



Advent and Christmas Calendar 2018

Arrival

When you hear the word Arrival, what do you see in your mind's eye?

An alien landing? (and do they come in peace--or hegemonic power?) A tired but hopeful motley crew of asylum-seekers straggling toward the southern border of the U.S.? A red carpet, rolled out for a possibly demanding VIP guest? A flurry of suitcases and hugs as beloveds come for a visit? A band of angels, faces invisible, wings beating softly in the darkness, creating a downdraft that will draw Someone else?

Does the word Arrival make your heart leap--or raise your blood pressure? What are the feelings you have when you say the word out loud? What--or who are you waiting for? And how do you expect them to come?

The images of the migrant caravan in Mexico started me thinking about Advent early this year: those fathers and mothers, children and elders are so like the Holy Family, making a forced and desperate journey with an unknown reception before them. But from there, I began to think of other kinds of arrival. Arrival signals journey and movement. It is not static. Arrival has soft boundaries; it asks us to be open and welcoming if we're the hosts, or get moving if we are the travelers. We are not passively awaiting the reality we long for.

We are expectant.

It has been a hard year, politically, and perhaps personally for you, as it has for me. It has been a year of many departures--people I loved, the nature and heart of the country I thought I lived in. But Nature abhors a vacuum. Every departure leaves space for God to enter in. This Advent, I invite you to let your sacred observance be in the spirit of Arrival, be it with jazz hands as you walk through an open door, the packing of bags for a new adventure, or the welcome of those who need shelter after a hard journey.

God enters our lives in all the forms named above: alien, friendly, demanding, comforting, needy and self-offering. At Advent and Christmas, God arrives as all of the above at once, and especially as: a baby. The long-awaited Prince of Peace, the One who makes us One-der, silenced in awe, stilled in perfect contented joy the way only a baby can make us. We have been waiting so long for this arrival.

The day is almost here.

When it comes, just for a moment, we can stop waiting.

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas, Beloved.

Rev. Molly Baskette, Senior Minister, First Church Berkley

Over....

Sanctuary UCC is blessed to be one of the thousands of UCC folk who receive Molly's annual advent calendar creation and her blessed, heartfelt message. As she suggests, "print it on pretty paper, hang it on your refrigerator and put a little more **Hope, Peace, Joy, & Love** in the world through your actions and reflections"!



Advent & Christmas 2018: Arrival



	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>2 First Sunday in Advent Keep slippers by your front door. Have a Mr. Rogers routine for every time you come home this Advent.</p>	<p>3 Pray for someone on the other side of the political divide from you. Send your spirit out of your body to them.</p>	<p>4 Leave the door ajar for 10 minutes tonight. Sit and watch. Who or what is coming? Its name is: Emmanuel.</p>	<p>5 Pray for the migrant caravan in Mexico. Trace their route on a map with your finger. Say out loud, "You are welcome here."</p>	<p>6 Get out an old suitcase. Go through all the pockets. In one of them is a "message from God." What does it say?</p>	<p>7 Write a list of things you are waiting to arrive into your life. Mail or email it to God.</p>	<p>8 Google photographs of mothers who have just given birth. Put one hand on the screen and one hand on your belly, and bless both.</p>
<p>9 Second Sunday in Advent Swan into church when you walk through the doors as if you are the Second Coming of JC. You are (and so are you and you and you)</p>	<p>10 Set out a special treat, note or small gift for one you live with, as if they were a long lost prodigal or angel.</p>	<p>11 Go through your house and open all the doors and windows for a few minutes. Invite God inside.</p>	<p>12 Stare at a star tonight. Tune in whatever extraterrestrial life might orbit it, and pray for them.</p>	<p>13 Every place your body goes today, take 3 breaths and invite your spirit to arrive too, keeping body and spirit together.</p>	<p>14 Scripture says God will come like a thief in the night. Sneak around your house after bedtime, in the dark. Listen to the sounds of the house. Is God there too?</p>	<p>15 If you don't have a person or pet waiting for you when you come home, leave yourself this note in the am, and come back home to it: "I missed you! I'm glad you're here."</p>
<p>16 Third Sunday in Advent Go to the airport. Hold up a sign that says "Welcome home!" to everyone. Watch family embrace. They are your family, too.</p>	<p>17 Light a candle and leave it burning in a window all night (maybe an LED). Pray that it might guide someone home.</p>	<p>18 Have an imaginary conversation with an alien at dinner. What do you want to know? What do you want to teach them?</p>	<p>19 Make peace on earth begin with you. Sit somewhere quiet. Listen to nothing but your own breathing for five minutes.</p>	<p>20 Sometimes it's ok to veg instead of being alert to what's coming. There's more than one way to watch. Get together with someone you like and watch a Christmas movie.</p>	<p>21 Pack a Go Bag as if you were close to giving birth. What is in it? Music, snacks, aromatherapy? Use them on yourself.</p>	<p>22 Ask for, and receive, a heart to heart hug from at least 3 people. Hold for six seconds or more.</p>
<p>23 Fourth Sunday in Advent Spend time with a creche, looking at each character. Who do you feel like today? Carry them around with you for a while.</p>	<p>24 CHRISTMAS EVE Eat until bursting. Imagine tummy pains as labor pains. What is God birthing through you?</p>	<p>25 CHRISTMAS DAY You've arrived. Make a nest or couch fort and inhabit it for a while.</p>	<p>26 Baby is here! Be the baby. Swaddle, nap, cry if you need attention.</p>	<p>27 Keep being the baby! Drink warm milk. Take it slow, and quiet.</p>	<p>28 Be your own parent: give yourself one thing you have always needed, since childhood. Foster your own well-being.</p>	<p>29 Make a red carpet for yourself and all who enter your home: a scarf, cardboard or sweater. Treat all who enter as a VIP angel.</p>
<p>30 What doors have closed in your life? What is written on them? Make peace with this closure, and give thanks for a simpler path</p>	<p>31 NEW YEAR'S EVE In what ways have you "arrived" in your life? What milestones have you reached—and which are ahead? Make a list of three next steps on the journey.</p>	<p>1 NEW YEAR'S DAY In defiance of winter's cold, get seeds from a drawer or garage. Wrap them in wet paper towels & put them in a jar. When they sprout, eat them. Spring is arriving!</p>	<p>2 Things change if we change them. Write a letter to someone you need to reconnect with.</p>	<p>3 Things change if we change them. Write or call your members of Congress about an issue dear to you.</p>	<p>4 Make a list of all the Good News you perceive. Put it on the fridge. Leave a blank space for God to write the next entry.</p>	<p>5 Do a yoga inversion or headstand. Have an epiphany. Or more than one. Write them down.</p>