

SEEDS  HOPE
OF
in a time of waiting

*An Advent liturgy for church and home by Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball,
West Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church*

Advent 2 – The Message

All: Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Sing or read verse 1: #206 The United Methodist Hymnal

I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus. God set the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus. In him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike. The lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

One Voice: Last week we lit the first purple candle looking forward to rehearsing the story of Christ’s first coming and expecting Christ’s coming again. Each of the candles on the wreath represent Jesus, the light of Life. The first candle stands for the promise of God, Jesus Christ, who brings us hope. ***Light the first purple Advent Candle.***

A Reading: Luke 1: 26 – 33 – The Message

“In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” (NRSV)

One Voice: What amazement: to have an angel visit! What amazement: Mary listened! How many of us hear the angel's voice or even are aware of the angels among us? Mary heard and Mary replied, for angels are messengers of God who bring messages, and revelation calls for a response. When the angel announced that she would give birth to the Son of the Most High, Mary answered, "I am the Lord's servant." To be fully alive is to be obedient to the work to which God calls us. To follow our calling is to be formed by, to embrace the vision of God's calling. The dancer, dances. The teacher, teaches. To follow our calling is to say yes to the miracle of life for when we follow our calling, opportunities appear, doors open that we did not know were there.

The Second Purple Candle of the Advent Wreath is lit.

One Voice: We light this candle recognizing the amazing gift of faith and love. What amazement: Mary listened! God spoke and Mary listened. In faith we can discover that God still speaks and does many great and wonderful things in our world today! God's messengers are among us. The second candle reminds us to look at this world through the eyes of faith so that we might receive, hear, respond to, and be formed by the messages of God.

Prayer: Dear God, help us in this time of waiting and preparation to deepen our love and faith in you and in your Son our Savior. Help us to Listen for your voice and for your call and give us the courage and strength to respond. Amen.

Sing or read verse 1: #196 The United Methodist Hymnal

Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

A seed for reflection: Are your spiritual ears and eyes open to hear and see the things God is up to?