2019 ADVENT DEVOTIONAL
WHAT CAN'T WAIT
A Sanctified Art
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ART, REFLECTIONS, & PROMPTS FOR THE SEASON OF WAITING
A Sanctified Art
sanctifiedart.org

A Sanctified Art LLC is a collective of artists in ministry who create resources for worshiping communities. The Sanctified Art team works collaboratively to bring scripture and theological themes to life through film, visual art, curriculum, coloring pages, liturgy, graphic designs, and more. Their mission is to empower churches with resources to inspire creativity in worship and beyond. Driven by the connective and prophetic power of art, they believe that art helps us connect our hearts with our hands, our faith with our lives, and our mess with our God.

Learn more about their work at sanctifiedart.org.

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SAMPLE

WHAT CAN'T WAIT

2019 ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

NAME _____

CHURCH _____

PHONE # _____

EMAIL _____

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7TH

SABBATH CAN'T WAIT

What *can* wait? On this day of Sabbath, identify one thing in your life that feels urgent but can actually wait in order for you to rest. Commit to one of the activities below, or spend time doing something else that centers and recharges you.

- Go for a walk outside.
- Sit quietly and meditate.
- Plant something indoors or outside.
- Try cooking or baking with a new recipe.
- Spend time with a friend or loved one.
- Dance or play music.
- Explore a new area of your town or city.
- Take a nap.
- Draw or create something.
- Write a poem or a song.
- Play a board game with friends or family.
- Read a book.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8TH

REPENTANCE (PEACE) CAN'T WAIT

Carve out time today for prayer and quiet contemplation. Read this poem as part of your devotional time.

Sometimes,
While the sky is still dark,
I slip sock feet into tennis shoes and go for a walk.
Step by step
I ask my deepest questions,
While the sky lets go of its deepest dark blue.

Am I doing enough?
Ink to indigo.
Does my brother know how much I love him?
Indigo to navy.
Will my friends keep showing up?
Navy to royal blue.
Will we ever know peace?
Royal blue to gold.

And after a while, my pilgrimage must end,
So I turn apologetic feet toward home
And walk my repentance back toward the sun.
And once again, while I stand in sock feet and tennis shoes,
God takes my breath away.
For once again,
The sky's deepest void is now a watercolor of light.

And I am reminded
That like the sky,
God touches everything.
And I am reminded,
That like the sky,
Nothing is so broken that it can't be painted gold.

In the morning light, there is peace.

SAMPLE

A Child Shall Lead Them | Lisle Gwynn Garrity

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9TH

READ ISAIAH 11:1-10

FROM THE ARTIST | LISLE GWYNN GARRITY

The image of the stump of Jesse might have knocked the air out of those first hearing these words. The stump represented the end of the Davidic dynasty, the family line believed to carry Yahweh's goodness. The monarchy was either thwarted by the Babylonian exile, or the Assyrian empire—historically, we're not exactly sure. Regardless, Isaiah names what no one wants to say out loud—Jerusalem's political future feels dead, cut off, stunted by despair.

The image of a stump might accurately represent how we feel about our own future. Greenhouse gases and sea levels continue to rise. No place—schools, sanctuaries, theaters, malls—is safe from mass shooting attacks. Our government leaders fight like lions and wolves starving for dominance.

We also need Isaiah's vision for a reordered world where creation exists in harmony, not as a threat to itself.

When reading this poetry of peace, I found myself pausing at the line, "and a child shall lead them" (Is. 11:6). The example of Naomi Wadler came to mind. After the Parkland, FL, school shooting,[1] Naomi, an eleven-year-old at the time, organized a walkout at her elementary school to honor victims of gun violence. In addition to those slain in Parkland, Naomi and her fifth grade classmates also recognized people of color who are killed by gun violence every day and never make news headlines. Naomi went on to speak courageously before crowds in DC and on TV shows about the need for gun reform. When she spoke, she held the nation—and much of the world—captive with her passion, her insight, and her urgency.

Where is new life shooting up? Perhaps in the places where God can't wait for peace. Perhaps in the voices of our children, who urge us to find a better way.

PRAYER

Breathe deeply as you gaze upon the image on the left. Imagine placing yourself in this scene. What do you see? How do you feel? Get quiet and still, offering a silent or spoken prayer to God.

1 On February 14, 2018, a gunman with a semi-automatic weapon shot and killed seventeen students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

SAMPLE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10TH

Repentance Can't Wait

ACTION PROMPT

Think of someone to whom you might be needing to apologize. This might be someone whom you have hurt or disappointed, or someone who has been harmed by your inaction. As an act of repentance, write this person a letter, offering a full and honest apology. If it feels appropriate to do so, send the letter to this person. If not, keep the letter and offer it to God as a private prayer for reconciliation.

SAMPLE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11TH

Peace Can't Wait

JOURNALING & REFLECTION

Think of a person, place, or situation in desperate need of God's peace. With that in mind, write a prayer for peace in the space below.

One with Mystery | Lauren Wright Pittman

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12TH

READ MATTHEW 3:1-12

FROM THE ARTIST | LAUREN WRIGHT PITTMAN

A curious, odd, status quo-threatening man emerges in the wilderness of Judea. He shouts in the place of desolation—a dangerous place where God has repeatedly shown up throughout Israel's history. John lifts up his voice, entreating people to make an about-face from the things that keep them from God, and move toward the new thing God is doing. He invites people to dip their weary bodies into the river, wade into mystery, and to tell the truth—taking on a posture of confession and surrender.

This eccentric man wears the clothes and eats the food of one living at the mercy of the land. His embodiment is that of an outcast, defined by common elements—camel hair, locusts, and honey. This is the one entrusted with introducing the world to God's incarnate self. John's cries bring the powerful to the edges of society where Jesus would spend his life and ministry. John points us to where God is to be found—in the wilderness, at the margins of power, at the periphery of looming, destructive systems, where the waters of Baptism ripple and swirl, where grace is abundant and God draws near. I drew John at one with the wilderness. His shape is hardly distinguished from the powdery textures and deep, cool colors of the waters of the Jordan. He is at one with the wonder and mystery of the coming Messiah. He holds out his hand, inviting the viewer to choose trust and dive fully into the unknown.

PRAYER

Breathe deeply as you gaze upon the image on the left. Imagine placing yourself in this scene. What do you see? How do you feel? Get quiet and still, offering a silent or spoken prayer to God.

SAMPLE

Flourish | Hannah Garrity

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13TH

READ PSALM 72:1-7, 18-19

FROM THE ARTIST | HANNAH GARRITY

The psalmist prays for wisdom for his leader, King Solomon. The leadership actions are specified: "defend the cause of the poor, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor" (Psalm 72:4). The psalmist contends that these actions of righteousness create peace for the nation. In a poetic rejoinder, the psalmist imagines this form of leadership as nourishment that will cause the people to flourish.

God bless our elected officials. May they defend the poor, deliver the needy, and crush the oppressor. Thus our people will flourish.

Leadership is an opportunity to be aware of the needs of your people, to focus on the overall group goals, and to engage people in meaningful work; thereafter, if needed, comes the enforcement of rules, the compliance. Author Daniel Pink argues that engagement before compliance is the order that humans will best respond to.

In my classroom, I explored this idea last school year. As the year progressed, I found that the more I focused on engagement first, the less time I spent on compliance. This year, my students needed more support than the year before. No matter what I did, the room was most productive if I had personally checked in with every child in the class. Once I had done that, the confidence level rose palpably and a hum of productivity ensued.

In this coloring page I have expressed this poetic idea of the intangible measures we hope for in our leaders. Rain falls and grass grows, nourished in the endlessness of the cyclical day, the sun and moon.

God bless our elected officials. May they defend the poor, deliver the needy, and crush the oppressor, that our people may flourish.

PRAYER

In quiet contemplation, color in the page on the left, reflecting on how the imagery illuminates what you find in the scripture and artist's statement. Conclude with a silent or spoken prayer to God.

SAMPLE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14TH

SABBATH CAN'T WAIT

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- Go for a walk outside.
- Sit quietly and meditate.
- Plant something indoors or outside.
- Try cooking or baking with a new recipe.
- Spend time with a friend or loved one.
- Dance or play music.
- Explore a new area of your town or city.
- Take a nap.
- Draw or create something.
- Write a poem or a song.
- Play a board game with friends or family.
- Read a book.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15TH

DELIGHT (JOY) CAN'T WAIT

Carve out time today for prayer and quiet contemplation. Read this poem as part of your devotional time.

I have seen Joy face to face.
She was dancing.
She took my arm in the crook of hers
And spun me around until I couldn't help but laugh.
We met in the kitchen with Motown
And then again at your wedding.

And I ran into Joy in my mother's recipe box.
Her handwriting looked like my grandmother's.
And she smelled like our famous chocolate cake.

Once I saw Joy in the street.
She was at the parade.
There was glitter in the air
And a father hugged his son.
Joy cried happy tears.

And I have seen Joy on the loose,
Running to keep up with you as you go.
Did you know that Joy is looking for you?

I know that your heart hurts,
And that you're not sure if you like yourself.
I know that this world is scary
And I know that love can feel fleeting.
But Joy told me to tell you—she's at the door.
She delights in who you are.
She's inviting you to dance.
I pray and pray you'll let her in.
I pray, and pray, and pray.

Prayer by Sarah Are

SAMPLE