

ADVENT TWO

Jerusalem: A Place of Waiting (Peace)



On the way to Bethlehem, we travel to Jerusalem. The Temple is the site of the dramatic high point of Zechariah and Elizabeth's story of waiting so long for prayer to be answered. As Zechariah carries out priestly duties and Elizabeth waits outside with others, the usual and customary becomes anything but ordinary. An angelic messenger reveals a divine plan that leaves Zechariah literally speechless. This week we ask "what are we waiting for?" and we learn that what happens within us while we wait is as important as the outcome. Can we be at peace-work for peace-"live peaceably"-even while waiting?

Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be arrogant, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

— from Romans 12: 9-18 NRSVUE

The last time I held onto my patience (even if I didn't want to) was...

A PRAYER FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

II

Holy and Living God, we pray to you in the midst of unanswered questions.

Often we are anxious and impatient as we desperately want to know outcomes and chart our life's path with certainty.

Give us patience, God.

Call us to pause in peaceful surrender,
even and especially when the pieces of our lives
seem to be falling apart rather than getting put together.

Open our hearts to know your enduring presence
in this very moment, in this waiting.

We pray this in the name of your Son,
Jesus, the Christ, the Prince of Peace. **Amen.**

Click this link or scan the QR code below
to go to a short video of the scripture
and visualization of our journey.
(<https://youtu.be/J-SGFCH5vnU>)



Monday: Ordinary People

12

Read Luke 1: 5-17. Scripture doesn't tell us much about Elizabeth and Zechariah before their lives were altered forever by the news that they would conceive and give birth to a son in their old age. Where have you witnessed something remarkable take shape from seemingly ordinary origins?

Tuesday: Changes

Describe a moment when you experienced radical change in your own life. Was the change expected, or were you caught by surprise? Perhaps describe one change that made you feel fearful, and one that made you feel peaceful. How did each of those moments of transformation play out in the end?

Wednesday: Milestones

13

The Romans used milestones to signal the distance between landmarks and destinations. What milestones have you observed in your own life this year? Are you waiting for or preparing to pass a significant one soon?

Thursday: Community Guidelines

Read Romans 12: 9-18. To what extent do Paul's instructions for living together in community align with your own moral code? In what ways does our modern society uphold or deviate from these ancient guidelines?

Friday: Acceptance vs. Anxiety

14

Waiting can be so hard – especially when we just want to know the answers to an uncertain outcome. Think back to the last time you had no choice but to wait – for test results, for a decision, for news, for an arrival. What did you do to deal with the uncertainty in the interim? How do you practice acceptance in the midst of anxiety or uncertainty?

Saturday: Looking to Nazareth

Not every waiting period has a happy ending. Waiting periods can be all the more painful when they finally conclude in the form of a denied dream or opportunity, loss of health or a relationship, or bad news we were praying not to hear. How does God's promise to be present with us help you hold on to joy and perhaps keep a sense of perspective even on the worst days?
