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- ECF may need to mute all participants to limit background noise and audio interference
- To start your web cameras, press the “Start my Web Cam” button and “Start Sharing”
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- PDFs of the slides and resource list are available for download
- This webinar is being recorded and will be made public



Be Born in Us: A Reflection on Love of Neighbor in the Season of Advent

The Rev. Ali Lutz
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The Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF)

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Open to both lay and ordained Episcopalians, ECF builds a relationship with Fellows not only when they are receiving financial support, but over the long haul, so that our community of Fellows may serve as a gift and resource to the Church in serving God's mission.



The Rev. Ali Lutz



Photo by Jerree Scheitlin

- Currently a PhD student in Christian Social Ethics at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN, writing on the ethics of humanitarian aid and mission.
- Ordained in 2012. Served churches in New York, Arizona, and Haiti.
- Worked in global health in rural Haiti from 2008-2013.
- Lived in a L'Arche community with adults with disabilities in London, England, and helped resettle refugees in Boston and in Atlanta.

Let us pray...



Be present and draw near to us, dear God. Energize our minds and enliven our hearts as we listen for your spirit leading us ever deeper into love and service. Free us from distractions internal and external for this next hour. May we receive the gifts and graces of insight you have for us this evening, for the sake of the nourishment of our souls; for the care of the people you have entrusted to us; and for you, dear Christ, whom we bear into the world. AMEN

A Reflection on Love of Neighbor in the Season of Advent

Reflection: meditation, not best practices.

Advent:

...a season to learn to wait...

...to ponder in our hearts...

...to welcome the salvation and healing of the world in vulnerability...

...to make room to receive the grace we need from God.

Breathe with me...



Breath is life



Breath connects us to God.



To breathe is to have a body



All living creatures breathe



Breath is non-dualistic



Overview of our time

- Love as attention
- Love as justice
- Love as imagination
- *Reflection*

Love as attention

Simone Weil, “the substance of love is attention”

“Not only does love of God have attention for its substance; the love of our neighbor, which we know to be the same love, is made of the same substance. Those who are unhappy have no need for anything in this world but people capable of giving them their attention. The capacity to give one’s attention to a sufferer is a rare and difficult thing.”

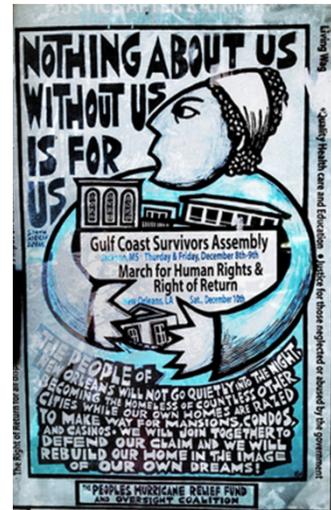
from “Reflections on the right use of school studies with a view to the love of God,” in *Waiting For God*.



Love as attention

Attention to neighbors as *persons*, not as objects to be counted, fixed, healed, changed.

**nothing
about us**



Love as attention

Attention to neighbors as “protagonists of their own liberation”

Gustavo Gutiérrez



The midwives Shiphrah and Puah defy Pharaoh’s order to kill Hebrew infant boys.

Moses’s mother acts to save her son.

Joseph and Mary act to save Jesus from Herod.

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Love as attention

Love requires attention to the social world of the neighbor

Example: Christmas gifts for women and children living in a shelter, and gifts for children at a care home in Haiti.



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Take a moment to reflect...

Think of a time when you have experienced love as attention.

Love as justice

Attention to the social structures of misery



“If I define my neighbor as the one I must go out to look for, on the highways and byways, in the factories and slums, on the farms and in the mines—then my world changes...

...But the poor person does not exist as an inescapable fact of destiny...The poor are a by-product of the system in which we live and for which we are responsible.”

Gustavo Gutiérrez, *The Power of the Poor in History*

Love as justice

“Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.”

Cornel West



Example: When your medical mission group leaves, who provides medical care? Look for ways to connect with and support local systems that serve the people you feel called to care for.

Take a moment to reflect...

***Is there an issue of justice you are passionate about?
How is this issue a public expression of love
that should be accessible to everyone?***

Love as imagination

The ability to perceive a more just world,
knowing that current social reality is not natural or inevitable



“Oppressive structures are not basic reality, but just the way operative reality has been constructed...What is oppressive has been humanly constructed, and it can be changed.” Ada María Isasi-Díaz

Love as imagination

Example:
Countering a failure of
imagination with a
preferential option for
the poor in healthcare



June 1999



1 year later



With *acompañante*



10 years later

Love as imagination

A new heaven and a new earth



“we all are longing for an intimate relationship with God, for a sense of dignity, for community and belonging, and for the ability to use our gifts and abilities to develop creation. The goal is not to turn Kampala into Chicago. The goal is for both Kampala and Chicago to look more like the New Jerusalem.”

Brian Fikkert, David Beckmann, and Dale Hanson Bourke, *Christianity Today*

Take a moment to reflect...

Think of a place that suffers from inattention and injustice.

***Really picture that place in your mind: What it looks like,
feels like, and sounds like.***

***Now imagine that place as the New Jerusalem, from which God's
love and justice will flow for all people throughout the world.***

Next steps

“to accept day by day the gift of the Spirit, who makes us love—in our concrete options to build a true human fellowship, in our historical initiatives to subvert an order of injustice—with the fullness with which Christ loved us” Gustavo Gutiérrez

Let us end as we began, with breath.

Questions?...then reflections



Ongoing questions or ideas?

Contact me at
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