

First Sunday of Advent

“People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest, is on the way.”

People Look East, vs. 1 by Eleanor Farjeon

Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn,³⁶ or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly.³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.
Mark 13:35-37

There is an urgency to the Season of Advent. Yes, there is the hustle and bustle of getting ready for Christmas but there exists an even deeper, more meaningful sense of longing and preparation in our celebration of Advent. We read Scriptures that command us to always be ready for we do not know the hour of the return of the Messiah. We sing hymns that speak of preparation and waiting. Living in Bethlehem, I feel this urgency more deeply than ever before. Between the holy sites and the very unholy sights of continued injustice, I hear the people crying out for liberation and redemption. Yet, the waiting of Advent is an active waiting. We are not called to sit idly by while we wait for the Messiah's return and the establishment of the Kingdom. We must always be ready, always watching, preparing our hearts, minds, and world. Surely, “Love, the guest, is on the way.”

As we light this candle, O Lord, we pray for patience and strength as we prepare our hearts, mind, and world for your arrival. Amen.

Grace Killian
United Methodist Global Mission Fellow
In Palestine and Israel