

## Sunday | ROMANS 13:11-14

Paul practically comes through the pages of this ancient text, begging his hearers to recognize what time it is. The time is at hand, he seems to shout, for those of us who follow Jesus to get it together and reflect the One on the cusp of coming to meet us. Salvation is near, nearer than when we first believed, so we best wake up, stand up, look up and get ourselves ready for this transcendent, transformative, life-upending encounter with God. Imagine if we thought of the season of Advent in these terms.

When the purple paraments adorn the pulpit, we ought to know the time is at hand to prepare to meet the Son of God. The purple dotting the sanctuary or resting on the pastor's shoulders should signal to us a sense of urgency, a feeling of nervous anticipation, because salvation is drawing near and time is running out to make ready for Jesus' arrival.

Paul instructs us, purple Presbyterians that we are, to lay aside works of darkness — that's what urgent preparation requires, first and foremost. Whatever sin clings closely, shake it off. Take stock and be honest and then lay aside whatever it is that obscures the light of Christ in you. Let the purple of preparation prompt you to step away from the darkness and bask in the light. Put on the whole armor of it: the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shield of faith and the like. Advent is the season to prepare to meet Jesus by stepping away from and out of the dark and into the light of faith, hope and love.

*God of all that is seen and unseen, you know what works of darkness we commit. Nothing is hidden from you. Despite our propensity to do what we know we ought not to do, you send your Son to save us. During this Advent season we seek you, your wisdom, your strength and your will in order to be prepared to meet our Savior, the light no darkness can overcome — not ours, not the world's. Amen.*

# The purple of preparation

ADVENT DEVOTIONS – WEEK 1  
DECEMBER 1-7, 2019

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## Monday | MATTHEW 1:24

Today imagine responding as Joseph did to God's instructions. Being prepared to meet God entails being not only awake to God's presence, but willing to follow God's commands. What act of mercy and grace is God asking of you? Do it. What did you learn from heeding God's will?

*Lord, we are humbled by Joseph's courage. His obedience makes us wonder if we would be so bold. Prepare us to act on your will. Grant us both careful discernment and the faith to take major risks for your sake. We pray for the wisdom to follow your plans, no matter how different they are from our own. Amen.*

## Tuesday | EPHESIANS 5:12-14

Today consider those things you do not want exposed to the light. Make a list of all that you wish to remain hidden from God, from others, perhaps from yourself. Now imagine all of those shameful things being exposed to the loving, healing light of Christ, trusting that nothing is beyond his power to redeem.

*Gracious God, we expend extraordinary energy attempting to hide that which we find shameful, painful and unlovely. We compare ourselves to others when your opinion of us is the only one that matters. We offer you all our shame, guilt and fears, knowing that Jesus comes to save sinners, trusting that his light will reveal all that is hidden not to expose or humiliate, but to illumine and heal. Amen.*



# The purple of *preparation*

## *Wednesday* | EPHESIANS 4:22

Today review how you spend your time, where you expend your mental and emotional energy and what holds your attention. In preparation for Jesus' coming, prayerfully consider if these are the ways, things and places you want to be investing in every day. Choose one thing to put away for Advent.

*Too often, Lord God, we go about our days on autopilot, mostly unaware of where we focus, how we speak and what consumes our time and resources. Knowing that you call us to be ready for your arrival, we ask for discernment and discipline to put away anything that distracts us from you, your will and your ways. Amen.*

## *Thursday* | HEBREWS 12:1-2

Today remember the people (present or past) who love you, support you, inspire you and guide you. How does their witness challenge you to do and be better? Looking to Jesus' coming and remembering all the people cheering you on, what risk will you take for the sake of the gospel?

*Gracious God, our culture lauds the supposed self-made person, but we know that we cannot run the race of faith alone. We give you thanks for all of the people, past and present, who surround us and spur us to on as we seek to emulate Jesus Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Amen.*

## *Friday* | JAMES 1:21

Today take just a few minutes in silence and notice what comes to your consciousness. Are you anxious or worried about something? Do particular people or words come to mind? A looming change or pressing decision? Offer all of these to God in prayer, knowing God will do more than you hope or imagine possible.

*Loving God, you made us in your image and implanted your word within us, giving us all we need to rest in your grace, follow your instructions and lead a life worthy of our calling. Forgive us when lesser things consume us and yet again aid us in our desire to welcome your word. Amen.*

## *Saturday* | EPHESIANS 6:10-12

Today imagine as you get dressed that you are also putting on the whole armor of God. What does that armor entail? What does it protect you from and what does it prepare you for? Keep in mind that Jesus' power was made known in sacrificial love. How does that color your image of God's armor?

*Prince of Peace, Lord of all, you come to us as a helpless infant and will submit to a painful death. We forget that you made your power manifest through sacrificial, vulnerable love. May the armor of God we wear reveal not aloof invincibility, but instead help us to stand up for those yearning for compassion, justice and care. Amen.*