



A thrill of HOPE?

Advent Devotional

"In Advent we celebrate the beginnings and endings of Christ's victory over the power of evil, and we call upon God to accomplish that victory in our own lives, to break in on us, to be born in our hearts and to create us anew"


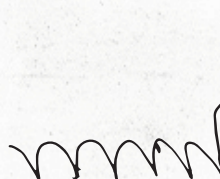

**ROBERT WEBBER,
ANCIENT FUTURE TIME**



With Christmas fast approaching, anticipation is in the air! There is excitement for time with family and friends, relaxation from school and work, and the tradition of gift-giving. While this season brings much joy, it also produces busyness, anxiety, and a spirit of consumerism. Advent offers us the invitation to slow down and approach Christmas in a different way. It is a time to wait, be open, and set aside our rhythms of cold indifference, allowing God to break into our lives. Advent is a time when God breaks in with new surprises and touches with a renewing and restoring power!

Dear Local Family,

In the midst of the hype of the Christmas season, Advent asks us to remember, reflect and recognize our need for a savior; our desperate need for hope. Hope is different from hype. Worldly hype eventually lets us down, but biblical hope does not disappoint. The Christmas season offers all kinds of hype: presents and parties, cheery songs and heartwarming movies. Hype isn't bad, it just can't satisfy. Hype is short-lived. Hope lasts forever. **In Advent, we realize that hope has a name.** His name is Jesus. He is the promised one who has entered into the story and into our world to bring hope and healing to people who desperately need it. Advent brings a thrill of hope, and the announcement of Advent is simple: **hope is here.**





Christmas isn't about a present; it's about a person. Jesus is the gift who brings light and life to a world that is often too busy to hear His voice and recognize His presence. In Advent, we find the space to slow our hearts and lean in to listen to the beautiful truth that God is with us--and is breaking into our lives anew.

This booklet is an invitation for you to engage with Jesus through His Word, speaking and listening to Him in prayer with intentional experiences during the weeks of Advent. We hope that interacting with these intentional rhythms will help create space for you and/or your family to slow down and embrace hope, peace, joy, and love.

Are you a parent? You have the greatest influence on the faith formation of your children. It is our prayer that these invitations to engage with these various rhythms would help your family slow down, reflect and connect with Jesus, as well as each other, this Advent season.

You'll find encouraging and unique ways to pray, engage, and reflect —both individually and collectively — on what it means to anticipate Christ breaking into our world at His birth and upon His return.

May you, your family, and your Local Group all find rest and renewal as we anticipate God's hope, peace, joy, and love this Advent season.

Grace + Peace
The Local Church Team



*"A thrill of hope a weary world rejoices.
For yonder breaks A new and glorious morn."*

CONTENTS

WEEK 1: HOPE

REFLECTION	6
AROUND THE TABLE	8
ACTIVITY	9

WEEK 2: PEACE

REFLECTION	10
AROUND THE TABLE	12
ACTIVITY	13

WEEK 3: JOY

REFLECTION	14
AROUND THE TABLE	16
ACTIVITY	17

WEEK 4: LOVE

REFLECTION	18
AROUND THE TABLE	20
ACTIVITY	21

EXTRAS:

MORNING & EVENING PRAYERS	26
DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS	28





Make the Most of this Devotional

Engage with this booklet daily, Monday through Friday. While you can go through it as an individual, you'll get the most from the content if you can read and discuss with family, your Local Group, or with a close friend or roommate.

MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS

Carefully crafted prayers you can use as often as you'd like, individually, with your family, or with your Local Group.

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

A reflection for the beginning of each week that sets up the theme (hope, joy, peace, love) and prepares your heart for how God might want to speak to you.

AROUND THE TABLE

A simple and short time each day to engage with God and scripture, hopefully around a table with family or friends.

ADVENT ACTIVITY

Special time for yourself, your family, or your Local Group to experience and reflect on the season of Advent through unique activities.

WEEK 1



HOPE (EVEN JESUS HAD TO WAIT)

By Jordan Koller

"I should be an expert at waiting by now."
Have you ever thought that before?

With all the years behind me, all the events and experiences I've had to wait for, you would think I would have the whole waiting thing down by now. I've waited for many things:

- As a child, waiting for Christmas morning to arrive so I could open the gifts waiting for me
- Waiting for the day I could get my driver's license and have my own car (freedom!)
- Day after day of school, then college, waiting for that summer break to have a moment of freedom from homework
- Becoming engaged and waiting for the wedding day to arrive and see to my bride in her wedding dress
- Counting down the days expectantly, waiting for a family vacation to relax and unwind
- Waiting for test results to come back to know what might change my life
- Waiting those nine months for each of my children to be born and see them in person for the first time

The list goes on...I'm sure you have your own. Big things and small things.

Now, I find myself owning a home that needs remodeling and lots of fine-tuning to become the place my family wants it to be. When we bought the home, we knew it would take work and lots of it. Our mentality was simple: Work on it as we could, when we could, and as we could afford it, and over time it would all get done. All of it...but not all at once. We would have to wait.

I find myself often revisiting my to-do list as the weeks and months tick by. Once one project is done, another is waiting to take its place...and another, and another. I look around at the things that need to be fixed, worked on, and made right around me and know that someday, those things will be fixed and they will become better. For now, I have to wait.

As we step into the Advent season, I am thankful for the way that Advent reminds us that waiting is good for us. After all, Jesus had to wait.

The Advent season reminds us to slow down, to anticipate, to look for the little things, to drink in hope and peace and love in a season of business and stress. We are reminded to let our hearts and minds dwell on the Messiah who was to come (and how we wait for Jesus to come again).

We remember those who waited for the birth of a Savior, for the one who would bring light to a dark world. They had hope, in their waiting, that this Savior would come and make all things right. But if we move just past that miraculous event just a bit we are met with another reality: Jesus had to grow up. He didn't start his ministry for some odd 30 years.

That means that Jesus had to wait. Wait...really?

We don't think about that often. Jesus had to wait.

Why would that be? God could have immediately made things right in the world and put everything in place. He could have somehow fashioned Jesus to act sooner, to live faster, to be older — any other crazy idea you could think of — any of it was possible for the God of all creation to do. And yet, Jesus was born into a human family and had to grow up. He was a toddler. He was a tween. He went through puberty (sorry, I know). He had to learn and explore and spend days working and living and eating and sleeping and doing chores and helping the community around him — so many things as he waited for his time to arrive.

I like to think about how, in the waiting, Jesus lived his life among the people he would one day save. Much like my house that needs remodeling, Jesus spent his life growing up around the very people who were sick, diseased, broken, dying, and in need of a savior. He saw it all around him, all the time, for years and years, and he had to wait to do something about it. He knew these people were just looking for hope, somewhere, somehow. Jesus was that hope; there was hope in the waiting. Jesus looked around him and knew that some day, those people would be fixed, that they would be made right, that they would be saved. One day, but not right now. There was waiting, and there was hope in the waiting.

And so, if Jesus had to wait, we certainly can.

No matter what it is you find yourself waiting for today, we can rest knowing that hope finds a place in our waiting. We hope for what's to come. When we wait with Jesus, that hope is never wasted. Maybe right now you just need to be reminded to slow down and think about Jesus deeply for a moment, let the waiting do its work, and know that one day, all will be right.





Around The Table

ADVENT CANDLE

Light the first candle at the table this week.

MONDAY ONLY: After you light the candle, tell your child how you shared the good news of their birth (or arrival in your family) with others. - OR - If you do not have children, share a funny or crazy way you have seen people reveal the gender of their child or announce a pregnancy.

READ

MONDAY	_____	Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19, Mark 1:1-8
TUESDAY	_____	Isaiah 64:1-9, 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
WEDNESDAY	_____	Psalm 85, Mark 1:9-11
THURSDAY	_____	Isaiah 6:8-13, Mark 1:14-15
FRIDAY	_____	Psalm 119:25-48, Mark 13:24-37

REFLECT

MONDAY

What does hope mean? How does God give us hope? How do we pass it on or show it to others?

TUESDAY

What is one word or phrase that sticks out to you and why? What does God want me to think or know about Him through this Scripture?

WEDNESDAY

Advent is about waiting in anticipation for the arrival of Jesus the Messiah. Where did you have to WAIT for something this past week? What was it like?

THURSDAY

What do you think the Kingdom of God looks like? Like Isaiah, what do you think you have that God can use?

FRIDAY

Think about your week - your job, school, friends, etc. Where have you experienced or have been able to share the hope of Christ with someone either in a conversation or action?

PRAY

Pick a morning and evening prayer from pages 26-27, or use the Advent Season Prayer:

Lord Jesus, in this Advent season we wait eagerly for your arrival. Come fill our home with your hope, peace, love, and joy. The world isn't like you wanted it to be. Come, help us change. Bring us peace. We need you, Jesus. Break into our hearts and world. Come, Lord Jesus. Come.

Activity

Choose one person in your life (think of friends, family members, classmates, etc.) and write a personalized Christmas card of hope to them. Then, actually, place the card in an envelope, address and stamp it, and mail it! If your family is going through this devotional together, each person should write a card.



WEEK 2

ABUNDANT PEACE

By Lindsey Hoffman

"And the angel came to her and said, 'Rejoice, favored woman! The Lord is with you.' But she was deeply troubled by this statement, wondering what kind of greeting this could be." **LUKE 1:28-29 HSCB**

When you think of the word peace, what comes to mind?

I used to think peace was the absence of hard, the absence of conflict or strife in any form. The vision of a placid lake, so smooth you can see the perfect reflection of everything surrounding it- serene, ideal, perfectly calm.

But the longer I live, and experience life with Jesus in the midst of this broken world, the more I can relate to Mary in this passage



from Luke. Mary receives this abundantly beautiful, yet terribly perplexing news and she is immediately questioning. The Prince of Peace is quite literally about to dwell inside of her, and instead of being overcome with a peaceful calm, she is wondering what this could possibly mean for her.

Peace is not the absence of hard, it's the presence of God in the midst of it.

The very essence of Jesus, born as a baby, the light of the world transcending the darkness, is the perfect picture of peace. He entered the world, right in the midst of confusion and uncertainty. Offering Himself to us in unexpectedly glorious ways. The peace He bears is all-encompassing and makes no rational sense. It's a baby born of a virgin, to a willing but scared mother. It's an impossibly beautiful miracle right in the midst of pain and darkness. It's hearing



unfathomable news and receiving the Spirit's presence—shalom peace—right in the midst of the swirling dark. The peace we deeply desire is given from a place of abundance, when all we can see is wilderness.

"For water will gush in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;

ISAIAH 35:6B HCSB

God transcends time and space and fills us with His immeasurably more, but not in the absence of darkness or hard—no. Rather, it's the darkest nights where He shines the brightest. It's in the moments of open-handed desperation, or a weak reach towards Him while it's still dark— with nothing to offer but a trembling yes. This is the place where The light clashes with the dark and suddenly we begin to experience the miracle of Advent unfolding in our midst.

His unexpected, glorious peace.

"Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true."

LUKE 1:38 NLT

Friends, as we enter into this second week of Advent, may you receive peace in the darkness. May you begin to know more deeply the person of Jesus and the peace He embodies. May you invite Him into the middle of your story, while it's still dark and uncertain. May you bring your questions and fears to Him. He will meet you right where you are. The night may feel long but He is the everlasting Prince of Peace.





Around The Table

ADVENT CANDLE

Light the first and second candles at the table this week.

MONDAY ONLY: Share about something that is stressing you out right now. Then pray that God would give you His peace this season.

READ

MONDAY	_____	Psalm 37:1-11, Luke 1:1-25
TUESDAY	_____	Isaiah 33:17-20, Luke 1:26-38
WEDNESDAY	_____	Isaiah 35:1-10, Luke 1:39-56
THURSDAY	_____	Psalm 63, Luke 1:57-66
FRIDAY	_____	Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11, Zephaniah 3:14-20, Luke 1: 67-80

REFLECT

MONDAY

What does peace mean? How does God give us peace? How do we pass it on or show it to others?

TUESDAY

What is one word or phrase that sticks out to you and why? What does God want me to think or know about Him through this Scripture?



WEDNESDAY

Advent is about waiting in anticipation for the arrival of Jesus the Messiah. Where did you have to WAIT for something this past week? What was it like?

THURSDAY

What do you think the Kingdom of God looks like? Like Isaiah, what do you think you have that God can use?

FRIDAY

Think about your week - your job, school, friends, etc. Where have you experienced or have been able to share the hope of Christ with someone either in a conversation or action?

PRAY

Pick a morning and evening prayer from pages 26-27, or use the Advent Season Prayer:
Lord Jesus, in this Advent season we wait eagerly for your arrival. Come fill our home with your hope, peace, love, and joy. The world isn't like you wanted it to be. Come, help us change. Bring us peace. We need you, Jesus. Break into our hearts and world. Come, Lord Jesus. Come.

Activity

Grab blankets and popcorn or your favorite snack, and watch a Christmas movie with your crew.

WEEK 3



FAITH > FACE

By Carly Stender

I stared at my feet as I sat in my counselor's office. They had been working so hard to take one step in front of the other lately. Why was it so hard to feel the joy and wonder of Christmas this year? I'm typically the one who has a house decked out in sparkles, snowflakes, and stockings while belting out Mariah Carey's "All I want for Christmas is You". Yup, I'm really that person. But this time around it took everything within me to get the decoration bins out of the basement. I kind of just wanted to hide down there with them.

Maybe you can relate. Or maybe you sense joy bubbling up in you during this season, and that is something worth celebrating! It's important and even beneficial for us, as believers, to fully unwrap the joy of the

Lord like a child opening gifts on Christmas morning. Take it all in and spread that joy all around! But I have had to be reminded that joy isn't a feeling as much as it is a practice that needs to be cultivated.

Have you ever pictured Jesus' face when he was tested in the desert before he started his ministry? I think it can be easy to assume that Jesus was always bright-eyed and smiling. That's why I've geeked out on the show, "The Chosen" because I love the way they depict Jesus' humanity. The show has invited me to get curious and imagine what Jesus may have felt like in different moments of hardship and how he carried that hardship in his body and face. When we read this story of Jesus being tested,





Satan came with lies and deception while Jesus was weak and vulnerable. Satan wanted him to put his trust elsewhere. But Jesus was resolute and responded with the promises and commandments of God. This is the way joy is cultivated. In times of weakness and despair, we, by faith, dig deep past the feelings, shame, and lies, into the promises and commandments of God. This doesn't mean we should ignore or stuff those feelings and trade them in for some kind of jolly Santa Claus kind of joy. Instead, we dig deep and stare darkness in the eye telling it that we will not be overcome! This Advent season, I want to ask us to consider something: what if joy isn't always expressed through our face, but through our faith? The kind of faith where even though you may not see God now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy (1 Peter 1:8)

So as you hear Christmas carols playing overhead at the store or on the radio in your car, remember there is another song being sung over you. "The Lord your God is with you, a mighty one who will save; He will take great delight in you; he will quiet you by his love; he will rejoice over you with loud singing" (Zephaniah 3:17). And this song is true whether your home is decked out with Christmas decor or whether it's still tucked away down in the basement.

Joy isn't sustained by presents, parties, and positivity; joy is sustained by a person and His promises that never fail.



Around The Table

ADVENT CANDLE

Light the first, second, and third candles at the table this week.

MONDAY ONLY: What is one of the best gifts you have ever received on Christmas? What made it special?

READ

MONDAY _____	Isaiah 11:1-11, 1 John 1:1-4
TUESDAY _____	Psalm 126, 1 John 2:1-6
WEDNESDAY _____	Psalm 49, 2 Peter 1:16-21
THURSDAY _____	Amos 9:11-15, John 1:1-18
FRIDAY _____	Isaiah 40:1-5, John 1:19-34

REFLECT

MONDAY

What does joy mean? How does God give us joy? How do we pass it on or show it to others?

TUESDAY

What is one word or phrase that sticks out to you and why? What does God want me to think or know about Him through this Scripture?



WEDNESDAY

Advent is about waiting in anticipation for the arrival of Jesus the Messiah. Where did you have to WAIT for something this past week? What was it like?

THURSDAY

What is one area or part of your life that Jesus is restoring right now? How can we be the light of Christ to those around us?

FRIDAY

Think about your week - your job, school, friends, etc. Where have you experienced or have been able to share the joy of Christ with someone either in a conversation or action?

PRAY

Pick a morning and evening prayer from pages 26-27, or use the Advent Season Prayer:

Lord Jesus, in this Advent season we wait eagerly for your arrival. Come fill our home with your hope, peace, love, and joy. The world isn't like you wanted it to be. Come, help us change. Bring us peace. We need you, Jesus. Break into our hearts and world. Come, Lord Jesus. Come.

Activity

Take a car ride or walk on foot to see Christmas lights and decorations in your neighborhood or community. As you are driving or walking, break out a pack of glow sticks. Have a Christmas dance party with upbeat Christmas music playing in your car or on your phone.

WEEK 4



A SLOPPY WET KISS?

By Carly Stender

"I love you sweetie", I said as I smothered my little girl with kisses before she went to bed.

"Ok, ok, mom, I got it", as she rubbed off the kisses. But she knows the routine. I'm going to keep kissing her if she keeps wiping them off. I hope my love for her never feels stale.

Whether you've grown up in the church or not, the idea of God's love can sometimes lose its potency. Maybe it's hard for you to believe and receive it, or maybe you've just become too familiar with the idea of His love. There are times when we need to choose to believe in God's love for us even when we don't feel it. But His love is also meant to be experienced and enjoyed, tasted and seen.

Do you remember when the song "How He Loves Us" was on repeat at churches all over the country back in the early 2000s? Ok, maybe some of you had just been born around that time while I was off living the good ol' college days; but hey, it's still listed in the top 10 worship songs of the 2000s! If you haven't heard it before, look up the John Mark McMillan version, it's the original one! There were varying reactions to his lyrics, "so heaven meets earth like a sloppy wet kiss", and I get it. It's kind of out there and is so different from what we are used to with our typical pragmatic ways of relating to God. But maybe that's exactly the point. Maybe we've gotten so used to the idea of a methodical kind of love that we've missed the unreserved, unrelenting, and unconditional love of God.



God has always been in pursuit of us; that's why He sent Jesus. Emmanuel, God with us. Love embodied for us. He is truly everything we've been longing for.

Just like love came in an unexpected way as a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, what are some ways you can look for God's love to meet you in unexpected ways this season?

When we experience more of God's love for us, it changes us to the core. Love compels us to have eyes to see others in light of God's love. How can you embody God's love and extend it to someone else during this Advent season? Is it leaving baked goods for the delivery driver? Or making Christmas cards for your neighbors? Or slowing down to check in with a friend that's having a hard time this season?

So maybe God doesn't come at us with a sloppy wet kiss, or perhaps he does. Either way, I think he feels what I feel toward my kids to an even greater measure. He doesn't want us to wipe off his kisses, although He'll gladly keep pouring out more of His affection. He wants us to take it all in! He doesn't want His love to become old news to us, but the best news that we get to receive again and again.

In this Advent season, may we be people that receive God's love fully, and also people that extend it fully to those around us.



Around The Table

ADVENT CANDLE

Light the first, second, third, and fourth candles at the table this week.

MONDAY ONLY: With your family, small group, or roommates, have each person share one thing that they love about each other. It can be something silly or something really significant. Close this time with a group bear-hug (we know, cheesy!) and remember that as much as you love one another, God loves you more.

READ

MONDAY	_____	Psalm 148:8, Matthew 22:36-40
TUESDAY	_____	Isaiah 42:16 ; Romans 8:28-39, Luke 15:1-31
WEDNESDAY	_____	Isaiah 41:10-14; 1 Peter 4:8, Matthew 24:1-14
THURSDAY	_____	Isaiah 28:14-22, Matthew 23:37-39, Revelation 21:1-5
FRIDAY	_____	Isaiah 9:1-7, Matthew. 1:18-2:23

REFLECT

MONDAY

What does love mean? How does God give us love? How do we pass it on or show it to others?

TUESDAY

What is one word or phrase that sticks out to you and why? What does God want me to think or know about Him through this Scripture?

WEDNESDAY

Advent is about waiting in anticipation for the arrival of Jesus the Messiah. Where did you have to WAIT for something this past week? What was it like?

THURSDAY

How has God been WITH YOU this advent season?

FRIDAY

Think about your week - your job, school, friends, etc. Where have you experienced or have been able to share the love of Christ with someone either in a conversation or action?

PRAY

Pick a morning and evening prayer from pages 26-27, or use the Advent Season Prayer: **Lord Jesus, in this Advent season we wait eagerly for your arrival. Come fill our home with your hope, peace, love, and joy. The world isn't like you wanted it to be. Come, help us change. Bring us peace. We need you, Jesus. Break into our hearts and world. Come, Lord Jesus. Come.**

Activity

Bake a batch of Christmas cookies (no shame if you grab a tube from the grocery fridge section!). Share a snack with a friend and maybe take some to a neighbor.

Christmas DAY

AROUND THE TABLE

ADVENT CANDLE

Light all four of the candles.

READ: Isaiah 9:6

SHARE: Jesus' name means "the Lord is salvation"! Share with each other what your name means (Google is your friend for this). Then share the story behind your name if you know it. Finally, light the Christ candle.

READ

If you are with your family or Local Group, take turns reading the following passage out loud.



In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

LUKE 2:1-20



REFLECT

What makes Jesus's birth "good news"?

PRAY

ALL TOGETHER SING OR RECITE THE FOLLOWING PRAYER:

Christ is born!
Praises to our Creator God, who became flesh for us most fully
in Jesus, Incarnate Word
To become one of us, human, yet divine

Christ is Born!
My Heart sings that the time of waiting is over.
The light has overcome the darkness as
the true gift from God has arrived

Christ is born!
Praises to our Creator God, who is as close as the love that binds
us, one to another,
Filling us with awe and wonder at such miracles

Christ is born!
Help us to live the joy of Jesus' birth this and every day,
knowing that the Spirit of Christ dwells in us
guiding us to be his witnesses in all that we say and do
throughout the year.

Christ Is Born!



EXTRAS



Daily Scripture READINGS

Reading the daily scriptures on your own each day (and not “Around the Table”)? Use this section as a quick reference guide to keep yourself rooted in the Word during Advent season.

WEEK 1: HOPE

MONDAY	Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19, Mark 1:1-8
TUESDAY	Isaiah 64:1-9, 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
WEDNESDAY	Psalm 85, Mark 1:9-11
THURSDAY	Isaiah 6:8-13, Mark 1:14-15
FRIDAY	Psalm 119:25-48, Mark 13:24-37

WEEK 1: PEACE

MONDAY	Psalm 37:1-11, Luke 1:1-25
TUESDAY	Isaiah 33:17-20, Luke 1:26-38
WEDNESDAY	Isaiah 35:1-10, Luke 1:39-56
THURSDAY	Psalm 63, Luke 1:57-66
FRIDAY	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11, Zephaniah 3:14-20, Luke 1: 67-80



WEEK 1: JOY

MONDAY	Isaiah 11:1-11, 1 John 1:1-4
TUESDAY	Psalm 126, 1 John 2:1-6
WEDNESDAY	Psalm 49, 2 Peter 1:16-21
THURSDAY	Amos 9:11-15, John 1:1-18
FRIDAY	Isaiah 40:1-5, John 1:19-34

WEEK 1: PEACE

MONDAY	Isaiah 11:1-11, 1 John 1:1-4
TUESDAY	Psalm 126, 1 John 2:1-6
WEDNESDAY	Psalm 49, 2 Peter 1:16-21
THURSDAY	Amos 9:11-15, John 1:1-18
FRIDAY	Isaiah 40:1-5, John 1:19-34

Christmas Day

Isaiah 9:6
Luke 2:1-20





Prayers

MORNING PRAYERS

- God takes delight in his people: let us enter his presence in prayer. Strong is God's love for us; he is faithful forever. Let us be aware of his presence today and receive all that comes our way with patience, love and thanksgiving. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen. Alleluia!
 - Father, meet me in the waiting, the place where I long for what is not fully in view. Still my heart and give me the ability to know that you are near. I believe your plans are good. I see I in the birth of your only Son. But sometimes I struggle to see beyond the haze that surrounds me. Renew my confidence as I lift my eyes to you. Be glorified in my life during this season of expectation. Amen.
 - Father, I want to see your face. Hear my cry and reveal yourself to me as I make room for you to invade my life.
- I am desperate for more of you. I am here. I am knocking. Intersect my life today with a greater awareness of who you are. Please show me more of your character and purpose as I set my heart on You. Amen.
- Oh God, in the middle of the storm I am setting my hope on you. You fight for me and you are greater than all my enemies. Nothing I face today is more powerful than you. You are the solid ground beneath my feet. Thank you for surrounding those who surround me. Give me peace in the presence of my enemies, knowing that You see me and defend me in your love. Amen.
 - Father, thank you for the name of Jesus. Jesus, there is no other name like yours. You humbly came and laid your life down. Now you are exalted to the highest place of all. I bend my knees to you today. Your Name alone sets me free. I want my life and breath to make much of the Name that is greater than all others. Amen

EVENING PRAYERS

- Oh Lord, as we rest tonight, give us peace. As we close the day, remind us of how you love us. You meet us in the stillness, in the silence, and call to us there. Tonight, we respond to your calling. Would you bring us closer to you and to your heart? Your ways are higher, your ways are greater. We give over all the ways we try to take control. In this Advent season, remind us that you have a plan and a purpose for us. We love you. Amen
- Jesus, your yoke is easy and your burden is light. We come to place in your hands the burdens we have felt today. We have carried this weight and it is heavy, so we give it to you. You are able to carry it and help us face all that we are going through. In this Advent season, remind us that your strength is quiet, confident, and capable. We pause and give you these things we carry. Thank you for helping us and for loving us so deeply. You do not leave us alone. Amen.
- Father, I praise you for coming and leading me out of dark places, into the light of your love. I renounce everything that opposes You and

seeks to separate us. Unite mankind in your peace. Give me love for all people. In this Advent season, remind us of why you came. You came to help the hurt, the broken, and the lost. Let my heart be tuned to yours. Come, Emmanuel, and be with me. Christ in me, my peace. Amen.

- Oh Jesus, as we lay our heads down tonight, let us think of how you rescued us. In the stillness of the night, a baby was born. In the darkness of the night, a light burst forth to bring hope to everyone. You lived a perfect life and died a perfect death so that we might have life in you. In this Advent season let us remember that your sacrifice was our rescue. And you will come again. We wait for your return. Come quickly, Lord Jesus! Amen.
- Father, tonight we praise your name. Glory in the highest to the King of Kings. We trust you with our present and our future. You love those who can't earn your love or deserve it. We are those people. We can't earn your love, but you give it as a gift to us. In this Advent season, we remember that yours was the perfect gift, given freely. We receive it with grateful hearts. May our lives be fixed on you in all that we do. Amen.



HOPE

In the New Year

During our online services on Jan. 1, we'll talk about a way to carry hope with us into the new year. Please save this activity until then!

The opposite page is filled with verses of hope. We hope you'll interact with one every day for the next couple of weeks. Consider cutting them into strips and putting them in a jar, then choosing one each day

SOME IDEAS FOR HOW TO INTERACT WITH THIS SCRIPTURE DAILY:

- Pray this verse over another person (family member)
- Have your kids draw a picture that depicts or represents the verse
- Ask yourself who might need to hear this verse today. Share it with them!
- Practice Lectio Divina with this verse: Read it slowly. *Pause and reflect for 1 minute. Read it again and reflect for another minute. What word or phrase sticks out to you?*



Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. **1 Peter 1:13**

Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. **Jeremiah 17:7-8**

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. **Isaiah 26:3**

Taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the one who takes refuge in Him! **Psalms 34:8**

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. **James 1:12**

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in whom I trust." **Psalms 91:1-2**

Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. **Hebrews 10:23**

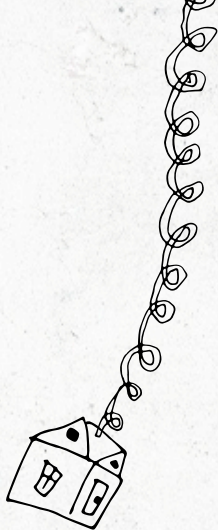
The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. **Numbers 6:24-26**

The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. **Psalms 145:8-9**

"Write your own scripture here"

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **Matthew 11:28**

"Write your own scripture here"



SCAN TO LISTEN TO OUR
ADVENT PLAYLIST

