

# Until the Dawn

## ACTIONS FOR THE WORK OF ADVENT

Creative resources inspired by  
the RCL, Year B

### RESOURCES INCLUDED IN THE BUNDLE

- 1. DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET** *(A printable devotional booklet with scripture, commentary, poetry, visual art, hymns, and reflection prompts).*
- 2. SERMON PLANNING GUIDE** *(A detailed guide offering biblical commentary, theme connections, text study prompts, and links to further reading for each Sunday in our series).*
- 3. WORDS FOR WORSHIP** *(Worship liturgy inspired by our themes and focal scriptures for Advent 1-4, Christmas Eve, and Epiphany Sunday).*
- 4. CREATIVE LITURGY FOR THE SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS** *(A creative worship service that helps you reflect on the previous year and celebrate your community).*
- 5. EPIPHANY STAR WORDS W/ LITURGY** *(Newly-designed star words for Epiphany with supplemental liturgy to incorporate this ritual into your worship).*
- 6. ORIGINAL HYMNS** *(Fresh lyrics set to traditional tunes for each Sunday in the series).*
- 7. POEMS** *(7 poems inspired by our weekly sub-themes).*
- 8. 11 NEW VISUALS W/ ARTIST STATEMENTS** *(Original artwork created by 5 different artists, illuminating the focal scriptures in our series).*
- 9. BANNER DESIGN** *(An intricate design to bring to life as a paper lace, painted, or commercially-printed banner in your worship space).*
- 10. BRANDING SUITE** *(Logo files, design elements, and graphics to help you share the series in your print and web communications).*
- 11. CHILDREN'S CURRICULUM** *(Weekly curriculum for children that includes reflections on the scriptures, art projects, and hands-on service activities).*
- 12. CHILDREN'S BULLETINS** *(Interactive worship bulletins for each Sunday in our series).*
- 13. ADVENT PRAYER CALENDARS FOR CHILDREN & ADULTS** *(Advent calendars, one for children and one for adults, offering daily prayers).*
- 14. BONUS RESOURCE: THEME SONG** *(A theme song written by our guest musician, Sam Allen. This will be released after our initial launch of the Advent resources, so stay tuned).*

### About the Theme & Series

Every Advent, we light candles and speak of hope. We wait for the good news that God is born. We prepare with pageants and presents. Yet, in the midst of our busy waiting, we know all too well that the world is not as it should be. Wars rage on, violence persists, new tragedies unfold. God's promises are real, *and* God's promised day has not yet come. This tension keeps us yearning—for a new day, a new way, a world made new.

This series focuses on the actions we can take as we move through the night with hope for tomorrow. Night is a time when the way forward may seem unclear, when our senses are heightened and fear may creep in. And the darkness also brings gifts—rest, regeneration, dreams, intimacy with God. In our sacred stories, angels often arrive in the night, calling for courageous action and singing good news. In the night, Mary's labor pains crescendo and Christ is born. In the night, shepherds and Magi follow the stars to get closer to God. And so, in the metaphorical night, we will carry on with the work that is ours to do.

Just as surely as the sun rises, God's steadfast love and mercy are made new every morning. As we move toward the horizon, we will cry out, start somewhere, speak up, take courage, build up, and choose joy. These actions will help us resist despair and put our prayers in motion. Until the day when God's love reigns and all the earth echoes shalom, let us keep moving, singing, resisting, and rejoicing—trusting that God joins us in the work of Advent.



# About the Branding & Logo

Like a painting in motion, the branding photography captures the reality that dawn is not a fixed destination, but a process. Dawn is a liminal space of gradual change. This imagery affirms the sacred beauty of the night as it evolves into day—through darkness and light, hues of phthalo, indigo, and mulberry emerge. As we move through Advent toward Christmas and Epiphany, the light of morning breaks in. The sunlight beckons us to keep our gaze on the changing horizon, focused on the ways God’s good news dawns each day.

In the typography, the letters lean forward, urging us to keep working, to keep trusting, and to keep going even when life is hard or uncertain. The “a” in “Dawn” represents the rising sun and serves as a reminder that the day is surely coming when all of God’s promises will be made known.

## FREE MATERIALS TO SUPPLEMENT THE BUNDLE

### 1. HYMN & MUSIC

**IDEAS—** A long list of music ideas inspired by our theme and weekly sub-themes—for worship, fellowship, and listening.

### 2. CONTENT CALENDAR FOR SOCIAL MEDIA—

Carefully-selected images, graphics, and excerpts from the resources for you to post on your social media platforms. This will be a free bonus for bundle patrons.

### 3. LITURGY FOR THE NIGHT—

A blog post with liturgy to host a candlelight service that honors the gifts of darkness while also holding space for grief and lament.

## The Series at a Glance

1 <sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT	2 <sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT	3 <sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT	4 <sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT	CHRISTMAS EVE	SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS	EPIPHANY
Until the Dawn... <b>CRY OUT</b>	Until the Dawn... <b>START SOMEWHERE</b>	Until the Dawn... <b>SPEAK UP</b>	Until the Dawn... <b>TAKE COURAGE</b>	Until the Dawn... <b>ANGELS SING</b>	Until the Dawn... <b>BUILD UP</b>	Until the Dawn... <b>CHOOSE JOY</b>
<b>Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19</b> ("Restore us, O God; make your face shine") <b>Isaiah 64:1-9</b> ("O that you would tear open the heavens and come down")	<b>Mark 1:1-8</b> (John baptizes in the wilderness, calling for repentance) <b>Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13</b> ("...righteousness and peace will kiss")	<b>John 1:6-8; 19-28</b> (John the baptist testifies to the light) for repentance) <b>Isaiah 61:1-4</b> ("...he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed")	<b>Luke 1:26-38</b> (The angel visits Mary) <b>Luke 1:46b-55</b> (The Magnificat)	<b>Luke 2:1-20</b> (Nativity; the angels sing "Glory to God in the highest!") <b>Psalm 96</b> ("O sing to the Lord a new song!")	<b>Luke 2:22-40</b> (Simeon & Anna in the temple)	<b>Matthew 2:1-12</b> (The Magi follow the star)

# FOCAL SCRIPTURES

This series follows the Revised Common Lectionary, Year B.



## Until the Dawn CRY OUT

### The First Sunday of Advent

#### Until the Dawn... **CRY OUT**

**Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19** ("Restore us, O God; make your face shine")

**Isaiah 64:1-9** ("O that you would tear open the heavens and come down")

The first Sunday of Advent gives voice to the desperation we feel for God to restore what is broken. Crying out may not feel productive, but it is often necessary; our weariness, hopelessness, anger, and grief must be given a voice. After all, we cannot repair what we cannot name. We turn to the psalms and the prophets to put our pain into words, remembering that, for generations, people of faith have cried out to God for restoration and relief. In our lamentations and grievances, there is deep faith: faith that God hears us, faith that God cares for us, and faith that God can plant hope and restoration within us.

## Until the Dawn START SOMEWHERE

### The Second Sunday of Advent

#### Until the Dawn... **START SOMEWHERE**

**Mark 1:1-8** (John baptizes in the wilderness, calling for repentance)

**Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13** (Prayer for restoration; "righteousness and peace will kiss")

Mark's Gospel doesn't begin with Jesus' birth—but with his baptism. John the Baptist is drawing crowds to the water's edge, inviting them into a new way of living. The whole region of Judea has come out to see this wild man—something is clearly drawing them in. And though the call to repentance is difficult, they step into the waters of baptism, committing to turn away from the paths of power to the path of righteousness. Do they see what the Psalmist sees: faithfulness springing up from the ground and righteousness looking down from the sky? Or are they simply taking the first step, unsure of what comes next? When we cannot see the full path ahead, let us trust that we can start somewhere—anywhere—and simply show up at the water's edge.

## Until the Dawn SPEAK UP

### The Third Sunday of Advent

#### Until the Dawn... **SPEAK UP**

**John 1:6-8; 19-28** (John the Baptist testifies to the light)

**Isaiah 61:1-4** ("...he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed")

When John the Baptist begins baptizing the crowds, the religious authorities come to question him, and John gives his testimony. Rather than lifting himself up, John points to Jesus; he simply tells what he knows to be true. Knowing what often happens to prophets, speaking up can be a daunting task. But bearing witness—both to the powers of evil and the goodness of God—is critical work. We are called, like John, to proclaim the need for repentance; and we are called, like Isaiah, to bring good news to the oppressed. When we don't know what to do, we can simply tell the truth about where we have seen God at work in the world, believing that our voice can give others the courage to do the same.



## Until the DAWN TAKE COURAGE

### The Fourth Sunday of Advent

## Until the Dawn... TAKE COURAGE

**Luke 1:26-38** (*The angel visits Mary*)

**Luke 1:46b-55** (*The Magnificat*)

When visited by the angel Gabriel, Mary has the courage to ask questions. She has the courage to believe in God's call and to trust her own worth. She has the courage to go into the highlands to seek help from her cousin. She has the courage to sing about God's upside-down kingdom, where the rich are sent away empty and the hungry are filled with good things. As a poor, unwed teenager, Mary exhibits bold courage by bringing Jesus into the world. Like Mary, let us draw courage from the deep knowledge of who God is and who God has created us to be. To the God who topples thrones and lifts up the lowly, may we say, "Here I am."



## Until the DAWN ANGELS SING

### Christmas Eve

## Until the Dawn... ANGELS SING

**Luke 2:1-20** (*Nativity; the angels sing "Glory to God in the highest"*)

**Psalms 96** (*"O sing to the Lord a new song!"*)

In the middle of the night, angels split the heavens with choruses of good news: "Peace on earth! Glory to God in the highest!" Their song inspires the shepherds to run toward the manger and repeat the sounding joy throughout Bethlehem and beyond. The tune rings within Mary's heart as she ponders the shepherds' message. In the deepest night, God is singing: love is born, Christ is here. Do we hear it? Are we willing to listen for angels and join in their song?



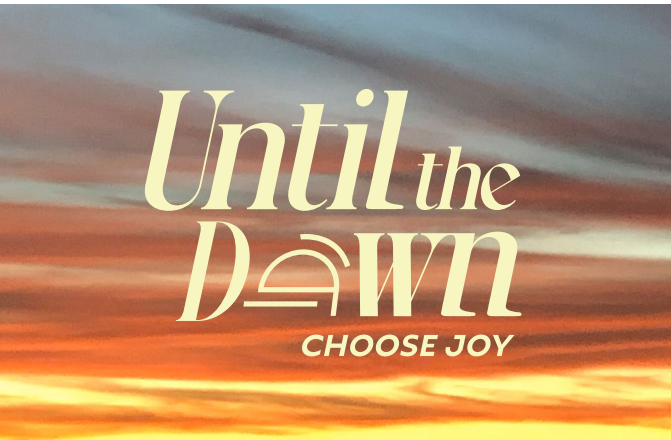
## Until the DAWN BUILD UP

### First Sunday after Christmas

## Until the Dawn... BUILD UP

**Luke 2:22-40** (*Simeon & Anna in the temple*)

When Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to be presented in the temple, they meet two faithful prophets. Simeon proclaims who Jesus is and who he will become. Who has been like Simeon for each of us? Who has called out the gifts we carry inside and nurtured them? They also meet Anna, who has remained in the temple for the better part of her long life, committing herself to her faith practices. Who has been like Anna for each of us? Who has been steadfast in their dedication to the work of God, inspiring us to do the same? Like Simeon and Anna, we are called to build up the beloved community by naming one another's gifts, speaking words of affirmation, being steadfast and faithful, participating in spiritual practices and rituals of our faith, and responding to the Holy Spirit's movement in our midst.



## Until the DAWN CHOOSE JOY

### Epiphany Sunday

## Until the Dawn... CHOOSE JOY

**Matthew 2:1-12** (*The Magi follow the star*)

The star that rises at Jesus' birth strikes fear in Herod's heart, but it ignites joy within the Magi, who have eagerly awaited its rising. They have dedicated their lives to following the movements of the cosmos, and God uses this passion to point them toward Christ. The Magi are overcome with joy—not when they reach Bethlehem, but when they see the star beckoning them forward. Joy is not a destination. It is not a commodity to achieve or earn. In a fearful, heavy world, joy is a resilient, faithful practice for the journey. Joy liberates us from the bondage of empire and guides us through the night toward the dawn.

# About Our Guest Contributors



## **GUEST WRITER**

### **Kat Armas**

*is writing commentary that will be featured in our devotional and sermon planning guide.*

Kat Armas (*she/her*) is a Cuban American writer, speaker, and theologian from Miami, FL. She holds a ThM from Vanderbilt Divinity School and a dual MDiv and MAT from Fuller Theological Seminary where she was awarded the Frederick Buechner Award for Excellence in Writing.

Her first book, *Abuelita Faith: What Women on the Margins Teach Us About Wisdom, Persistence and Strength*, sits at the intersection of women, decolonialism, the Bible, and Cuban identity. Her second book, *Sacred Belonging: A 40-day Devotional on the Liberating Heart of Scripture* invites readers to encounter the Bible through a decolonized lens, lifting up themes of creation, wisdom, spirit, the body, and the feminine. Her third book, *Liturgies for Resisting Empire: Seeking Community, Belonging, and Peace in a Dehumanizing World*, examines the ideologies of empire that infiltrate daily life and offers a pathway toward liberation.

Kat has spoken at seminaries, universities, and conferences nationwide, and her work has appeared in the *National Catholic Reporter* (where one of her essays was shared by the Pope!), *Plough* magazine, *The Christian Century*, *Christianity Today*, *SOJOURNERS* magazine, and more. Kat currently lives on a small farm in middle Tennessee with her family—which includes her spouse, young children, chickens, goats, pigs, dogs, and cats.

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# About Our Guest Contributors



## GUEST ARTIST

### **Carmelle Beaugelin Caldwell**

*is writing commentary that will be featured in our devotional and sermon planning guide.*

Carmelle Caldwell (*she/her*) is a Haitian-American multidisciplinary artist whose visual lexicon fuses gestural abstraction and theology to explore themes of diaspora, faith, and cultural memory. Borrowing her use of color from the vibrancy of Haitian artistic traditions, Carmelle's art pulses with movement and mysticism.

After earning a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary, Carmelle founded BeauFolio Studio, curating collaborative experiences that merge fine art, spiritual disciplines, and play to foster creativity in sacred spaces. Her work has been featured in partnerships with Interfaith America, Flagler College, and Duke Divinity.

Beyond her studio practice, Carmelle serves as Associate Director of the Missing Voices Project at Flagler College's Center for Religion and Culture and serves on the board of Artworks Trenton ([artworkstrenton.org](http://artworkstrenton.org)).

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## GUEST ARTIST

### **Ashley Slade**

*is creating visual art that will be featured in our devotional and visual art collection.*

Ashley Slade (*she/her*) is a painter, illustrator, and collage artist based in Pasadena, California. She is interested in the use of various materials to examine the difference between her interior world and the reality in which we live. She is inspired by afro and retro-futurism, solarpunk, surrealism, midcentury illustration, and her rural upbringing in Virginia. Although not visual artists, her creative

family is filled with musicians, chefs, and makers. She has an extensive background in graphic design and digital art, but fell in love with oil painting during the COVID pandemic and now focuses her practice on creating artworks by hand. By day, Ashley serves as Communications Director for First United Methodist Church of Pasadena, California. She holds a Master's Degree in Communications from Johns Hopkins University and has experience in editorial work and publishing.

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# About Our Guest Contributors



## **GUEST MUSICIAN** **Sam Allen**

*is writing an original song inspired by our theme.*

Sam Allen (*he/him*) is a worship leader and songwriter based in Dallas, TX. Though he is now Presbyterian, his musical and cultural roots are steeped heavily in the Evangelical churches he grew up in. From 2022-2026, Sam served at First Presbyterian Church of Dallas as the Worship Music Director for Wood Street Worship, which is a casual, band-led service where you might hear a hymn, an original song, and Beyoncé all in one

Sunday. When Sam isn't making or writing music, you can find him commuting on his bike, sipping hot tea, or getting tackled by one of his four boys.



# *Reflections on the theme from the SA Creative Team*

In my daily life, I can get so overwhelmed that it feels impossible to get through my to-do list, much less participate meaningfully in the in-breaking of God's kingdom in the world. The weight of the world often leaves me immobilized and disheartened to the point that I begin to believe there is nothing I can do. And yet, what I've found helpful is learning to set small, incremental tasks—ways of continuing to move toward the big picture, one faithful step at a time.

In Advent, as we celebrate the birth of Christ while also longing for Christ's return, we are called to keep moving toward the promised reality where mourning, crying, pain, and death will be no more (Rev. 21:4). This Advent, we will make progress bit by bit: crying out to God in lament, finding our footing and starting somewhere, daring to speak the truth, taking courage in our call, recognizing the voices of angels among us, building up the beloved community, and resisting despair as we choose joy. We will do all of this together as we find our way toward the breaking dawn.

—Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman, Director of Branding, Founding Creative Partner

"Advent is a season of longing—an emotion we know all too well. We know what it feels like to long for a better day. We know what it feels like to long for a world without war. We know what it feels like to long for Christ's presence among us. We also know that the more you long for something, the harder it is to sit by and wait. So this Advent, instead of waiting passively for Christ to come to us, we are meeting God in the middle. Every Sunday of this season holds a spiritual practice, an invitation, or a tool for your spiritual tool box. Together, we will move through this holy season, not as passive bystanders waiting for good news, but as active seekers and dreamers who long to stand in the sun. Link arms with us. Sing with us. Speak with us. Move with us. We would love to journey together."

—Rev. Sarah Speed, Founding Creative Partner

"The Advent scriptures are filled with people taking courageous actions in the face of uncertainty. People from all over Judea and Jerusalem leave familiarity behind to go into the wilderness seeking a change. When questioned by the authorities, John the Baptist testifies to Christ—but continues the work that is his to do. Mary says yes to God's impossible and unbelievable call. The shepherds listen to the angels singing good news—and then go out into the world singing their song. The Magi evade Herod's tricks and choose joyful resistance as they travel far from home.

Despair or helplessness could have convinced any of these people to give up and passively wish for a better day. Instead, what we see in our faithful forebears is the will to start somewhere, the grit to keep going, and the faith to trust that God is with them along the way. This series is an invitation to learn from their resilience and discover how God is also guiding us toward the dawning of a better day."

—Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity, Founder, Creative Director

Shortly after we finalized our theme planning for this series, protests broke out in Minneapolis in response to Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents surging the city; hundreds of clergy traveled to Minnesota to participate in prayer vigils and nonviolent civil disobedience. The stories that emerged in the following days echoed the sub-themes we had been discerning from the RCL Year B texts: cry out, start somewhere, speak up, take courage. The spontaneous singing breaking out across the Twin Cities echoed the angels' songs of peace on earth. As protests continued and spread throughout the country, we built each other up and didn't let oppression dim the light of our joy. Though God's promised day feels so far away, we haven't stopped moving toward its dawning.

This is the message that we desperately need: what we do in the waiting matters. Every action we take, no matter how small, matters. The crying out matters, the linking arms matters, the showing up matters. And all of it takes us closer to the promised day God is bringing."

—Rev. Anna Strickland, Creative Partner/Operations Support

"Lament is not a way in which I grew up interacting with God. In the last two years, when I turn to God in prayer, my body, mind, and soul yearn for the ability to lay burdens down—these burdens that are out of my control, too big for me to deal with, too hard for me to hold. As we were diving deep into the scriptures and imagining this series, the realization that we may not see the dawn of God's new creation in our lifetime was palpable—probable—painful. Yet, smaller, attainable dawns emerged over and over again, giving life to my understanding of how to do the next right thing. This season, it begins with learning to lament."

—Hannah Garrity, Founding Creative Partner