

Worship Engagement and Devotion for week of November 28, 2021

READ Luke 21:25-36 and 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Close to Home Advent 1: Homesick (Hope)



When something hits close to home, it affects us deeply. During the Advent and Christmas season, we journey through scriptures and rituals that are tender, heavy with emotion, and vulnerable. We carry the memories and truths of this season close to our hearts. Close to Home acknowledges the “already but not yet” tension of our faith: Emmanuel is with us, and yet, God’s promised day—our everlasting home—is not fully realized. It names our deep longing for God to come close to us.

As we begin Advent with the “Little Apocalypse” in Luke 21, we remember how far from home we are. The world is not as it should be. Many have lost their physical homes, many feel alone, and many are isolated. Many of us feel as if we are wandering with no clear way forward. This first week speaks to our deep longing—for our home to be made whole, made right, and made well. With deep longing, we watch for God. Thankfully, God enters a homesick world.

Questions for Reflection:

- Draw or journal a memory of feeling homesick. How did you feel? What did you yearn for?
- What is your community homesick for? What are the collective “homesicknesses” we hold within ourselves? How does our deep longing intersect with deep hope?
- What are the stories of people who have lost their homes—due to natural disasters or financial strain? What are the stories of people who have been displaced from their homelands or have had to flee them? How can you and your community help provide support?
- Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians resonates with our deep yearning for connection and intimacy. If you were to write a similar letter to a person or community you haven’t seen in a long time, what would you say? How would you express your longing to be close?
- Where do you see God entering a homesick world?

Adapted from Close to Home Sanctified Art | Sanctifiedart.org

Spiritual Practice: Advent Candle Lighting, First Week of Advent

The tradition of lighting the candles on the Advent Wreath is a favorite element of worship that symbolizes the passage of the four weeks of Advent and the celebration of the Christ Child on Christmas Eve. Advent wreaths are usually circular representing God’s never-ending love. At Faith United we use 3 purple candles and 1 pink for the four weeks of Advent. The pink candle is lit on the third week as a symbol of joy. The white candle is the Christ Candle and will be lit on Christmas Eve. Some traditions use 4 blue candles and 1 white.



The Advent Wreath is a tradition you can also use at home by making your own wreath! You can use garland, branches from your yard, clay or other art materials to form your wreath. Reading a scripture and reflection question can add to your personal or family devotion experience.

Learn more about the Advent Wreath in Faith United’s Spiritual Practice 101 video series. [Click here](#) to view the Advent Wreath video.

Candle Lighting Liturgy | The Candle of Hope *Written for two voices, this liturgy could be adapted for one, three or more.*

A: We hope for a world where all are fed. B: We hope for a world with more bridges than walls.
A: We hope for a world with wide open doors. B: We hope for a world with contagious laughter.
A: We hope for a world where trees grow tall and creeks run clean.
B: We hope for a world where all people feel at home—in their bodies, in the church, in their physical homes.
A: We hope for that world. B: We long for that world.
A: We are homesick for that world.
B: So today we light the candle of hope, because hope keeps our hearts alive as we wait.
A: May this light be a reminder that the wait is always worth it.
B: We are close to home. May we carry hope with us. Amen.

Wonder Together: What are your hopes for the waiting of this Advent?