

## INTRO

**What are you looking forward to this Advent season? What do you expect will be challenging?**

## IDEA 1

**Read Luke 1:5-25**

“I wonder how many of us are like Zechariah - seasoned Christ followers, obedient, seeking righteousness, but just going through the motions with no expectations.”

**In what ways can you relate to Zechariah’s faith journey?**

**Do you find yourself in a season of barrenness? Lack of expectation? Going through the motions?**

## IDEA 2

When we are not expecting a divine encounter - we may respond like Zechariah:

- Shaken and overwhelmed with fear
- Questioning and doubting

**Like Zechariah, why do you think we can be fearful or skeptical of divine encounters?**

**What has been your experience of divine encounters in your life?**

**How can we become the kind of person that is expectant of and attentive to divine encounters?**

## SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

“Our world is full of noise. Our heart and mind is full of noise. We don’t know how to be “bored” anymore. How can we hear from God, recognize his presence, if we are never silent?”

### Practice spending time in silence together.

- This isn’t something that we’re used to doing so don't be surprised if it feels awkward.
- It may be helpful to name some of your fears or skepticism before sitting in silence.
- You may like to lay your hands out open on your lap in a posture of receptivity to God.
- Setting a timer for 5 mins (or however long you want) can be helpful
- If people anticipate getting distracted, you can encourage them to focus on a particular word like "Jesus" or "trust" to help draw their attention back to God
- Give it a go and see what happens!

### Read Isaiah 30:15 and then wait wordlessly before God in silence.

- After your allotted time, if you feel led, have people share with each other in groups of 2-3 about how that experience was.

## NEXT STEPS

There were two next step opportunities that Jennifer shared as part of the sermon:

### Engage in this Advent season with expectation

- Read and reflect on Isaiah 9
- Pray and invite God to breakthrough your seasoned unbelief
- You may find it helpful to pray a breath prayer from Mark 9:24
  - Breathe in: Lord, I believe
  - Breath out: Help my unbelief

### Create spaces for silence

- Read and reflect on Isaiah 30:15
- Wait wordlessly before God
- Carve out time for the wonder, for a divine encounter, for an epiphany

Pause and reflect on these next steps.

- **What do you sense God’s invitation to you is?**
- **What next step is He encouraging you to take this Advent season?**