

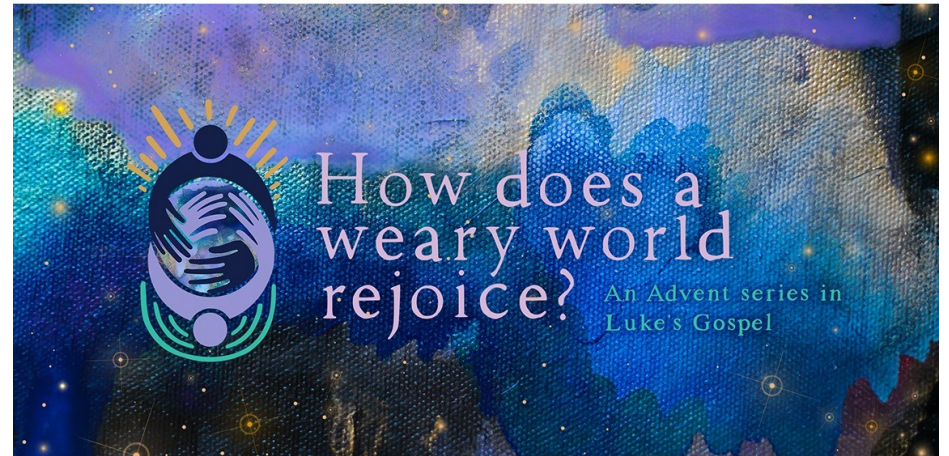


Followers of Christ, called to serve our community and be an actively-engaging light to the world. We live into our faith, inspired by our worship, encouraged by our fellowship, empowered by our studies. As a Matthew 25 Congregation, we answer the call to provide food and shelter to those in need. As a More Light Presbyterians Congregation, we provide a safe and affirming worshipping community for LGBTQIA+ persons, celebrating the uniqueness and dignity of each person as they seek a home for their faith and confidence in the promises of God for them.

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What does the logo mean?

The image of a comforting embrace, and perhaps in the space between the people, continents and bodies of water come into view. These two people could represent characters we follow this Advent season: Elizabeth & Zechariah, Mary & Elizabeth, Mary & Joseph. Or maybe the figures are more broadly representative of God & humanity or of the personification of joy & weariness. Two people—one radiating joy and the other wading into weariness—hold the world together.

How does this all work?

You have several meditation options. You can read the prayer on the next page, you can focus on the images on the front of this bulletin and use Visio Divina (instructions below), you can listen to the music, or you can practice all three. You are welcome to the coffee and cookies available in the Narthex. If you want to spend some time chatting, join us in the office.

Visio Divina

Visio Divina, latin for “divine seeing,” is a method of meditation, reflection, and prayer through a process of intentional seeing. Visio Divina extends the 6th century Benedictine practice of Lectio Divina by the use of visual imagery. Traditionally, Visio Divina was accompanied by Benedictine iconography and illuminations, however, different faith traditions have adapted the process over time, utilizing both secular and nonsecular images.

Suggestions to consider throughout the visual meditation:

- 1) Focus on your breath. If your mind begins to wander, inhale and exhale slowly. Stay mindful of your breathing as a way to bring you back into the present moment.
- 2) If you find yourself not knowing what to think, or trying to figure out what the art means, remember that you are invited to simply be an observer. As you look, jot down simple observations about what you see, or ask yourself questions such as, “Why did the artist choose that color?” or “Why did the artist portray the story in this way?” or “How does this art make me feel?” Perhaps your questions will lead to more questions and more observations and then you’ll be getting somewhere.

Gracious God,

You carry us
through our days.
You know every
word on our tongue,
every hair on our
head. You know the
dreams in our hearts, and the weight of our bones.

You also know the weariness we bring with us into the morning and into this space. So with honesty we come before you, both with hearts full of gratitude and with prayer requests on our lips.

First, holy God, we thank you for the gifts of this life that *give* energy. For birthday candles and sunrises, for handwritten cards and jobs that we are passionate about. For stories that can make us laugh until we cry, and for friends that feel like family. For all these gifts, thank you.

In addition to these prayers of gratitude, loving God, we also bring you the things that weigh heavy on our hearts. For gun violence, for family and friends in chemotherapy, for seasons of transition and grief that won’t let us go—we ask for your attention. We ask for your love and care.

Take this yoke from us. Relieve some of the burden on our backs, and wrap your arms around places where we feel most tender. And as we enter into this new Advent season—a season marked with joy, hope and light—we ask that you would remind us that our full humanity is welcome here. There is room for both joy and grief. There is room for weariness and awe. There is room for faith and doubt, for nothing is too big or too far gone for your love to reach it. Amen

written by: rev. sarah speed | sanctifiedart.org

