

*Advent 1 C - Stir up your power, Lord Jesus, and come.*

*By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit one God now and forever.*

## When did God stir you up in the past year, last week or days?

**+Bishop Jon V. Anderson**

In August, Robyn and I were able to go to visit our son, Sean, who works in Washington, D.C. I was deeply troubled and stirred up by many things there. I found myself wondering if I was doing enough to engage the political issues of our time as I remembered significant challenges in the history of our country and world. I found myself wondering why I was not more involved as a disciple of Jesus in working persistently for justice in our democracy.

Two places where God grabbed my heart and mind were in the [National Museum of the American Indian](#) and even more so in the [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#). Both are amazing museums that tell the beautiful and horrifying story of human history. They are both reminders of our broken human nature. As I learned more about all the different communities of native people and their history, I began to wonder why these histories were not shared more deeply in my education.

While you go down through the layers of the museum of the American Indian, you cannot escape the fact that native people's lives were deeply and negatively impacted by the arrival of my ancestors and most of yours in the great migrations of people from Europe and other parts of the world. The American Indian Museum helped me better understand the many native peoples or "first nation" people. As I learned more about the history of what happened across our country in these encounters and eventually clashes I became heartsick at how this mostly sad history unfolded.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum tells the haunting story of how a racist political movement could lead to "the final solution" that killed millions for their ethnic identity. It also spawned a war that took millions of lives. It continues to echo in my mind and memory today.

I have become more and more convinced that how we talk really matters and that racist speech, hate speech and even careless speech about people is dangerous and needs to be challenged.

After serving in Texas I know how slippery and insidious my own racism can be. I do not stand above others but know that I am broken in this and other ways. I understand more about the impact of personal and communal prejudice through the eyes of my neighbors and the odd places this calling puts me. As individuals, a culture and as a church we have deep work to do to make a better future and become even more of a multi-ethnic church.

As you enter the National Holocaust Museum you receive papers for one of the persons who died in the holocaust. It reminds you that this event destroyed particular human lives. Actions and lack of actions led to a sad wound in human history. It is one of many.

Our sins in every sphere of life are more dangerous than we want to face.

The reality of evil in us and in our community and in our country is frightening when it bubbles out into plain sight. But it is always stewing below the service and twisting us and our communities whether we see it or not.

"Redeem us for your life of justice" – the prayer for the first Sunday of Advent asks.

I don't trust my personal or our communal improvement projects, but I do trust the one who loves us enough to work in decisive and unique ways to make us whole and redeem the whole of creation. If there are deep forces for darkness at work in this world, God's promises in Jesus, reveal an even more powerful and deep force and source of light and hope.

In Advent we face the brokenness of our lives and world and pray,

“Dear God stir us up and guide us to become the ones you made us to be. Call and send us to step into those tipping moments where words and actions can make all the difference. Through your Spirit guide us. Amen. “

*Advent 2 C - Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son.  
By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and  
Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*