

Advent 2017: Yes! Let it be!

Every blade of grass has its angel that bends over it and whispers, "Grow, grow."

This line from the Talmud gives us an image of a God who is tenderly and intimately invested in even the smallest parts of creation. A God that wills growth and restoration for all of creation. This is the same God that sends an angel to whisper in Mary's ear, to invite her to participate in God's plan for restoration in tender and intimate ways. Mary's response is our theme for this season: "Yes, Let it be." God is always the initiator, the whisperer, the beckoner; but the choice to respond is ours.



Mary's answer is a courageous "yes" to the angelic invitation to participate, to grow, to risk. There is no promise of safety, only an invitation to become. Mary's "let it be" is a willingness to yield, to accept what God is doing and make space. It is also a courageous and active commitment. Rather than simply yielding, Mary is also expressing a strong desire to be a part of God's plan, no passive blade of grass, Mary gives her full consent and then some.

What are the angel whispers calling us to this season? How are we being invited to become God bearers? What will our response be? God does not ask us to become anything other than who we are created to be. Our yes is an affirmation of our deepest truest identity- God's beloved creatures, made in God's image who reflect God's radiance. This Advent season we can, like Mary choose to join in, choose to be inhabited, choose the radically courageous act of saying, "Yes, let it be."

As with other years, our Advent worship services will begin in darkness and quiet. To that end, we invite you to arrive promptly, gather in silence and enjoy the darkness as we wait to welcome the light.

We will also take a break from announcements during this season, so please be sure to communicate your announcements via the Assemblyline (assemblyline@assemblymennonite.org) and take time to read it!

There are many opportunities to enter fully into the season

- Children are invited into Advent through Children's time and family worship materials, which include an Advent candle for each family. A few extra count-down candles are prepared so that other individuals and households can also participate. In addition, Saturday evening, December 9 at 5:30 and 7 p.m. children will have the opportunity to walk the advent spiral in the worship space. Children are also welcome to take part in our Christmas Eve play on December 24. Look for upcoming announcements on how to be involved in the Christmas Eve service.
- Adults will also be able to walk the Advent spiral anytime from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Saturday, December 9.

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	Advent 1 Dec. 3	Advent 2 Dec. 10	Advent 3 Dec. 17	Advent 4 Dec. 24	Christmas Dec. 31	Epiphany Jan. 7
Theme	Let it be	Let it be so	Let it be whole	Yes! Let it be now	Yes! Let it be new	Yes! Let it be declared
Preacher	Eliana Neufeld Basinger	Aaron Sawatsky Kingsley	Mary Schertz	Gwen Gustafson-Zook	Lessons and Carols	César Garcia (Mennonite World Conference)
Lectionary Texts Year B	Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37	Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a, Mark 1:1-8	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Luke 1:46b-55; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38	Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40	Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12
Details/ Second Hour	Window and 2% offering Annie Joseph from Ankur Kala (ankurkala.org) in 2nd Hour	Messiah sing in 2nd hour Fellowship meal	Advent Meditative activities in 2nd Hour	No Second hour Christmas Eve set-up	9:30 Breakfast Service begins at 10:30 No Sunday School	Adam and Karen Graber Roth in 2nd Hour

Also of note:

Dec. 6: Candle dipping at Steve Shantz's house for K-5th grade children K-2 at 6:30pm or gr 3-5 at 7:15pm.

Dec. 9: Advent Spiral (for adults 10 a.m.-12 p.m. and children* at 5:30 p.m. or 7 p.m.)

Dec. 21: Longest night service, 7 p.m. worship space (Bethany Swope and Mary Lehman Yoder)

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve soup and bread supper,* 6 p.m. worship space (bring your own place settings)

Dec. 31: Breakfast Potluck at 9:30 followed by worship at 10:30, bring festive breakfast foods to share

*Sign up requested for these events.

