



A publication of
The North Carolina Council of Churches
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Tax Reform

2017-2018 Liturgical Resources

Christians are preparing for Christmas. Some will approach the coming weeks with a somber and pensive journey through Advent that bypasses tinsel and shopping. Some will herald the season by arriving at the mall late at night on Thanksgiving Day, or early in the morning on Black Friday. Some will balance between the spiritual and liturgical resting in Advent and the busy and chaotic shopping, cooking, and tending to community traditions that are hard to escape. There will be trips to Tryon Palace and Biltmore, pageant rehearsals, cold nights slept on the pavement, food drives, and small-town Christmas parades. (The Raleigh parade is already packed up and in the books, having welcomed Santa while pumpkins still adorned porches).

Those who are able to find their way to church during this season are likely to hear and sing prophetic promises about Jesus and what Jesus is about. Mary's Magnificat and the promises of Isaiah 61 make powerful claims: Jesus' work in the world flips power structures.

During this season of reconciling our hearts and our wallets, our Advent and our frivolity, our commitments and our desires, we invite you to lead worship in a manner that invites attention to the economic significance of Jesus' purpose and mission. We invite you to lead worship in a manner that connects Jesus-economics to tax policy in general, and to the current proposals for Tax Reform before the US Senate. We invite you to help your congregation develop a commitment to impacting systems as well as feeding individuals. We invite you to worship the Christ, in whom we live and move and have our very being, and whose path through the wilderness we are still called to make straight. We invite you to claim for yourself, and for your congregation, Jesus' warning: if you have done it to the least of these, you have done it to me.

The scriptures presented during this Advent Season are made poignant when paired with teachings which engage Jesus teachings about money, and about care for those who are hungry and whose bodies need healing. If your church follows the lectionary, then you may have used Jesus' reminder about the least of these on the Sunday between Thanksgiving and Advent 1. If so, this teaching can provide an especially useful grounding for teaching during Advent. Please take special note of our suggestions about this and other passages that can bolster a focus on Jesus-economics and economics during Advent – and into the new year.

This resource pays particular attention to shaping worship based on the lectionary reading for Year B, which begins with the first Sunday of Advent in December, 2017. Nevertheless, what is found here is useful to all who are planning worship this season! Use what will be meaningful and helpful in your context. And if you have ideas or resources to share, please email the Council, info@ncchurches.org, or tweet @MaryElizNCCC, @NCChurches, #NCCCTaxReform, #NCChurches