



Reflecting on Our Relationships in Light of God's Love - God

In Jesus, we see a God who models love and community. Jesus calls us back to God and to each other by highlighting what matters most – how we love God, ourselves and each other.* -Rozella Haydée White

Before we begin: We have travelled through this season of Advent examining and mending our relationships with neighbors, family, close friends, and ourselves. Now we turn to the greatest (and most mysterious) relationship of all. Our relationship with God. In a few days we will enter the season of Christmas and be awestruck once again at the God who wants so desperately to have a relationship with us that Jesus comes as a baby, a teacher, and a savior.

Invocation

In the deep and unshaking belief that you are always with us, God, please open our hearts and minds and souls to the love that you wish to pour into us. Give us great joy in the knowledge that you are always in relationship with us.

Confession

God, you know us. As we sit in this community, we sound so positive, but the truth is, there are these nagging doubts that keep creeping in. Help us to understand that our doubts can lead to a deeper relationship, one that has truly done the hard work to allow you to be the love of our lives. Also, while we are confessing, we know we are usually on the talking side of the conversation. Please be patient with us while we learn to listen. Amen

Matthew 1:20-23

An angel of the Lord appeared to [Joseph] in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." (NRSV)

Prayer

Leader: God, you loved the world so much that you came as a human. We give you thanks for that beautiful relationship.

All: God is with us.

Leader: Jesus, you tried to teach us about God's love and we were very slow to catch on. We are sorry for that and wish to have a better relationship with You.

All: God is with us.

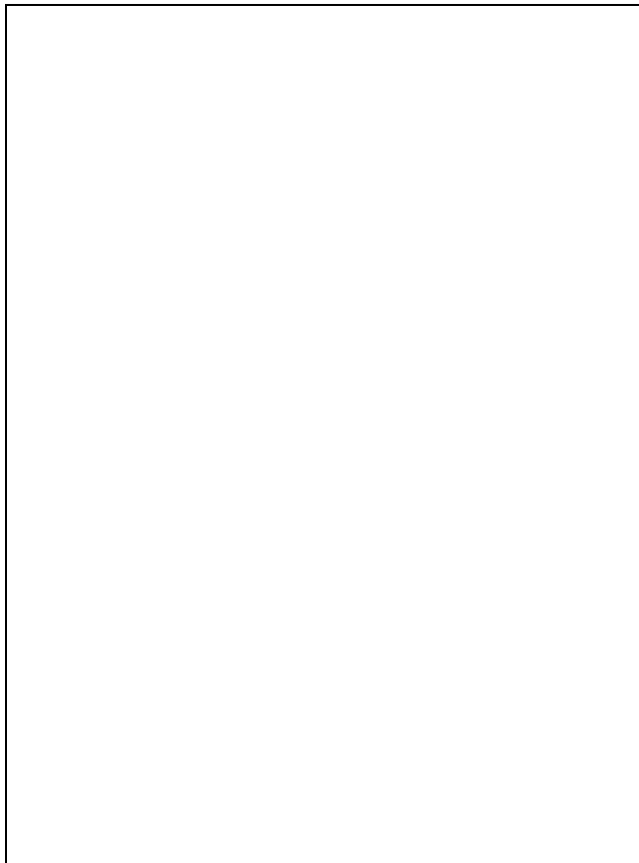
Leader: Spirit, fill us with love and patience for our neighbors, our friends, our own selves, and our relationship with You. Help us to serve each other with gladness.

All: God is with us. Amen

A time of silence:

You are invited into a time of silence. Take a deep breath and exhale slowly. Listen for God.

This week, as we come to the end of Advent, we are writing about our relationship with God as our spiritual practice. Look at the collage of faces. Imagine the love God gives to each of God's people. Sit quietly as you think about the enormity of that love. Now write a short note (like a postcard or a tweet) to God. Say whatever you wish to say to God. How is your relationship with God? How would you like it to be? Tell God. Be honest.



A blessing

May we love God, our neighbors, and ourselves
with all the creativity of our minds,
the strength of our hearts,
the power of our bodies,
and the resilience of the Spirit. Amen

Sending: An Invitation to go deeper

Jesus came as a stranger to the world. God came as a stranger into the world and desired to be in flesh and blood, life-giving relationship with each of us. And this is how God desires us to be in relationship with each other and with self.

How can I reach out to, learn about, and accompany all of the strangers, the neighbors, the coworkers, the friends, the family members, and myself with a love that reflects God's great love? How can my relationships improve?

LEAD 

Advent 2019 Week 4

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