

**Discussion guide for 12.17.23**

**Advent: Together We Wait: Week Four - We Wait**

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**Luke 1:26-38, 46b-55**

**Opening thought and questions:** Our Advent series has been about waiting, with an emphasis on what it means to wait together. How have you experienced this theme? What does it mean for you to share a sense of collective waiting for God?

**Scriptures to ponder:** Read the Scriptures above, paying special attention to the first section which we did not read during worship. Note how this sets up the story of Mary's song. If you have access to several translations in the room (or on your phones) you might read the Magnificat in some additional translations. Try the Common English Bible, or the well-known King James. The paraphrase *The Message* has a unique twist on this passage.

**Discuss:** How is it that Mary's song was applicable at Jesus birth, and is still applicable today? How do you experience these words? Are they good news for you? Why or why not? How does this song call you to a deeper level of caring for the poor and the oppressed?

**Discuss:** Three countries in the world at various times have banned the Magnificat (India, Argentina and Guatemala). Does this surprise you? Why are Mary's words (Jesus' teaching) considered revolutionary or threatening?

**On a more personal level:** Waiting is hard work. What is something or who is someone that you are waiting for this Christmas season? What sustains you as you wait? How does Mary's song, or her faithful life of obedience offer you comfort and hope as you wait? How might you allow someone else to wait together with you?

**For Further Thought - Passionate Waiting:** "If it is true that God in Jesus Christ is waiting for our response to divine love, then we can discover a whole new perspective on how to wait in life." *Henri Nouwen, The Spirituality of Waiting.*

**Prayer:** God as we come, cry, watch and wait may we open ourselves to your redemptive and transforming work in the world.