

# ADVENT NEWSLETTER 2013

Sunday, 1 December, 2013

*You will never learn to sky dive by only standing on the ground. You will never find God's ways if you keep your eyes focused downwards.*



## ADVENT MEANS 'GET ENGAGED'

Now try to imagine this bit of silliness.

You go to a class on ballroom dancing. The instructor tells you that you will only watch the videos. That's all. Just sit there and watch. Will anything happen or have you just wasted your money on the registration fee?

Advent is just like that. You can never learn to dance sitting on the chair. You can never learn to live your faith and grow in your

discipleship if you just sit and watch.

Advent is the call to become engaged with the great mission of Jesus Christ. Get up. Walk with Jesus. See the world as Jesus sees the world. Learn to love and find the meaning for life just as Jesus found meaning in giving himself to God the Father.

The call of Advent is "get up." Do not sit there

passively but become fully engaged.

This brief period of time sets the direction for our life of faith.

Read the signs of Advent.

Move your feet.

Engage your spirit.

God is coming-- right here, right now!

# TO BETHLEHEM – AGAIN!

An Advent reflection by Iona Community Associate Donald A. Wells. Donald is Theologian in Residence at Old South Church, UCC, Boston, MA

We are on the road again; a road that leads to Bethlehem.

We have been on this road before – last year, every year. We journey with our hopes and our fears; our pains and our joys; our expectations for the future and our anxieties about the present. It's really the only road for us, the only journey we can take.

It's not that we haven't learned anything in the journeying of previous years. We have. But this past year has had its new hurts and hopes which we need to bring with us. And, in all honesty, we didn't learn it all last year, either. Our learning is a never-ending process so it seems. So we are on the road yet again.

We journey together or, perhaps, alone. Together is better, but no matter, it's the same road. And some are farther along than others. Wendell Berry, the philosopher/farmer, says that it does not really matter where you are in the journey (and here he is speaking of our commitment to the environment, but it relates to other things as well), as long as your arrow is pointing in the right direction. Ours is toward Bethlehem.

The poet May Sarton says it well:

Yes, sick at heart,  
Plagued, lost as we are,  
Let us make the hard journey.  
Who can be sure?  
But perhaps if we go there,  
It will happen again,  
It will happen to us,  
An infant be born again  
Out of blood and filthy straw.  
How naked, how vulnerable,  
How desperate in need  
This breath between past and future!  
The infant Hope.

Oh shall we kneel again at last  
In the healing hosanna  
Of silence?

Yes, let us make the journey.  
Perhaps it will happen again.

Come, friend. We are on our way, yet again, to kneel in 'the healing hosanna of silence'. Grace to you, and to me, as we travel.

*Yes, let us  
make the  
journey.  
Perhaps it  
will happen  
again.*





# **WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?**



Modern life is so much on the go that we do not recognize how exhausted we actually are. Life goes by much too fast.

Advent is the clear reminder that we do not have the fullness of life. There are wars with one group of people trying to put down another group of people. There are fights in our city halls. We have family members that have not spoken to each other in years.

Life is not in its fullness. Our hearts tell us that there can be more.

Advent is the time to move into the space of waiting for God, waiting for the fullness of God's life and salvation.

It means that we stand with our ancestors who longed for deliverance from their bondage in

Babylon. They wanted to go home and be their own people rather than be subservient and exploited by the Babylonian Empire. We can hear the longing for deliverance of our ancestors.

We long for the fullness of life where everyone will respect everyone else. We want so much that all believers would be able to see the very face of Jesus in the poor and the suffering of right around us.

And then we look up to stars and long for the fullness of life, justice and peace in eternal life.

The soles of our feet tell us that there is so much more to life than what we know. Every believer is meant for glory and the fullness of life.

This Advent, stand with all who long for the fullness of God's life, deliverance and peace.

## VOICES OF HOPE IN ADVENT

In the face of growing  
darkness  
We journey together.  
In the face of ecological  
decline,  
We journey together.  
In the face of social upheaval,  
We journey together.  
In the face of growing  
uncertainty,  
We journey together.

In the face of growing  
darkness,  
we journey together toward  
the light.

As we search for glimpses of  
truth,  
We journey together.  
As we search for heralds of a  
new era,  
We journey together.  
As we search for angels of  
hope,  
We journey together.

As we search for glimpses of  
truth, we journey together toward  
new levels of meaning.

As we build our world out of  
chaos,  
We journey together.



As we build our world out of  
shattered illusions of superiority,  
We journey together.  
As we build our world out of  
our inadequate institutions,  
We journey together.  
As we build our world out of  
our unfair sharing of resources,  
We journey together.

As we build our world out of  
the chaos, we journey together  
toward a new era of justice.

As the universe unfolds,  
We journey together.  
As the universe unfolds  
through spontaneous communion,  
We journey together.

As the universe unfolds  
through new levels of meaning,  
We journey together.  
As the universe unfolds  
through new forms of life,  
We journey together.

As the universe unfolds, we  
journey together in God's great  
becoming.

*Rev. Daniel Martin, International Communities  
for the Renewal of the earth ICRE, New York)*



### ADVENT HOPE

Now is the season of hope  
unfolding,  
the dark winter season, when  
hope waits to be born.  
Let us come before God with

receptive and willing spirits.  
May our souls magnify God's  
name,  
and our spirits rejoice in God  
our Saviour.