

# FAITH @ HOME

Week of December 15, 2019

Third Sunday in Advent

## ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

**READ:** James 5:7-10

**REFLECT:** In this third week of Advent, we are reminded again not grumble and quarrel. We are told instead to be patient. This is really hard for children, never mind fully grown people! Being patient just means that we are supposed to wait without getting annoyed or upset. Maybe your child is cool as a cucumber or maybe your child is easily bothered. Or maybe, especially at this busy time of year, you are feeling rather annoyed. Pay attention to all of that frustration this week. Notice when it appears. Point it out to each other and think about what it might mean in those moments to “strengthen your hearts.”

**RESPOND:** Strengthen your hearts in those really intense impatient moments this week by sharing in a few minutes for meditation. Google “kids mindfulness” to find a simple practice that will suit your child, or download the Calm app to find age-specific meditative practices: <https://app.www.calm.com/meditate/kids>.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: ELSA ANDERS COOK



Elsa Anders Cook is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ who has served churches in New York, Maine, Washington, and Pennsylvania. She volunteers at church now while supporting her husband in his service as a Major in the United States Army. Together, they have two little ones. She blogs at [cookingwithelsa.org](http://cookingwithelsa.org).

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## ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

**READ:** James 5:7-10

**REFLECT:** This week's lectionary texts, from the Old Testament lesson to the Gospel--even the Psalm--are full of asking God to hurry up. That seems like a funny thing to ask God to do... hurry up. Hurry up and get here, God. Hurry up and help us. Hurry up and come be with us. Hurry, hurry, hurry.

When we look at the world and our place in it, we might feel anxious or afraid sometimes. We might worry we don't have what we need to succeed, that we will struggle to keep ourselves and those we love safe. We worry about how our hair looks and where we're going to sit at lunch. We sometimes forget to study for things or to put meetings on a calendar. There's a lot going on, all the time. And it's hard to keep it all together. Sometimes, we might even feel bullied. And we can always talk about all of those feelings with God. God understands exactly how we feel, exactly where we are. God is right beside us in all those feelings.

Sometimes, it can feel like help is taking forever to get to us... like maybe we've been forgotten about or that no one can hear us. Sometimes we might even worry that no one is coming or that no one cares. But all the lessons today tell us that God is coming. God hears us. We are not alone. And when we ask God to hurry up, God give us the grace to hang on and does indeed come to help us. God is rarely early, but God is never late. And God is with us always.

**RESPOND:** Think about what time feels like in different situations. Set a timer for one minute, and see what it feels like to not talk for one minute. See what it feels like to hold water in your mouth for a minute. See what it feels like to laugh for one minute. See what it feels like to hold your breath. Time feels different depending on what you are doing or what you need. Thank God for being in all the moments, with you always. We don't have to hurry, we just have to be here.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: RACHEL JONES



Rachel Jones is the associate editor for Forward Movement. She and her husband live on a farm with a dog, too many cats, several rabbits, and a flock of very opinionated chickens.

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## ADULT AND YOUTH

**READ:** James 5:7-10

**REFLECT:** When I was younger and found myself in a sticky situation – a situation, mind you, that required more patience than I seemed to possess in any given moment – my mom would often chime in with the pithy reminder: “But patience is a virtue, darling!” I suppose her words were meant to remind me that patience really was mine, deep down inside, even if I didn’t feel like I had any patience in that moment.

While patience is a virtue, so to speak, for us as individuals, I think there’s a greater reason why we read this passage in James during Advent. As Christ-followers, we’re in a season of waiting for the big day to arrive – even though the last thing we often times want to do is actually have to practice patience and wait for Jesus to appear. But together, we get to be patient, strengthen our hearts and not grumble against one another. After all, God is there with us in the glory and frustration of waiting, even if we don’t have the slightest idea.

**RESPOND:** Consider solving a problem together as a family. Perhaps you play a favorite board game like Telephone Pictionary or The Settlers of Catan, both of which require certain amounts of patience. Or maybe you head to your garage, gather up all the padlocks you can find, then play a little padlock hide-and-go-seek around your house to model patience, like this game suggests. Whatever you decide to do, consider answering these questions too: 1. Think of a moment in your life when patience was the last thing on your mind ...or in your body. How, if at all, did you gain patience when you most needed it? 2. In this season of Advent, God invites us to be patient and wait. What is God inviting you to be patient with in your life?

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: CARA MEREDITH



Cara Meredith is a writer and speaker from Seattle, Washington. Her memoir, *The Color of Life: A White Woman’s Journey Toward Love and Justice*, released in 2019 (Zondervan). You can connect with her on her website at <https://www.carameredith.com/>.

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Week of December 15, 2019

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## ADULT AND ADULT

**READ:** James 5:7-10

**REFLECT:** I've been hearing about Christ coming since I was a little girl. I'm sure you've heard the stories, too. Despite how excited we are about that great and glorious day, we must wait. Just like farmers plant the seed and then wait for the harvest, we must wait as well. During this season of waiting, we need to be strong against the temptation to fall back into our old ways because "the coming of the Lord is near" (James 5:8, NRSV). During this season of waiting, we need to be busily working for the Lord, sharing the Gospel, healing the sick, and comforting the brokenhearted. Indeed, now isn't the time to sit around twiddling our thumbs. Now is the time to wait on the Lord the way servers wait on us in restaurants. We need to be meeting needs and anticipating needs until Christ returns. Yes, we must be diligent, so we're ready at Jesus's coming, keeping ourselves from sin, while also maintaining the bonds of unity and peace with other believers.

**RESPOND:** As a reminder to be patient, buy some seeds and plant them, perhaps first in a plastic cup, and then outside. Nurture the seeds by placing the cups in sunlight and watering the seeds. Seeing the cup daily will remind you of the farmer's patience and the need of your own. When you see the plants begin to grow, plant them in bigger containers, and continue to tend to them. Get fresh dirt, water the plant, and watch it grow. When the plant is fully grown, give it to someone as a gift.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: ARETHA L. GRANT



Aretha Grant serves her local church as a Bible teacher and elder. She loves writing and is the author of *Overcomer: 25 Keys to Walking Victoriously*. Aretha resides in Hagerstown, MD with her husband and two youngest children. You can read Aretha's blog at [www.arethagrants.com](http://www.arethagrants.com).

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