

## S10 E12 - Advent Part 1

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Today's show sponsor is Kingdom Builders. Kingdom Builders creates opportunities for holy encounters for women. Their latest project is My Father's Garden. And I just want to share a little bit from this beautiful piece. Imagine that you have the capability to help a friend in such a way that her life is transformed. You are able to guide her down a path, where she finds freedom from the negativity she hears in the silence of her own thoughts. She has confidence in who she is as the woman of God. She stands strong in her unique design and bears the burdens of life knowing that she can find rest with her savior. Your friend would be eternally grateful for what you have done for her. In My Father's Garden, you have that friend and the woman being transformed is you. My Father's Garden is a place where we learn to love ourselves as God loves us, and see ourselves as God sees us. We see that we are beautifully and wonderfully made. And Heather had the joy of speaking at their conference in October, and she met the ladies who created this program and she testifies to the fact that they are on a mission and they are committed to walking with women in the light of God's love as He unveils their worth and authority. To purchase My Father's Garden or to learn more about Kingdom Builders, go to their website [buildingthroughhim.com](http://buildingthroughhim.com), use ABIDE2021 to receive a free shipping that's [buildingthroughhim.com](http://buildingthroughhim.com).

Hi and welcome to season 10 of the Abiding Together Podcast. We are so excited to have you with us this season. Abiding Together is a place where you can find connection, rest and encouragement on your journey with Jesus Christ. My name is Sr Miriam James Heidland, and every week I am joined by two of my dearest friends, Heather Khym and Michelle Benzinger. We talk about our life with Christ. We talk about big things, small things, beautiful things, sorrowful things. We laugh, we cry you'll fit right in. You are most welcome here. So please grab a cup of coffee, settle in and welcome home.

Hello, and welcome to this week's episode of the Abiding Together podcast, which can also be seen on our YouTube channel, and Happy Advent.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Happy Advent.

**Heather Khym:** Happy Advent.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Happy Advent, y'all. Even though we're not recording this in Advent, it's Advent .

**Heather Khym:** I know, we have a cute little....

**Michelle Benzinger:** Advent wreath. Yeah we're in season. I Just hope the world doesn't end before ...

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** If the world ends before, we'll edit that out.

**Heather Khym:** I don't think anybody will care about this video.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Happy Advent! Let's keep going

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** And I love the way everybody at Spirit Juice Studios did for building us a little set and making it all Adventy and just the beauty of it. And you guys are all glammed up, you know, like what's up?

**Heather Khym:** We've been getting pampered.

**Michelle Benzinger:** We have. Yeah, we love it, so it's been very nice.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** It has been very nice. So we are going to continue our four-part series. We've been doing our four-part series on daughter and then sister, and then we're going to take a little break from the identities and we're going to delve into, I'm still holding this hand. We're going to do a four part series on Advent. And maybe what we can do is we'll have Michelle kind of talk about your, this was your baby in that regard, this vision of, 'cause we had a couple different ideas for Advent, and then you settled on one that we're like Heather and I were like, that's a great idea. So do you want to share with everybody about that more launch into it.

**Michelle Benzinger:** When we originally did the four women Doctors of the Church, that series, which is really powerful, the restoring the beauty but it really came after the priest scandal, the one, one of the priest scandals that broke. And so when we were praying about this Advent, we had already had, we were going do something with the litany of Mary, different titles of Mary. And we really love that. We felt like that was it. But then the more we prayed into it, there was something that just wasn't flowing, we weren't in the flow. And the way I was praying about it and we went back to the vision of the four women doctors and how that series even came about was about all the nurses that were in world War II that were in the field hospitals. And they were the ones that doctors heal and doctors nurture and doctors. But there was something powerful about the war nurses in World War II that were on the front lines, you know, in this bloody messy war, they were the voices of care and nurture and healing in a deadly war. You know, and it's just things have gotten darker in the last year and a half, really last two years. Things have gotten darker. It's just that need again for the healing and nurturing of the doctors

and the healing and nurturing of our hearts. And I don't know about you, but I almost feel like there's like a dimmer and things are getting darker in the world, but that is not a reason for fear. That's actually a reason for hope because as things get darker, light gets brighter and that is our time for Advent, for time for doctors and healing and a time for the light will not overcome. I mean, the darkness will not overcome the light. And so we are going back to our women, the four women. So here we go, you know?

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Yeah, people have been commenting for a long time on that series. The Four women Doctors of the Church and.

**Michelle Benzinger:** They kind of stalk us I feel like those four women, you know.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** They do, yeah. And wasn't, who else did the women study the women doctors? Endow? Who else did?

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yeah, so they did a great study on the doctors. Mainly, it was Hildegard and some of the men doctors, but it's a beautiful, beautiful study 'cause Hildegard is not one that is well known and she's actually prolific and brilliant and one of my favorites, oh to read and so anything Endow does is really great. I think we've mentioned before their one on Edith Stein, it's probably one of the best that I've read, you know, it's brilliant, it's brilliant. So, yes.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** That is great. So we're going to talk today about hope and we have our first Advent candle lit and Advent I love the Latin, even the Latin root here, Advenire, which means to come to, so as the season encompassing our first, the four Sundays and weekdays that leading up to the celebration of Christmas. So some people are very strict about this. Like there are no Christmas hymns, there's no Christmas tree. I mean, some people are really very intentional about keeping the spirit of Advent that it's purple. It's a penitential season actually in the church. So it's a time of, you know, not like lent but it's a time of releasing things of repenting, of being purged of turning away from the world and turning toward Christ and preparing our hearts and quiet. And I remember our founder of our community would often speak about the quietness of Advent and making sure that our hearts are quiet so that we can receive, so that we can receive the Lord. And so I thought we would have two, I'm going to spring this on you right now, because as you're talking, I was thinking of Isaiah 61, that God, what we're going to read from the old Testament but I was also thinking the prologue of the gospel of John. And so we maybe, we can do two weeks of with Isaiah and then two weeks of the prologue of the gospel of John, which is really. stunning.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Beautiful.

**Heather Khym:** I love that.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** So let's go ahead and let's just read from Isaiah 61. And this is verses one to three. "The spirit of the sovereign Lord is on me because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners. To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God. To comfort all who mourn and provide for those who grieve in Zion. To bestow on them a crown of beauty, instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise, instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor."

**Heather Khym:** Amen.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Amen to that.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Amen.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Even for the display of his splendor, like the oaks of righteousness and the oil of gladness and like the preparation, this is the good news. This is the good news that as dark as the world is the light never has and it never will overcome it. It never will so. What about for you, Heather? What are some things that you're noticing in your heart as we kind of jump into this place?

**Heather Khym:** Well, that scripture in particular has really become a life scripture for me. Like I remember being in a personal time of prayer, it was probably like around like 1999 or something like that. And I, or 1998, I can't remember exactly. And I remember just that scripture coming to mind, the Lord led me there in my prayer. And I had never really heard it before or read it before myself and it struck me so deeply. Like I just felt the Holy Spirit's presence, like very strongly like pay attention to this Heather. And there's been that, I feel like that voice of God in my life at a few, like very pivotal moments where He said, "Pay attention, this is bigger than you." And so I remember being like, whoa, and so I was really praying with that scripture and like, wow, Lord, like, this is you. Like, you have come and like all these things and please come to me. And then Pope John Paul the second going into the Jubilee year announced this as kind of like the driving scripture for that year and I was like, whoa, like, this is just a lining on like, this is bigger than me.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yes this is big.

**Heather Khym:** You know, like it was like a whoa. And we got married in the year 2000. So that scripture was a part of our wedding as well. But I would say now I look back and I'm like, I didn't even have a clue, even though I knew just the unfolding of that in my own life as Jesus, as all of those things coming to me as a prisoner, like setting me free, being a light in my darkness, like, you know, inviting me like to be one who displays his glory. And then in turn, like feeling that call ever more deeper in my own heart of like, and I too am called to be Christ to the world. So I'm called to bring, you know, freedom to the captives and all, but I can't do that until I've experienced that first myself. And I think in the most dark times that we, and especially lately that we've all been going through in the world so much failure, so much disappointment, so much heartache, suffering and darkness and sin. Yeah, all I keep clinging onto is Jesus as our hope. Like He is the one who will never fail and the darkness is not too dark for him.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yes. Amen, amen.

**Heather Khym:** It is not too dark for him. So yeah, that's what's hitting me at first.

**Michelle Benzinger:** So good, so good. And I think I go back to, we actually have it on a mug in our shop, the people who have hope live differently from Pope Benedict like you love that saying. But, like I literally look at that mug almost at least once a week if I drink a cup of coffee out of it in the morning and it's just like something I really cling to, like when I'm clinging to my coffee, I cling to, okay, the people who have hope live differently. Am I living as a person of hope? Am I living where my person is rooted in the person who is hope, the Trinity who is hope? Am I, you know, doing that? Because I feel right now like that, some of areas do feel hopeless, you know, but I have to trust against trust, you know, have faith against like, just trust even when I can not see it. You know, the things unseen that the Lord is moving, doing and is still in control, you know. And his glory will be displayed. His glory will be displayed, you know, so.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** And Advent really is a season of great hope. We've talked about it before in our different series on Advent. We've had a lot over the last several years just.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Girl we are in season 10.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** I know, I mean its like the, especially our Advent series, like just the different ways it's unfolded. But we usually talk about how it's a season of hope and it's a season of light. And the light brings hope and literally in the Northern Hemisphere and the darkest time of the year, you know, the brightest light comes to shine. And I was thinking of St. Catherine of Siena, who you paired

up Michelle with hope and with the first candle of Advent. And just as we prepare to dive into this season and the quote that you have from her is that God is crazy in love with us. Which is so great. And we think of, I think of Saint Catherine of Siena, this fiery woman who loved so deeply and who lived like we do in a very broken time in the church, a broken time in the world. And she is somebody who spoke the truth in love. And she loved Christ deeply. And everything that she did came from this deep love of Christ, but she was one of the ones who convinced the Pope to come back to Rome. I mean, we can't even imagine the fracture in the church and the warring different sects in Italy at the time that the political factions in the church in France and all the different places. And that would you talk about being dismayed. Losing hope, but here's somebody who not only has hope as she goes and actually implores the holy father to come back to Rome and she's calling people to task with great love, but very, very seriously, very soberly saying, this is, we're not messing around with sin. She could smell sin on people. We are not messing around with sin. She'd tell people to repent, tell them to go to confession, tell them to convert. And it came out of a deep place of love for her and what a sign of hope for people.

**Heather Khym:** And her words were so prophetic because as we've really kind of rediscovered her again and dove deeper into her with the Doctors of the Church series, gosh as we read through her words and her, the things that she said to the Popes and just the things that she wrote, I'm like, this is true now. Like, this is so true now, we need this voice now. And, you know, who is God raising up now to speak these words in the church and to people and to let those words penetrate our own hearts first. You know, of course, but yeah, incredible.

**Michelle Benzinger:** And it's funny because when we did the original series of Doctors of the Church, we were gearing it more towards the scandal, the brokenness in the church with the Pope not being back in Rome and all this kind of stuff. Like we kind of brushed over the fact when Catherine was living the black plague was happening, like this huge plague that was happening, that literally she spent most of her time at the beginning in a hospital nursing people, like that was a beautiful thing. Like she was like a mother, a nurse in the hospital taking care of people. So even praying about the doctors this time, I'm like, oh my goodness, how fitting is that? You know, and I was listening to a talk and it was fascinating to me where this was a, actually a Protestant professor, a brilliant professor, but he was talking about that the world looks really dark right now and people are, you know, more of a doomsday thing. And he was saying, the world has always been dark. The difference is that we can see it all now on social media, you know? And he said like, he's from England. He said, you mean to tell my parents, like, that we're waking up in the middle of the night, we're woken up in the middle of the night, taking to bomb shelters because they were getting bombed, you know, by Germany, like all these different things in the middle of the night. Like if that was on Instagram now,

like you would be thinking, so this is the worst thing that's like, but it's not that the world has gotten darker, I think is that we're exposed to so much. Like, I feel like we're almost, it's like an assault. Yes, like an assault to our senses an assault. And not that we should be like, just bury our head in the sand, but also we're like, okay, you know, taking a step back. I was telling you all, like I was flying yesterday or two days ago, how long have we been.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** I don't know.

**Heather Khym:** It's been several weeks now.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** that day when you were flying. Whenever that was.

**Heather Khym:** I think it's been two days.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Thank you. And so the, when I was flying, that happened right the day after, basically two days after Hurricane Ida had hit. And so we were still getting bands of the storm. And so the pilot that was driving us literally said, "Hey, I'm going to get you guys to Atlanta, hold on." Like basically we're going and he made us open up our windows.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** t's just, this is so great, I love it.

**Heather Khym:** Preacher pilot.

**Michelle Benzinger:** I totally could tell he loved flying, which I love anyone that loves what they're doing. And he's like, open up your windows, just like, look over to the right. And he said, "You could see that storm right there. That's like the last band or whatever." And he was using more technical terms. And He said, "Hold on two or three minutes." And then we kept on, you know, going up higher. And he said, "Look, like we broke through the clouds." And it was like the darkest thing and then all of a sudden pure sunlight and the clouds and things, he said, "if you hold on and go up higher, the light is always there." And I'm like, if that is not a prophetic word for us in the season. If you hold on and go up higher, the light is always there. He's always there, you know.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** I was thinking also of the transcending power of just, of the good news. Like this Isaiah 61 that is a good news. Christ is a good news. Advent is the good news. And one of my friends, we were talking about kind of some of these realities, one of my friends was pointing out that in the past news, when things happened, you didn't have instantaneous knowledge of it. So something would happen, but you would find out like the horse, the mail guy on



horse would come and bring you like a sealed little letter, like in pride and prejudice, you know, on a silver tray and you'd be like, oh, a week ago, somebody died, you know. Or it was a month ago, or you heard about a war or the black plague. I mean, so this person died. And so there was like a bit of a distance from it. And you couldn't see all the graphic details. And you just think of like the impact of news of what that does that we can, you know, people were on the ground in Afghanistan filming the horrendous things that were happening like and you were seeing it in live. And so, I mean, it's just.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Real time yes.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** It's hard to even, so it's like this traumatization of the suffering of this magnified across the world of something that people all share in which was not necessarily bad. But I was just thinking of that reality of it can be like an addiction, like the addiction to the darkness, addiction to this whereas the good news comes in the darkest places, but it emanates outward and it continues to emanate forth that it's not something that's like, oh, what's the next thing, you know. Okay, I consume that on social media and I'm done with that. The new cycle is so quick, right? The thing that seems like the biggest thing a day later, they don't even mention it anymore. And so people get lost in the shuffle, but the good news of Christ has emanated through all eternity and it still to this day is like the oil of gladness, is like the gentle, it's like, it is Christ coming in the darkness being born, a baby being born, poor naked, being born in a stable. It's such a different thing than the sensational, like in your face, do something about it right now. And in that regard of, you know, what's happening to us, like the assault upon our hearts many times.

**Heather Khym:** Yeah, and I do believe that that's a big part of why so many people now are suffering from depression and anxiety. We're not made for this. We're not made to carry as human beings and people who are sensitive and especially part of the feminine genius of women, like the sensitivity to people, to situations, to heart, to harm, to hurt. Like, I just think we're not made for this to hear this many traumatic events happening all throughout our day in real time, because it's not just one thing. It's usually 10 things in a day. Plus you have your own life. That's like happening right before your eyes. And I think, yeah, it's taking a toll on people's hearts more than we can understand. And it's not as if, you know, there's okay, we'll give you this for 30 seconds and we're going to have a commercial break and just preach the good news about Jesus Christ and how He's still on the throne and He still reigns and that He is with the poor and the broken and close to us there. Like the, it's not even compared like you can't compare the two messages that are coming out in the world. There's no balance in this. So if we don't seek out Jesus as our hope, Jesus, the truth of Jesus as the light in the darkness who has come to set the captives free. If we aren't intentionally seeking that out, having that proclaimed



like into our hearts, like in mass, like during this Advent season, always the readings are incredibly beautiful, you know, but to allow that to be preached in our hearts, but for us also to proclaim that then. Yeah, I mean, we're going to be at a huge deficit if we continue that way. And I don't think we can maintain that, it's not sustainable.

**Michelle Benzinger:** I don't think we can maintain it and it's not sustainable. And I think that this Advent, like you were saying, it is a hidden time. It is a quiet time. It's a time of preparation. So how do we prepare our hearts like in the words of St. Catherine of Sienna?

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Yeah read that quote, its so great. I love it.

**Michelle Benzinger:** When she says, "The love of Christ embraces all without exception, fire of love, crazy over what you have made, oh, Divine Madman." Like, you know, it's crazy love. I remember this is one of my favorite quotes. And I remember Bishop Barron wrote a meditation on it or someone wrote a meditation on it for word on fire and they used the Beyonce song Crazy in Love. And I remember thinking about it, that's how, you know, he's crazy in love with us. Like, he's so crazy love with us that He sent his son to take on flesh and blood. And He sent his son to take on our wounds and He sent his son to incarnate himself in flesh to save us because He was crazy in love and it is a Madman. You know, but when people are in love, they do crazy things. My husband and I were talking about how like, we would stay up on the phone to all hours of the night. Like sometimes you fall asleep just to listen to the person breathe, like come on. Now ee're like, okay baby, I gotta go to bed.

**Heather Khym:** You're like, I love you but.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Goodnight. Exactly, but you're like, oh, you know, but like you do those things when you're crazy in love. You travel, you go to any lengths, distances because, oh, you just need to be so close to the, you know. I mean, like we would drive somewhere like crazy hours just to be five hours with one another, you know, just to have that kind of thing but that's how he feels about us. But one thing my spiritual director always reminds me. He said, the quieter you get when you enter into solitude and you enter into silence with solitude, he said, especially he said, especially a woman's soul expands. It becomes great and it becomes vast. And then a mentor asked that I just really love asked me the question like is this a question to gauge your life? So she said, Michelle, you need to always constantly ask your question is my own person, my marriage, my family good news to the world?

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Say that again.

**Michelle Benzinger:** He said is my person, is my marriage, is my family, good news to the world. Not perfect news, but good news to the world. And if it is not, why? What needs to be redeemed? What needs to be restored? Where is it in that process? Are you in the process of the resurrection? Like, are you on Good Friday? Are you on Holy Saturday just waiting? Are you on a resurrection period? But where does it like? Because that it needs to be, the good news has to be personal. It has to be personal. Advent has to be personal. He came for you, He came for each one of us and He would've come if it was only us, you know? And that's good news, yeah.

**Heather Khym:** Yeah, I've heard too that some people give up something for Advent. Like not in the same way as Lent.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yes because it is a penitential time.

**Heather Khym:** Yeah, and I was like, wow, like there's some things that I haven't considered before. And I think because often Advent feels very busy to me, it's like, oh, busy in school things and plays and, you know, all the Christmas parties, like all that kind of stuff, yeah. So you're like, okay, like life is happening and it doesn't mean you have to cancel everything that's going on but how in the midst of that, can we still make space? Like make room, like have something that creates longing within our hearts that we're maybe depriving ourselves up for a time so that we can feel the longing, which is really supposed to be like the longing for the savior, you know, just meditations within that even if you are going out and you have busy things to do that you can still maintain that inner place with the Lord, the secret place where you are opening wide the door to him, yeah.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** We have to do that. We have to do that. We were talking to a few episodes in our show about we can't control everything, but what's something we can do. Like what is something we can do that keep that intention in our heart. Make a good confession this Advent. Make a good confession.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Cause that's making some room!

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** It's making some room and unlike anything else we're going to do, that is prepare him room. I mean, so it's not just, I mean, we go to confession often, but, you know, we talk about lent but holy cow, make a good confession this Advent. A lot of places do have penance services at your local parishes. Just go see your local priest, make a good confession, make time for silence where you're carving out some more time for silence and to, like our founder

was saying it just to travel with Joseph and Mary, to travel with them in this last month and to travel with them to Bethlehem and to really ask Jesus to quiet our hearts and to fill us with the hope of his love. And that's how we live differently. Otherwise, it's so easy to be a consumer in everything. And then Christmas day happens then the next day, the Christmas trees out in the front yard and we're like, yeah, what's next? And that's not, there's the octave of Christmas and there's a Christmas season. It's just like, the church has so much more for us I think than we even understand or are able to absorb and to really do that, we have to prepare our hearts well, so oh come oh come Emmanuel so that he may, God with us can come.

**Heather Khym:** Yeah, it's one of the easiest times to enter into the season, into the mystery and to these themes, like the darkness, the light, even the Christmas lights in the darkness. Like the quiet, the stillness, if you're in a place that where there's snow, like when the quiet comes of the snow, like just those little things, the gentleness of the season. I think it's really easy to enter in. And I think all three of us it's become our favorite.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Oh, absolutely.

**Heather Khym:** I think lent used to be, but I'm less hardcore now.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** We can talk about that later. I'm like, what's up with people who like lent? I mean, I do it. It's important, but...

**Michelle Benzinger:** You don't get a blanket lent. Having a blanket, it gets cozier. I don't know.

**Heather Khym:** Yeah, but we can enter in, even when we know, oh, I've done this before, there's always something new. In every season you're a different person encountering maybe the same message. But when the Holy Spirit's on that, like it can hit you really differently.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yeah, and what you were just saying sister, like the, like going through the season in a rush, but really like if you rush the season, you miss the richness of the season, like you don't rush a rich meal or something good, you savor. You know, and there's a richness in this liturgical season that we have to savor and that we have to experience. And I think for whatever that is like, it is a season of fasting, but is it a season to fast from something that's distracting? So you can really savor the richness of the season. It's not a season like it's not a fasting to give up. It's an invitation to enjoy the richness of the season to enter in fully in a deeper way, you know, and to see like we've said before in our Advent season, what does the Holy Spirit want to birth in you this season? He's always doing something new.

You're coming as a different person, a different time. You know, how is he going to expand our hearts? How is the Madman going to love us madly and crazily in this season of Advent this year?

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Yeah, the particular presence I was thinking of, even as we kind of finish this episode of even just the small things of, as you make Christmas cookies with your kids, it's like putting your phone away, just being present to them and just making cookies together or just talking about your day and what happened and let's go for a walk and if, you know, if it's still fall or whatever, let's go for a walk, let's bundle up. Let's just go for a walk and let's just have some good conversation where it's not so scattered, but the really the small things that are enjoyed that can be savored and I think those are the things that we, as we go more deeply and we ask for Christ to open his heart for us, that's what brings hope, you know.

**Heather Khym:** And I really think like, especially if you have children, it's a great time to start introducing little traditions. That you have Advent traditions so you can start that, you know, this being the first week of Advent, like I love that book by Ann Voskamp. And it's like a daily devotion with, like it's a big picture book that your kids can go through with you.

**Michelle Benzinger:** About the Jesse Tree, yeah, it's beautiful.

**Heather Khym:** So good. But yeah, other little things you can do a little devotions and whatnot, but I think that's important and it's important to draw children in and they, you know, have the wonder of the season as well, but they can teach us too, but that we can teach them.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Yeah, so here we go. Here we go into Advent. So Heather, would you like to share with us your one thing for this first week of Advent.

**Michelle Benzinger:** I'm gonna grab my one thing, you go start sharing.

**Heather Khym:** Oh, Michelle has to grab her one thing. This is exciting.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** She's like an overachiever right here people. All right, we just... We just have little hands.

**Heather Khym:** We're just little.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Little hands are still here.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** It's advent and they're still here.

**Heather Khym:** My one thing is an Advent playlist that I made just to help everybody on their journey this Advent to enter into the season to just offer some prayerful song reflections on waiting and on the season of Advent, yeah. Okay, Michelle.

**Michelle Benzinger:** So mine is, you can even see it from the video, it's called seeing Christmas and by a really good friend of mine, Karen Stacy, but it fits perfectly with our theme basically in the rush and hurry of Christmas to stop and see the things that are important. Like to stop to see the light of Jesus. It's such a great, and I'm a big children's book fan. So like anything that you can have for that. So it is called, Seeing Christmas by Karen Stacy. And I will put the link in our show notes.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Can you read it to us later? Heather and I can gather.

**Heather Khym:** Oh yes, I need that.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Be all cozy, yes here we go.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** My one thing for the week is a book that's finally out. I've been talking about it. It's a book called Be Restored by Dr. Bob Schuchts. And you talked about a book. It's deep but also brings hope of healing, especially in the area brokenness and sexuality. If you're looking to really make a deep dive, it's not the book about Advent by any means, but it's, if you're looking for something like I want to read something really deep and spend some time in healing this Advent season, I would highly recommend the book Be Restored. I cannot wait for just the level of freedom and healing it's going to bring and the immense hope of Christ and the areas of some of our deepest brokenness, his light, the light of Christ shine so deeply, so Be Restored by Dr. Bob Schuchts. I'm so proud of him and just, this is his life work easily. It's just really great, so yeah. So Happy Advent friends. Make sure you get an Advent wreath and make that part of your tradition and maybe a little Advent calendar where with your kids, you open up the door everyday maybe there's something inside.

**Heather Khym:** It's my favorite.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** You do you still have one?

**Heather Khym:** We do it still, we are. It might just be for me at this point.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** I know, it's okay. It's okay, mama. And once again, we'll just read the quote from Saint Catherine of Sienna, "the love of Christ embraces all without exception, fire of love, crazy over what you have made, oh Divine Madman." So we just pray Lord that at this first week of Advent, that you would set up a creche in our hearts, that you would help us make room for you, that we would prepare a soft bed for you to come and rest. We pray that you would open up the spaces in our hearts in a very, very deep and holy way. We pray for a blessing upon all of our families, all the people that we are on the journey with and our whole listener community. We just thank you Lord for being the light and the darkness and the hope of all of our hopes. And we just ask that you be with us during this time in a very special way, Lord, and we make this prayer through Christ, our Lord, amen. Saint Catherine of Sienna, pray for us. Pray for us, all right. Happy Advent y'all, until next week we'll be abiding together. God bless you, see you then.

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