ's spirit, broken and whole all at once.

All: Nourished and hungry, loved and loving,
sinner and forgiven, we make one circle
of knowing, believing, rejoicing, being,
as God lights and rests among us.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Leader 1: Eternal Promise, in the midst of our doubt and fear
we give thanks for the promise of your coming.

All: Restore us, O God, fill us with a hope that casts out our fear and doubt.

Leader 2: We give thanks for Jesus the Christ, who came in weakness
And with his life, death, and resurrection
showed us the power of your love for the world.

All: Restore us, O God, so that in our weakness
we may find your strength.

Leader 1: We give thanks for the Holy Spirit,
whose whispers of encouragement
enable us to live in the now and not yet of our faith.

All: Restore us, O God, and give us the courage
to wait for your coming with grace and impatience.

Leader 2: We give you thanks for your Holy Church,
where we can raise our voices in lament and hope
that all things will be made new.

All: Restore us, O God!
Come in your power,
come in your weakness,
and make all things new.

BLESSING THE ELEMENTS

Leader 1: Christ invites everyone to eat the bread of life,
to drink the cup of the new covenant.

Leader 2: Jesus said, I am the bread of life.
You who come to me shall never hunger;
you who believe in me shall never thirst.

Leader 1: On the night he gave himself up, Jesus took bread,
and after giving thanks to God, broke it and said,
This is my body,
broken for the healing of the world.
Whenever you eat it, do so remembering me.

Leader 2: After supper, Jesus took the cup and said,
This is the cup of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for all.
Whenever you drink it, do so remembering me.

All: O Holy One, send down your Spirit
that these gifts of grain and grape,
and work of human hands
may be for us the body and blood of Christ.
Unite us with Christ forever
and bring us with the whole creation
to your eternal realm.

SHARE THE ELEMENTS

As a sign of gathering in spirit while scattered, you may want to lift your bread and cup toward your camera.

Leader 1: The body of Christ, broken for all of us.
Feed on Christ in your hearts with thanksgiving.

Leader 2: The cup of the new covenant, poured out for the healing of the world.
Drink deeply of it.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION

All: God of abundance and mercy,
we give joyful thanks
for your eternal love and healing presence
in our celebration of bread and cup.
Bless this Body of Christ
that we may attend faithfully to our call to be your servants,
with each other and throughout the world. Amen.

SHARED REFLECTIONS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HYMN

BENEDICTION

Leader: Let us leave this sacred gathering,
restored in our anticipation of your imminent coming,
with hope encouraged and grace renewed,
as we greet each other with signs of peace.

All: Amen.