

spill the beans

worship and learning resources for all ages

issue 53

advent, christmas, epiphany

1 december 2024 to 2 march 2025



A resource with a Scottish flavour for
Worship Leaders, Sunday Schools,
Junior Churches and Youth Leaders.

www.spillthebeans.org.uk
www.facebook.com/spillbeansresources
© 2024 Spill the Beans Resource Team

introduction

Welcome to the fifth in a series of eight issues of Spill the Beans through which we are taking an alternative journey through the Scripture over a two year period. Having spent the previous year with The Women's Lectionary, and not at the beginning point of either the Revised Common Lectionary or the Narrative Lectionary, this has been an opportunity for thinking about a different way to engage the Scripture with a contemporary setting.

Word And World Lectionary

Members of the Spill the Beans Resource Team took time out to consider the way forward and with enthusiasm embarked on creating our own two year lectionary. We had past experience with our "Path Less Travelled" lectionary in 2018-19 which was inspired by user feedback.

This time we decided to deliberately and methodically to engage Word and World using the device of special days and themes. For instance, using United Nations' focus days, or saints days, or particular festivals. We have shaped these into short thematic series. We would encourage engagement both with the Scriptural texts for each day and to use this as an opportunity for your congregation to engage with some of the international themes that arise.

This is a different approach for us and we hope it will be inspiring to you in your worship as we pray it will be for us as we lead worship in our own settings.

We have decided to keep the format for the layout of the issues as we have used in the past year, and to encourage the development of intergenerational worship.

Intergenerational Worship

Spill the Beans has always been rooted in the power of story telling. Story binds generations together. In that shared bond of story lies the creative space for building relationships between generations. Using different ways to engage with the story recognises the variety amongst us all: some learn by listening, others by doing, others by creating. All are valuable and a part of our shared worship of God.

We are encouraging you to experiment as we will be doing with ways to worship intergenerationally in an authentic and inclusive manner. To that end we are still providing a rich variety of resources but grouped by how they help us **'tell the story'**, **'explore the story'**, and **'live the story'**. Mix and match, rewrite, contextualise for your own setting, try something different, and have fun with it! Please do give us feedback.

There are many resources online to help think more deeply about intergenerational worship. A simple but very helpful summary is provided by the Methodist Church, copied below.

Intergenerational worship IS about:

- **building relationships**—offering a key time for people to get to know each other better and build a sense of connection;
- **a time of worship and learning that is offered in a simplified and participatory way**—simple does not mean shallow; rather it enables everyone to contribute and receive in a meaningful and appropriate way;
- **providing an inclusive experience and a sense of belonging**—helping everyone of all abilities to feel part of the body of Christ, whatever their experience;
- **being a bridge**—not only between ages but also for those who are exploring what being part of a church means. This relaxed service style can provide a comfortable place for some to discover more about Christianity;
- **encouragement, nurture and inclusiveness**—it is a means by which faith can grow and, in turn, inform life-making or life-changing decisions;
- **exploring vocation**—an opportunity to discover and develop gifts and calling.

Intergenerational worship is NOT about:

- limiting the richness of resources used;
- oversimplifying the message or adding a children's talk into the 'usual' service;
- unstructured and chaotic worship;
- children having token responsibilities for roles and participation;
- limiting potential to explore faith and discipleship together;
- nuclear families exclusively worshipping together.

Information

Unless otherwise indicated, any quotations of the scriptures are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicised Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Original content in this issue © 2024 Spill The Beans Resources Team.

Editor: Peter Johnston peter@spillbeans.org.uk
 Chair: Roddy Hamilton roddy@spillbeans.org.uk
 Admin: Julie Mackie admin@spillbeans.org.uk

<http://spillbeans.org.uk>

<http://www.facebook.com/spillbeansresources>

Sleepless Nights Publications

contents

Word and World: New Lectionary for 2023-2025

Incarnating Love

Sunday 1 December 2024 (Advent 1)	7
Sunday 8 December 2024 (Advent 2)	15
Sunday 15 December 2024 (Advent 3)	22
Sunday 22 December 2024 (Advent 4)	30
Tues 24 / Wed 25 Dec 2024 (Christmas Eve / Day)	38
Sunday 29 December 2024 (Christmas 1)	49
Sunday 5 January 2025 (Christmas 2)	56

Holocaust Memorial	
Sunday 12 January 2025 (Epiphany 1)	63
Sunday 19 January 2025 (Epiphany 2)	71
Sunday 26 January 2025 (Epiphany 3)	78
Rediscovering Jesus	
Sunday 2 February 2025 (Epiphany 4)	85
Sunday 9 February 2025 (Epiphany 5)	93
Sunday 16 February 2025 (Epiphany 6)	101
Sunday 23 February 2025 (Epiphany 7)	108
Sunday 2 March 2025 (Transfiguration)	116
Extra Resources and Activity Sheets	123

Please remember you can use the bookmark system within Adobe Reader to quickly move around this document.

the team

If you would like to find out how you could be part of the team, please contact either Roddy or Peter (see previous page).

The contributors from the Spill the Beans Resource Team producing this issue included:

Amy Bender	Peter Johnston
Keith Blackwood	Jo Love
Shuna Dicks	Nikki Macdonald
Conor Fegan	John Murning
Roddy Hamilton	Mary Whittaker
Karen Harbison	

Key to Abbreviations

In the worship ideas section the following abbreviations may be used to indicate different sources of worship music:

ATAS	All the Assembly Songs You'll Ever Need
CG	Common Ground
CH4	Church Hymnary, 4th Edition
GTG	Glory To God: The Presbyterian Hymnal
GWA	God Welcomes All (Supplement to CH4)
JP	Junior Praise
MP	Complete Mission Praise
STF	Singing The Faith
WGP	Wild Goose Publications

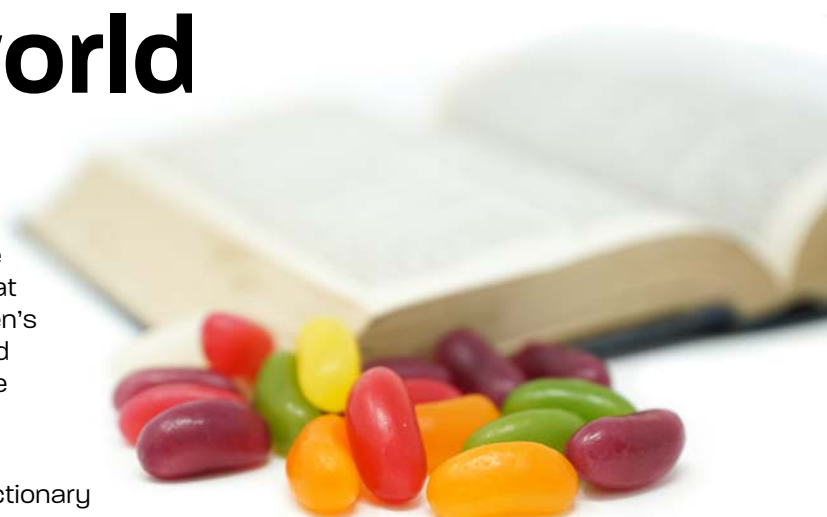


word and world

New Lectionary December 2023—November 2025

Members of the Spill the Beans Resource Team have been exploring ideas on what to do following our year with The Women's Lectionary. As we are mid-stream in both Revised Common Lectionary and Narrative Lectionary, we decided to take the opportunity to do something different.

This is our second foray into creating our own lectionary following The Path Less Travelled in 2018/19. The inspiration for this new plan was to connect the worship of the church more systematically with events that are happening around and outside the church. This includes 'national' or 'world' days, particular seasonal events and people. We are excited at the opportunity this may give us to engage with other events. Some are very serious such as International Holocaust Memorial Day, while others may inspire some fun such as National Ice Cream Day and one close to our hearts... Jelly Bean Day!



Note that we are still fine tuning this, but the following table will give you the main basis of where we are planning to journey for the two years from Advent 2023.

As always, this is invitational, and you are welcome to join us as and how is right in your own setting. We pray it is a jumping off point for your own engagement of Word and World.

Date	Liturgical	Theme	Primary Text	Support Text	Links/Notes
YEAR 1					
3 Dec 23	Advent 1	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion	Isaiah 40:1-11	Matthew 8:1-4	Abolition of Slavery (2 Dec)/Persons of Disability
10 Dec 23	Advent 2		Malachi 3:1-7	Galatians 5:13-14	Human Rights Day
17 Dec 23	Advent 3		Isaiah 16:2-5	Luke 1:5-25	International Migrant's Day (18 Dec)
24 Dec 23	Advent 4	Christmas	Isaiah 9:2-7	Luke 1:39-56	
25 Dec 23	Christmas Day		Luke 2:1-20	1 John 4:7-9,13-21	
31 Dec 23	Christmas 1		Matthew 2:1-15	Micah 5:1-5a	
7 Jan 24	Epiphany 1	Unwrapping	Luke 1:1-4	John 1:19-31	Beginnings, setting up calendars, Orthodox Christmas
14 Jan 24	Epiphany 2		Luke 4:16-30	Psalm 119:97-108	Flourishing, St Mungo
21 Jan 24	Epiphany 3		Luke 6:20-26	Psalm 1	Blessings, use "A Man's A Man" by Robert Burns
28 Jan 24	Epiphany 4		Luke 8:16-18	Jonah 1:1-17	Lighting, Up-Helly-Aa (30 Jan)
4 Feb 24	Epiphany 5		Luke 8:22-25	Psalm 139:1-12	Calming, World Cancer Day
11 Feb 24	Transfiguration		Luke 9:10-17	2 Kings 5:1-6	Feeding, International Day of Women/Girls in Science
14 Feb 24	Ash Wednesday	Social Justice	Luke 11:37-44	Isaiah 55:6-11	Valentine's Day
18 Feb 24	Lent 1		Isaiah 58:6-12	1 Samuel 21:1-6	World Day of Social Justice (20 Feb)
25 Feb 24	Lent 2		Luke 6:27-36	1 Peter 3:8-14	
3 Mar 24	Lent 3		Luke 7:1-17	Psalm 68:4-10	Whuppity Scoorie Day (1 Mar)
10 Mar 24	Lent 4		Luke 7:36-50	Micah 7:14-20	Mothering Sunday, International Women's Day (8 Mar)
17 Mar 24	Lent 5		Luke 8:26-39	Psalm 102:1-6,18-22	International Day of Happiness (20 Mar), Red Nose
24 Mar 24	Palms/Passion		Matthew 21:1-11	Psalm 22:1-11	
25 Mar 24	Monday	Holy Week	John 15:1-13	Psalm 36:5-11	The true vine
26 Mar 24	Tuesday		John 16:4b-24	Psalm 74:1-14	Work of the Spirit
27 Mar 24	Wednesday		John 17:1-11	Psalm 70	Praying for friends
28 Mar 24	Maundy Thurs		John 18:1-12	Psalm 116:1-2,12-19	Betrayal and arrest
29 Mar 24	Good Friday		John 19:1-30	Psalm 40:1-14	Jesus and Pilate
30 Mar 24	Holy Saturday	John 19:38-42	Psalm 31:1-5	Jesus' burial	
31 Mar 24	Easter Day	Resurrection and New Creation	John 20:1-18	Psalm 18:16-21	Jesus and Mary in the garden
7 Apr 24	Easter 2		Isaiah 40:21-31	Matthew 6:25-34	Holy Humour Sunday, World Health Day
14 Apr 24	Easter 3		Isaiah 51:1-18	Matthew 13:24-29	National Gardening Day
21 Apr 24	Easter 4	Joy	Isaiah 61:1-11	Matthew 20:1-16	Mother Earth Day, Jelly Bean Day (both 22 Apr)
28 Apr 24	Easter 5		Psalm 30	Romans 12:9-21	International Dance Day (29 Apr), Beltane's Day (1 May)
5 May 24	Easter 6		Psalm 16	1 Peter 1:3-12	World Laughter Day, St Catherine of Siena (29 Apr)
12 May 24	Easter 7	Christian Aid	Acts 1:15-17,21-26	1 John 5:9-12	RCL readings used this week to link to Christian Aid
19 May 24	Pentecost		Acts 2:1-21	2 Samuel 6:14-19	World Baking Day (home bakes to raise money for work of Christian Aid)

Date	Liturgical	Theme	Primary Text	Support Text	Notes
26 May 24	Pentecost 1	Witness and Journey	Exodus 3:10-17	Matthew 28:16-20	
2 Jun 24	Pentecost 2		Genesis 20:1-13	Acts 21:1-6	
9 Jun 24	Pentecost 3		Exodus 34:4-8	1 Samuel 3	St Columba
16 Jun 24	Pentecost 4	Refugees and Asylum Seekers	Exodus 2:1-10	Luke 15:11-32	Father's Day
23 Jun 24	Pentecost 5		Exodus 5:1-14	1 Corinthians 4:1-13	World Refugee Day (20 Jun), International Widow's Day
30 Jun 24	Pentecost 6	Stories of Travelling	John 4:1-15,28-30,39-42	1 Kings 17:7-16	Hospitality
7 Jul 24	Pentecost 7		Matthew 15:21-28	Hebrews 13:1-3	Encounters with strangers
14 Jul 24	Pentecost 8		Leviticus 25:10-12,35-41	Galatians 3:26-28	Towards equal opportunities
21 Jul 24	Pentecost 9		Mark 2:18-28	Genesis 2:1-2	Holidays and refreshing Sabbaths, Ice Cream Day
28 Jul 24	Pentecost 10		Psalms 139:1-12,23-24	Romans 8:31-39	God with us on the journey
4 Aug 24	Pentecost 11		1 Kings 19:1-8	Mark 8:1-9	Food for the journey
11 Aug 24	Pentecost 12		Psalms 71:16-18	Ephesians 4:11-16	Journey from youth to age, Inter. Youth Day (12 Aug)
18 Aug 24	Pentecost 13		Telling Our Stories	Deuteronomy 6:20-25	John 9:13-25
25 Aug 24	Pentecost 14	Exodus 12:21-28		Acts 26:1,9-18	International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition (23 Aug)
1 Sep 24	Pentecost 15	Jeremiah 29:1-14		Philippians 4:10-20	World Letter Writing Day, Amnesty International Write for Rights
8 Sep 24	Pentecost 16	Peacemaking	Leviticus 26:1-6	Matthew 5:9	World Suicide Prevention Day (10 Sep)
15 Sep 24	Pentecost 17		Psalms 34	Colossians 3:12-17	International Day of Democracy, Hildegard De Bingen (17 Sep)
22 Sep 24	Pentecost 18		John 14:25-31	Philippians 4:4-9	International Day of Peace
29 Sep 24	Pentecost 19	Environment and Harvest	Deuteronomy 16:9-15	James 2:14-26	World Heart Day, building up to Sukkot
6 Oct 24	Pentecost 20		Psalms 126	Joel 2:15-19	Restoring the environment
13 Oct 24	Pentecost 21		Exodus 16:9-16	2 Corinthians 9:6-15	World Food Day
20 Oct 24	Pentecost 22	Faith Heroes	Hebrews 12:1-2	Hebrews 11:8-22	Back to the Future Day (21 Oct)
27 Oct 24	Pentecost 23		Hebrews 12:1-2	Hebrews 11:23-28	National Mentoring Day, Reformation Day (31 Oct)
3 Nov 24	Pentecost 24		Hebrews 12:1-2	Hebrews 11:29-40	All Saints Day (1 Nov), link to any local saints
10 Nov 24	Pentecost 25	Hope	Job 17:1-5,11-16	Matthew 12:9-21	Armistice Day (11 Nov), World Kindness Day (13 Nov), St Machar, St Gerardine
17 Nov 24	Pentecost 26		Lamentations 3:19-24	Romans 8:18-25	Prisoners Week, International Day for Tolerance (16 Nov)
24 Nov 24	Reign of Christ		John 3:11-21	Isaiah 42:1-10a	
YEAR 2					
1 Dec 24	Advent 1	Incarnating Love	Isaiah 11:1-9	Luke 5:12-13	World AIDS Day, St Aiden of May
8 Dec 24	Advent 2		Mark 1:1-8	Isaiah 2:2-4	International Anti-Corruption Day (9 Dec)
15 Dec 24	Advent 3		Isaiah 35	Galatians 5:13-16	
22 Dec 24	Advent 4		Luke 1:26-38	1 Corinthians 13:1-13	
24/5 Dec 24	Christmas Eve/Day		Luke 1:46-55 Matthew 1:18-25	Romans 13:11-12 1 John 3-11	
29 Dec 24	Christmas 1		John 1:1-14	Isaiah 43:1-7	Donald Caskie (died 27 Dec 1983)
5 Jan 25	Christmas 2	Daniel 2:8-23	Matthew 2:1-6	Thomas Aikenhead (died 8 Jan 1697)	
12 Jan 25	Epiphany 1	Holocaust Memorial	Luke 11:14-28	Nehemiah 5:1-13	Awareness of evil
19 Jan 25	Epiphany 2		Exodus 1:15-22	Mark 9:42-48	Slaughter/protection of innocents, Jane Haining
26 Jan 25	Epiphany 3		Isaiah 61:5-11	Mark 15:33-34	International Holocaust Memorial Day (27 Jan)
2 Feb 25	Epiphany 4	Rediscovering Jesus	Luke 2:41-52	Proverbs 3:1-10	Jesus the Jew, Candlemass, Groundhog Day
9 Feb 25	Epiphany 5		Matthew 13:1-3,10-17	2 Samuel 12:1-7a	Jesus the Storyteller
16 Feb 25	Epiphany 6		Luke 4:38-41	Ezekiel 34:11-16	Jesus the Healer
23 Feb 25	Epiphany 7		Mark 6:45-52	Mark 8:11-14	Jesus the Wonder Worker
2 Mar 25	Transfiguration		Matthew 16:13-20	John 20:30-31	Jesus: the Christ?



Date	Liturgical	Theme	Primary Text	Support Text	Notes
5 Mar 25	Ash Wednesday	Health and Wellbeing	Matthew 6:1-6,16-21	2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10	Wellbeing
9 Mar 25	Lent 1		Romans 12:1-8	Proverbs 16:21-24	Self Care I
16 Mar 25	Lent 2		Romans 12:9-21	Psalms 1	Self Care II
23 Mar 25	Lent 3		John 6:35-40	Proverbs 3:5-8	Food
30 Mar 25	Lent 4		Hebrews 4:1-11	Matthew 11:28-29	Rest, Mothering Sunday
6 Apr 25	Lent 5		1 Timothy 4:6-16	Isaiah 40:25-30	Health
13 Apr 25	Palm/Passion	You want it darker	Mark 11:1-11	Isaiah 52:13-53:12	The Gate
14 Apr 25	Monday		Mark 11:15-19	Isaiah 48:6-11	The Temple Courtyard
15 Apr 25	Tuesday		Mark 11:12-14,20-25	Isaiah 34:1-4	The Mount of Olives
16 Apr 25	Wednesday		Mark 14:1-11	Isaiah 61:1-4	The Home at Bethany
17 Apr 25	Maundy Thurs		Mark 14:12-16	Isaiah 53:7-12	The Upper Room, Gethsemane
18 Apr 25	Good Friday		Mark 14:43-15:41	Joel 2:1-2	The Hill, Golgotha
19 Apr 25	Holy Saturday		Mark 15:42-47	Psalms 22:27-31	The Tomb
20 Apr 25	Easter Day		Mark 16:1-8	Luke 24:13-35	The Garden (use Emmaus story for an evening service)
27 Apr 25	Easter 2	Community Wellbeing	John 21:1-14	Mark 1:16-20	Back at the Beginning I
4 May 25	Easter 3		John 21:15-21	Mark 14:66-72	Back at the Beginning II, Mental Health Awareness Week, death of David Livingstone (1 May 1873)
11 May 25	Easter 4		Acts 9:36-43	Revelation 7:9-17	Christian Aid Week
18 May 25	Easter 5	Creative Communities	Micah 6:6-8	1 Corinthians 12:4-14	The Why Behind the How
25 May 25	Easter 6		Colossians 3:12-17	Micah 6:6-8	Creative People, death of Thomas Chalmers (31 May 1847)
1 Jun 25	Easter 7		Ephesians 5:1-20	Micah 6:6-8	Creative Living
8 Jun 25	Pentecost		Galatians 5:13-26	Micah 6:6-8 Acts 2:1-13	Creative Spirit
15 Jun 25	Pentecost 1	Thankful and Grateful	Psalms 100	Romans 5:1-11	Father's Day, National Beer Day
22 Jun 25	Pentecost 2		Psalms 118	1 Thessalonians 5:12-24	International Picnic Day (18 Jun)
29 Jun 25	Pentecost 3		Psalms 145	2 Corinthians 4:7-18	Death of George MacLeod (27 Jun 1991)
6 Jul 25	Pentecost 4		1 Chronicles 16:8-36	Romans 11:33-36	Thank You Day
13 Jul 25	Pentecost 5	Crossroads of Culture and Faith	Psalms 95	Luke 2:22-32	Music, St Swithin
20 Jul 25	Pentecost 6		2 Chronicles 1:1,7-13	Luke 3:7-18	Politics, St Thnew
27 Jul 25	Pentecost 7		Exodus 31:1-11	Luke 6:43-45	Art
3 Aug 25	Pentecost 8		2 Samuel 12:1-9	Luke 9:1-6	Literature
10 Aug 25	Pentecost 9		Song of Songs 2:8-17	Luke 12:49-53	Poetry
17 Aug 25	Pentecost 10		1 Kings 4:29-34	Luke 17:11-19	Science
24 Aug 25	Pentecost 11		1 Samuel 8:1-21	Luke 20:20-26	Civic Space, death of George Matheson (28 Aug 1906)
31 Aug 25	Pentecost 12		Prayer	Jeremiah 20:7-18	1 Samuel 1:1-18
7 Sept 25	Pentecost 13	Luke 10:1-9,17-21		1 Samuel 2:1-10	Thanksgiving
14 Sept 25	Pentecost 14	Genesis 32:3-21		Luke 18:1-18	Protection
21 Sept 25	Pentecost 15	John 17:10-26		Luke 2:36-38	Intercession
28 Sept 25	Pentecost 16	2 Samuel 12:15b-23		Psalms 98	Unanswered
5 Oct 25	Pentecost 17	Reforming Our Faith	Psalms 96:1-9	1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 14:26	Songs and Liturgy
12 Oct 25	Pentecost 18		Ecclesiastes 3:1-8	Matthew 22:34-39	Times and Priorities
19 Oct 25	Pentecost 19		Joshua 10:36-43	2 Timothy 3:14-17	Lectionaries
26 Oct 25	Pentecost 20		Exodus 3:1-10	Ephesians 3:14-20	Experiences of God, Reformation Day (31 Oct)
2 Nov 25	Pentecost 21	Christ on the Edge	Mark 12:41-44	Deuteronomy 24:17-22	All Souls Day
9 Nov 25	Pentecost 22		Matthew 5:38-44	Genesis 22:1-14	Remembrance Sunday
16 Nov 25	Pentecost 23		Luke 10:25-37	Deuteronomy 10:17-22	Home Made Bread Day (17 Nov), St Margaret of Scotland
23 Nov 25	Reign of Christ		Mark 10:17-21	Luke 12:13-21	Stir Up Day, death of James Hogg (21 Nov 1835)

Note that the double-lined breaks in the table delineate between issues.



the peaceful kingdom

Advent 1

Sunday 1 December 2024

Theme

Incarnating Love

Word

Isaiah 11:1-9

Luke 5:12-13

World

World AIDS Day

Saint Aiden of May (3 Dec)

tell the story

Bible Notes

As the season of Advent gets underway we embark on a series of services that focus on the theme of what incarnating love means and looks like, culminating, of course, in the celebration of incarnation at Christmas. It can be tempting to approach Christmas with a Christo-centrism in which the birth narratives exist in their own bubble, albeit Matthew's and Luke's versions interplaying with each other. The truth, of course, is that they are part of a developing story, taking from the old stories and telling a new story for that time and place and rooting Jesus in what has been in order to give him authority for what it is to come.

While it is a truism that a weed is just a plant in the wrong place, when that plant grows into a tree in the wrong place it can be deeply damaging to nearby buildings requiring removal. Those who have cut down a tree and then watched as shoots start to form from the stump, commercialized in the practice of coppicing of course, know the power of the image that begins this week's lection from Isaiah. The troublesome tree that needed to be dispensed with represents the Assyrians who it was understood were sent by God as judgement on the Israelites for their waywardness. The King of Assyria, Sargon II, saw himself as more important and powerful than God, and became ever more oppressive over the Israelites as time went by.

Isaiah provides the hopeful image of a different future in which that oppressive rule was ended and from the cut down roots, the stump of Jesse (calling back to King David's father), will grow something new, a refreshed Israel from the broken remnant of those still present.



"Peaceable Kingdom" by Edward Hicks (1834)

More than just a new start, the imagery invoked by Isaiah for this renewed nation portrays a radically different kind of kingdom: a peaceable kingdom. In this kingdom evil will not flourish, there will be equity for the meek. It is an overturning of the expected 'business as usual' as relationships of power and dominion are rethought. Predator and prey will find a way to live with each other in peace.

The American artist Edward Hicks was captivated by this imagery in many of his paintings. Again, these pieces of art are also rooted in their context. We see colonists and indigenous First Americans sitting with each other as Hicks, a Quaker, recalled the agreement by William

Penn (the Englishman who founded Pennsylvania) and the Lenni Lenape tribe to live peacefully with each other. The works were created long after this legendary event when Penn is said to have proclaimed: "We meet on the broad pathway of good faith and good-will; no advantage shall be taken on either side, but all shall be openness and love." Hicks used this story in his art to encourage a spirit of reconciliation and peace in his own time.

Indigenous peoples the world over know that living peaceably with others can be extraordinarily difficult when expectations and outlooks are vastly different. The truth is that working for the peaceable kingdom, trying to overturn powerful interests deeply invested in systems of extraction, is a constant striving. Isaiah's imagery, like Hicks' paintings, give us inspiration, but the real work is done by all of us together as love in incarnated one action at a time. Such is the case with Jesus' healing of a man with a skin condition: one action, one person renewed, but it all begins with individuals choosing to act for what is good and peaceful, making those differences in order to benefit all.

Story Retelling

Playtime!

Look, that stump's sprouting shoots!
It must have deep roots
since the day someone gave it the chop.
Lots of new bits are growing,
small leaves boldly showing,
a bunnet of green on its top!

And look at what's snaking—
an adder is making
the children chase around with a laugh!
To the sound of their giggling
the adder is wriggling
while a bear cub galumphs with a calf!

Oh what was that howling—
a wolf has come prowling,
her cry always high, long and big!
Standing tall on her paws
she opens her jaws—
"Would anyone like to play tig?"

Bleating lambs all exclaim,
"That's our favourite game!"
So the wolf agrees to be 'It'
Oh such baa'ing and running
and all the wolf's cunning—
a hilarious way to keep fit!

From his den comes a lion
keeping an eye on
his friend, the handsome ox
who is itching his rump
against Jesse's great stump
sighing, "Moo! Ooo! That rocks!"

After tiggling and chasing
and scratching and racing—
a day full of howling great fun—
the creaturely riot
descends into quiet—
they all fall asleep in the sun!

sampler



Discussion Starters

Few of those of a certain age will forget the image of Princess Diana in 1987 on the opening of the United Kingdom's first specialist HIV/AIDS unit at Middlesex Hospital in London shaking the hand of a man suffering with HIV. In a culture deeply fearful of HIV/AIDS that simple act helped to break the stigmatisation of people who were living and dying from the condition. It was a powerful image that showed a different way to look at the situation and the plight of those with HIV/AIDS at a time when there were not the treatments that are available today.

- Who else can you think of who has, through their actions, caused you to rethink your assumptions or prejudices about a group of people or about an issue?
- What did they do or say?
- In what ways did they contribute to creating a peaceable kingdom?

Read together this week's passage from Isaiah (11:1-9), relishing the imagery described. Encourage the group to stop and reflect on the different phrases, particularly the examples that are provided: "the wolf shall live with the lamb", "the leopard shall lie down with the kid", and so on.

- How does Isaiah use hyperbole to make his point?
- What are examples you might use that would relate to our world today?
- What does the peaceable kingdom mean to you?
- How do you think people in different parts of the world today might define the peaceable kingdom? What is the difference, for example, if you are living in a country at peace or in a country engaged in conflict and war?

Read the story of the healing of the man with the skin condition (Luke 5:12-13). Pay attention to the conversation between the man and Jesus. The man recognises the capability of Jesus to make a difference in his life: "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean" to which Jesus simply responds, "I am willing. Be made clean."



- What choices are being made in this passage?
- What choices are you going to be facing this week?
- How will today's stories relating to the incarnation of love affect the decisions you will be making?

explore the story

Engaging The Text

You will need: a large flowerpot filled with earth or damp sand, a tree stump to sit in the middle of the pot but leave plenty of earth free around it (optional), twigs or branches, enough for everyone.

Read the passage from Isaiah 11:1-9. Use three or four readers, each reading a different stanza.

Take some time reading verses 6-9, lingering over the unusual combinations of animals, that ought not to go together.

Individually invite people to think of unexpected combinations. Imagine what needs to go together for peace in the world, or for safe communities, or for family reunions and so on.

Once people have thought about those combinations invite them to symbolically plant a twig or branch in the soil round the stump of Jesse.

Once people have completed this, invite folk to turn to neighbours, and, if they wish, describe those unusual combinations. Together pray for these.

Advent Season Craft Incarnating Love

You will need: this will depend on what styles you choose to use (see below).

During the season of Advent, we will be making a variety of hearts in different shapes, sizes and styles, using shades of purple. These hearts should be hung around your worship area or all around your building, increasing in number as we go through the season. You should try to get a good mixture of sizes, shades and styles and display these on the walls or suspended from strings/wires of various lengths. In most of these suggestions basic heart shapes can be a solid shape or cut out like a wreath with hole in the centre

We have listed a few suggestions here at the beginning of Advent. Choose the ones that appeal to you, refer back here over the next few weeks and develop ideas that suit the people taking part, the resources and time you have. There will be, follow on crafts for Christmas to add to the overall display.

Collage Heart: thick card heart covered with pieces of purple paper, which should be in a variety of shades and textures and pieces should be overlapping.

PomPom Heart: thick card heart covered with small purple pom poms (make the pom poms from wool or use packs of small pom poms).

Christmas Baubles Heart: thick card heart covered

with small purple, Christmas baubles.

Ribbon Heart: a florists wire heart shape with ribbon with a variety of shades of purple tied onto the heart.

Wool Heart: knit or crochet a small heart using scraps of wool in shades of purple.

Pin Board Heart: small pieces of thick corrugated card or light wood with pins placed in a heart shape which you the use as the base to crisscross embroidery thread or metallic thread from one pin to another.

Quilted Heart: use narrow strips of paper to make paper hearts.

Paper Weaving Heart: use narrow strips of contrasting shades of purple paper to make woven hearts.

2D Heart: cut out two thick card hearts of the same size. On one cut a slit from the bottom point to halfway up and on the other cut a slit from the dip in heart at the top again halfway down. Slot together.

Stained Glass Window Heart: heart shape in black card and use tissue paper to make a stained-glass effect.

Heart Lantern: use glass paints to paint hearts onto glass jars and then put a tealight/battery tealight inside.

Link all these hearts to the idea of 'Incarnating love': Jesus's birth as God's message of love and the ways we show love to each other and our neighbours in our lives.

Lion And Lamb

You will need: small paper plates (two per person), felt tip pens, scissors, glue sticks, strips of paper 1cm by 10cm in shades of yellow, orange and brown and in white.

Ask everyone to take two plates, one to create the lamb and one to create the lion. Ask folk to draw each animal face in the middle section of the plate using felt tip pens. Then ask those participating to roll strips of paper around a pen to create a 'curl'. Once these have been created, stick the curls around the outer section of the plate to create a mane and a fleece.

Talk about the how we usually think about the same kind of animals being together and getting along. The picture in the passage from Isaiah talks about animals who would not usually be together, being able not only to be in the same place but to live together and eat together. Talk about what this picture means for us today.

Growing A New Biscuit

You will need: chocolate digestive biscuits, marshmallows, icing sugar, green food colouring, paper plates, chocolate Matchmakers or similar, sweet, strawberry laces, bowls, spoons, knives.

Give each person a paper plate, a chocolate digestive, a marshmallow, a few of the Matchmakers and a few pieces of the strawberry laces. Mix up the icing sugar into a spreadable consistency and divide it into bowls. Give a bowl of icing sugar to a group of three to four people. Then add the green food colouring to the icing sugar (a few drops will be enough) and stir it into the icing sugar to make it green in colour. Ask those participating to cover their marshmallow with the icing sugar mix and then to use this to stick it onto the chocolate side of the biscuit. Ask participants to use the icing sugar mix to stick sweets to the biscuit, representing the stump, new branches and growth (Isaiah 11:1).

Talk about new things starting from unexpected places and refer to verse 1. Talk about Advent being a new season and the beginning of the Christian year and how we look forward to new and unexpected things happening.

Animal Snap

You will need: copies of the cards provided on page 124 (note that you will need multiple sets of these cards (an even multiple) so that pairs of cards can readily be formed).

Shuffle and divide the cards out equally among the participants. Play like a game of snap, calling out 'Peace' whenever two of the same images come together.

Talk about the how we usually think about the same kind of animals being together and getting along. The word picture in the passage from Isaiah talks about animals who would not usually be together, but who in the image provided are not only able to be together in the same place but can live together and eat together. Talk about what this picture might mean for us today.

Guess Who

You will need: the Guess Who board game.

Play the game, focus on 'yes' or 'no' questions about the physical characteristics of the people represented on the boards.

The idea behind the game is to ask questions based on appearance, this is different from what is said in the passage from Isaiah about the new King not judging by appearance or hearsay. Talk about how at times we judge or make assumptions by appearance or hearsay and how we can make different choices which follow the way of love.

Snake Tails

You will need: space for children to run around in, some ties or pieces of fabric.

Divide those participating into teams of five or six. Teams should form a line with each person holding onto the shoulders of the person in front. The last person in the line should have a tie or piece of fabric tucked into their waistband to form the 'tail of the snake'. The teams move about, making sure they keep holding on to the others in their own team. Each team is trying to protect its own tail, whilst at the same time trying to catch the tail of the other teams.

Talk about the image of the baby playing near the poisonous snake and not being harmed. Talk about how things in the peaceable kingdom are different from what we usually think of in nature.



live the story

Call To Worship

Listen:
from afar the prophets speaks,
dares to shift the darkness of this world.

Words begin to change
from threat to consolation,
and the rumour is
the light is moving out from the shadows.

Listen:
the prophet holds the key.
The frost deepens,
and winter settles,
but a hope kindles,
and a word is being loosed.

It is the echo of the ancient ones:
listen: wolf and lamb,
leopard and kid,
calf and lion,
together.
Emmanuel is on the way.

Prayer Of Dedication

Gracious God,
the image of life
on your holy mountain
where we will not hurt or destroy
is an image that we long for
in this earthly world.

We bring these gifts
to work toward peace
in our communities
and in our world.
We also offer ourselves,
to be shaped in wisdom
and understanding,
in fear of the Lord,
we humbly come.
and ask that you use these gifts
to carry out your will.
Amen.

Advent Candle Liturgy 1

From death to life,
from broken to rebuilt,
from dead root to new branch,
God is with us.

Let the spirit of understanding
help communities to thrive.
Let the wisdom of God
instruct the ignorant and bless the clever.
Let the love of God,
banish all fear.

Light candle

May enemies become our friends,
food be shared compassionately,
children flourish in community,
outsiders become insiders,
and growth be experienced by all.

Prayer Of Adoration And Confession

Holy God,
we begin observing advent today,
amazed and excited
about the possibility of welcoming
your incarnating love.

Draw us near to you in worship
today and throughout this season of advent
as together we come to sing and pray,
to be nourished by your Word,
to love and to wait
to confess and to forgive.

We confess that we
do not live as peaceably as we could.
Our sharp tongues puncture,
and our hard hearts turn us aside
from others' needs and wounds.
Forgive us.
Help us to choose healing.

We are willing, O Lord.
Come, Holy Spirit.
Fill this worship space with your presence
the earth with your knowledge,
and this advent allow us
to embed your incarnate love
in our daily interactions with others.
Amen.

Prayers For Others And Ourselves

God, today as we mark World AIDS Day, we acknowledge improvements in attitudes toward people who continue to cope with the treatments of the disease.

We are thankful there now is a treatment, but know so many are still living with the side effects, the consequences and the stigma of this disease who need to feel your comforting presence.

Lord, be with the orphans who have lost parents, and give encouragement to the carers who raise them. We pray for people who provide medicine, and combat misinformation that prevents people from accessing treatment.

Lord, we pray for your church, in this new calendar year; for the millions of Christians across the world that are gathering today to observe the beginning of Advent. May this season draw people in, nurture and sustain believers with the promise of your ever-present, incarnating love.

Lord, we pray for Your world; for the worrying, out-of-control state of the environment, for the continuing loss of life due to war, for your hurting creation. We bring before you those lost and alone because of strife and violence.

We hold in our imaginations a peaceable kingdom as envisioned by Isaiah. We have repeated illustrations of peace, that our hearts long to understand and put into place in our families, our churches and our communities. We are working with an imperfect vision of Your perfection, that only you can reach. Fill the world with Your knowledge.

God, we ask your blessing on healing for those who are struggling with mental health, for those who are facing this season without someone they love, for those who must face a diagnosis and treatment. Bind up our broken hearts, our fear of everything except you, Almighty, Eternal, Son of God in whose name we pray. Amen.

Reflective Prayer

Incarnating Love

Do we ever fully understand it?
representations of God's love,
experiences of God's love,
Do we actually identify it?

Thousands of images, photos, paintings
through the centuries
that aim to grasp
incarnating love,
ineffable love,
incinerating love.

Grant us a moment,
a whisper,
a glow,
here,
now,
in wonder and awe.

We can but love others
and wait and see
what our loving incarnates.
Amen.



Reflection

Inspired by The Sycamore Gap Tree: One Year on Exhibition (<https://www.thesill.org.uk/exhibition/sycamore-gap-one-year-on-exhibition/>), the famous tree along Hadrian's Wall which was felled in September 2023.



A tree cut down,
deliberately or planned,
the Tree of Life
with special connection to the world.

The Tree of our life
cut down by
war and conflict,
racism and discrimination,
betrayal and treachery.

The Tree of our life
suddenly gone and dead
causing pandemonium:
from love to fury,
from joy to grief,
from ecstasy to despair.

Leaving behind the stump
of what was in our life,
barren and hopeless,
time stopped,
death as inevitable end...

BUT...

Over time
silently and hidden from view
a new shoot appears,
small and weak,
another shoot appears,
vulnerable and helplessly,
more shoots appear
forming a protective support.

These new shoots of God
within each one of us
communicate the depth
of our hearts and souls.

Look beyond our bare stump:
new life is being born,
new shoots,

new hope,
new beginning.

You are not alone.
From the stump of our life
God is in the shoots
radiating beauty of new birth,
the presence of the Spirit
reaching out,
reassuring with love,
healing with forgiveness,
inspiration of peace:
the Incarnation of God.

Sending

Emmanuel is on the way
the incarnating love of God,
the lasting peace of Christ,
the revelation light of the Spirit.
Go now and share the hope
of Emmanuel with all you meet.

Praise/Hymns

As the wind song through the trees	GWA 128
Comfort, comfort now my people	CH4 274
God is working his purpose out	CH4 235 / MP 189
Isaiah the prophet has written of old	CH4 241
It came upon the midnight clear	CH4 303 / MP 345
Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming	GTG 129
Long ago, prophets knew	STF 178
Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour	MP 431 / STF 593
Now the heavens start to whisper	GWA 98
O come, O come, Emmanuel	CH4 273 / MP 493
O day of peace	GTG 373
People, look east	CH4 281
The candle of hope (Advent Candle)	online at https://www.carolynshymns.com/the_candle_of_hope.html
Tiny little seed	see page 125
We are a people of hope (Advent Candle)	GWA 90
We pray for peace	online at https://www.carolynshymns.com/we_pray_for_peace.html
Who would think that what was needed	CH4 295 / STF 222

sampler

© 2024

Spill the Beans Resource Team

www.spillthebeans.org.uk

www.facebook.com/spillbeansresources

**Booklet produced by
Sleepless Nights Productions**