



On October 23-24, 2026, more than two dozen lay worship leaders of the Bermuda Nova Scotia and Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Councils met to explore the concept of EPIC Worship Leadership: Experiential, Participatory, Inclusive/Image Rich, and Connective. Also, during their time together they planned five services, one for each of the Sundays of Advent and Christmas Eve based on the idea/practice of holding space.

Hope, Peace, Joy and Love are the themes of the four Sundays and they offer opportunity to pause... to be present to the here but not yet, or as Parker Palmer calls it, "Living in the tragic gap -- a gap between the way things are and the way we know they might be. It is a gap that never has been and never will be closed. If we want to live nonviolent lives, we must learn to stand in the tragic gap, faithfully holding the tension between reality and possibility..." The practice is captured in a poem by respected scholar Walter Brueggeman, *The Grace and Impatience to Wait*:

In our secret yearnings
we wait for your coming,
and in our grinding despair
we doubt that you will.
And in this privileged place
we are surrounded by witnesses who yearn more than do we
and by those who despair more deeply than do we.
Look upon your church and its pastors
in this season of hope
which runs so quickly to fatigue
and this season of yearning
which becomes so easily quarrelsome.
Give us the grace and the impatience
to wait for your coming to the bottom of our toes,
to the edge of our finger tips.
We do not want our several worlds to end.
Come in your power
and come in your weakness
in any case and make all things new.
Amen.

As Jan Richardson writes, ““I cannot tell you how the light comes, but that it does. That it will. That it works its way into the deepest dark that enfolds you, though it may seem long ages in coming or arrive in a shape you did not foresee.” From: *How the Light Comes*

What we do in community on Sunday, especially during Advent is to hold space! We engage in the intentional act of being present to one another and to Mystery. We live in what Parker Palmer calls the tragic gap, the space between the world as we long for it to be and as it is. We practice commitment to the hard work of being in community with others. We practice accountability so to foster the conditions for trust and vulnerability.

May these services be for you a resource in your planning and holding space.

