

2016 Advent Readings for Worship and Small Group Study

First Sunday of Advent (11/27)

READ: Genesis 18:1-15 (The visitation of Abraham and Sarah by 3 divine guests)
Luke 14:12-24: What does the teaching of Jesus say about hospitality?

Share a personal experiences of wonderful hospitality. What was the situation? Were you a stranger, a guest or the host? What are some of your fears or uncertainties about welcoming strangers? Discuss the signs of hospitality of Abraham and Sarah. What simple acts of welcome could you begin this week? What small change could you make in your daily routine to become more hospitable?

Second Sunday of Advent (12/4)

READ: Luke 5:27-32 (Levi called to follow Jesus and in turn throws a party)

Do you prefer to plan, host, work in the background or attend a party? When you think about inviting guests to your home, who do you invite often or rarely? What do you notice about Levi's party and hospitality? The most straightforward New Testament writings about hospitality are: Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8. Who is responsible for hospitality? What did you learn from these readings? What is God saying to you about hospitality?

Third Sunday of Advent (12/11)

READ: Matthew 25:31-46 (Parable of compassion and hospitality or not)

Matthew 25 is the most important text about Christian hospitality. Hospitality is more than inviting guests to your home. It is a lifestyle of responsiveness to others. Jesus calls the hospitable disciples as sheep and the unresponsive as goats. Does Jesus divide them based on their: 1) Beliefs; 2) Actions; or 3) Character? Who would you nominate from our church, your family or friends for their care: _____ for feeding the hungry? _____ befriending the stranger? _____ clothing cold and naked? _____ caring for the sick? _____ visiting the prisoner and/or their family? Writing letters to a prisoner, a card to the sick, a phone call, a visit, sharing a meal in public are all expressions of care. How is our church responding to the needs of our community according to Matthew 25 and what may we be missing? How is God nudging you?

Fourth Sunday of Advent (12/18)

READ: Luke 22:7-20 (Jesus & the apostles share the Passover meal, the last supper)

What holiday meal holds your best memories? What was it about this meal that made your memories so wonderful? Last meals and final words before a death are often significant. What makes the Last Supper so important to us as Christians? What is the connection between this meal and Jesus' hospitality? Did Jesus ever limit who he would eat and drink with during his ministry? How does bearing the body and blood of Jesus as we leave the table impact how we see and treat others during the week?