

WAITING...

**Theme Resource Pack
May/Pentecost 2026
(3 May - 6 June)**

Introduction

In the beginning... creation waited. There was nothing else for it.... Reality, it turns out, takes time to load...

Then this lump of rock suspended in the universe received life and colour through the voice of God.

And then, after more waiting, humanity — a family to share it.

This pattern of **waiting**, **receiving** and **sharing** repeats itself throughout the Bible and throughout history. Through prophecy and poetry, pictures and patience, prayer and protest God's people wait on God, receive from God, and then share with God.

This waiting has sometimes been dull, exasperating, dispiriting, galling, and frightening. But it has also been peaceful, blessed, exciting, humbling, stretching, and enriching. Waiting it turns out, is not optional, it is part of the rhythm of life. Receiving and sharing come through waiting — like a tree comes through seed and rain and sunlight. There is no such thing as an instant tree — a tree is a storied thing with a story to tell in each of its rings. Some of the most beautiful things have very long wait times.

Waiting is deep in our psyche. From infancy — we have to wait on other people for everything. So we scream and cry out. There's nothing else for it. We come into a loud and vibrant and confusing world full of things we don't understand, but already we're full of deep longing and needs. And this experience continues into childhood — where a day can feel like an eternity — and into adulthood. We never stop making our way in a loud, vibrant confusing world full of things we don't understand and we don't never stop having deep longings and needs to fulfil. That is the human experience. To know what is and to know what could be. To hope.

But in all our waiting, all our longing, all our hoping — God waits with us. The Holy Spirit is closer to us than we'll ever know, in our heart laughing and sighing and crying out with us.

For God is waiting too.

In **Week one — Loading...** we think about some 'load screens' in the Bible, starting with very first one as Reality 1.0 is installed.

In **Week two — Typing...** we explore the sometimes agonising wait for an answer, a response, a confirmation.

In **Week three — Downloading...** we continue the digital metaphors thinking about the updates that the prophets and psalmists urge us to look out for — are we ready for the new thing God is doing?

In **Week four — Expecting...** as we come to Pentecost we move from the digital metaphors of loading, typing and downloading to the physical, flesh, blood, and fire metaphors of birth and flame!

In **Week five — Anticipating...** as the theme draws to a close we ask one another, what are we anticipating? For ourselves, our communities, our churches, our world? What do we long to receive, what do we long to share?

Format

This theme will run 5 weeks taking us from 3 May - 6 June. Over the course of 2026 we are going on a journey that we began in Advent 2025 — of coming round the table with God.

Our themes drawn from Revised Common Lectionary and additional readings 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.

Loading... (Week 1, 3 May)

Introduction: This week we think about some 'load screens' in the Bible, starting with the very first one as Reality 1.0 is installed. The Bible, like our lives, is full of such moments when we are stuck with nothing to do but wait. These can be times to catch our breath, or sigh in wonder, but they can also be restless uneasy places. We have all spent time desperately willing the loading bar to move faster, or refreshing our browser over and over again. During the 'load screens' we can take heart that God takes time for us, makes time for us, treasures time with us. For after all there is no screen — no separation — we don't 'look in' at the wonders of God, instead we 'look around' at the one who wants to have a relationship with us, loving us into eternity. The screen becomes a window or a doorway through which we are invited to come and seek the God who is seeking us!

Seeds to sow: Where is God calling us to reboot and restart in our lives?

- 1. Genesis 1: 1-13 Creation is loading...** The opening words of Genesis show us the loading screen of creation in this incredible poem. Our world has always been an organic, emerging thing that takes time to grow.
- 2. Genesis 1: 14-31 Loading... loading...** Creation is still loading and now increasingly complex files are being installed.
- 3. Genesis 2: 1-3 Rebooting...** Creation is fully loaded, and now time for Sabbath, time for a reboot! What does it mean for our lives to intentionally reboot with God weekly?
- 4. Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 Psalmist reloaded...** We are living stones joined together into Christ the head of the body. We are reloaded into something new. But this takes time.
- 5. 1 Peter 2: 2-10 Salvation loading...** In our prayers, in our psalms we can come to God to reload, relaunch, restart...
- 6. John 14: 1-14 There's no shortcut...** Jesus isn't simply a fact, Jesus is a person, a person we come to know. The full picture takes time to load even for those right next to Jesus. We uncover our own personhood, the personhood of God, and the personhood of one another over time. Our very identity is a gift we must unwrap.
- 7. Psalm 27: 14 Waiting for the Lord...** The load screen can be a place of anticipation but also a place of frustration! But take heart, it's worth the wait!

Typing... (Week 2, 10 May)

Introduction: It can be agonising, you're waiting for a reply from someone and all you can see is 'So-and-So is typing...' or perhaps the three bouncing dots. What are they going to say? You're in suspense. And then, the dots stop, and no message arrives and you're left hanging. This week we explore the moments in our lives when it seems like 'God is typing...' and the three dots are bouncing, but no message seems to be coming through...

Seeds to sow: What is our personal attitude to waiting? How does it make us feel? What are we waiting for God to say or do?

- 1. Acts 17: 22-31 Waiting on messages from an 'unknown God'...** Many of us in the world today live like the Athenians at Mars Hill — waiting on some divine intervention in our lives but not sure where to look for it. Perhaps we are reaching out for something, have glimpsed God, have a sense that there's something out there but we don't know where to start. And perhaps like the Athenians we keep returning to the same spot — hoping for the divine to speak to us in one place — when God is in fact God is working through the whole of creation to woo us, to demonstrate the gift of love.
- 2. Psalm 66: 8-20 Answered prayer... after a long wait...** This is a story of answered prayer that recognises the struggle, the adversity that comes from free will in a complex world. God has placed within us a heart of freedom that reflects God's own — our search for love is because we have a freedom design mechanism built into us. How does sharing our experience of faith help us through our times of waiting on God?
- 3. 1 Peter 3: 13-18 Suffering for doing good...** Life with Christ is not life inured to suffering. All human life has pain and disappointment and waiting. Many have waited and continue to wait a long time for mercy, for justice, for wholeness. But as Christ suffered and was reborn to newness of life — so that promise is extended to each of us, that suffering and shame and slander will not have the last word.
- 4. John 14: 15-21 God is closer than we know...** Waiting on God can leave us feeling like God is distant and remote — someone who only sends us intermittent texts. But the Holy Spirit abides in us, closer than we know. You could say the longing for one another, the longing for God, the longing for responses is deep in our very DNA. We are not orphans — in the fabric of our being we are held. God does not need words to speak to us.
- 5. Romans 8: 18-25 Creation groaning...** Longing and hope is part of the whole picture of nature, or reality itself. Longing for connection, longing for relationship, longing for love.
- 6. Romans 8: 26-27 The Holy Spirit intercedes...** When we come before God wordless, unsure what to type, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with wordless communication. We could perhaps say with the gifs, emojis and memes of our hearts!
- 7. Romans 4: 35-39 Inseparable.** Even when God feels quiet, distant, absent... God is always there and nothing can separate us from the love of God. We are inseparable.

Downloading... (Week 3, 17 May)

Introduction: Sometimes we are impatient with God to do a new thing when it is we ourselves who are thirled to an old way of doing things. Are we on the new operating system? Have we updated our firmware in a while? Are we in fact more bound to the specifics of the hardware than God is? Are we happy to rely on old glitchy software if it means we can keep an old ~~building~~ machine running? Or are we willing to install where God is calling us now. Because we need the resurrection software running and up to date. In this metaphor Communion keeps us connected, keeps us downloading!

Seeds to sow: Some questions for us to reflect on in our communities: What do we do that we have been doing for a long time and we could stop doing? And what is something we used to do that we could starting doing again?

- 1. Acts 1: 6-14 Time for a restart...** Jesus tells his disciples a new download is coming, that's going to change everything. Two men in white robes pop up and tell them they need to restart — what are they waiting for? Are we ready for a new download?
- 2. Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 New prophecy to download...** One of the roles of psalmists and prophets is to get us to check our downloads! When we are waiting for God in the wrong place we need a shake up. The problem is there's no shortage of pop-ups promising us quick fixes to download into our lives. But one of the things that makes the psalms so timeless is that they embed wisdom in worship — not just in how we think about God but in how we actively wait for God in praise and awe.
- 3. 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11 Security updates...** Many have tried to 'hack' Christianity and run their own malware on it throwing bugs into the system (see verse 8). But through all our struggles God offers us lifetime product support!
- 4. John 17: 1-11 A firewall from the Father...** Christ prays for the protection and care of his followers in the name of the Father.
- 5. Luke 3: 21-23 Dove download...** Jesus ministry doesn't start until 30 years into his life with the 'Dove download', launched in this beautiful moment. What must it have been like for Jesus to wait through these decades?
- 6. Romans 6: 1-14 Downloading newness of life...** Dying and rising with Christ through Baptism. Baptism can happen in an instant, but newness of life is a big download, it can take a while!
- 7. Acts 16: 16-34 Passing time, marking time...** Paul and Silas choose to pass the time with praying and singing as they wait on God. The jailer marks this incredible night through Baptism. As we wait on God how are we passing the time and making the time?

Expecting... (Week 4, 24 May)

Introduction: As we come to Pentecost we move from the digital metaphors of loading, typing and downloading to the physical — flesh, blood, fire — metaphors of birth and flame! Expectancy is not just a way of life, it is *the* way of life. Nothing arrives fully formed. No flame bursts into life without heat and oxygen and fuel. Creation took time to form and so does new creation. Life takes time to grow and so does new life. Birth takes time and so does rebirth...

Seeds to sow: “Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.” Sometimes in the midst of the waiting comes the ‘Suddenly moment’ a pivotal breakthrough. What has been your experience of being surprised by God in your life?

- 1. Acts 2: 1-21 Language is like fire!** After the wait it comes all in a rush! It is striking here the interplay between fire and language because language is a bit like fire. Both spread quickly, are hard to control and have the power to both take life and to save it, to comfort and shock. A new language of heaven, long expected and yet unexpected, bursts into life and spreads like wildfire!
- 2. Numbers 11: 24-30 Expecting and not expecting...** Eldad and Medad are caught off guard. It doesn't matter that Joshua doesn't expect it — God's prophecies don't come on our schedule or conform to our guest list.
- 3. Psalm 104:24-34, 35b Creation lives in expectation of God...** Waiting is in the fabric of reality, all of creation lives each moment in expectation.
- 4. 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 Living in expectation of gifts...** Are we living our lives in humble open handed expectation of the gifts God has for us?
- 5. Jeremiah 29: 10-14 Living in expectation of renewal...** God does not plan for our suffering and exile, but in our suffering and exile God plans for our renewal.
- 6. Psalm 130 Putting our hope in God...** A whole body, whole life expectation.
- 7. Philippians 4: 4-7 An expectant life...** A guide to living an expectant life.

Anticipating... (Week 5, 31 May)

Introduction: As our month on waiting comes to an end what are we anticipating? For ourselves, for our communities, for our churches, for our world? There is a pattern repeated often throughout scripture and in our lives is of waiting, receiving and sharing. What are we longing to receive? What are we longing to share?

This anticipation is tied up with an enigmatic idea about — ‘remembering the future’. In theology it is known as ‘proleptic anamnesis’ to partake of something before it’s fulfilment. This is often described as what happens when we take Communion. Living in this kind of understanding of life creates within us an understanding of the importance of the role the Church-universal is being called to play in the world.

Seeds to sow: What do you anticipate for this Connect group? What does the next year hold for it?

1. **Psalm 8 Anticipating majesty...** Are we tuned into the handiwork of God? Do we read the world around us as a majestic place packed with anticipation?
2. **2 Corinthians 13: 11-13 Paul’s parting shot: live in peace!** Where do we anticipate peace? How can we actively anticipate peace in our world?
3. **Matthew 28: 16-20 Anticipating disciples, anticipating baptism...** In our churches are we anticipating disciples, anticipating those coming to baptism? Or are we anticipating managed decline and increased irrelevance?
4. **Colossians 3: 1-17 Choosing patience...** What does an active patience looks like in our lives as we clothe ourselves in Christ?
5. **Romans 15: 13 Abounding in hope!** Does our anticipation, our hope, spill out of us, flowing through our lives?
6. **Philippians 4: 8-9 Anticipating the admirable...** In all our waiting in life are we anticipating the admirable all around us?
7. **Isaiah 6: 8 Anticipating the call...** Father God thank you for taking us on this journey and helping us to understand what it means to wait on you, to be guided by you, and to receive from you the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Here we are...