

Advent Sunday Week 1 - Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

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2021 has been an anxious year for many, including for me. We have continued to protect ourselves and our communities against COVID-19 but are worried that it has not been eradicated. Loved ones have faced illness and difficulty healing. Friends have sought new jobs after pandemic layoffs, worried about new responsibilities and lingering debts. As a social worker, I have held the concerns of clients closely, hoping to accompany them through their fears. I have offered therapeutic techniques to manage stress and reduce anxiety. But we still worry, I still worry. How do I stay steady through these kinds of storms? How do we wait for the rainbow?

This story reminds me how rooted anxiety and anticipation really are, both in humanity and in the Advent season. In a way, I find this calming, knowing that I am not alone in the very human feelings of worry. There is power in the way Luke names those feelings head on and doesn't shy away from the reality of a world in panic, a world not unlike the one we live in each day. Yet he tells us to find strength and stand upright amid such struggle, as the Son of God will soon enter our world, a Redeemer unafraid of disrupting our chaos and bringing us peace.

How are we to do this? After all, being vigilant when we are afraid is hard, and not succumbing to the stresses of life is even harder. I'm still figuring it out, but this season of Advent reminds me that I do not journey alone in the darkness of my fears, and that the promise of light is on its way. I am raising my head as I wait.

Prayer

God Who Redeems:

I know that you are near me in my times of fear and worry, even when I struggle to see you there. Help me turn to you when I feel overcome with troubles and find it hard to garner strength. Thank you for standing with me as I wait for the peace and healing that your child will deliver. Thank you for bringing us light.

Amen

Suggestion for Service

Winter, especially during an ongoing pandemic, can be a lonely and isolating time that brings about new worries. Take the time to check in on a friend you've been out of contact with, or a neighbor that you have not seen for a while. Make a point of following up with these people so that they know they are not alone or without someone who cares.