

### WEEK 3

Take time on this Advent journey to listen for the “still small voice,” that voice in which God often speaks to us.

O God of the still, small voice, quiet our inner spirit. Help us to focus upon You and You alone, to hear Your voice within.

There are so many other voices demanding our attention. But we cannot attend to them without You... *Be still and know that I am God*, You say to us as You said to Elijah... May Your voice speak through us.

In weakness, be our strength. In poverty, be our wealth. In depression, be our joy. In apathy, be our love.

We cannot sing Love’s song, O Lord, unless it be Your voice singing in us. Take this heart, and with this mouth make Your praise and thanksgiving a reality here and now. Because of, and in the name of our Messiah, Jesus. Amen.

[My Redeemer Lives website]

Silence and stillness are often in short supply. Advent is no exception. Noise and activity seem to accelerate during the month of December. And yet, Advent invites me to stillness – to let go of empty words and activities – and to open myself to the wordless love of God. In stillness I am open to hear God’s voice instead of my own. In stillness I can let go of my own ideas and be open to God’s plan.

### WEEK 4

Waiting – so much of life seems to be waiting. In this Advent time, let us turn to Mary to show us how to wait in expectation.

My soul reflects quietly on your fullness, and my spirit grows stronger in the hope of your promise, God my redeemer, because you have filled me with the knowing that you are alive within me. Yes, day by day, through the course of time my awareness of the call to blessed fulfillment increases for you have done great things in me.

Holy is this time, and patience is your gift to all who nurture the seed of your love.

You have changed my life; I was so confident in my unknowing. You have deflected my fervent thrust toward iron-clad goals, and spread before me your vision of fragile simplicity.

My longing to be a healing and reconciling person to your people is affirmed within the daily comings and goings of my life; my illusions of my own wholeness are mercifully revealed.

You are here now in this seeming emptiness of waiting, remembering your intent, ... according to the promise made in the beginning of time... remembering your intent to reach through the work of my life that your fullness may be known now, in our time.

[Ann Johnson, *Miryam of Nazareth*]

God of love and mercy,  
help us to follow the example of Mary,  
always ready to do your will.  
At the message of an angel  
she welcomed your eternal Son  
and, filled with the light of your Spirit,  
she became the temple of your Word,  
who lives and reigns with you and  
the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

## LABYRINTH WALKS for ADVENT



Advent is a time of preparation. It is easy to make our preparations focus on shopping, cooking, decorating, entertaining. But this is a season of Holy preparation. Take time to prepare yourself by spending time with God. Some time during the week – it could be before or after church, or when you are in the neighborhood – slow down, and walk the labyrinth. Prepare your heart and extend the invitation, “Come, Lord Jesus.”

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## **General Information and Instructions**

Come take a walk with the Holy.

It is easy: just one foot in front of the other. There is nothing “magic” about a labyrinth. It is a pattern that you can walk (or trace with your finger on a printed labyrinth). Unlike a maze, you can’t get lost: this is one way into the center, and the same way out again.

But why a labyrinth at all? What’s the point?

- If you have trouble sitting still, walking a labyrinth may make a period of prayer easier.
- Walking may help you sort things in your mind. Hold a question or issue in your mind, remaining open for an answer.
- And walking and talking with a friend (e.g., the Father, Son, and/or Holy Spirit) can bring you closer to the Beloved.

There is no right or wrong way to walk. Pause as you step onto the labyrinth, take a deep breath, and start. Step by step.

When you get to the center, pause ~ take time to be ~ to pray. How do you feel? Have you received clarity about an issue?

When you’re ready, walk out as you walked in. Allow the experience to soak in. When you leave the labyrinth, take time to rest in the presence and peace of God.

OR – hop, run, and skip in the labyrinth. Be as a little child. It’s all good.

Following you will find reflections and prayers for each week of Advent. Use them as you walk or reflect quietly as you prepare your heart for the coming of the Lord. Come, Lord Jesus.

## **WEEK 1**

We prepare when we take a journey – pack a bag, arrange for someone to feed the pets and water the plants. So, too, on our journey for the coming of the Lord we are told to prepare. What does it mean to prepare for God?

We want to begin this journey by rallying ourselves to turn to the Lord with great hope. In the midst of many discouraging challenges in our lives and the violence in the world around us, [help us spend this time] in anticipation of the graces our God desires to give to us.

Lord God, I sense your power, your might, and I stand in awe, painfully aware of how poor and weak I am before you. As I begin this Advent journey, teach me to turn to you in my fear and sorrow. I don’t want to keep making my heart hard against you, turning a deaf ear to your invitation. Only you can help me to soften, to be like the clay in your gentle potter’s hands.

[Online Ministry/Creighton University]

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

[Thomas Merton]

## **WEEK 2**

Spiritual journeys – even those to sacred sits – are inward. Advent invites us to turn within, to reflect on the meaning of the coming of the Lord.

God of the journey, your invitation is to all  
to walk with you without fear of stumbling  
Your arm enough to stead the feeblest soul  
Your grace to rescue us should we fall  
Grant us faith enough to take you at your word  
To know that when our hearts are heavy  
and the destination seems so distant  
that you are there with us along the road  
Forgive us those times when we doubt your Word  
when we awake and feel alone  
Draw us ever closer into your family  
that we might know your presence  
and sing your praises  
all the days of our lives. Amen.

[faithandworship.com]

Advent... symbolizes the spiritual journey... as [we] affirm that Christ has come, that He is present in the world today, and that He will come again in power. That acknowledgment provides a basis for... holy living arising from a profound sense that we live “between the times” and are called to be faithful stewards of what is entrusted to us as God’s people.

[Dennis Bratcher]