



Hope
November 28, 2021
Psalm 25:1-10

Connect

- Happy New Year! Did you know the first Sunday in Advent (*which means “coming”*) is the start of the Christian New Year? If you made a faith resolution this Christian New Year, what might it be? In other words, how would you like your spirit to arrive at Christmas this year?

Engage

- Read *Psalm 25:1-10*. This Psalm, selected in the lectionary (*scripture readings assigned for given days and seasons in the year*) is a prayer offered during an anxious season. Why do you think it fits, or doesn't, this first Sunday in Advent (*Hope Sunday*)?
- How do you pray in anxious seasons of your life?
- A man reminisced this week about a time his spouse said, “*When are you going to enjoy the holidays?*” We spend much of the Advent season grieving how things used to be, how much we have to get done for the season to “*go right*” or anxious about how things will be in the future. That’s why our theme this season is “*Right Here, Right Now.*” How can you be present to God, to others, and even yourself this season without living in the past or the future?
- A seminary president called herself an eternal optimist. With things in upheaval in the world this year and significant personal loss in her life as well, her optimism is waning, if not absent, moving toward Christmas this year. Surprisingly, however, she says it’s precisely being in such a space that truly allows her to hope in God without passing over the wounds with some false optimism. Do you agree with that assessment? Is hope only truly practiced in times of desperation? Discuss.
- When it comes to practicing your faith, do you “*try*” or do you “*train*”? Discuss the difference.

Next Steps

- Make a Christian New Year’s Resolution – some goals or intentions for how you want your spirit to arrive at the manger this year. Be specific and make a plan to focus on those goals each day during this season.
- Recognize that others may be struggling this Advent season with any number of realities of life. Take the time to call, text, or send a card to someone you know who may be in such a space. Letting them know you love them and they are on your mind may be just the encouragement they need to press through this season with the hope of Christ.

Pray

- “*God, our hope is in you. Show us your ways. Guide us in truth for all our days. May our waiting not be idle but active, alive to the moment, present to your Spirit, each other, and even ourselves. Amen.*”