

For the HIP Church – from Rev. Ron

Our first Advent as pastor and people is coming soon, and I couldn't be happier about the possibilities before us. Advent, as you know, is a season of preparation, and I pray that we will be preparing ourselves for the next great adventure that Christmas will bring to us as a congregation.

From the pulpit, you'll be hearing a series based on Advent and Christmas canticles except on Sunday, December 22 when there will be A Service of Lessons and Carols, which is a tradition that began at King's College in Cambridge in the 19th century. If you have not signed up to share a solo or play an instrument during this service, please do so as soon as possible (rongilmer.pcusa@gmail.com).

I'm delighted to be leading my first book study with you. We will meet every Sunday during Advent, which will be December 1-22, to discuss our experiences of Amy-Jill Levine's *Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent*. Books are available in the pastor's study. Here's the schedule of readings for this series:

- Dec 1: Introduction and the first chapter "The Meaning of Memory"
- Dec 8: The second chapter "The Promise of Potential"
- Dec 15: The third chapter "The Journey to Joy"
- Dec 22: The fourth chapter "The Gift of the Gentiles"

Yes, I have taught in middle schools, high schools, colleges and seminaries, but in churches, I tend to be more of a facilitator than a teacher. I want to hear how you experience God's grace in the readings -- and to ask questions that get lively conversations started.

I hope that you'll participate in as many sessions in this series as your schedule will allow. My experience of such series is that I come out of them feeling closer to the participants, and I fully expect that to be the case here.

May you draw near to Christ during this holiday season as God draws near to us.
Blessings, Ron