

# Preparing for Advent

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Preacher: Norah Johnston

[ 0 : 00 ] Here we are again, and I mean that in the most significant way, not in a way that expresses boredom. Oh no, not this again. But I was speaking about this time, as Alexandra has said, last year in this same place, at almost this same time.

Some of you may have been here. I like to think that this is significant. We are a community. We are a liturgical church.

And so we could say one of the things we do is celebrate passing of time by enacting the same patterns in our liturgy that Christ commanded.

We celebrate communion together. Our Anglican practice is to do so using the same words over and over. You will hear the same lessons tonight if you come to the Advent carol service at four o'clock.

You will hear those same lessons tonight that you heard last year. Even when we travel elsewhere in the world, we are with the Lord as we worship in these patterns.

[ 1 : 14 ] Will and I experienced this in a great way last summer while praying morning prayer with our dear friends in an ancient chapel in Scotland.

And I felt at home. Or another place I felt at home was in the company of participants of an educational cultural tour as we prayed vespers in a gorgeous Benedictine chapel in Florence. The language of the day was Italian. The languages were Italian and Latin. But I knew enough liturgical Latin words to be praying with those brothers.

And they were in Latin, I in English. And I felt part of a great company of heaven. I'm sure that each one here has experienced such things as they travel.

So we pass through our days marking time with repetitive words and actions. And they imprint a holy reality on our minds and hearts.

[ 2 : 20 ] I believe that humans were made for this. As a landscape painter, I'd like to tell you that I particularly love this time of year.

And largely because of the somber nature of the light in the northern hemisphere as the darker days of the year approach. The light comes to the eye from very low in the sky.

And that lengthening light creates particularly at this time of day. And, you know, it's a bit softer today because there's more haze in the air.

But it creates, at this time of day, and again at about four o'clock in the afternoon, so watch for it, saturated color with very long shadows.

The trees in the buildings seem to surround us in a dark cocoon. This accentuates the bright sky. But the light is coming in through the atmosphere at an angle that makes color much more intense.

[ 3 : 29 ] And if you study the trees in your own garden or when you go out today from this place, you will, I think, notice that the leaves have shadows around them, which really makes the colors of the leaves stand out and the branches.

They're very rich, the colors, at this time of year. I mention this because this light with long shadows has long stirred me, and sometimes in my paintings, with the idea of the day long spent.

It is as if the very earth in this northern hemisphere is reminding us that this part of the cycle of the tilting planet, the night is come.

We long for Emmanuel. Now from here on in this talk, I intend to unravel things a little bit this way. I'll speak a little bit. I'll read some excerpts from books and articles that have caught my attention. And I've handed out papers. One has music, and I intend for us to use that music.

[ 4 : 34 ] And one has the colics and a psalm and a written piece. And so just keep those at hand, and I'll call you to use them.

And I will punctuate things, as I said, with this little box, which will play music. And if time permits, I may even ask us to sing a hymn together. So that's why you have music.

At Advent, we stop our busyness and intentionally give time to think on the incarnation, anticipation of his coming. We strain to hear and understand the nature of our place in the cosmos as God presents himself to us in that surprising and mysterious way.

He who was there at the beginning of time comes for us as a tiny child. Now, at this point, please take the first little booklet, which has the colic on the front.

Now, you may have already prayed this today. The colic for the first Sunday in Advent. We'll pray that together. Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness and put upon us the armor of light.

[ 5 : 51 ] Now, in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son, Jesus Christ, came to visit us in great humility, that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal through him who liveth and reigneth, thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever.

Amen. Advent is our new year. So this colic is the first colic of the year. And it's meant to be prayed each day of this season.

So take this home if you don't have a prayer book at home. Use this when you rise up in the morning and when you go to bed or at dinner. A few years ago, Dr. Packer pointed out to us that the colics are written in a style whereby each of them is written in one single sentence.

So if you look through the prayer book, you will see these great complex sentences. And they're quite wonderfully made and divided up with colons and semicolons.

And these phrases express artfully church doctrine. And they call us to holiness of life and prayer for the church. This one we've just prayed expresses an idea about time.

[ 7 : 14 ] So I am going to again read the first part of this complex sentence. Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness and put upon us the armor of light.

Now, in the time of this mortal life, in which thy son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility. What a concept. Now, this mortal life includes us as inhabiting the time that Christ came to visit us. This is that time. Now, we are there now. When life is mortal, we are, all of us in this room, and most of us, Dr. Packer and I were just talking about how we're all getting older, we are all very aware of our mortality.

And we had a fabulous funeral on Friday here for Wendy Cowan, and it's very fresh to us that we are mortal. We are mortal with Christ.

And he is born as salvation for us. We are still in that time frame. As the Colet says, Now, in the time of this mortal life, in which thy son Jesus Christ came, now we live in that time with him.

[ 8 : 37 ] And then this little phrase, which is like a connector phrase, that in the last day. And it is as if the writer of the Colet is saying that time is divided into different categories or parts that are all part of a continuum.

Life waiting for the incarnation, then accepting our Lord and our salvation, and living here in that time.

And then there's the broader expanse of time in which we also participate, and that is eternity. And we are told the purpose of eternity in this Colet, that in the last day, we may rise to the life immortal through him.

We wait in anticipation for the second coming, when we will know the Father as we are known by him.

And we gaze back in time to the waiting and anticipating, to waiting and anticipating the coming of our Lord as Emmanuel, God with us.

[ 9 : 44 ] And this is where, hopefully, my technology will work. I've practiced it at home. And people who know me know that I'm clumsy, so I'll try not to lean on the podium here.

This is... I know from afar And though I see the thought of God coming And the cloud-to-bearing the whole earth, Go ye out to meet him and say, Tell us what, Tomy, me that should come to And before you The parts Beh, for example Hymn Thou the bleak of children, blind are she?

Tell us about the need that should come.

Start up thy strength, O Lord, and come. To lay down thy need, O Lord, and come.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

[ 12 : 04 ] I look from above, and look, I see the love of God.

I look from above, and look, I see the love of God. I look from above, and look, I see the love of God.

Glory be to the Lord, and come. And say, tell us about the need that should come to lay down.

I look from above, and be in holy land. Amen. Amen. So this you will likely recognize if you've been to the Advent Carol Service.

It is by Palastrina, and it is the Advent Responsory. And tonight, if you come, and I really hope you will. It's one of my favorite days of the year.

[13:19] Tonight, the candles will be lit, and we will wait in anticipation as our choir sings to begin our carol service. And then we will all respond earnestly with, Come, Thou Redeemer of the Earth.

It's a great hymn. In our tradition, the liturgy on this night is richly fulfilling. We will hear in song, and hear in word read, and in preaching, that recurring, a once ancient and contemporary telling of the story by which nature, by the nature of the liturgy, we are caused to remember.

Not just to think on, but to participate in active remembrance. We take part as we listen to the choir while they're singing.

We, with them, look from afar. We reenact the prophet asking for us in humility, Art thou he that should come?

Emmanuel. How stirring. Music can speak to deep parts of our being. The Apostle Paul writes to the Colossians, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

[14:54] Our beloved Monja Hedgerton has passed on parts of a book by Lawrence Stuckey to me as I was trying to plan this talk called The Calendar, Christ's Time for the Church.

And he speaks about memory and remembrance in liturgy. Quote, The present is but the thin moving edge separating us from the future.

To state it differently, both the past and the future are in some sense brought into our present experience, particularly when we are at worship.

The past becomes present by an active kind of remembrance. End quote. And so liturgy is an active kind of remembrance. In this book, Stuckey points to hymnody as being a vehicle to transport us into the realization of eternal time.

Think of these hymns which we sing, wherein we, the singers, the singers become people living in the present tense.

[16:07] And another quote. Thus, the liturgical observance of past events somehow brings them into our own time. If this seems to be an alien concept, a brief survey of our seasonal hymnody will reveal how familiar, if unrecognized, it actually is to us.

Consider the startling abundance of present tense verbs used for past events in our hymns for Christmas. What child is this who laid to rest on Mary's lap is sleeping, not who has slept.

Come and behold him, born the king of angels. Good Christian men rejoice. Hark, the herald angels sing. Or on Good Friday, were you there when they crucified my Lord?

This present tense language, says Stuckey, does not mean that history is cyclical. It is not that the events we refer to in the present are happening again as we sing and pray.

Rather, it is the events that occurred only once, nevertheless become contemporaneous with us because the risen Christ holds all time in unity and by the Holy Spirit brings all things to our remembrance in this way.

[17:33] End of quote. Or as another thinker, Father Gerald Murphy, puts it in a blog that I read called The Catholic Thing. Quote, The pagan notion of time, and thus history, is an endless circular repetition of events, similar to the annual cycle of the seasons.

Yet, this repetitive way of interpreting reality imprisons man in a pointless round. Where are we heading if there is no end and point to time?

No end point to time, sorry. Just a constant replay involving a changing cast of characters who come and go. And I would say that a lot of people right now feel this way about time.

Christian revelation, of course, solves this dilemma. Creation has a beginning and an end. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega. Our world and our lives come from him and our journey through life is a quest both to walk with him at all times.

I am with you always to the close of the age, from Matthew. And to find him as our merciful judge when our days on earth come to their end, which they will, and we all know that it's coming.

[ 18 : 58 ] Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom, prepared for you from the foundation of the world, also from Matthew. Given this linear understanding of history, stretching from the creation to the redemption and reaching fulfillment on the last day, our place in time and space is relatively easier to figure out.

We want to be in that great procession of pilgrims, which is the church. God has put us on this earth at this time of his choosing to accomplish his purposes.

Our duty is to seek his will as we look forward to seeing him face to face, either at the moment of our death or at his second coming on the last day, if we live to see that day.

With these thoughts in mind, let's listen to this ancient and stirring hymn, which will also be sung tonight by the choir.

You can tell that I'm trying to push you all coming tonight. And this is probably one of the oldest hymns in Christendom, they reckon. It's from the 4th century.

[ 20 : 15 ] The tune that we know comes from the 1800s. It's a French folk tune, Picardie. But you see, I actually may, if we have time, play some...

The Orthodox Church uses this in its liturgy for Holy Communion. And I may play a little bit of an Orthodox recording. I cast about all over the place looking for various recordings of this.

So let me just line up. I'm going to play a version of Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence, if you find that. This one comes from what probably is a great space in, by the sound of it, in Washington, D.C.

I think they have a lot of money to have hired singers and they have belts and they have a great organ and you can hear the sound going up into the vaults of the ceiling and the thing I like is they have hand bells which click as they're being rung and so it's quite mysterious and it has about it, this version has about it something like Taverners music, a great Anglican music composer. it's got low notes of drone and the bells actually provide the same note sitting underneath the arrangement and I'll let you hear it.

[ 21 : 47 ] It's fairly long and I will sort of turn down the music at a certain point near the end. So here we are. and I will thank you, thank you, thank you, you and I will thank you.

A temple of our Father is trusted, and knowing the image is■■■■■■ they are CHOIR SINGS  
CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS  
CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[ 26 : 27 ] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

I'm just going to turn that down. It goes on a little bit longer. A marvelous great hymn to lift our spirits. And to keep us grounded in what God has for us.

And to help set us in place. Set our feet in place. And set us well to walk. What I like to suggest for people. Especially at these finite seasons of Advent and then Lent.

Is to use lections of readings. And these come from the Book of Common Prayer. I just printed out 20 because I gave the same one out last year.

[ 28 : 58 ] And some people may still have it. I can hand out 20 today. If you are not a person. If you're like Harvey Guest and you don't have a computer. And therefore I can't send you one of these.

I actually have a nicer version at home. That has a woodcut from the 15th century I think.

So if you want to come and get one of these at the end. I will leave them on this table. And you can come and grab one. It's got extensive readings. Including a controversial one for us evangelical Anglicans.

It's for the Feast of the Slaughter of the Holy Innocents. And it's from the Apocrypha. So it's on the bottom.

But I think it's an appropriate reading for the day it's suggested for. But if you don't want to read it you can pick something else. That will be up here at the end.

[ 30 : 01 ] And otherwise come and give me your email address. And I would be happy. Or I'll give you my email address actually. And I'll be happy to send you a copy of the lectionary. I would recommend this as a practice.

And if you're married maybe read. There are extensive readings in the lectionary. Usually about four chapters a day. I find it really helpful to read to one another.

If you're going to pray together. And to read. If you read one lesson each morning and night. That's quite a helpful way to do it. And they're mostly lessons.

I think from the Gospel of Mark. From Isaiah. And from Revelation. So it sits us well. At both ends of this time continuum.

So finally I would like to read a passage. Which touches on a reality of our situation.

[ 31 : 00 ] That we find ourselves in. We are in difficult days. And that could always be said to be the case. For all times in history. I don't know if you feel it.

I feel that these are particularly dangerous times. In our family of course. The obvious thing of Will. Putting himself in the line of fire.

Fighting the I think inevitable push. In modernity. For allowing euthanasia. And actually pushing euthanasia. And the obvious crisis of the danger.

Physical danger. We may as Christians in North America. Even find ourselves as our brothers. In other parts of the world. Are being slaughtered for their faith.

And the press doesn't seem particularly impressed. By the fact that it is Christians. Often that this is happening to. Along with other people. But in these dangerous days.

[ 31 : 57 ] I wanted to touch on. That merging of. Suffering. And deep joy. In knowing our Lord.

By reading this. And it's on the readings part. A reading from Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He wrote this. I think.

I couldn't quite tell from the footnotes. I think it's from. Something called. I want to spend my days with you. And it was something that he wrote. From prison to his fiance.

And of course. He never got to marry. You know. He died. Well in prison. He's murdered. So. This. If you find it.

Is a lovely. Quote. That. Focuses our attention. On eternity. In the midst of the deepest guilt. And distress. Of the people.

[ 32 : 53 ] A voice speaks. That is soft. And mysterious. But full. Of the blessed certainty. Of salvation. Through the birth. Of a divine child. As spoken of.

In Isaiah. Isaiah. And we will either hear. This lesson. From Isaiah 9. Tonight. Or at. Nine lessons. And carols. It is still. 700 years.

Until the time. Of fulfillment. But. The prophet. Is so deeply immersed. In God's thought. And counsel. That he speaks. Of the future. As if he saw it already.

And he speaks. Of the salvific hour. As if. He already stood. In adoration. Before the manger. Of Jesus. For a child. Has been born.

For us. What will happen. One day. Is already real. And certain. In God's eyes. And it will not only. It will be not only.

[ 33 : 47 ] For the salvation. Of future generations. But already. For the prophet. Who sees it. Coming. And for this generation. Indeed.

For all generations. On earth. For a child. Has been born. For us. No human spirit. Can talk. Like this. On its own. Sorry.

Yes. How are we. Who do not know. What will happen. Next year. And. We're all in that situation. Supposed to understand. That someone. Can look forward.

Many centuries. And the times. Then. Were no more transparent. Than they are today. Only the spirit of God. Who encompasses. The beginning.

And the end. Of the world. Can in such a way. Reveal. To a chosen person. The mystery. Of the future. So that he must prophesy. For strengthening believers.

[ 34 : 45 ] And warning. Unbelievers. This individual voice. Ultimately. Enters. Into the nocturnal. Adoration. Of the shepherds. And. Into the full jubilation.

For the Christ. Believing community. For a child. Has been born for us. A son. Is given to us. A shaking of heads. Perhaps. Even an evil laugh.

Must go through. Our old. Smart. Experienced. Self-assured world. When it hears. The call of salvation. Of believing Christians. For a child. Has been born for us.

A son. Given to us. And I wanted to. Just finish. With one. Last piece of music. Which.

You guessed it. You will also hear tonight. It's a call. For us. To go out. Where we. Where we've been placed. Go out. Into our. Our time.

[ 35 : 42 ] And culture. Without fear. I had turned. I'm just going to put that in. Whoop.

Whoop. Just a moment. Technical glitch. Okay. Here we go. Through beauty. And Jerusalem will not know his name.

Tomorrow, the Lord and the Lord will be with you.

And we still and we shall see the salvation of the Lord. Tomorrow, the Lord and the Lord will be with you.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

[ 36 : 51 ] Tomorrow, the Lord and the Lord will be with you.

Now, I don't know if there can be questions about any of this.

I would take questions. But also, if you would like, one of my favorite hymns at this time of year I've put in the back here. And we don't do it enough.

And it's Sleepers Awake. And I love that call to us that we need to be wise. We need to be like the wise virgins and have our lamps filled. And I did find on iTunes, and Manya will be thrilled with this, a website.

And I think my daughter might think it's a little cheesy, is what she would call it. But I have found a great organ accompaniment to it. If you would like, what we could do is take questions and maybe end with singing hymn together.

[ 37 : 59 ] And I could play organ on this machine if you would like. But I'll take the will of you all.

Thank you. That's it. We have questions now?

Yeah. Oh, when you said your Latin was good for the liturgy, and I did a hundred of those, I translated those. You did, and you sent them to me, and it was a great help. Did that help you? Oh, yeah.

Oh, yeah. It did. That and having been in a choir, because when you're in the choir, you actually, we had a funny occurrence once when our choir was singing with some soloists who we'd hired.

And Latin can be pronounced with different accents. And at that time, Ed was the choir director, and he had us using the Italian pronunciation of Latin.

And one of the soloists was using the German pronunciation. And so we ran into a few problems with that translation. But yes, being in the choir, and John, very kindly, a number of years ago, when John was learning Latin, because he heard, you may have guessed that it was close to Portuguese.

[ 39 : 10 ] And so he was learning Latin, and he would send me emails. He was translating at the top of the Psalms the Latin for me, and it was quite lovely.

I had four dictionaries. I had the Latin dictionary, 501 Latin verbs, and the Ecclesiastical Latin.

Yeah. I went to the Central Library, and I could put 40, double-spaced 40 phrases per email, and there was 171.

I just went every day after work. I'd go down there from 6 to 9 to take the SkyTrain home. I don't know. No, no, no, that's great. Thank you. Thank you, John. I went on to read my Portuguese, and it was easier after the Latin, because Will was saying that when I gave Laura my Portuguese with the English translations, they would say, oh, it's similar to Latin.

Do you mind translating the Latin? I said, okay, I don't mind. No, it was great. It was great. It was a great use of your talent. I think, yep. Okay, so this, it's too big a question, and feel free.

But one of the things that I cherish so much is your contemplative approach to Advent. And if you were to give me three things that I should do this Advent season to prepare my heart, other than come to this afternoon, I thought that was a story.

[ 40 : 34 ] What three things would you recommend if we wanted to have a more reflective Advent season? Well, first, the caveat that I, as my husband and family could tell you, that I am not like a still point in the universe going, you know, spinning around.

I actually have as much trouble with some of this as anyone. But I think, you know, a lot of people in the culture get really frustrated that Christmas begins earlier and earlier at Costco, where I shop every week.

It began in late August. And, you know, I think that it really, apparently, and Downton Abbey seemed to confirm this, in the old days, the Christmas tree, for example, wasn't decorated until Christmas Eve.

And then they kept 12 days of Christmas, and those days, you know, were looked at in a very serious way. So I'm not saying that you have to be like the Grinch who, you know, said, you know, you don't have to say, I'm not putting any Christmas lights up or anything until Christmas Eve.

But I think having a quieter, you know, we've just put a garland in our house. Well, I have had it actually up for a year, but I changed the colors. I put new little lights in, and they're quiet.

[ 42 : 00 ] And I will start adding color. It's just sort of to remind us. It's a little thing. I do think that using the collet, and, you know, I've thought of memorizing that collet.

It is meant to be prayed every day of Advent. And you could use a little, a truncated version of these readings.

Maybe do all of the Isaiah and Revelations reading one year. And, you know, something to kind of set your mind and heart. It is interesting.

The days that I've been able to hear the lessons at Evensong and also go to morning prayer at Regent. Morning prayer is being prayed at Regent at 8.30 in the morning, most weekday mornings now.

And with our schedule, Will and I never see each other unless we see each other at that time. So I haven't been as often this year as I'd like. But it is quite interesting how in your day, if you start your day with readings and with those prayers, one of the other things that I put on this sheet is Psalm 34.

[ 43 : 15 ] And I put that because I think it's a good psalm for times of trouble and sorrow. I think if you sort of set aside time to do that, it will ground you.

You'll be amazed at how many times then during the day things that you've read in the morning come to your mind. And so it starts resetting us.

Harvey Guest, who I love dearly, did a startling homily for us at Evensong a few weeks ago. It's something I had never quite heard before.

Often Harvey does that. Which he was talking about Jesus taking one of the little children and holding up and saying, become like this little child.

And then he said, and you know what little children are like? Something like this. I was actually in the kitchen and trying to strain to hear him as I was preparing dinner for Evensong after. But the example is what children do when asked the question, what would you like to be when you grow up?

[ 44 : 23 ] Is, you know, if they want to be a fireman or a knight, then they pretend. And what Harvey suggested is, so we should be like this.

And that sounds kind of odd, but what he meant was, if you want to be patient and you know that you're not patient, pretend that you are patient.

Pretend that you are gracious. And pretty soon you will start having that come into your being as you act it out. And I thought that was a really interesting perspective.

So you might want to do that too. Start going around pretending that you are patient. Yeah. Thank you to my naked. Yeah. Okay. Thank you.

Any other questions? Karen. Thank you so much, Nora. I really appreciate your contemplative approach to Advent. And the music.

[ 45 : 21 ] Just the gorgeous music. Where can we get a hold of that CD or whatever it was? I got it from iTunes. So if you would like what you should do now, if you have pens, I'll just give everybody my email address.

And I, as Will knows, check my email. The best way to get me is email. I check it about 10 times a day. And so it is, if everybody has, and I would be happy to send you information about any of those pieces of music or anything else, the lectionary, whatever you would like.

So it is all small case, Nora with an H. So N-O-R-A-H. One word, Johnston, J-O-H-N-S-T-O-N, at Shaw.ca.

And if you don't have email, come and see me afterward and I could write that information down for you. Thanks. Yes. Hi. That's much a question, a comment.

You know, we're so blessed by how liturgical you are and that you share that with our community. And I saw that sort of more up close and personal as Emma when you blessed us by visiting us.

[ 46 : 40 ] And you showed Morton and me ways that you conduct your devotions to a certain extent. And we became part of that for a while. And, you know, we're all so keen on physical fitness and the right nutrition and looking to different systems in our life.

But what about our spiritual muscle, right? And what I found was through personal devotions on a daily basis that are, that's much regenerated, but it's a discipline you hold yourself to because you want to be more intimate with God.

Actually, you can strengthen that spiritual muscle in the way that you do when you're stretching or, you know, that that's something that you can actually work on.

And it is a response to the L-I-D-N-A. It's really powerful. Yeah. No, I agree. And it's hard, though, because I had two lovely things that happened.

One of them is a bit daunting. When you get on fire, people who are on fire with a new realization about something are terribly impossible sometimes. And so I gave this fired-up talk.

[ 47 : 52 ] I don't know what I just did. I gave this fired-up talk to women at 10 about doing the daily office. And I could tell by the end that the poor women just felt like, oh, my goodness, you know, what?

How am I ever going to keep that kind of discipline? And another experience I had 30-some years ago was being in a Bible study with one of our assistant rectors who had three small children. And we had, some of you will remember and know, the beloved Kathy Nichol to our Bible study one night. And she was a single woman, a dynamo.

She was Mrs. Pioneer Camp, Mrs. InterVarsity, and had many spiritual children and lovely, lovely woman. And she came to our Bible study one night to talk about prayer.

And the assistant rector's wife said near tears, I don't feel that I have a chance to pray very much in the day. And Kathy looked at her and said, do you pray with your children when they're going to bed at night?

[ 48 : 58 ] And she said, yes. And she said, I think that God knows your situation right now. And that's probably good enough. And I think there are seasons in our lives when that might be all we can do.

Richard John Newhouse, when he almost died and was in the hospital, made the observation that when he was going in and out of consciousness, the only prayer that he really could pray was, now I lay me down to sleep.

But he was aware of a great company of people praying for him and that they were lifting him up in prayer. So I think there are times in our life.

I do think you're right, though, that exercising that spiritual muscle is important. I had a scholar from Britain tell me when I was bemoaning the fact that I was really embarrassed as the then chairman of the Prayer Book Society, that I could often pull off morning prayer but found evening prayer really hard to do.

And he said, but Nora, it's meant to be done in community. It's not as easy to do by yourself. And I think that we fall short as a community sometimes.

[ 50 : 10 ] And it's bad of me to say that. Regent is doing this fabulous job of having the ability of people to come together. But I think Ernie Eldridge in the old days had us fashion ourselves in communities around postal codes.

If you were here in those days, you know, and he was walking the city praying. He and his wife were walking, praying for all the blocks in the city. And I would love to see us organize ourselves where we live close to one another to maybe try to get together at an agreeable time to people.

I would love to have people come to my house and pray morning prayer in the morning if, you know, it would just take some communication. Or to Regent. I mean, the chapel there is pretty small.

But I think it is important. But I think much easier to do with other people. How many people attend the Regent Chapel morning prayer?

Well, you know, Kyle is really involved. Then Bill. You know, five or six of us, sometimes as many as eight, sometimes as few as three. All that. Yeah. I fall until disconnected.

[ 51 : 21 ] Everywhere. And you can park on the street, which is free. Yes, because at nine they start dinging you with fines. But you can come. Yeah. I do evening prayer.

Sometimes I have a glass of brandy or glass of wine. It makes it not too much. You just sip off the side. It makes it nice and pleasant. Well, you know what, that's, you know, we laugh.

But the person who actually taught me how to do the daily office, having been, that's what you call doing morning and evening prayer with the election area of reading. He sat me down in Kelowna.

And Dr. Packer and I had gone up to a conference in Kelowna together. He sat me down to teach me how to do this and said, okay, now the first thing you do is grind your coffee beans.

And then you get your cup of coffee and you sit down to do morning prayer with your coffee. Which, you know, it's fine. We don't, we don't.

[ 52 : 18 ] Sure. Yeah. Yes. This has been a really great introduction and start to a season that I have always enjoyed.

And one of the things I like about it is the way that it gains momentum. Yeah. You know, we start out looking for the future and we finish up with the Lord is here.

I know. It's so exciting. Yeah. Yeah. We actually had to stage things like this in my family because we have three December birth dates. And little boys do not want to have their birthday party kind of shoved aside by Christmas.

Right. Right. We started with his birthday party and then the decorations went up, then mine and the tree went up. Then my mother nods and everything came down. Oh, yeah. So you have this funny sort of, yeah.

But we did, we do the same kind of thing. Just look at the church calendar. Yeah. I mean. Yeah. The things that are starting to happen. Yes. Yeah. And one of the points made in this book by this fellow and I, you know, like whatever his name was back, that Monja gave me the book.

[ 53 : 28 ] He points out in all of this, all of us have been either to Christmas Eve communion or Christmas morning. And we never sing the verse from O Come All Ye Faithful.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning, until either Christmas Eve or Christmas morning. It's not meant to be sung any, it's very specific to that day. And I don't know how you feel, but when I get to sing that, I always well up with tears.

Now, if Nancy Buen were here from Vancouver Island, she would beat all of us at welling up with tears. But, yeah, it's quite wonderful, the buildup to that, really taking, apprehending what it is that we're talking about with incarnation.

Like, it's just amazing. So, yeah. Yes. Alexander asked the question, how can we appreciate Abbott more and use this season?

Learning to use the Book of Common Prayer, it's fullness, it's not just morning and evening, there's noon, noon time. Yeah.

[ 54 : 40 ] There's disciplines. It was a couple weeks ago, was it a couple weeks ago that we had a book of you? Yes, yeah. And Muslims are very disciplined. I've got at least one couple on my mail route, and they're fine people.

Yes. They don't have the truth. And the Book of Common Prayer is alive. It's the Holy Bible, it's a lectionary.

Mm-hmm. There's a great collect or prayer somewhere talking about those feeling after, feeling after that truth.

And I think that it's helpful for us to pray for those. I mean, I'm going to be saying this recorded, but, you know, our son is running headlong in the other direction from the church.

And the best, the most important thing, I talk about Manya a lot, she's an important person in my life, and she says, God loves them more than you do.

[ 55 : 46 ] And so I think the best thing we can do is pray that they will feel after God and pray for them. And it's very important. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.