

Advent Contemplative Space



St James's Church
Piccadilly

A space for prayer, readings and
silence throughout Advent on
Zoom

Fridays 6, 12 and 19 December
Monday 22 December 2025
6.00 -7.00 pm



Advent Contemplative Space 2025

**A space for prayer, readings and silence,
on Fridays throughout Advent, ending
with a session on Monday 22 December.
All sessions 6.00 – 7.00pm on Zoom.**

Please join us for this series of Advent reflections. Each session will be facilitated by a member of St James's community and will include a welcome, reading from Scripture, a second reading (usually a poem), guided silence with opportunities to reflect in whatever way is meaningful for you, time to share reflections, and a closing prayer. Everyone is welcome to attend for all or part of the time each day.

Mother of God Healer, Nurturer, Friend

Friday 5 December

Luke 1:28-38 The Annunciation

28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail."

38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Prayer For the Waiting Time *Nicola Slee*

Give me the resolution to say No to the good
So that I will be ready to give my Yes to the better.

Give me the courage to keep living in the open-endedness
of the future without foreclosing the mysterious work of
your spirit in my mask of fear.

Give me the persistence to stay in the wilderness of
unknowing
until I am ready to receive your call.

Give me the strength to keep still and waiting when all
about me is pushing towards movement, activity and
choice.

Give me the acceptance to live these days in
uneventfulness, simplicity and hiddenness without craving
excitement, distraction or change.

Give me the grace to live in the emptiness of not doing
without the rewards of achievement, fulfilment or success.

Give me the wisdom to discriminate between my own
impatience to move forward
and your Spirit's deep stirring of my spirit when the time is
right to move.

Give me the faith to trust in your obscurity,
the obedience to stay faithful to your mystery,
the courage to keep tryst with your inscrutability.

Prayer

Holy Mother, give us the courage to wait for God with a trusting and hopeful heart and pray that we will be given what we need on this challenging journey we call Life.

Courage, Resilience, Spiritual Warriorhood

Friday 12 December

Philippian's 1:27-30 Life Worthy of the Gospel.

Paul writes:

27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God.

29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

This Land My Sister Is A Woman

Fadwa Tuqan, Palestinian poet

My sister our land has a throbbing heart
It doesn't cease to beat, and it endures the unendurable,
It keeps the secrets of hills and wombs.
This land sprouting with spikes and palms is also the land
That gives the birth to a freedom fighter,
This land, my sister is a woman

Prayer

Dear God

Help the world to see this gift of land is to be shared so
that all of the inhabitants are able to live with the inherent
dignity you have bestowed on all of your creatures within
this beautiful and beloved planet.

Joy, Mysticism, Love

Friday 19 December

John 4:7-10

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"

8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a

drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)
10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

This is the Discovery *Howard Thurman*

This is the discovery made by the slave that finds his expression in the song - a complete and final refusal to be stopped.

The spirit broods over all the recalcitrant and stubborn aspects of experience

Until they begin slowly but inevitably to take the shape of one's deep desiring. There is a bottomless resourcefulness in man that ultimately enables him to transform the spear of frustration into a shaft of light.

Under such circumstances even one's deepest distress becomes so sanctified that a vast illumination points a way to the land one speaks. This is God in humanity. Because of it we stand in immediate candidacy for the power to absorb all the pain of life without destroying our joy

Prayer *William Blake*

He who binds to himself a joy
Does the winged life destroy.
He who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in eternity's sunrise.

Acceptance, Peace

Monday 22 December

Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

The Rapture of Sadness Past (excerpt from Michael Leunig)

Christmas approaches and an unforeseen sadness quite suddenly appears. How beautiful and astonishing it is. There you are, standing alone in the kitchen, paused between one ordinary thing and the next, when all at once this strange feeling enters the body like wine, gently flooding your veins with a mysterious sweet mixture of grief and yearning. And there, intoxicated for a moment, we are able to stand clear of the world and stare like children into the life that was ours, the life that has slipped away so sadly and joyfully, beyond memory and into the blackness of space, without us having understood very much of it at all.

I hereby name this sweet, pre-Christmas melancholy 'amalgamated sadness rapture', suspecting it is distilled

from the dim memory of all life's losses and all the deepest, dearest needs that were denied to us and others or never met or never known, 'Beautiful but nevermore' is the sense of it.

Yet in no way is it depressing, this elusive melancholy, particularly when held and savoured - for then it is recognised as the healing miracle of acceptance. Fortunate indeed are those who ever find even the briefest glimpses into this rare and gentle epiphany, and if I could wish all the world something for Christmas, I would certainly wish it some amalgamated sadness rapture - otherwise known as peace.

Prayer

Dear God,

May we, like Michael Leunig wish the world the peace of Christ that passeth all understanding

Amen

St James's Church
197 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LL www.sjp.org.uk