

THOSE WHO DREAM

*Creative Resources for
Advent - Epiphany Year B*

RESOURCES INCLUDED IN BUNDLE

- 1) Advent Daily Devotional** (*A printable daily devotional booklet with: scripture, poetry, visual art, coloring, written reflections, & journaling prompts*).
- 2) Sermon Planning Guide** (*Offering biblical commentary by Dr. Marcia Riggs, as well as theme connections & links to further reading for the gospel lectionary scriptures from Advent through Epiphany*).
- 3) Words for Worship** (*Written liturgy inspired by the theme & scriptures for each week of Advent through Epiphany, including candle lighting liturgy for each week of Advent*).
- 4) Banner Designs** (*For bringing to life as large, paper lace banners in your worship space, or as art families can create at home to create sacred space in their dwelling place*).
- 5) 17 New Visuals w/ Artist Statements** (*Illuminating the lectionary scriptures from Advent through Epiphany*).
- 6) Those Who Dream Branding Bundle** (*Logo files & graphic templates to help you share this theme in your print & online communications*).
- 7) Poetry Prayers** (*7 poems inspired by our theme & weekly sub-themes*).
- 8) A Longest Night Service + Original Song** (*Crafted by The Many, this service will create space for lament & feature an original song inspired by our theme*).
- 9) A Creative Worship Service For the First Sunday after Christmas** (*A full order of worship to continue to proclaim the Christmas story on the Sunday when many pastors are exhausted or on vacation*).
- 10) Epiphany Star Words** (*Star words inspired by our theme & scriptures with an accompanying liturgy to invite worshipers to return to their star word throughout the new year*).

about the theme

In our study of this season's lectionary scriptures, the opening lines from Psalm 126 jumped off the page: "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream." What does it look like to live as those who dream? The prophets, the psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds and the Magi—they were all dreamers. They received, discovered, and responded to God's dreams for the world. In Advent, we step into the mystery and awe of God's dreams and pray they shape our reality.

This theme is for the dreamers in all of us—those who dream of a deeper connection with God and those who dream of a better world. It's for those who dream of comfort and for those who have given up on their dreams. It's for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time. Join us this Advent as we dream alongside prophets and angels, Mary and the Magi. Join us as we seek and sow God's dreams for our world.

focal scriptures

Our theme and resources are inspired by the Revised Common Lectionary (Year B), with particular emphasis on the following texts each week. We developed sub-themes for each week that also parallel the traditional Advent themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. You are welcome to use or adapt these weekly themes in your worship.¹

THOSE
WHO *keep awake*
DREAM
1st sunday in Advent

The First Sunday in Advent

THOSE WHO DREAM... *keep awake (hope)*

Mark 13:24-37 | Isaiah 64:1-9 | Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Those who dream do not fall asleep to the realities of the world. God prompts us to pay attention to where God's dreams for change and new life are emerging. In Advent, we remember that God's ultimate dream is to be intimately connected to us—to come down and dwell among us. As we keep awake, we join Isaiah and the psalmist in pleading for restoration and for God to draw near.

THOSE
WHO *prepare the way*
DREAM
2nd sunday in Advent

The Second Sunday in Advent

THOSE WHO DREAM... *prepare the way (peace)*

Mark 1:1-8 | Isaiah 40:1-11 | Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

John the Baptist calls the crowds into the journey of repentance and transformation. Similarly, we are called to prepare the way for God's message of love and liberation to be shouted, heard, and received. Those who dream make way for righteousness and peace to kiss, for faithfulness to spring up from the ground (Ps. 85:10-11).

THOSE
WHO *sow joy*
DREAM
3rd sunday in Advent

The Third Sunday in Advent

THOSE WHO DREAM... *sow joy (joy)*

Luke 1:46-55 | Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 | Psalm 126

Ultimately, dreams sow joy, even if that joy doesn't immediately spring forth. Sowing seeds into the soil always feels risky and feeble—how can something so small become something so beautiful, so big, and so nourishing? Like Mary, we are called to tend and nurture the dreams God has woven into us.

THOSE
WHO *are not alone*
DREAM
4th sunday in Advent

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

THOSE WHO DREAM... *are not alone (love)*

Luke 1:26-45 | 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 | Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

This week, we recognize what preceded Mary's song of praise: news that was disorienting and bewildering, possibly threatening her life. Together, Mary and Elizabeth find courage and comfort in spite of their unusual circumstances. We, too, are called to carry, support, and encourage one another's dreams.

¹ We are intrigued by the conversation our sub-themes form with the traditional weekly Advent themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. You are welcome to choose one or the other or also work with both in mind.

focal scriptures (cont.)



this night, we are
**THOSE WHO
DREAM**
christmas Eve

Christmas Eve

this night, we are **THOSE WHO DREAM**

Luke 2:1-20 | Isaiah 9:2-7

The Christmas story reminds us that we are all dreamers. Like those gathered around the manger, we come to this night each year with awe, wonder, and holy imagination for what is possible. Like Mary, we treasure God's dream in our hearts and commit to keeping it alive. Like the holy family, we believe and trust in a God who comes to us in the vulnerability of a child.



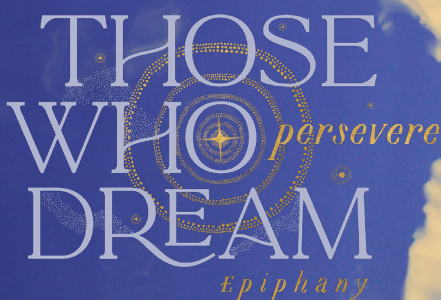
**THOSE
WHO** *will not
keep silent*
DREAM
1st Sunday after Christmas

The First Sunday after Christmas

THOSE WHO DREAM... *will not keep silent*

Luke 2:22-40 | Isaiah 61:10-62:3

God's dreams are not for us alone. Simeon and Anna could not keep silent—they witnessed Jesus' divine presence in the temple and were compelled to speak up. Like the prophet Isaiah, we will not keep silent and we will not rest until what has been sown will spring up as righteousness and peace in every nation (Is. 61:11-62:2).



**THOSE
WHO** *persevere*
DREAM
Epiphany

Epiphany

THOSE WHO DREAM... *persevere*

Matthew 2:1-12 | Isaiah 60:1-6

On Epiphany, we celebrate how God's love transverses cultural and geographical barriers to become good news for all people. We marvel at the persistence of God to shine the way for the Magi so that they might bear witness to the divine. We honor that the Magi trusted their dreams and returned home by another way. As we journey forward, we carry the dreams of our ancestors in faith. With courage and resilience, we dream on.

ABOUT THE LOGO & BRANDING

When considering the theme, the image that came to mind most presently was the image of one eye open, and another eye shut. There is something about this space between sleep and consciousness that I think is important to pay attention to, and something about this move toward awakening that feels deeply relevant to our current context. I quickly sketched the eyes as we brainstormed, but I also felt strongly that the logo needed to be abstract. Recently, I've found myself particularly captured by the work of Yayoi Kusama who uses repetitive dots in her paintings, sculptures, and installations. Her play with repetition and scale obscures reality, creating confusing and seemingly limitless spaces. People from all over the world travel to engage with her meditative and even disorienting work. For me, her work has a sense of allusiveness much like dreams. In this series of logos, at first the stippled dots feel more chaotic and free-flowing as they move from the eyes toward the word, "Dream." As the logo evolves, the dots become more organized, creating imagery of light and a rippling effect. This movement and imagery can symbolize many things: the bewildering narratives and fragments of our dreams, our individual dreams taking on the form of God's dream, the collective movement of people it takes to bring God's dream to life, etc. Ultimately, through the movement of the stippling and shifts in color, accompanied by Lisle's beautiful photography, the logos have a sense of movement from the disorientation of the apocalyptic imagery of the prophets in the first week of Advent, toward the awe and wonder of meeting the Christ child.

– Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman, Director of Branding, Founding Creative Partner

ABOUT OUR GUEST CONTRIBUTORS



Dr. Marcia Y. Riggs

J. Erskine Love Professor of Christian Ethics at Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA.

Dr. Riggs is writing commentary that will be featured in our sermon planning guide as well as our daily devotional booklet.

Dr. Riggs has an undergraduate degree in Religion from Randolph-Macon Woman's College, a Master of Divinity degree from Yale University Divinity School and a PhD in religion/ethics from Vanderbilt University. In April of 2006, Dr. Riggs was inaugurated as the first professor to hold the J. Erskine Love Chair in Christian Ethics at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. She teaches in the Master of

Divinity, Doctor of Ministry, and the Master of Theology Programs at the seminary. Dr. Riggs is currently writing a book on an ethical theory and practice called religious ethical mediation. Religious ethical mediation (REM) prepares leaders to address religion, conflict, and violence in a transformative manner. She is the founder of an educational non-profit: Still Waters: A Center for Ethical Formation and Practices that offers training in REM. Dr. Riggs is interested in the relationship between social oppression and socio-religious ethical praxis, ethical discourse that bridges the gap between womanist religious scholarship and the Church's practice of ministry, the moral foundations for public policy, and the Church's role in social justice ministry. ctsnet.edu/faculty/riggs-marcia



The Many + Plural Guild

The Many are writing an original song inspired by our theme, "Those Who Dream," and working with Lenora and Gary Rand of Plural Guild to craft a Longest Night (Blue Christmas) worship service.

Drawing on indie pop and gospel influences, *The Many*, composed of lead singers Darren Calhoun and Leslie Michele, as well as singer/

songwriter Hannah Rand, is a liturgically-grounded new kind of worship band. *The Many* is an intentionally diverse collective making music to help give voice to faith and doubt, questions and fears, laments and longings, music that speaks to a non-violent God, a Jesus who is with us and for us, and to a Spirit that can't be easily defined or controlled. themanymarehere.com



The *Plural Guild* came together to create and curate music, poems, prayer, visual art, liturgy, experiences and community that embrace questions and doubts, as well as faith. To make work that can be used in worship gatherings that's truly inclusive and helps everyone feel like they belong. That has eyes wide open to the pain of the world. That speaks of a God who came to this earth in Jesus to show us the way to love and live fully alive lives. Work that invites participation versus performance. For anyone...and everyone...who longs for a more loving, just, open,

and abundant world. The *Plural Guild* is a collective led by the husband and wife team, Lenora and Gary Rand, as well as the members of *The Many*. pluralguild.com

ideas for worship & programming

- * Provide copies of our Advent devotional for older youth and adults. If your church has a Facebook group, utilize that platform to discuss the prompts and content in the devotional. Or use the daily devotional in small groups to discuss the scriptures, poetry, reflections, and art.
- * If you can do so safely, gather a small team and use our banner designs to create beautiful paper lace banners for your sanctuary. Or share the banner designs with members who are worshipping from home to guide them in creating sacred art for their dwelling place. Share images and stories of the art members create.
- * Create a video montage, inviting members of all ages in your community to send short videos sharing their dreams for the future, for your church, for your world, for their families, etc. Invite them to also share what they imagine God's dreams look like. Compile the videos into a message you can use for worship.
- * Use our liturgy to host a Longest Night Worship service to create space to lament and grieve the many losses we've experienced in this year and years past.





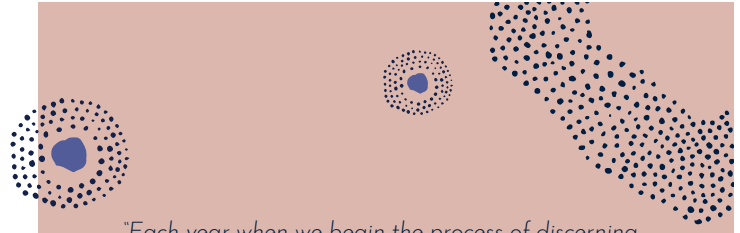
REFLECTIONS ON THE THEME

"Lately, I've had the most vivid dreams. I wake unsure of what is real and what are figments of my imagination. Sometimes it's difficult to navigate the space between dream and reality. In the midst of a pandemic and what Time Magazine calls, "America's Long Overdue Awakening to Systemic Racism," what is the function of dreaming? Dreaming helps people escape reality. There are those who dream, curating their own world, protected from news cycles, sirens, echoing cries, and responsibility. Dreaming helps people survive. There are those who dream, holding tight to the hopes of ancestors while imagining a better future for generations to come. Dreaming helps people transform reality. There are those who dream, resisting the status quo while fighting for a just and equitable world. Sometimes our dreams are small because to dream big feels frivolous. Sometimes our dreams are small because to dream big might threaten our reality. Sometimes our dreams are big because our lives depend on it. This Advent, how can we harness the power of dreaming? What can we learn from dreamers who came before us? How can we narrow the space between reality and God's dream—a dream imaged in the flesh of the Christ child?"

– **Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman,**
Director of Branding, Founding Creative Partner

"When I think about the theme, Those who Dream, I see God's people realizing God's dream, right now. We are poised on a threshold. The dreams that we dream now will build the new world. We are an advanced, informed world; never have we gotten it right before. We are a global society with a love of good and a hate for evil. And now, we can see. We can all see. God has reached each of us in our own way and we can see the dreams God has for us. We must break down the barriers to create space for God's dreams. Generations of people have partially seen and realized God's dreams, but now, we are connected as a world in a way that makes the gospel possible! We can see the death, pain, poverty, and injury that systems of oppression have caused. We can see how colonialism was informed by selfish, oppressive thought. We can see that white supremacy has co-opted Christianity repeatedly since its birth. The gospel does not condone that. We can see the legacy of colonialism in everyday, worldwide, systemic racism. And we can also see—like a glimmer on the horizon, like a distant memory in the teachings of faith, like a phoenix from the ashes—the way that we can reimagine this world, this global society. We can see the way that God is calling us to break down and build up. We can see the dream, God's dream. Dream, then build."

– **Hannah Garrity,**
Founding Creative Partner



"Each year when we begin the process of discerning a new Advent theme, we pull out our bibles, open our notebooks, and read over every lectionary text for the season. The dining room table becomes a maze of coffee mugs, scripture notes, and highlighters as we sink into a new lectionary year. This year, the phrase, "those who dream" was tucked into one of those lectionary passages (Psalm 126). It would have been easy to pass over such a short phrase, and yet something about the raw emotion associated with a communal dream caught hold of my attention. For in those few words, I I could see the dreams within church basements filled with AA and grief support groups. I could see the dreams within Pride festivals, Black Lives Matter marches in the streets, and couples longing to be parents. I could see the dreams of congregations fighting decline, and teenagers fighting for a cleaner planet. And I could see the dream of Advent—a space and time set aside to remember that God is with us. So this Advent, we invite you to join us in dreaming—as an act of hope, as an act of resistance, as an act of faith."

– **Rev. Sarah Are,**
Founding Creative Partner

"As we begin a new church year, this Advent will mark the end of an extremely tumultuous calendar year. COVID-19, our current civil rights revolution, the US presidential elections—these events, among many others, are disrupting and reorienting our lives. In the midst of great loss and hardship, new possibilities and realities are being revealed to us. Often, our dreams are wildly disorienting—they don't always make sense. They throw us off kilter. Sometimes they are deeply disturbing, and sometimes they help us uncover our deep knowing. Similarly, Advent is a season of trusting that God's deep wisdom will guide us from disorientation (the mini apocalypse) toward wonder, awe, and praise (Mary's Magnificat). As we journey together this season, I pray that we will not only dream of a better world, but bring it forth through our choices and actions, our rituals and practices."

– **Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity,**
Founder, Creative Director

