

St John's, Ranmoor

Sanctuary at home

Refuge | Safety | A Holy Space



Waiting

A voice says, 'Cry out!'
And I said, 'What shall I cry?'

From Isaiah 40

To wait with openness and trust is an enormously radical attitude toward life. It is choosing to hope that something is happening for us that is far beyond our own imaginings. It is giving up control over our future and letting God define our life. It is living with the conviction that God moulds us in love, holds us in tenderness, and moves us away from the sources of our fear.

Our spiritual life is a life in which we wait, actively present to the moment, expecting that new things will happen to us, new things that are far beyond our own imagination or prediction. This, indeed, is a very radical stance toward life in a world preoccupied with control.

Henri Nouwen

Welcome and introduction

Welcome to this suggested outline for how you might spend some time at home with the idea of waiting and what waiting means in our spiritual life. If we had been gathered in church there would have been a quiet space and some candlelight. You might like to find a quiet and comfortable corner at home, away from distractions, to allow this to be a time of rest, reflection and intentional abiding in Word and prayer.

It is said that God offers three responses to our petitions: 'yes', 'no' and 'wait'. As we approach Advent and what is, for the Christian Church, a time of intentional waiting, we may be feeling more keenly this year the difficulties of being made to wait.

What are you waiting for today?
How does the waiting make you feel?
When will the waiting come to an end?

During Advent, Christians go back to that time of waiting as the Bible shows it to us. They read again the prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures and the Old Testament. They read about how people were longing for an end to slavery, longing to be back home in some sense, longing to be at home with God again, longing for reconciliation. And all of that is expressed in the most powerful metaphors, especially in the prophecies of Isaiah, metaphors about the desert blossoming, metaphors about the rain falling, metaphors about day dawning after there's been a long, long night.

Rowan Williams

Throughout this short reflective liturgy feel free to say the words out loud or pray them in the silence of your heart. God is listening.

Greeting

Though we are scattered, we come together now to meet with God.
Let us recognize his presence with us

Silence is kept

As God's people we have gathered:
Let us worship him together.

Come O Lord and visit us in peace,
that we may rejoice before you with a perfect heart.

Music during which a candle may be lit:

The Call from 'Five Mystical Songs' - Ralph Vaughan Williams

To play the music on YouTube click [here](#)

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:

Such a way as gives us breath;

Such a truth as ends all strife,

Such a life as killeth death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength:

Such a light as shows a feast,

Such a feast as mends in length,

Such a strength as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:

Such a joy as none can move,

Such a love as none can part,

Such a heart as joys in love.

George Herbert (1593–1633)

Opening prayers

In the depths of my being

I become quiet and still;

I wait for you, my God,

Source of my salvation

Amen.

You, Lord, are in this place,

Your presence fills it.

Your presence is peace.

You, Lord, are in my heart,

Your presence fills it.

Your presence is peace.

You, Lord, are in my life,

Your presence fills it.

Your presence is peace.

Amen

Psalm 80:1-8

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you that led Joseph like a flock;
Shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim,
before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.
Stir up your mighty strength
and come to our salvation.
Turn us again, O God;
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
O Lord God of hosts,
how long will you be angry at your people's prayer?
You feed them with the bread of tears;
you give them abundance of tears to drink.
You have made us the derision of our neighbours,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.
Turn us again, O God of hosts;
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

Isaiah 40:3-8, 27-31

³ A voice cries out:
'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
⁵ Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'
⁶ A voice says, 'Cry out!'
And I said, 'What shall I cry?'
All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.
⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.

²⁷ Why do you say, O Jacob,

and speak, O Israel,
'My way is hidden from the Lord,
and my right is disregarded by my God'?
²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
²⁹ He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.
³⁰ Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;
³¹ but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

Read again one of the texts from scripture, or the George Herbert poem

In the time of silence which follows, reflect on how **waiting** makes you feel.

You may feel prompted to focus on a verse or phrase from the scripture readings that has resonated with you.

You may want to consider words from George Herbert's poem The Call, meditating on how Jesus might be each of these things in your life (Way, Truth etc.).

Come...

My Way

My Truth

My Life

My Light

My Feast

My Strength

My Joy

My Love

My Heart

...Come

A time of silence (20-30 mins)

Lord, meet us in the silence
and hear our prayer

At the end of the silence:

Come, Lord Jesus,
Come as King.
Rule in our hearts,
Come as love.
Rule in our minds,
Come as peace.
Rule in our actions,
Come as power.
Rule in our days,
Come as joy.
Rule in our darkness.
Come as light.
Rule in our bodies,
Come as health.
Rule in our labours,
Come as hope.
Thy Kingdom come
Among us

Prayers



David Adam

Father in heaven,
Our hearts desire the warmth of your love
And our minds are searching for the light of your Word.

Increase our longing for Christ our Saviour
And give us the strength to grow in love,
That the dawn of his coming
May find us rejoicing in his presence
And welcoming the light of his truth.

The Roman Missal

A prayer for rest and restoration

Lord Jesus our Saviour,
The One who is to come,
We come to you now.
Our hearts are cold;
Lord, warm them with your selfless love.
Our hearts are sinful;
Cleanse them with your precious blood.
Our hearts are weak;
Strengthen them with your joyous Spirit.
Our hearts are empty;
Fill them with your divine presence.
Come, Emmanuel:
Enter our lives,
Possess them always
And only
For yourself.
Amen

*Prayer before advent
(adapted from Augustine of Hippo)*

Prayers conclude with The Lord's Prayer

Conclusion

Blessing

May God keep us in all our days.
May Christ shield us in all our ways.
May the Spirit bring us healing and peace.
May God the Holy Trinity drive all darkness from us
and pour upon us blessing and light.
Amen.

May the Lord, when he comes, find us watching and waiting.
Amen

Let us bless the Lord
Thanks be to God

Advent Calendar by Rowan Williams

He will come like last leaf's fall.
One night when the November wind
has flayed the trees to the bone, and earth
wakes choking on the mould,
the soft shroud's folding.

He will come like frost.
One morning when the shrinking earth
opens on mist, to find itself
arrested in the net
of alien, sword-set beauty.

He will come like dark.
One evening when the bursting red
December sun draws up the sheet
and penny-masks its eye to yield
the star-snowed fields of sky.

He will come, will come,
will come like crying in the night,
like blood, like breaking,
as the earth writhes to toss him free.
He will come like child.

