

twelvebaskets

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ADVENT 3C

15th December 2024

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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For more information <https://theworshipcloud.com/terms/free-weekly-resource>

Opening Prayers

In the darkness, shine your light, O God.
In the cold, bring your warmth, O Christ.
In the chaos, breath your peace, O Spirit.
Come, O come Immanuel.

In this time of worship, bring your healing to me, O God.
In the rest of this day, bring your peace to those around me, O Christ.
In the week ahead, bring your hope to the whole world, O Spirit.
Come, O come, Immanuel.

You might like to light a candle, and hold a few minutes stillness or silence, praying for stillness in your own heart, and peace in the world.

Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

Reading: Luke 3:7-18 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

Twelvebaskets has put together some video resources for The Methodist Church's Christmas campaign – Hush the Noise. You can find these via the links on the Methodist Church resources and you might like to watch the video for Advent 3, reflecting on the same reading as today - methodist.org.uk/for-churches/christmasresources/

John the Baptist is angry!

In this week's gospel reading, we get one of the best / most vicious 'put downs' in the whole Bible! John the Baptist, surrounded by crowds of listeners, calls them a 'brood of vipers.' This is not a recommended technique in the Methodist Local Preachers and Worship Leaders training...

This passage, along with that famous moment when Jesus turns the tables over in the temple, often raise an important and difficult debate for us as Christians today: is it okay to be angry?

Do you have a view on this? Are you someone who gets angry quickly, or someone it is difficult to provoke? Do you think this affects your discipleship?

There is a strong tradition of 'righteous anger' in the Christian people, and much of it has motivated people to bring about the kind of social change that Jesus seems to have been preaching and teaching about. As one wise teacher has put it: 'be careful of what makes you angry, it might just be God's way of prompting you to do something about it.' Yet, that still raises important questions about where the line is, and what we do with our anger. There is also, of course, a strong tradition of non-violence within the Christian tradition and many of us might agree that any anger that leads to violence is misplaced. But anger that motivates non-violent protest, or fuels the energy to bring about social change in healthy, peaceful ways might well be a positive force in the world. What's your take? This is

something you could discuss with trusted friends and Christian leaders in your life. What's their take?

John is angry because there are clearly people around him who are pretending to be religious without backing this up with a way of life that showed true repentance and transformation. The way ahead was not then – and is not now – pious religiosity but a costly choice, which was about to be embodied in Jesus. This choice involved setting different priorities and living in a new way. In other words, not simply trying to be good or follow the rules but taking the risk of being baptized, of encountering the Holy Spirit, of totally transforming the way you live.

Can we make that sort of radical change today? What does that look like for you this week?

How often do you hear the word 'religion' in negative ways? What can you do to change the 'religiosity' in your life / church community into a force for good in the world and community around you?

Lots to reflect on this week. Make some time to pray about your responses to these questions, you might like to write them down or sketch, paint, craft a response. Or to speak to someone else who is using these resources to swap ideas and initial thoughts...

Hymn:

255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy - [YouTube](#)

Blessing

May you go out with peace,
Into this time of busy-ness and consumerism,
May you be a person of sanctuary and calm,
Channelling righteous anger where needed,
But never driven to violence,
Offering a different way to do Christmas,
To experience it as a time of love divine, all loves excelling.
Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers

Monday 16th December

- Listen to this famous hymn (O Come O Come Immanuel) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UH7asSGxAxA>
- Where do you need God the Christ to come into your life this Christmas season? Where in the world needs to know the presence of God?
- Offer these places, situations and stories to God in prayer today.

Tuesday 17th December

- Christmas is a very loud season, with so much music, so many voices, so many adverts!
- How can you 'Hush the noise' this year, in preparation for the advent of God's coming? How can you be present to the incarnation and listen to the still, small voice?
- Find a moment today when you can turn off all the background noise, and just hold a moment of silence.

Wednesday 18th December

- Take a look at these Christingle resources from All We Can: <https://www.allwecan.org.uk/resources/christingle>
- Even if you have already been at a Christingle service this year, you might like to say the words at home, perhaps making an effort to share them with someone in your family or neighbourhood.
- You could even make your own Christingle and set it in the windowsill for the next few days, helping you to think about the world, the injustices and unfairness of the world and God's desire for every person's potential to be fulfilled.

Thursday 19th December

- Light a candle. As you watch the flame flicker, think about the parts of your life, your community, our world, that need to know something of the light of the world. You might like to pray this prayer:
- Lord of Light, shine into the darkness in me, the darkness in this community, the darkness in our world. In the midst of all that is frightening and cold and uncertain, come Prince of Peace.
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Amen.

Friday 20th December

- Today, let us pray for all who will be working over the Christmas period – all those key workers who keep our society going.
- If that's you, take a moment for yourself today.
- If it's someone you know, maybe drop them a text or give them a call to thank them and let them know you will be praying for them.

Saturday 21st December

- God of all grace,
God of the Christmas season,
Show me how to share the hope of the Christmas story with those around me this year, in conversation, in the giving and receiving of gifts, in the way I live my life.
Help me to be a guardian and an evangelist for your good news this year.
Amen.