

ROOM AT THE TABLE

Theme Resource Pack
December 2025
(30 Nov - 4 Jan)

Introduction

There's room at the table!

It's such an evocative, welcoming phrase. It invites us to be generous and open handed towards each other. It calls us to table and to make room; to budge up; to practise hospitality to the stranger in need as well as for those we love and cherish. It speaks warmly of expectation and acceptance. In fact it's a kind of prefiguring of the Kingdom of Heaven being born in the human heart. To hear there is room at the table is to hear the voice of God saying there is a place at the table in my Kingdom set for you!

Advent is a time of journeying, waiting, preparing and expectation. It resonates with the inward longing within all of our hearts to find a spiritual home, a place where we know we belong and where we are accepted. The story of Advent is primarily one of God journeying towards us, but it also uncovers unnumbered stories of very diverse people discovering they too are on a journey towards God. As you read this perhaps you too are thinking that's me. Of course you might be also asking how will I be accepted, will I be too late? Am I fooling myself, is there a table? Is there a God? Is there a homecoming?

We will encounter all sorts of people on the journey to the table of the King. Think of the journey Joseph and Mary made to encounter Jesus. The journey the shepherds made to find themselves known by God. There were also foreigners, wisemen from the east perhaps a little later but they made an incredible journey. So we too will have our personal journeys with doubts and struggles to encounter King Jesus.

Then there is the waiting. There is a certain degree of patience required hoping that those invited will come. Those who have arrived need to be patient as others come from distant journeys. The big brother syndrome always has a tendency to emerge as time passes and the table places are not yet filled. Yet the patience of the King continues. 'Room at the table' speaks of his open heart and the preparation he knows is required to make the journey, and to wait for the coming of others.

No doubt the place of waiting will resonate with us all at some point in our lives. However the most hopeful of all our spiritual feelings is that of expectation. When we literally gather around the Lord's Table for Communion it is much more than a remembrance of the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is filled with expectation that there is room at the table for our identity in time and in eternity.

In the coming weeks and months we hope to invite members of the Sanctuary First Community to help us exact out the meaning of 'Room at the table; in such a way that we will see many more people start out on the journey to enter into the Kingdom of God.

And perhaps this Advent as you begin to make your preparations for Christmas you might literally think about what it would mean to leave room at your table for the unexpected guest.

Weekly Overview

- Leaving room — *hope and expectation*
- Finding room — *harmony and flourishing*
- Room enough — *hospitality and generosity*
- Making room — *welcome and belonging*
- Room to spare — *room for all the world*

Format

Every month we have a God-given theme delving into different aspects and areas of faith. Over the course of 2025 these themes connect and take us on a faith journey out into the wonders of life with Jesus. Our themes shape our Daily Worship, live streams and all sorts of other creative things we get up to! Each week runs Sunday - Saturday and each has a series of daily Bible readings and prompts for reflection.

Leaving room — *hope and expectation* (Week 1, 30 November)

Introduction: We begin Advent reflecting on anticipation and expectation. As we journey through the season what are we anticipating? What are we expecting? What are we leaving room for? And what room has been left for us? How do we respond to the invitation to God's table where all are welcome and there's always room?

Setting the scene: An extra place setting laid out on the table just in case.

Seeds to sow: This can be such a busy season but it's important to make room and make time too. What do you want to stop doing over Advent to leave room for other things?

1. **Romans 13: 11-14** **Getting up, getting dressed, getting going!** As we head into Advent what rooms are we leaving and who are we leaving room for?
2. **Psalm 122** **Going to the house of the Lord!** Room has been left for us in the house of God! What are our expectations?
3. **Isaiah 2: 1-5** **Coming back to the mountain of the Lord!** This Advent are we leaving room for peace and leaving room for transformation? Are we living like there's room at the table? Like there's space for all to live together?
4. **Psalm 85** **Coming to the table to discover something new.** At God's table we long to uncover a new prophetic picture of justice and mercy for a world that all too often tears itself apart. How do our expectations shape the world?
5. **Psalm 103** **Coming to the table to discover something we've forgotten.** At God's table we can remember the gifts of grace that sustain us.
6. **2 Samuel 24: 18-25** **Coming to the table to make an offering.** At God's table we can make sacrifices that mean something. God's table is a balm for our souls. Psychologically it allows us to atone for what we are leaving behind and positively step into a new future.
7. **1 Corinthians: 11: 23-26** **Coming back to the table to join the feast.** There's always room at the Lord's table. There's always a space left open! Are we leaving room at the Lord's table for others?

Finding room — *harmony and flourishing* (Week 2, 7 December)

Introduction: A week on the transformative power of belonging; on the life-changing power of finding room, finding a place, and finding harmony.

Setting the scene: Finding room next to Christ on a bench.

Seeds to sow: What helps you to feel at home?

- 1. 1 Samuel 1: 1-20 Finding room for Hannah.** Many of us find ourselves like Hannah at this time of year. Pacing around, out in the cold, on edge, feeling like we don't fit or belong. The intense materialistic spectacle of the season can magnify the isolation we already feel through hardship, loneliness or bereavement. It can put pressure on us to feel the fulfilment, purpose, and roles being sold to us. But God wants you to know there is room for Hannah and there is room for you! None of us are out in the cold.
- 2. 1 Samuel 1: 21-28 Finding room for flourishing.** Hannah is finding room for Samuel to flourish as a prophet. Flourishing takes time and room... what are we finding room for in Advent to help ourselves and others flourish?
- 3. 1 Samuel 2: 1-11 Finding room to sing!** The boldness and energy of Hannah leaps off the page thousands of years later. In the midst of deeply patriarchal times — this woman is an incredible testament to what God values and what God cares about. For God there is always room for Hannah at the table.
- 4. Psalm 72: 1-7, 18-19 Finding room for peace.** At God's table we find peace. Who are the poor and vulnerable who are trying to find room this Advent? How can room be found for the vulnerable, the oppressed, the displaced and the victimised this winter?
- 5. Romans 15: 4-13 Finding room for harmony.** At God's table we find harmony, but harmony takes work! Are we pulling up the chairs and laying out the place settings for all to be able to come and find harmony at God's table? How can we be part of God's personalisation of the universal call?
- 6. Isaiah 53 Finding room with Christ.** Jesus himself became the suffering servant, rejected and despised of all men. In his humility, his grace, his human experience of pain and shame and dishonour we can find room for ourselves whatever we have been through and whatever life has thrown at us.
- 7. Luke 1: 26-38 Finding room for God on earth.** In the Annunciation — room was found for Christ in humanity. This Advent let's remember the courageous openheartedness of Mary who agreed to carry Christ into the world.

Room enough — *hospitality and generosity* (Week 3, 14 December)

Introduction: This Advent how can the invitation of 'Room at the table' challenge ongoing narratives of hostility, fear and antagonism? How can an ethos of hospitality and generosity change how we do politics, economics, church?

Setting the scene: A shared meal on a long, long table with a great many people.

Seeds to sow: How hospitable and welcoming are church buildings in our local communities today?

1. **Isaiah 35: 1-10 Room enough for abundance!** Where do we long for this transformation? And what can we do to make room for it?
2. **Psalms 146: 5-10 Room enough for strangers!** None of us are strangers to God for God makes room for each of us.
3. **Luke 1: 46b-55 Room enough for the hungry!** Let's unpack the prophetic edge in this song, for the rich here are needing to make room for the poor, the full for the hungry, the powerful for the lowly.
4. **James 5: 7-10 Room enough for anticipation!** The farmer must make room and make time and make peace.
5. **2 Corinthians 12: 1-10 Room enough for grace!** God's grace will always be sufficient! How does Paul's nuanced reflections here shape how we think about generosity in society?
6. **Isaiah 61 Room enough for justice!** There is room at the table for the brokenhearted. There is room at the table for social justice, renewal, and restoration, for celebration and dignity and grace. Come to the table — be a part of it!
7. **Micah 6: 8 Room enough for what is required!** There is room enough in our hearts to love mercy, and walk humbly.

Making room — *welcome and belonging* (Week 4, 21 December)

Introduction: As we head to Christmas day itself we reflect on incarnation — God becoming flesh and blood as room is made in humanity for God.

Setting the scene: A makeshift table in a first century stable where two new parents and their child gather for a meal.

Seeds to sow: Do we squash Jesus to fit into the space that's left over in our lives or do we make room for Jesus?

1. **Isaiah 7: 10-16 Making room for Emmanuel!** The unfolding story of Emmanuel, God-with-us, has been unfolding since the beginning of time and woven throughout history
2. **John 1: 1-14 Making room for rejection!** This story goes way *back*. Christ was willing to make room for recognition AND rejection, an offering of grace for our world.
3. **Isaiah 52: 7-10 Making room for good news!** Are we making room for those carrying good news or are we more often making room for the doomsayers, naysayers and soothsayers?!
4. **Matthew 1: 18-25 (Christmas Eve) Making room for family!** This Christmas Eve we reflect on how Joseph, like Mary, made room and the found family of Christ.
5. **Luke 2: 1-7 (Christmas Day) Making room at the inn!** This Christmas know that there is room at the table for you!
6. **Isaiah 9: 2-7 Making room for the Prince of Peace!** How can we use hospitality and compassion to make room for the Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace?!
7. **Luke 2: 8-20 Making room for shepherds!** Learning from the Shepherd's response.

Room to spare — *room for all the world* (Week 5, 28 December)

Introduction: As we head into the New Year with our expansive message that there is room at the table for all, we further widen our scope to the natural world and indeed to the cosmos. There is room to spare for all creation! How can 'Room at the table' change how we think about our world?

Setting the scene: Crisp winter sunshine on God's people on God's earth.

Seeds to sow: What are we making room for in 2026? What tables are we setting?

1. **Isaiah 63: 7-9 Room to spare for mercy and kindness.** Are we telling of God's mercy and kindness?
2. **Psalms 148 Room to spare for creation.** There is room enough for all of us, indeed room to spare, and yet we often live absurd lifestyles that are profoundly wasteful and unequal. How can we re-embrace and rediscover the vivid praise of creation as a partner not a source of plunder?
3. **Hebrews 1 Room to spare for the Trinity.** The community of God's being in the trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit has room to spare for us.
4. **Hebrews 2: 10-18 (Hogmanay) Room to spare — through Christ as one of us.** This Hogmanay we revel in the cosmic revelation of Christ that changes history.
5. **Colossians 1: 15-23 (New Year's Day) Room to spare at the table — draw up a seat!** This table is cosmic, bigger than we could imagine
6. **Luke 2: 22-35 Room to spare for all nations!** There are no geographical or ethnic limits to God's grace, to God's table.
7. **Luke 2: 36-40 Room for redemption — for all who will listen!** How can we be Annas in the 21st century — sharing the invitation to the table, to redemption, to all who will listen!