

# ADVENT 2025

## *Waiting with All Creation*

Advent is the liturgical season marked by the four Sundays before the celebration of the Incarnation of Our Lord on Christmas Day. It is a season of waiting and longing. It is a time to recall the promises of the Kingdom of God and notice the ways in which we long for these promises to be fulfilled when Jesus returns. Advent is a counter-cultural season, an invitation to quiet contemplation in the midst of the chaos of shopping days until Christmas and peppermint everything.

This four week program is a simple invitation to take some time each week during Advent to pause - to notice, to wonder, and to remember. Each Sunday, offers a short devotion with these invitations and an invitation to get creative. There is also an online discussion group to share your thoughts, observations, questions, and insights as well as the fruits of your creativity.

A quick note on creativity - While creativity does indeed "create" something, the purpose is the process and not the product. The process of creating opens us to contemplation. To draw or describe something requires to look deeply and notice. In doing so we also notice things about ourselves and about God. In the same way, contemplation opens us to creativity. To contemplate or look deeply into a passage of Scripture, a time of prayer, or a common masterpiece of Creation quickly brings us beyond words to the place of picture and poetry. Creativity is also a process of community. The art we create is never complete but always being completed by those who experience it with us. As you prepare for this program, feel free to gather the creative supplies that you like. We will offer invitations to certain media, but all media are welcome. We look forward to sharing your creations.

To join our online community discussion and share your creative work, please sign up for online Advent Program at <https://www.horizons-sa.org/challenges>



# ADVENT #1: REFLECTION

## *Consider the Trees*

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,  
because the Lord has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor;  
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
to grant to those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;  
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.  
Isaiah 61:1-3

As autumn turns to winter and the leaves lend their color to the majestic oaks and then to my yard, I notice the waiting of the trees. How some leaves linger longer on the branch waiting for just the right gust of wind. I notice how the barren limbs wait for spring to fill them once again with green leaves. I notice the waiting of the greater community as acorn becomes seedling on the years-long journey to a mature oak.

I wonder what I can learn about waiting from the trees. What am I clinging to awaiting release? What awaits in the next season as days lengthen and weather warms? What is the long journey of waiting on which God is leading me? How am I invited to wait? What nourishes my faith as I wait?

The acorn's journey reminds me of watching my children grow, of the time between finding out my wife is pregnant and holding the child, of the time between starting school and graduating.

In this season of Advent, in what ways might God be inviting you to Rejoice? Or Lament? Or Trust? Or simply Abide in Him?

### What Do You NOTICE?

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### What Does It Make You WONDER?

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### What Does It REMIND You Of?

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# ADVENT #1: GET CREATIVE

## *Consider the Trees*

In this season, trees and their leaves offer a variety of images and colors. Consider a creative way to explore the colors you see.

Perhaps using watercolors, markers, or pencils to draw the trees you see.

You might consider collecting leaves and making a collage, or something else entirely!

Take a moment to consider your creative process.

What about trees initially drew your attention?

In this process, how might God be inviting you to experience Advent?

Now consider sharing your creative expression and insights with our community in the discussion group.

What Did You NOTICE As You Explored?

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What Did It Make You WONDER?

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What Did Your Creative Work REMIND You Of?

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# ADVENT #2: REFLECTION

## *Consider the Seeds*

And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

John 12:23-25

I am amazed by the abundance present in seeds. I notice the number of acorns an oak tree produces compared to the number of small oak trees. The purpose of the seeds goes far beyond the propagation of the species. Acorns feed squirrels and deer and other wildlife. Grasses, grains, and berries feed birds through the winter. I also notice the waiting of seeds. Grass seeds can remain in the ground ungerminated for years then when conditions are right they sprout.

I wonder how I might look at my efforts differently if I considered them in community? In what ways am I producing seeds? In what ways am I gathering the efforts of others? I wonder how dormant seeds know when to sprout? Even in the same environment some sprout and some wait.

I am reminded of some of the best teams with whom I ever worked. Those where efforts were shared according to talent with some generating ideas and others turning ideas into action.

The mystery of discernment when God clearly says "Yes" and "Wait" at the same time.

In this season of Advent, what might God be inviting you to Release? To Receive? To Wait?

What Do You NOTICE?

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# ADVENT #2: GET CREATIVE

## *Consider the Seeds*

As we consider the generosity and abundance found in seeds this week, consider getting creative and generous.

This may be a perfect time to use peanut butter or suet to coat pine cones or cardboard with birdseed to provide supplemental food for backyard birds.

What other ways might you be creative in your generosity?

Take a moment to consider your creative process.

What about seeds initially drew your attention?

In this process, how might God be inviting you to experience Advent?

Now consider sharing your creative expression and insights with our community in the discussion group.

What Did You NOTICE As You Explored?

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# ADVENT #3: REFLECTION

## *Consider the Grasses*

For thus says the Lord:

"Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river,  
and the glory of the nations like an overflowing  
stream;  
and you shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her hip,  
and bounced upon her knees.  
As one whom his mother comforts,  
so I will comfort you;  
you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.  
You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice;  
your bones shall flourish like the grass;  
and the hand of the Lord shall be known to his  
servants,  
and he shall show his indignation against his enemies.  
Isaiah 66:12-14

### What Do You NOTICE?

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While checking the cows, I notice the way that the pastures have turned a beautiful golden brown as seed heads have matured and the frost has pushed the summer grasses into dormancy. I also notice as I look closely, the tender green of winter grasses pushing up through the brown. While driving, I notice the stark contrast between the brown of the hay meadows and pastures and the vibrant green of early wheat fields. I notice the way that each type of grass waits differently for the warmth of Spring.

I wonder what I can learn about waiting from the grasses. Can I learn to be dormant for a season? Can I grow slowly while waiting, taking advantage of sunny days and the moisture of winter rain and snow? What might Spring growth bring?

The grasses remind me of the redemption and hope that God works when it seems that all is bleak, brown, and dormant.

# ADVENT #3: GET CREATIVE

## *Consider the Grasses*

It is easy to ignore grasses in this season where many of our lawns are dormant, yet grassy areas can still be filled with contrast and a variety of images. Noticing contrasts and images is a great start to inspiring our creativity. Take a little time this week to find an area with grasses - a yard, a park, a pasture, anywhere!

Find a comfortable place to really observe the grasses. After a time of observation, consider a way that you might creatively respond.

Perhaps a poem or a creative story about seeing the world from the perspective of a blade of grass or something else entirely.

Take a moment to consider your creative process.

What about grasses initially drew your attention?

In this process, how might God be inviting you to experience Advent?

Now consider sharing your creative expression and insights with our community in the discussion group.

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# ADVENT #4: REFLECTION

## *Consider the Roots*

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Hebrews 10:19-25

As we approach the end of our Advent journey, I invite you to notice things that are usually hidden or unnoticed. I notice the unseen support that roots provide for the visible part of trees. I notice the way that roots secrete nutrients to cultivate the microbial community that surrounds them in healthy soil.

I wonder about the unseen structures that support me. I wonder how I might cultivate a healthy soil around me?

I am reminded of all the little things that go into daily life that are hidden or that I choose not to notice. What are all the unseen steps required to bring each piece of food to my plate? What are all the unseen influences that go into the response of the person in front of me?

In this season of Advent, in what ways might God be inviting you to be nourished and supported?

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# ADVENT #4: GET CREATIVE

## *Consider the Roots*

As we get creative during this very short and very busy week, I invite you to take a short walk with your camera. Look for the unnoticed things around you and take a few pictures.

Spend a bit of time when you finish your walk to look at one or two of your pictures more closely. What else might you notice when looking closely?

Consider cropping a few of the pictures down to one small, unnoticed item or part of an item or consider making a collage of your pictures.

Take a moment to consider your creative process.

What about roots initially drew your attention?

In this process, how might God be inviting you to experience Advent?

Now consider sharing your creative expression and insights with our community in the discussion group.

What Did You NOTICE As You Explored?

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