

BREAK FREE

ADVENT CONSPIRACY GUIDE

2018




CHRISTMAS

CAN STILL CHANGE

THE WORLD!

INTRODUCTION

BY RICK
MCKINLEY



I recently read a story about a Catholic Priest, Father Christopher Hartley, who worked for years with Mother Teresa in Calcutta. Father Hartley currently works in Gode, Southeast Ethiopia, close to the border of Somalia. Many people there were dying daily of infections because they did not have clean water. So Father Hartley launched a project to create a water-filtering system that treated water from the Waban Shebelle River, making it available to the people and saving tens of thousands of lives.

As Father Hartley reflected on his work he said, “I hear in my heart daily Jesus’ words to the apostles: ‘Give them something to eat yourselves!’ Along with the echo of the Lord saying, ‘I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.’” The Imago Dei Staff is preparing for Advent, and as we do, I can’t help but sense that I am hearing those same words: “You give them something to drink.”

For the last ten years, Imago Dei has celebrated Advent in a peculiar way. We call it Advent Conspiracy. We strive to resist the consumerism of the traditional American Christmas and embrace the radical self-giving story of Jesus’ birth. We worship Jesus by being faithful to His story. God gave us life when He gave us His Son, who is THE life the world thirsts for. We tone down our Christmas spending and instead give simple and meaningful gifts to our friends and loved ones. This shift allows us to give generously to those who are hurting in the world.

Like Father Hartley, we’re embarking on a life-saving mission this Christmas as we continue to help our partners in Kenya bring clean water to thousands of people. During the month of December, we take a special Advent Conspiracy Offering. The majority of this offering goes to these clean water initiatives. It is an honor to work with our amazing Kenyan brothers and

sisters, like Humphrey and Janet who serve on staff of The Water Project, and Catherine of WEWASEFO (Western Water and Sanitation Forum). These people are the true heroes of this story, and they work endlessly to bring clean water to their people.

We also use 25% of the offering to fund local initiatives that help the hungry and thirsty right here in Portland. It is a profound and humbling experience to see hundreds of people empowered by the gift of clean water, and empowered to live a life of hope through Jesus Christ.

This Christmas our Advent Theme is *Giving Life*. It's a really appropriate theme. Jesus gave us life, and as God's people, we get to extend that life to the world. We get to announce to the world a more compelling, meaningful story than shopping Black Friday deals. This Christmas we celebrate Jesus, the Giver of Life, and *that* reality changes everything.



**WHAT
IS**

ADVENT CONSPIRACY?

Years ago, a small group of churches came to the end of Advent feeling that stress and consumerism had overtaken the worship and celebration of the season. The time of year when focusing on Christ should be the easiest had become the hardest. They began to dream and explore how they might recenter approaching Christ and anticipating His coming during the Advent season. Advent Conspiracy invites us into a different experience of Christmas than that of the cultural norm, shifting our focus from consumer spending back to the coming of Christ. We practice this as a community through four tenets:



SPEND LESS

Conserve some of the resources we could spend on material gifts and instead use them to make a bigger impact by giving to someone in need or making memories with those we love.

GIVE MORE

Celebrate one another by replacing material gifts with deeper, relational expressions of care and generosity, such as quality time, homemade gifts and acts of service.



LOVE ALL

Christmas is a chance to love others as Jesus has loved us. We've been able to share the resources we saved with those who are hurting in our city and across the world.

WORSHIP FULLY

All this starts and ends with Jesus. This is the season in which we are called to put down our burdens and joyfully lift praise up to our Savior.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

GIVING LIFE: ADVENT SERMON SERIES

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TIDINGS: A WORSHIP FULLY EXPERIENCE

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GIVING TREES

DECEMBER 2 - 24 (PAGE 15)

ABIDE SINGLE MOMS' COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, 6-8:30PM (PAGE 29)

ADVENT CONSPIRACY OFFERING

DECEMBER 16 / GIVE ONLINE: DECEMBER 2-24 (PAGE 22)

CAROLING AT LAURELHURST VILLAGE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 11AM (PAGE 15)

SPECIAL SERVICE AT EASTSIDE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23, 10AM (PAGE 30)

CHRISTMAS EVE AT IMAGO DEI

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24, 3:00 & 5:00PM (PAGE 30)

3 O'CLOCK PEOPLE CHRISTMAS DINNER

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2-5PM (PAGE 22)

SPEND LESS



1ST TENET

SPEND LESS

BY JON WALLACE


I'm going to spend money at Christmas. This is the nature of celebrating and showing hospitality: food, travel, events, gifts—there's a very practical cost to expressing love.

Typically, as a family of seven, it's easy for us to spend between \$500-1,000 on the Christmas season. There are a lot of bellies to feed, let alone if we're gifting, and this is just our immediate family. However, it doesn't mean that we have to be excessive and more importantly, debt ridden. Sometimes the simplicity of spending less simply means that we stop spending what we don't have in the first place. Or more often, the debt and overspending is a result of a lack of planning and thoughtfulness before we open our Amazon account.

A few years back we started a new tradition, to move toward a shared vision of giving, receiving and sacrificing as part of our Christmas rhythm. We get out three jars, each labeled with a different word: "Gifts for us", "Gifts for others" and "Gifts for those in need." We then hand out ten-dollar bills to the kids (which they think is pretty cool) and have a simple conversation about each category. What do we want? What do we want for others? Who has the truest needs around us?

In this, our hope isn't to guilt or manipulate each other toward what we think is most godly; our hope is to acknowledge and relate to Christ in what he might be doing through the resources that He's given to us each year. We thank Christ for our resources and ask Him to guide us as we give. Each kiddo then gives what they have, in whatever jars they want. We then follow it up with a conversation about what we're all feeling and thinking. Usually there's some guilt, hope and peace all intermingled. This is where we pause a bit more and discuss our hearts. Why am I sad about what's been given away? Why am I at peace about sacrificing? Why am I excited about the presents that I'm hoping for? Why do I feel guilty about getting presents?





And these questions aren't simply for my kids, usually I'm feeling all of this alongside them.

In all of this experience and questioning, even though we've limited our spending, and will ultimately have spent less, we're mapping out how the Spirit is transforming us, or how we need to be transformed, and what Jesus could do through our resources with a little intentionality and a willingness to spend less.

Try to answer a few questions before you decide to start something like this:

- What Family or friends can I ask to join me in this activity?
- What's a realistic budget for this holiday season to keep from accruing debt?
- What do I want? What do I want for others? Who has truest needs around me?
- How might Christ be asking me to live more generously? More intentionally?

PRESENCE NOT PRESENTS

**BY JUSTIN
DERNISON**

As a child, I had the most fantastic Christmas mornings. All four of us kids would wake up early and quietly sneak out to the living room.

Just before reaching the point where the tree would become visible, my breath would catch. Around the corner there would be presents of every shape and size spilling out from under the tree. It was like a scene from a movie. With mom and dad both awake, we'd open our presents one by one. Mom would make her world famous sausage and egg bake that we ate together on the living room floor. There was Christmas Eve at my parents' house where all of our aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents would gather for dinner at six and then leave for midnight mass. Then Christmas dinner at the Duffys', and as we got older, sibling Christmas at Laurie's house.

I now realize it was never the presents that made Christmas special but *the presence*. The presence of loved ones near and far, here and gone. The presence of God, of Christ and the Holy Spirit as we gather in His name. How could we ever forget the time we carried Nanny up the stairs in her wheelchair as she laughed in excitement (or was it terror?). Or the last time our cousin Anthony was there because the next year he wouldn't be, and if only we'd known. No present can change the presence of those we love, of Christ our King.

Knowing this doesn't always make it easier to pass on buying all the new gadgets and toys. The Christmas industry starts a bit earlier every year, tempting us to head to the stores. Advent Conspiracy asks us to be more thoughtful with our giving, to spend less and give in a manner that leaves an impact for more than a morning—for generations to come.

How we do this will look different for each of us. Each holiday season, our family sets a defined amount to spend and give. As we spend, we know that each dollar spent on a gift takes away from the amount we are then able to give. This creates a thoughtfulness to the gifts we purchase and for whom. Our goal is to give a little bit more each year, continuing to expand the rhythm of generosity we are building into our lives.

PRACTICE

Exploring a Different Way to Do Christmas: Advent Conspiracy Parents' Group

Sundays, December 2 - 23, 11:00am

Every year we step into the difficulty of trying to celebrate Jesus while our culture presses for our attention with the consumption of possessions. Rather than simply thinking about the holiday rush, we'd like to offer a space to discuss what it might look like to do Christmas a little bit differently.

For four weeks we'll explore the core values of Advent Conspiracy, share transformative stories and brainstorm creative ways to capture the hearts of our children with the possibilities of Christ's Kingdom. RSVP to parents@idcpdx.com.

SPEND LESS

Advent Conspiracy Kits

Available in the gym at Central City & the Connect Table at Eastside beginning Sunday November 25

This free week-by-week kit is designed to help foster conversation and celebration around the four tenets of Advent Conspiracy in your family.

Designed by Imago Dei pastors, this kit features devotionals and activities geared toward kids of all ages.

PRACTICE SPEND LESS

IDEAS TO CONSIDER

- Get into the habit of asking a few more questions before spending your money.
- Develop a thoughtful approach to the histories of the products and companies you purchase from.
- Enter a process like this with humility and resist the potential pride in thinking your way of approaching such a complicated matter is the only way. This conspiracy will only grow with winsome voices calling others to new places and thoughts.
- Set your budget; know your limit. (If it's early enough, start saving for a debt-free celebration.)
- Before you start buying, consider each person on your list. Think about your relationship and the significance it brings to your life.
- Consider your core values and whether what you are buying reflects those values.
- Consider drawing names or giving one or two fewer gifts than last year.
- Talk openly with your family, giving them the opportunity to understand your motives.

- From *Advent Conspiracy* by Rick McKinley, Chris Seay and Greg Holder. New 2018 Edition available in the Imago Dei bookstore, on Amazon and most book-sellers.

GIVE MORE



2ND TENET

GIVE MORE

BY CHELSEA GERLACH

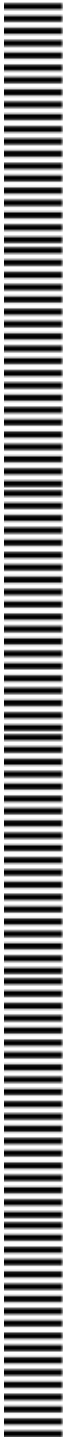
What are we expressing when we give a gift at Christmas? We may want the recipient to feel loved and cared for, but sometimes we unintentionally communicate something different. Maybe that we felt obligated. Or that we haven't paid enough attention to know what they would want. Or that we don't care enough to get it for them. Or that the item represents our love and gives an excuse to avoid real intimacy. When a purchased object takes the place of relational connection, love can get lost in translation.

Christ's gift of love is expressed through His presence with us, in close personal connection, and pouring His life out for us. Jesus came to humanity in flesh and blood, entering right into the messiness of life, our joys and our sorrows. He leans in and listens, giving what we need—though not always what we want—even when it cost Him everything. He gave of Himself so we could be brought together and know the heights and depths of His love for us.

Opening our hearts and giving of ourselves is costly. It's easier to buy a gift card than to take time from our busy schedules, shift the focus from ourselves, and be present with those we care about. It's a sacrifice to think about what would make the receiver feel loved rather than settle on what would be convenient or worse, what would satisfy us. (Ever receive a book with the implied message that you need to read it because you're doing life wrong? That feels like judgment, not generosity.) Because we love and are loved, we can lay down self-interest and sacrifice with joy. We can give connection over commodification. We can risk awkwardness over yielding to idolatry. We can give with vulnerability and bring the vulnerable into our giving.

The possibilities of what we give and who we give to are wide open. Who is Christ calling you to love this Advent season?





How will you show that love? This year my family, who are spread throughout the state, are not buying presents for each other. Instead, we're renting a house at the coast after Christmas where we can spend a few days just being together - talking, eating and playing. Ten people in a house, with small kids, special needs and pull-out beds might not be the most relaxing vacation, but the memories will last a lot longer than whatever I bought with that gift card last year. Since I won't be shopping for individual gifts, I'll have more time to spend with those who get lonely at the holidays (like myself sometimes) and more money to give for the Advent offering, remembering that there are many in the world for whom access to clean water is a tremendous gift. What we give at Christmas can be an expression of love. Let's love more—with presence, personal connection and Christ-like sacrifice.

A LITTLE MORE TO GIVE

Last summer, my husband and I listened as Ruben Alvarado explained from the stage that there were families in our community for whom navigating Sunday morning worship is a little more challenging. As someone who sits in the pew each week listening to the appeal to the community for more help with kids' ministry, it struck me that we don't have enough volunteers to accommodate all of the (relatively) independent children in our church. It hadn't crossed my mind there were others who require more assistance in the general Sunday rhythms.

**BY GIANNA
LUSSIER**

About a month later, Imago Dei Kids launched a Buddy Program. My husband and I were partnered one-on-one with two kiddos who until then hadn't been able to fully participate in kids ministry because of their individual needs. I had never worked with children with disabilities before. I had no background in occupational therapy. When people asked why I volunteered, I was tempted to over-spiritualize my response and say that God told us to. But it really wasn't all that spiritual.

God didn't "tell" me to volunteer. There was no booming voice or vivid dream. What I did feel was responsibility. As the community of Christ, these children are my family. I am responsible to them and to their parents, because we belong to one another.

The longer we walk with Jesus and our church body, the more we are willing to be shaped by the practices to which He has called us. We allow our hearts and desires to become like His. This past year I have given my body to hold a sweet boy for an hour and a half every other week. Some days he's heavier than my back can handle, and this relationship we're building is not without challenge. However, it's in those moments where I am pushed to the limit that I remember I'm being given the opportunity

to host someone dearly beloved by God.

I experience the nearness of God when my buddy lays his head on my chest while I support him in a body that can't yet fully support itself. I feel the victory of Christ when I hold on to his arms and he is able to take a step forward on his own. I feel deep joy when he sees me, another teacher or classmate and smiles as big as he can, even though I can't understand the thoughts he isn't yet able to communicate.

When I contemplate the hospitality of Christ, I know that I have a little more to give. In this case, I have two arms that can lift, and two legs that can walk. In helping this little creation move his own hands and feet, I get to be the hands and feet of our beautiful triune God—extending to him the embrace of a God who created him wonderfully, the support of the Holy Spirit we call “helper” and the smallest taste of the Savior's sacrifice.

PRACTICE

Giving Trees

December 2 - 24

Take a tag from one of the trees in the lobby and prepare a gift for a foster child, a homeless neighbor or a survivor of domestic violence (Central City) or for Celtic Heart's clothes closet at David Douglas High School (Eastside). Return your gift to either campus' info desk by Christmas Eve for distribution in 2019.

Caroling at Laurelhurst Village

Saturday, December 8, 11am

Families, Jr. High and High School students - Join us as we sing carols and handout Christmas cards to the residents of the Laurelhurst Village Assisted Living Community. Contact youth@idcpdx.com for more info.

GIVE MORE

Serve at Imago Dei's Services

Sunday, December 23 & Sunday, December 30

Many of our year-round Sunday volunteers need to take a break from serving during the holidays. If you're available to serve on any of these teams on one of these days (no long-term commitment required!), contact the appropriate contact below.

Central City Opportunities:

Hospitality Team -

aalcheyeva@idcpdx.com

Imago Dei Kids -

kids@idcpdx.com

Eastside Opportunities:

Setup & teardown -

hambrose@idcpdx.com

LOVE ALL



3RD TENET

LOVE ALL

BY RUBEN ALVARADO

In Jesus we experience the depth, height and width of God's love for all. He is the Son sent from the Father to die for a world He loves. But it isn't only Jesus' death that reveals God's love; it's also His life. He was born as an infant, fragile and vulnerable, to a poor family in a foreign city. His mom and dad of choice was Mary, an unwed teenage girl, and her scandalized fiancé Joseph. Soon after His birth, His family fled their homeland to a foreign place because their king had ordered the slaughter of all newborn sons.

From day one of his earthly life, Jesus chose to identify with us in all of our humanity. There wasn't anything too messy or scandalous for him to take on. He identified first with people on the margins of society, those who needed help. He became one of the "least of these" in order that He might bring God's love to the "least of these." This is the Christmas story!

Most of our depictions of this event on Christmas cards show a peaceful, non-messy affair with angels singing, shepherds worshipping and wise men bearing gifts. They depict only part of the story; the part that speaks to the deep reality of Jesus being Lord of All. I need this part of the story as much as I need the messy part because it reminds me that my hope is in a God that is both near to me and Lord of all. But sometimes I jump too quickly to the Christmas card version of Jesus' birth. I claim those parts of the story that identify Jesus with power and kingship. I too hastily move past the importance of God's choosing to identify first and foremost with the poor, the disabled, the refugee, the immigrant, the scandalous and the marginalized.

That Jesus - who looks like and lives like the least of these—is my God. This has huge implications for how we live with and love others. Toward the end of His human life, Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven would be inherited by those that fed Him when He was hungry, gave Him drink when He was thirsty, welcomed Him when He was a stranger and visited Him in



prison. When people asked Him “when did we do these things for you?” He replied, “When you did it for the least of these.”

We can find ourselves in this story in two ways. 1) We are those who have received Jesus’ Gospel and who have been changed by it. He identified with us and loved us unconditionally even though we didn’t deserve it. 2) Now, as believers, we are invited and called to love generously like Him. To give food to the hungry, a welcome to the stranger in our country, water to the thirsty and our presence to those who have been cast aside. He tore down every barrier to love us and we get to do the same. We are called to love like him. To Love All.



ON WELCOMING REFUGEES: A CONVERSATION

WITH DANIELLE MAYFIELD AND ERIN PRESBY

During our 2015 Advent season, Imago Dei began to explore how we might care for and support refugee families restarting their lives in Portland. In this conversation, Erin Presby and Danielle Mayfield, leaders in both Imago's initiatives and other ways

of engaging these communities, share their experiences and insight on the triumphs, challenges and issues our refugee neighbors face today.

How did you get started serving with refugees?

Danielle: I want to say it was 2004, maybe 2005. Catholic Charities had just started resettling an influx of one particular refugee population, Somali Bantu refugees. My friend asked me to help throw a Christmas party for some newly arrived families. I was going to school to be a missionary, so I thought it would be good practice. I ended up just being sucked into these communities. When I first worked with them, they were living on 122nd & Division in really rundown apartments. They were a non-literate community, and they didn't speak English. So being resettled in the US, they had so many challenges. I just felt... they need help; I can be helpful. Eventually, because I was single and around, they just sort of adopted me. I started doing things like homework clubs and English classes, even though I wasn't necessarily good at any of these things. There was just a need. After [I got] married, we moved in to low-income housing with them. Ever since then I've just realized that being in relationship with refugee populations brings me so much joy. My daughter goes to school with mostly non-english-speaking kids. We've sort of shifted a little bit away from doing programs to working on living our lives with our refugee neighbors in mind.

Erin: I started grad school in 2012 for a masters in global public health. I took several classes on forced migration population health, which included looking at refugee populations, right around when there started to be a much bigger influx in Europe. That summer, I got an opportunity to go help out at a refugee drop-in day center in Athens, Greece, for a couple months. When I came back that winter, I really wanted to get involved with that community in Portland and began talking to Josh Butler (then pastor of local and global outreach) about what that might look like. I slipped into some of the Imago stuff and at the same time started volunteering in the office of the refugee resettlement team at Catholic Charities. A lot of their team are former refugees and immigrants. I just consistently showed up and did data entry to try to learn from them. I've been co-leading [Imago's] Refugee Ministry for a couple years now. I've also been helping with Danielle's ESL class for a year.

Based on your experiences, what do you think it takes to stay in relationship with this community?

Erin: Cultural navigation is a really big commitment. You're committing to helping people figure out life for six months (the commitment time set out by resettlement agencies)—that's what you commit to but ideally it's much longer. It's all really hard because [the refugees] are in the throes of being brand new, a lot of times have no English language skills and are totally overwhelmed. They've experienced trauma, and it's another trauma to be dumped into a totally different culture. You're looking at building relationships that take a long time. It's important to keep consistently showing up...and to drop all your expectations. The goal isn't to solve problems; it's relationship.

Danielle: I started out with Catholic Charities, and they had me sign this thing saying I would show up for three hours a week. Sometimes I would literally just go sit down on a couch for three hours. I didn't understand anything that was going on around me. I wasn't helpful. I felt awful about it, but you do that enough times, and people are like, "Okay, I guess she's not going anywhere." And they start to open up to you. For me, it's easiest to be close in proximity. Portland is really segregated by income. Lower income refugees are getting resettled way out on the edges, and oftentimes that's not where people who want to help live. Something I tell people is that refugees need really good neighbors. They need people to send their kids to public school with them and advocate for resources.

What has changed about how we engage with this issue in the past couple of years?

Erin: We've been getting a lot of questions about advocacy. Advocacy and education is an important piece of it—to help people understand the difference between immigrant, refugee and asylum-seeker. It's very hard to parse that out from the news, so we've done some classes and continue to talk about ways to help people understand how you get to be a refugee in the US. But we're also hearing from resettlement agencies that they don't have enough volunteers. Catholic Charities is slated to have 150 arrivals this year, which is significantly down, but they don't have the volunteer capacity that they used to. What we've prayed through in the last few months is that we need to shift heavily to education and advocacy, but not step away from the partnerships that we've built.

Danielle: I personally think it's really cool that more people are interested in advocacy because that's probably the most needed thing right now. If God is calling you to welcome the stranger, then now is the time to be loud about that! Reach out to your family and to your community. I think the number one way we can make a change is to consistently address the fear we hear in rhetoric with a biblical call to pursue love and to pursue welcoming the stranger.

What would you say the tone is among your refugee friends and neighbors at this time?

Erin: People who've just arrived are more in survival mode. They're focused on making enough money to pay rent and learn everything. [Those who have] been here a couple years are way more understanding of what's going on in our politics. It feels like the shift in the last year has been that people are a little less relaxed.

Danielle: A lot of them have relatives in other countries that are affected by the travel ban. Since they can't get citizenship until they have been in the country for five years, they aren't able to travel to visit family members, even if they have the money.

Erin: Even if a family member is dying or ill.

Danielle: So there's real grief, but people don't want to share that. They're really good at surviving.

Erin: Right, they've survived worse things. It's also not in their personalities to complain. Their kids are thriving in schools and have access to things they didn't have.

Danielle: I'm trying to start a parent group at our elementary school. We all go to the second lowest-rated school in Oregon. It's me, two other white parents and all these refugees from all these different countries. They're starting to speak up and say things like, "Can we do more homework? Can we make it more challenging for our kids?" I think it's really encouraging to see people start to feel comfortable and safe enough to tell the school they want to see their kids challenged more.

To learn about upcoming opportunities to learn about and serve Portland's refugee population at Imago Dei, contact imagoforrefugees@idcpdx.com.

PRACTICE

Advent Conspiracy Offering

December 2 - 24

Every year, the money from this special offering helps fund projects to provide clean water to communities in Western Kenya and start new initiatives serving those who are hurting in our city.

A collection will be gathered during all services on Sunday, December 16th. However, you can give at any time during the Advent season at idcpdx.com/give, on the Imago Dei App or using the buckets on the communion tables.

LOVE ALL

3 O'Clock People Christmas Dinner

Tuesday, December 25, 2:00pm-5:00pm in the Imago Dei Central City Gym

We need your help to put on a feast worthy of a King for about 200 of our homeless neighbors on Christmas Day! Whatever your talents, there are several ways to participate: servers, security, decorating, help in the kitchen, setup, cleanup, people to host and spend time talking with our guests and much more. You can also donate dishes that form part of a turkey dinner. Please contact 3oclockpeople@gmail.com to learn more about helping out in any capacity.

PRACTICE LOVE ALL

THE WATER PROJECT

Since 2016, the bulk of our Advent Conspiracy offering has gone to help bring clean water to communities in Western Kenya through our partnership with the Water Project. The following is an update from one such project at Kilingili Primary School, installed in May 2017.

A year ago, contributions to The Water Project helped build a rainwater catchment tank and latrines for the Kilingili Primary School in Western Kenya. “Since the projects were implemented, our pupils look healthier and alert even in class. This evidence [is] a clear indication that the time wasted previously in search of water has been converted into learning,” Headteacher John Temba said.

“Before the tank was constructed, I used to carry water every day but now I only carry books and arrive at the school very early for my studies,” said Mercy Owela, a 14-year-old student. “Safe water is plentiful in school, thus I consume as many liters as possible to quench my thirst.”

Installation of the water tank and latrines is only one step along the journey toward sustainable access to clean water. The Water Project and WEWASAFO (our trusted local partner) are committed to consistent monitoring of each water source. Our monitoring and evaluation program allows us to maintain our relationships with communities by visiting up to four times each year to ensure that the water points are safe and reliable.

One project is just a drop in the bucket toward ending the global water crisis, but the ripple effects of this project are truly astounding. This tank at Kilingili Primary School is changing many lives. “Sanitation and hygiene challenges we faced before are now a forgotten story. The school compound looks so pleasant and good with the presence of a very big tank and new latrines,” said Mr. Temba.

To see more stories, download “Impact Snapshot by The Water Project” on the App Store or Google Play or visit idcpdx.com/water.

WORSHIP FULLY



4TH TENET

WORSHIP FULLY

BY MICHELLE JONES

“Love Me,” God says, “with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength.” All? Really? All?! Have you ever loved anyone like that?

How much of ourselves do we give to any one person at any given time? Even in our greatest efforts at love, we tend to hold something of ourselves back, don’t we? There is something frightening about a relationship that would consume us entirely—swallowing us whole and leaving us with nothing but the love of the other, in whatever measure or form they choose to give it back. What if our return is only a fraction of what we gave out? That’s a reasonable question if you’re offering yourself to people—not so much if the object of your surrender is God.

To celebrate Christmas is to celebrate The First Giver. With every breath, we consume His gifts to us of Himself—creation, humanity, family, community, industry and invention, art, wisdom and understanding. Most importantly, we celebrate that there is no part of God withheld from us in Jesus, His only Son, who gave heart, mind, soul and strength to see us redeemed.

Worship, in its sum and substance, is whole and holy with-ness. It is our behavior making visible what the heart, mind and soul have already found viable.

We give ourselves fully to God—particularly in this season—because He has already given Himself fully to us. We worship Him when we go beyond the act of giving to the affection found in generosity. We can thank Him with words, but we worship when gratitude makes us small before Him. Interest in Him is one thing, but Moses begged, “Show me your glory!” and he was forever changed.



The world would have you settle for looking the part of a “good Christian,” but a life of worship desires to be driven by the same desires that drive Christ.

Our lives are not perfect, or even pretty most days. There are spots where we look patched up or downright messy. Yet in all of it—every ugly season, shredded expectation, or fractured moment—HE is waiting to be found.

What is life if not an opportunity find God and worship Him? Suffering is not a gift. Neither is sunshine, even if it comes every day. RELATIONSHIP. That is the gift around which all things, good and bad, wrap themselves. We cannot become so enamored, distracted, or immobilized by our moments that we miss God’s tender efforts to draw every part of us to Him.

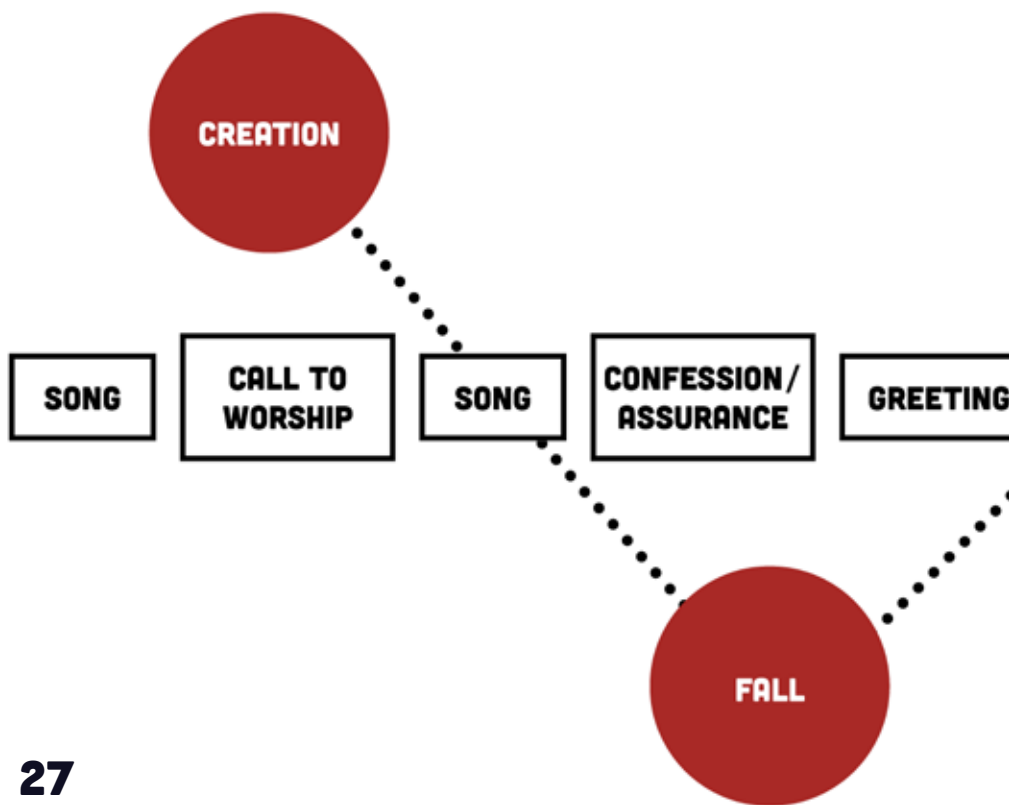
We love to say it’s not the gift, but the thought that counts. You will never hear God say that. For Him it all counts; the gift, which is eternal life, and the thoughts, which number the sands of the sea. Even the wrapping matters—especially the wrapping. It is The Word become flesh. Emanuel, God with us.



WEEKLY LITURGY

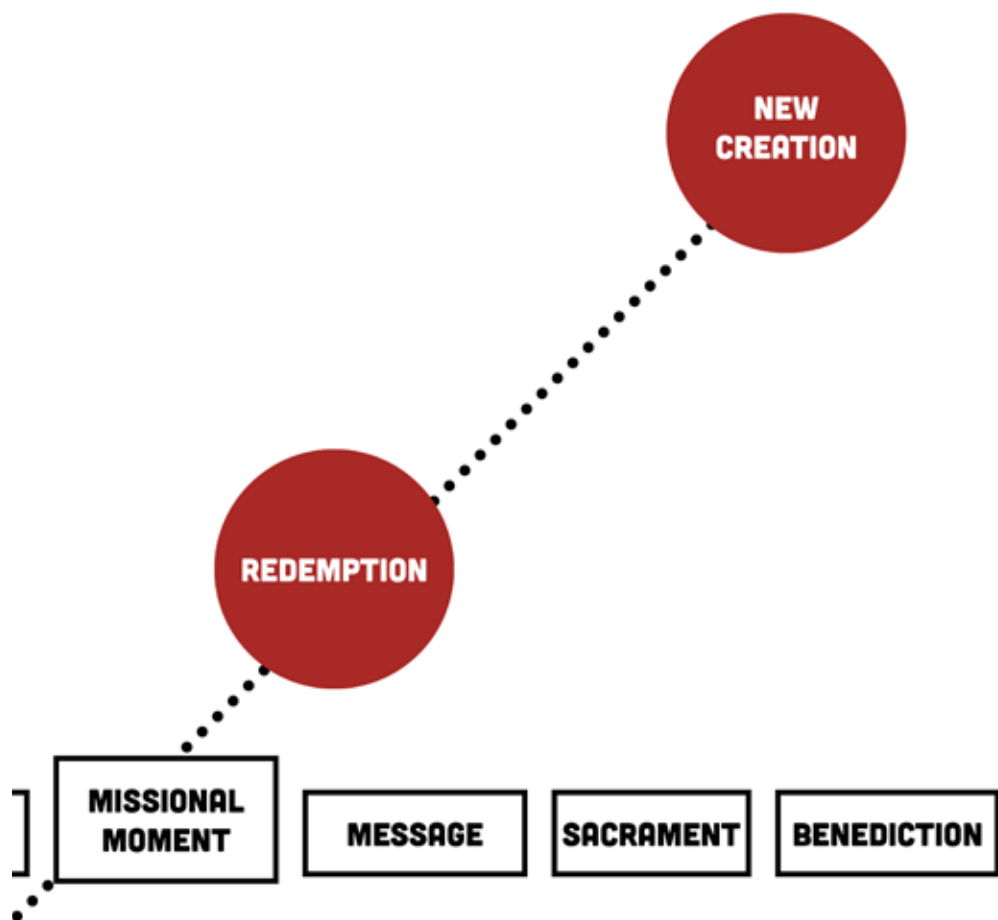
Liturgy is literally “the work of the people”—it is our weekly rhythm and flow of worship when we gather together. We practice worship as participants, not spectators, because the habits we adopt form our desires, which drive our beliefs. The weekly movement through the cycle of birth, life, crucifixion, death and resurrection reorients us and reminds us there is a way of being in the world that is truer than what is offered by Babylon. These are rituals of ultimate concern that are formative to our identity, and there is no formation without repetition.

- Paul Ramey, Pastor of Worship and Arts



● = GOSPEL STORY

□ = IMAGO DEI LITURGY



PRACTICE

Giving Life: Advent Sermon Series

December 2 - 23

This Advent we'll discover the amazing gift the Father gave in giving us His Son. Jesus—the bread and water of life, the light of the world—is the true gift of life we are all invited to receive. In response to this gift, we join Jesus in giving tangible gifts of life to the world around us. Bread for the hungry, clean water for the thirsty and light to those who are darkened by hopelessness, as we together pierce the darkness with the light and life of Jesus.

Tidings: A Worship Fully Experience

*Sunday, December 2, 4:00-6:00pm
in the gym at Central City*

Join us as we kick off Advent together! Innovated to help us thoughtfully enter the holiday season, this evening will be filled with ways to experience and apply the four tenets of Advent Conspiracy. Plus: caroling, snacks, warm drinks and a dessert potluck. Bring your favorite dessert to share in disposable container. Everyone is welcome!

WORSHIP FULLY

Abide Single Moms'

Community Christmas Dinner

Friday, December 7, 6:00-8:30pm

All single moms are invited to relax and be cared for at Abide Single Moms' Community's annual Christmas Dinner. Childcare is provided for ages 0-13. RSVP to abidesmc@idcpdx.com by December 3rd.

Abide also hosts a coffee hour for single moms on the third Sunday of the month, from 9:45-11:00am in the Conference Room of the Ankeny building.

North Portland Christmas Party

Friday, December 21, 5:00pm-9:00pm

If you live in a NoPo zip code, join us for a fun and festive evening! A large community of Imago families, couples and individuals live in North Portland, and it's time to meet each other! Stop by for a cup of hot cocoa, food and fellowship. Remember to wear a coat because this is an indoor AND outdoor event! RSVP to jennikupelian@gmail.com for location and details.

PRACTICE

WORSHIP FULLY

Special Service at Eastside Gathering

Sunday, December 23, 10:00am at David Douglas High School

Eastside will be celebrating the Christmas holiday with a special service on the 23rd. Elementary school kids are invited to join their families in service. Childcare is provided for nursery and preschool-age kids.

CHRISTMAS EVE AT IMAGO DEI

**INVITE FRIENDS AND
FAMILY TO JOIN US
FOR THIS SPECIAL
WORSHIP SERVICE.**



**MONDAY, DECEMBER 24,
3:00PM & 5:00PM CHILDCARE AVAILABLE
FOR AGES 0-3 AT 3:00PM ONLY.**



**FIND MORE WAYS TO EXPLORE
ADVENT CONSPIRACY AT
IDCPDX.COM AND
ADVENTCONSPIRACY.ORG**



ADVENT GUIDE

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Interested in contributing to our next guide?

Contact adarling@idcpdx.com.