



First United Methodist Church of Hanford
Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.



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“Come, thou long-expected Jesus”

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6

In a strange way all of us are waiting these days. Waiting for COVID-19 restrictions to be lifted, so we can see friends and family. Waiting for the coronavirus vaccine. Waiting for peace in a world riddled with dissension and despair. . . Waiting for things to happen that are not in my control.

The Church sets aside the four weeks before Christmas as a time to prepare for the coming of our long-expected Messiah. This season called Advent is an opportunity to focus on how God came to us in history in the person of Jesus, how He comes to us in the present, and how He will come again in the future.

In December 1745, Charles Wesley published a two-verse prayer in *Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord* that helps us enter into the season of Advent. “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus” appears in the *United Methodist Hymnal* with only minor changes from the original. As we sing Wesley’s words, we enter into an ancient prayer. For hundreds of years, our ancestors in the faith prayed for the Messiah to come. God had blessed them to be a blessing to all the nations but it was difficult to feel blessed in the pain of defeat, exile, and occupation. They longed for the Messiah to come and reestablish the kingdom.

We understand those feelings of distance from God. While we have experienced times when God feels near, there are others seasons of struggle and doubt. Many have felt this isolation – this distance from God – during the Covid-19 pandemic. Some have spent time wondering if God is still with us. So, we join this prayer today, “Come, thou long-expected Jesus.”

We also know this on a much larger scale. We see the brokenness of our world and its systems. We long for justice for all people regardless of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, age, gender, disability, status, economic condition, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religious affiliation. We await the day when Jesus will return to usher in the new creation and heal our broken world. We join this prayer for our future also.

Let us pray: With all the saints of God from every part of the world we pray this day – “Come, thou long-expected Jesus.” Amen.

“Now I can say I Live a Day” (John Wesley)
Pastor Pablo
December 16th, 2020

Online Devotionals

To grow in your relationship with God and others, it is important to have some spiritual disciplines in your life. Below are some helpful websites that will lead you to read scripture, pray, and focus on God.

UPPER ROOM DAILY DEVOTIONAL <https://www.upperroom.org/devotionals>

A daily devotional including scripture lesson and story.

UPPER ROOM DAILY REFLECTIONS <https://upperroombooks.com/neweverymorning/>