



FBC Advent Guide 2022

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Sing verse one on each day of the first week of Advent. Sing verses one and two on each day of the second week of Advent. Continue to add a verse each week.

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

2. O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

3. O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny
From depths of Hell Thy people save
And give them victory o'er the grave
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

4. O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Joy to the World

Sing this on Christmas day.

1. Joy to the World, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.

2. Joy to the World, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

4. He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

Thank you to our writers...

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is when brothers and sisters dwell (and write) together" (Psalm 133:1). A huge thank you to all the voices who worked on this devotional together:

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November 29	Steve Luxa
November 30	Peter Nittler
December 1	Marissa Condie
December 2	Bronwyn Lea
December 3	Teagan Morris
December 5	Corrie Haffly
December 6	Steve Luxa
December 7	Mike Wall
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December 9	Peter Nittler
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December 15	Tim Metcalf
December 16	Corrie Haffly
December 17	Kim Wieking
December 17	Marcie Broadwell
December 19	Sue Ann Finley
December 20	Yemi Akoda
December 21	Teagan Morris
December 22	Bronwyn Lea
December 23	Chidera Alim
December 24	Goziem Anisiobi

ADVENT

All the lights are off. Everyone is sitting around our table in the darkness. One of us strikes a match, and as they light the first candle we start to sing, "O come, o come Emmanuel..." The season of Advent has begun.

Advent means arrival. The word comes from the Latin word *adventus*, and has the nuance of waiting and watching. Advent = waiting and watching for the arrival of something or someone.

What arrival are you waiting for this December? For presents? For finals to be over? For school to be on break? For more peace or more joy or more health or more financial stability than you currently have?

December is also the month that Christians have set to wait and watch for the arrival of a person who came more than two thousand years ago, a person who changed the trajectory of the world.

This person is Jesus Christ. December is the month set for the advent of Jesus Christ. But... why wait for someone who has already come? For two reasons: First, because as we remember the waiting that took place before his arrival, the impact he first made on people can be felt by us. The Holy Spirit can change the course of our lives as we remember Jesus and his Kingdom coming long ago. Your kids' lives. Your friends' and neighbors' lives. Your life. Second, because Jesus will come again! Setting December as a time of advent helps us prepare for the advent of the second coming of Jesus Christ!

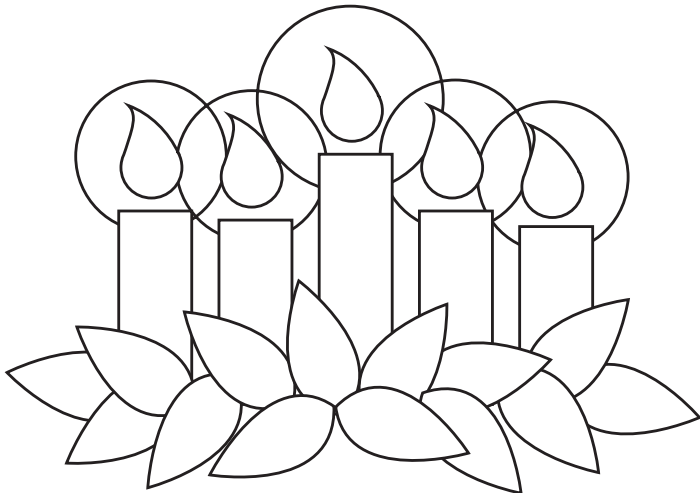
December is truly a thrilling month of waiting!
May this month be a significant month of Advent for you, your family, your friends, and your neighbors as you watch and wait for Jesus Christ to come.

How To Use This Advent Guide

This guide will help you and your family or friends wait and watch for signs of Jesus' coming. To celebrate Advent in community, gather with your household, friends, or neighbors and go through each day's simple liturgy, devotional, and suggested activity. Or, to celebrate Advent on your own, use the reflections, written by members of FBC, as part of your individual devotional time. If you have young children, you may find that they enjoy the candle lighting, singing, and short prayer at the end, while the Scripture reading and reflection is done by the adults and older children. Please tweak the wording and activities to fit your context; our hope is that you can experience the joy of celebrating Advent in a daily rhythm together, whatever that looks like for you.

Each day, you can participate in:

- **Candle Lighting.** Prepare four Advent Candles and one Christ Candle for Christmas day. You can make an advent wreath or just set up a place for your candles. These advent candles will be lit each time you sing or read the Scripture.
- **Singing.** We are singing *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*, adding one verse each week. If you don't know it, listen to it on YouTube a few times so you can sing it on your own.
- **Scripture Reading.** Read the daily Scripture.
- **Reflection.** Each day, after you have read the Scripture, take time to reflect on its meaning. Weekdays include a short written devotional with a reflection question, while Sundays include multiple questions.
- **Action.** An optional activity is included each day.



SUNDAY DECEMBER 25

Christmas Day

Candle Lighting and Song

All: Why do we light the first candle?

One: We light the candle of hope to express our longing for the coming of Christ into our dark world.

[Light the first candle.]

All: Why do we light the second candle?

One: We light the candle of peace to remind us to watch for Jesus to bring peace into our dark world.

[Light the second candle.]

All: Why do we light the third candle?

One: We light the candle of joy to open ourselves to the joy that Jesus will bring into our dark world.

[Light the third candle.]

All: Why do we light the fourth candle?

One: We light the candle of love to wait and watch for Jesus to come and bring love to our dark world.

[Light the fourth candle.]

All: Why do we light four Advent Candles and one Christ Candle?

One: We light the Christ candle to remind us that we have waited, and now our waiting is over. Jesus Christ has come to us.

[Light the Christ Candle and sing *Joy To The World* from the inside of the back cover]

Scripture Reading – Luke 1, Matthew 1, Luke 2:1-40, Matthew 2

These four chapters tell the full Christmas story. If reading all of this would be too much for young children, just read less!

Closing Prayer

Say together: Thank You for coming, King Jesus. You are our world's greatest gift. We invite you to enter into the reality of our lives and our world this year like never before. Amen.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 24

Listen and Obey

“But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.’”

Matthew 1:20

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.28).

Scripture Reading: Matthew 1:19-25

Reflection

One of the recurring themes in the story of Jesus’ birth and childhood is how often his parents listened for and heard God’s voice guiding them in family decisions. In today’s passage, Joseph’s fiancée (Mary) was pregnant with a child which was not his. Joseph was faced with a tough decision: He could either break off the engagement (which was the legal thing to do) or go ahead with the marriage (and face the rumors, challenges, and shame). He lovingly chose to quietly separate from her. But then something happened to change his mind: Joseph heard God speak to him through an angel in a dream, giving him instructions to go ahead with the marriage and to name the child Jesus.

I wonder what would have happened if Joseph did not listen to God, could not hear and recognize God’s voice, or was not willing to obey God’s voice and instructions. His choice of listening to and obeying God in his difficult situation turned out to be a blessing to everyone.

Friends, have you considered listening to God before you make decisions, willing and ready to obey what He leads you to do? In the moment, what God says might sound unpleasant, illogical, or counter-cultural, but you can trust in His infinite wisdom, love, and power.

As we look forward to celebrating Christmas, let us practice listening to God’s voice daily. His voice brings peace, joy, clarity, guidance, and light to our darkened world.

Question to Ponder: Can you think of other times Joseph and/or Mary listened to God and received direction from Him about their decisions?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. Bring us your love.

Action: Plan a time later this week to sit before God and listen to him. Keep each other accountable and share how the time went.



SUNDAY NOVEMBER 27

Give Attention

Candle Lighting and Song

All: Why do we light the first candle?

One: We light the candle of hope to express our longing for the coming of Christ.

[Light one candle. Sing verse one of *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*, which you can find on the inside of the cover.]

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:26-38

Reflection

1. Take a moment to be quiet. What do you hear, or smell, or feel, or see? Did you notice these things before you stopped to pay attention?
2. Are there moments in your day when you pay attention to God? What are some ways to pay attention to him more often?
3. Today, we light the candle of hope. What are some areas in your life where you would like to see Jesus bring his hope and power?

Closing Prayer

Say together: Come, King Jesus. We put our hope in you.

Action

Tape up a sheet of paper or use sticky notes on a wall to start keeping track of "God-sightings." Throughout the weeks of Advent, write down answers to prayer, moments of gratitude, and other things that you have noticed as you pay attention to God.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 23

I Believe

"Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." Luke 1:45

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.28).

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:39-56

Reflection

A story is told about a village many years ago going through severe drought: losing crops, livestock and villagers dying of thirst. They set a date to gather and appeal to God in unison for rain. When they gathered to pray, only one little child brought an umbrella! How amazing would life be if we all had child-like faith? Jesus did say to receive the kingdom of God like a child (Luke 18:17).

In our text today, we read the greetings from two women carrying "miracle" babies. Elizabeth was way past child-bearing age, and Mary was a virgin. Pregnancy should have been impossible for both, yet each had believed God's promise. Trying to understand the mechanism behind the fulfillment of God's word can cast doubt in our hearts—like the villagers in the story did not expect God to answer immediately. Verse 45 is a reminder to believe God's words and trust God's promises.

As we celebrate the miracle of Christmas, God is calling us to strengthen our faith in Him. His words will not return empty (Isaiah 55:11). When doubt starts to set in, think on the lyrics from the Heritage Singers: "God said it, I believe it, that settles it." As you go about your daily tasks, remember "Blessed is she (or he) who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

Question to Ponder: In 2007, 75% of Americans said they believed in the virgin birth. In 2017, only 57% said the same. Do you *really* believe this central tenet of Christianity? What difference does that make to how you celebrate Christmas?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. Bring us your love.

Action: Play a board game or group game with friends or family.

THURSDAY DECEMBER 22

Don't Be a Christmas Know-It-All

"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David." Luke 1:32

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.28).

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:26-38

Reflection

"Mary, did you know?" With over 200 million downloads on Spotify, the lyrics of this Christmas favorite ask whether young Mary realized the baby boy she carried would work miracles and bring salvation, whether she knew he was "the Lord of all creation" and "would one day rule the nations."

Luke's account tells us the answer, emphatically, is YES. Mary knew. The identity and mission of the son to be born was laid out in the very first conversation the angel had with her: she got not only her pregnancy test results, but also a full resume of the roles her son would hold. He would be part of the line of David—becoming *the* Son of David in whom all the 2 Samuel 7 promises would be fulfilled—and what's more: he would be the Son of the Most High. The Son of God, showing us the exact representation of who God is (Hebrews 1:3).

But even though Mary knew what was to come, she still spent a lifetime in wonder and worship as the details unfolded. Her posture is one we can learn from: even if we already know the truths of the Christmas story... there's still so much more to marvel at as we experience his reign and truth unfolding day by day. Oh, come let us adore him.

Question to Ponder: Even if you're very familiar with the Christmas story, do you believe God has fresh encouragement or insight for you this season?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. Bring us your love.

Action: Make some hot drinks (or set up a blind taste test of different brands of eggnog) and share memories from past Christmases.

MONDAY NOVEMBER 28

Where We're Headed

"Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord." Isaiah 2:5

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.4).

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 2:2-5

Reflection

Let's play an Isaiah 2:2-5 word-association game. With the people in your house or just you and this Advent Guide, say what comes to mind when you read the following words:

Mountains Law Justice Factions and divisions
Military industrial complex Last days Light of the Lord

Now, let's ask Isaiah what comes to his mind. Mountains: *Christmas*. Law: *Christmas*. Justice: *Christmas*. Factions and divisions: *Christmas*. War budgets, combat training, military industrial complex: *Christmas*. Last days: *Christmas*. Light of the Lord: *Also Christmas!*

Truthfully, Isaiah probably did not think "*Christmas*." Isaiah didn't know exactly how God was going to fulfill the prophecy recorded in chapter 2:2-5. What Isaiah did know is that a time was coming when God would manifest himself with strength (*mountain*), and reveal the best way to live (*law, light, and justice*), which would bring flourishing to all people (...*plowshares*. You might want to Google that one). Isaiah zealously rallied his people to rush towards God when that day came. A day when God would make all things right and people will "never again learn war."

We know what Isaiah did not: that Jesus—born in Bethlehem on Christmas Day—is that mountain of strength, speaks forth that law, radiates that light, and transforms all people who follow him into justice-bringers and flourishing-makers. That is why we come and keep coming to Jesus. And that's why we're following him through Advent.

Question to Ponder: Which of the lines in Isaiah 2:2-5 grips you the most? How do you want to pray for this line to become reality?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. We put our hope in you.

Action: Eat a meal by candlelight today.

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 29

A Guiding Light

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.” Isaiah 9:2

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.4).

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 9:1-7

Reflection

Darkness can be suffocating. It is where our fears are enlarged, our hurts intensified, and our confusion deepens. Think of those instances when we are jerked out of sleep at 3 am and lie there in the darkness, distressed by the thoughts swirling in our minds. Darkness simply makes everything worse.

Israel was experiencing a darkness that came from enemy occupation, as a consequence of their covenantal breach in sin, oppression of the poor, and abandonment of God. But, God assures us that darkness does not have the final word for his people. But how will God chase the darkness away? With the light from a mighty protector? A great show of strength? A ferocious divine howl? No, a child.

This child born at Christmas has God’s own wisdom as a Mighty Counselor to guide us through whatever darkness encases us. He has divine power to absorb the evil in this world at the cross and so empty it of its power over us. This son has God’s stamp of king on him to rule over and control the darkness. This child born to us is God’s agent for bringing peace, though darkness surrounds. (See Isaiah 9:6)

The great promise of Christmas is that God chases our darkness away with the coming light of this child. Our darkness does not have to suffocate us. It can prompt us to look again to the child come at Christmas to enlighten us as only he can.

Question to Ponder: What areas of darkness do you need this child to bring light into this season?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. We put our hope in you.

Action: Pretend that the power has gone out for part of your evening. Turn off the lights in your home and light candles or use flashlights.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 21

People of the Promise

“Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.” Matthew 1:17

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.28).

Scripture Reading: Matthew 1:11-17

Reflection

“Wait.” That’s a challenging command for anyone. What does it feel like to wait? Your mom promised you a childhood trip to Disneyland. As a teen, you anticipated the day you’d get your driver’s license. Then, you hoped for the day you’d meet, and eventually marry, that perfect someone. Then you dreamed of a house, a promotion, retirement... In each of these cases, you excitedly awaited the fulfillment of a dream.

Tens of thousands of years ago, God promised Abraham a nation; yet his descendants lingered in Egypt for 400 years. God promised David a line of kingship; then he was betrayed by his people and hunted by his own son. During exile, Israel was promised a Messiah to bring freedom from their oppressors; yet they continued in exile for generations. During these times, Israel waited. Though full of sorrow, pain, and persecution, they remembered God’s promises.

Now, looking back, we can see God’s hand through it all—the gradual renewal and fulfillment of His promises. Our God is faithful through every generation. As He promised Abraham and David an inheritance, God promises us freedom, redemption, and hope—and all God’s promises are a YES in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 1:20). He came to earth as flesh and blood, so we could be redeemed and set free. We are a nation of all peoples under God’s Kingship, and we are a people of the Promise fulfilled by our Lord and Savior that first Christmas day.

Question to Ponder: What answers are you waiting on from God? How can looking back on God’s past answers help you as you wait?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. Bring us your love.

Action: Share stories of God answering prayers.

TUESDAY DECEMBER 20

God of the Impossible

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” Isaiah 7:14

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.28).

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 7:10-17

Reflection

“God specializes in the impossible.” This statement is often said when God does something that blows our minds or when He comes through when all hope is lost. However, do we truly believe these words? Do you believe that God is omnipotent and can do anything?

Isaiah (led by God) told King Ahaz to ask for a sign concerning an issue and King Ahaz refused to yield because he thought he would be tempting God. Although the king refused, God still proceeded to do what he wanted to do. Obedience is key to seeing God do the impossible in our lives and around us.

Many times, we try to understand God’s ways and strategies. However, we forget that God’s ways are not our ways and that He can suspend the laws of nature to accomplish his purposes: just as we saw when virgin Mary conceived Jesus and how Joshua instructed the sun to stand still, and it obeyed.

Child of God, is there a promise you see in the scriptures or is there a miracle that you strongly desire? If it does not contradict God’s word, the Scripture encourages us to take our requests and promises to God no matter how impossible they look because God can do anything, no matter how unlikely it seems.

The Omnipotent is willing and able to do the impossible. You can just trust and obey!

Question to Ponder: What is God saying to you about the seemingly impossible circumstance you are in?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. Bring us your love.

Action: As an act of sharing God’s tangible love, choose a country that is in conflict and pray for it. If you are able, make a donation toward relief and development work in that country.

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 30

Imagining a New World

“The infant will play near the cobra’s den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest...” Isaiah 11:8

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.4).

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 11:1-9

Reflection

According to Rolling Stone Magazine, John Lennon’s *Imagine* is the 19th best song of all time. Lennon’s longing for a better world—a world with no cruelty, no war, no lack—has captivated listeners for decades. Crucial to Lennon’s imagined bliss is a world in which there’s no heaven, no hell, and no religion.

Isaiah invites Israel to imagine a different kind of world. Imagine a world where a lamb can live next to a wolf without the latter making a meal of the former, and where a baby can have a playdate with a poisonous snake. Imagine a world so fundamentally transformed from the inside-out that the most dangerous things on earth become agents of peace.

The impetus for such a radical transformation is the coming of the King—the promised Messiah. How might this have sounded to a people so intimately connected with the dangers of the world? Unbelievable? Too good to be true?

What about you? These words travel across time and arrive to another generation familiar with the danger and darkness of the world. And yet, the promise remains: something about this Messiah’s reign means the most dangerous things we can imagine will become agents of peace. A nuclear weapon transformed into a playground. Guns become plowshares. What else comes to mind?

If you need help imagining a world marked by these great promises, recall that this same Messiah turned a torturous death into a triumph of life. If he can do that, what else can he do?

Question to Ponder: What stirs in you as you picture the most dangerous things you can imagine becoming beacons of hope?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. We put our hope in you.

Action: Draw a picture or make a collage inspired by Isaiah 11:1-9.

THURSDAY DECEMBER 1

God is Not Stumped

“In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.” Isaiah 11:10

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.4).

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 11:10-16

Reflection

A careful reader will notice Isaiah’s switch from “a shoot will come from the stump of Jesse” (11:1) to a “root of Jesse” (11:10). Our Lord Jesus, who became a descendant of Jesse (“the shoot”) to bring peace to the world, has been unfurling this plan for deliverance from the beginning of time (“the root”).

The plan for deliverance includes people from all nations and walks of life uniting in their love for God, and following Him as he defeats evil and reconciles the broken relationships throughout our dark and twisted human history. Verses 10-16 is full of specific references to Israel’s history of rejecting God’s plan, turning to their own devices, and suffering the consequences of hostility, exile, and death.

Through all the discouraging human choices, God sees and has a plan for the remnant that is faithful to Him. Our God delivers: as he did for Israel when they were slaves in Egypt, as he did when he came to earth as a baby, and as he will when he returns and defeats evil once and for all, bringing rest to his faithful ones.

Question to Ponder: What is your favorite story of God’s deliverance in history? It could be a Bible story, a story you have heard, or a personal experience. What is a human experience that you are eager for God’s deliverance from?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. We put our hope in you.

Action: Listen to the Christmas hymn “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus.” This worship song was written by Charles Wesley and first published in a Christmas Hymnal in 1745. Do you notice any ideas that tie to Isaiah 11? Do other passages of Scripture come to mind?

MONDAY DECEMBER 19

The Soundtrack of Your Life

“The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, he will rejoice over you with singing.” Zephaniah 3:17

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.28).

Scripture Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-17

Reflection

When was the last time you delighted in something? Perhaps it was when you shared tea and laughter with a good friend or as you watched a dog chase its tail or when you finished a difficult project or enjoyed a walk on the greenbelt... Any number of things bring us delight. We can delight in God when He answers a prayer or as we worship together at church. But did you know that the Almighty God delights in YOU? It’s true!

Zephaniah was written to encourage the rebellious Israelites to turn back to God, but we can also read this passage as a word from God to us. And in verse 17 we read that God delights greatly in us. God delights in me? In all my brokenness, messiness and sinfulness? Yes! Say this truth three times out loud and emphasize a different word each time. GOD delights in me. God DELIGHTS in me. God delights in ME. Sit with that thought for a while. Soak it in.

What a perfect time of year to celebrate such an amazing truth. That God can delight in us is possible only because Jesus willingly came to earth for us. Verse 17 goes on to say that God “will rejoice over you with singing.” A heavenly choir of angels greeted Jesus at His earthly birth and now God Himself sings to you. Another mind-blowing thought! During this busy season, take time to be still, to respond with gratitude to God for delighting in us and giving us a reason to delight in Him, and to listen for God’s singing voice amidst all the noise of this world. It’s there. You just have to listen.

Question to Ponder: Do you know God delights in you?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. Bring us your love.

Action: Play a Christmas album. Here are a few suggestions: *Waiting Songs* by Rain For Roots, *The Light Came Down* by Josh Garells, *Behold* by Lauren Daigle, *The Advent of Our God* by Derek North, *The Many Moods of Christmas* by the Robert Shaw Chorale.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 18

Give Love

Candle Lighting and Song

All: Why do we light the first candle?

One: We light the candle of hope to express our longing for the coming of Christ into our dark world.

[Light the first candle.]

All: Why do we light the second candle?

One: We light the candle of peace to remind us to watch for Jesus to bring peace into our dark world.

[Light the second candle.]

All: Why do we light the third candle?

One: We light the candle of joy to open ourselves to the joy that Jesus will bring into our dark world.

[Light the third candle.]

All: Why do we light the fourth candle?

One: We light the candle of love to wait and watch for Jesus to come and bring love to our dark world.

[Light the fourth candle.]

Sing four verses of *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:36-38

Reflection

1. This week, we lit the candle of love. Make a list of the ways that you feel loved by God.
2. Make a list of people that you love. Thank God for them.
3. Is there someone in your life who you think might feel unloved? Consider how you can show them love this week.

Closing Prayer

Say together: Come, King Jesus. Bring us your love.

Action

With your family, household, or friends, give a three-minute group hug!

FRIDAY DECEMBER 2

The Secret To Endurance

“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”
Isaiah 40:8

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.4).

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

Reflection

“You can do anything for 30 seconds.” This motivation applies whether you’re pushing through the last, painful part of an exercise set or holding your tongue when you’re tempted to lash out. The idea that we can endure something very challenging when we know the end is in sight is both compelling and comforting.

Isaiah’s words to Israel are meant to comfort and compel them in a similar way. Israel will experience a painful exile in Babylon, but God promises that time will come to an end. One day the suffering will be over, and the good news of God’s return to be with His people will be proclaimed from the rooftops.

The people of God can hang on to God’s promise that no matter what is happening now, it won’t last forever. Right now, things might appear to be desolate and lifeless—like looking across the withered landscape described in verse 8—but we can persevere because God always makes good on his promises for comfort and deliverance. The end is always in sight. We can do anything for just a little longer, strengthened by the presence and promises of God.

The suffering we endure is real, but so is the hope.

Question to Ponder: What is God’s invitation or encouragement to you in the hard thing(s) you are enduring right now?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. We put our hope in you.

Action: Try something semi-challenging for 30 seconds—perhaps holding a 30-second plank or holding an ice cube—or trying to do something quickly within 30 seconds such as building a tower of blocks or touching every doorknob in your house.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 3

Christmas Feet

“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’” Isaiah 52:7

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.4).

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 52:1-12

Reflection

Feet. Think on that for a minute... what comes to mind? Dirt? Hangnails? The stench of ripe soccer cleats wafting from your garage? Cracked, zombie-like heels? I would bet that in Isaiah’s time, feet were even grosser. Feet were the main means of travel, and were thus often covered with grime from walking streets strewn with human and animal excretory products. Plus, no soap...

But in this passage, Isaiah writes about the type of feet that are beautiful. How can these appendages that rarely pass as “good enough” be considered beautiful—lovely, pleasing, or excellent? It’s not because of their aesthetic appeal, but because of what they do, or more accurately, what God does through them.

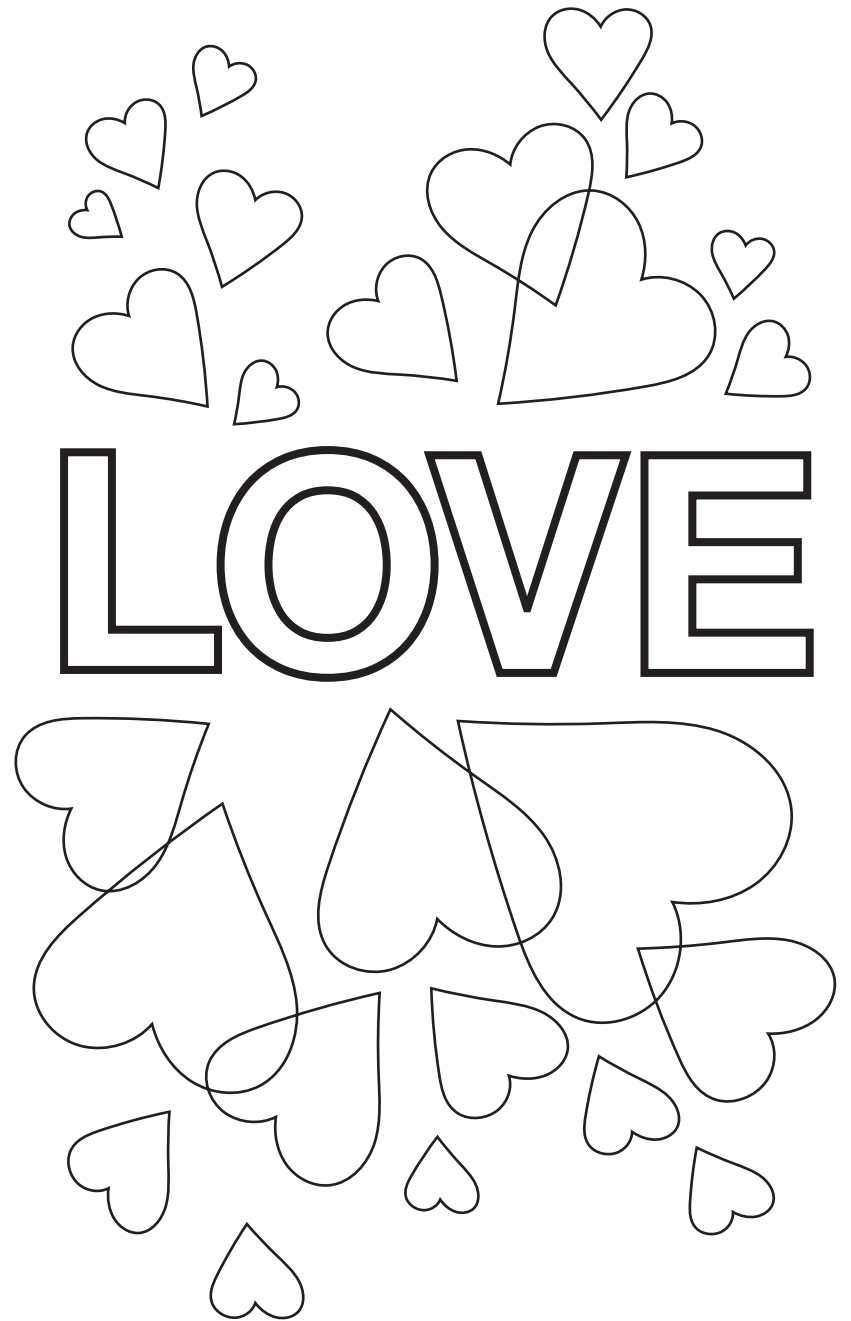
Isaiah prophesied during Israel’s exile in Babylon. God’s chosen people were hopeless, weak, and desolate. But Isaiah saw the feet of a messenger, moving swiftly on the mountains, bringing the good news of Israel’s freedom, peace, and salvation! As the prophet foretold, God delivered Israel from Babylon!

Hundreds of years later, the feet of Jesus Christ were seen on the mountains. He brought good news of freedom and salvation, not only to Zion, but to all the earth. Christ remains our hope—the One who came to save, and who will come again to finish the job. He invites us to accept this good news. Then, He helps us—with our dirty, mangled, ugly feet—to spread the beauty throughout the world.

Question to Ponder: What would make your feet more beautiful this Christmas season? To whom can you bring some good news?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. We put our hope in you.

Action: Pull out your fuzziest, comfiest socks or slippers to wear—or shop together to get a new pair of fuzzy socks for the winter!



SATURDAY DECEMBER 17

A Beautiful Jealousy

“This is what the Lord Almighty says, ‘I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her.’” Zechariah 8:2

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.20).

Scripture Reading: Zechariah 8:1-8

Reflection

Hebrew is the second language of my cul-de-sac. Not one, but two Israeli families have brought joy and blessing to our little community. From them, I have learned more about the love and familiarity of God the Father as I have heard their girls shouting, “Abba! Abba!” over our shared fence. Recently our family was included in their Rosh Hashana celebration, and my heart was moved as I stood in a circle with these precious people (including an Auschwitz survivor) for whom Jesus died and whom Yahweh loves.

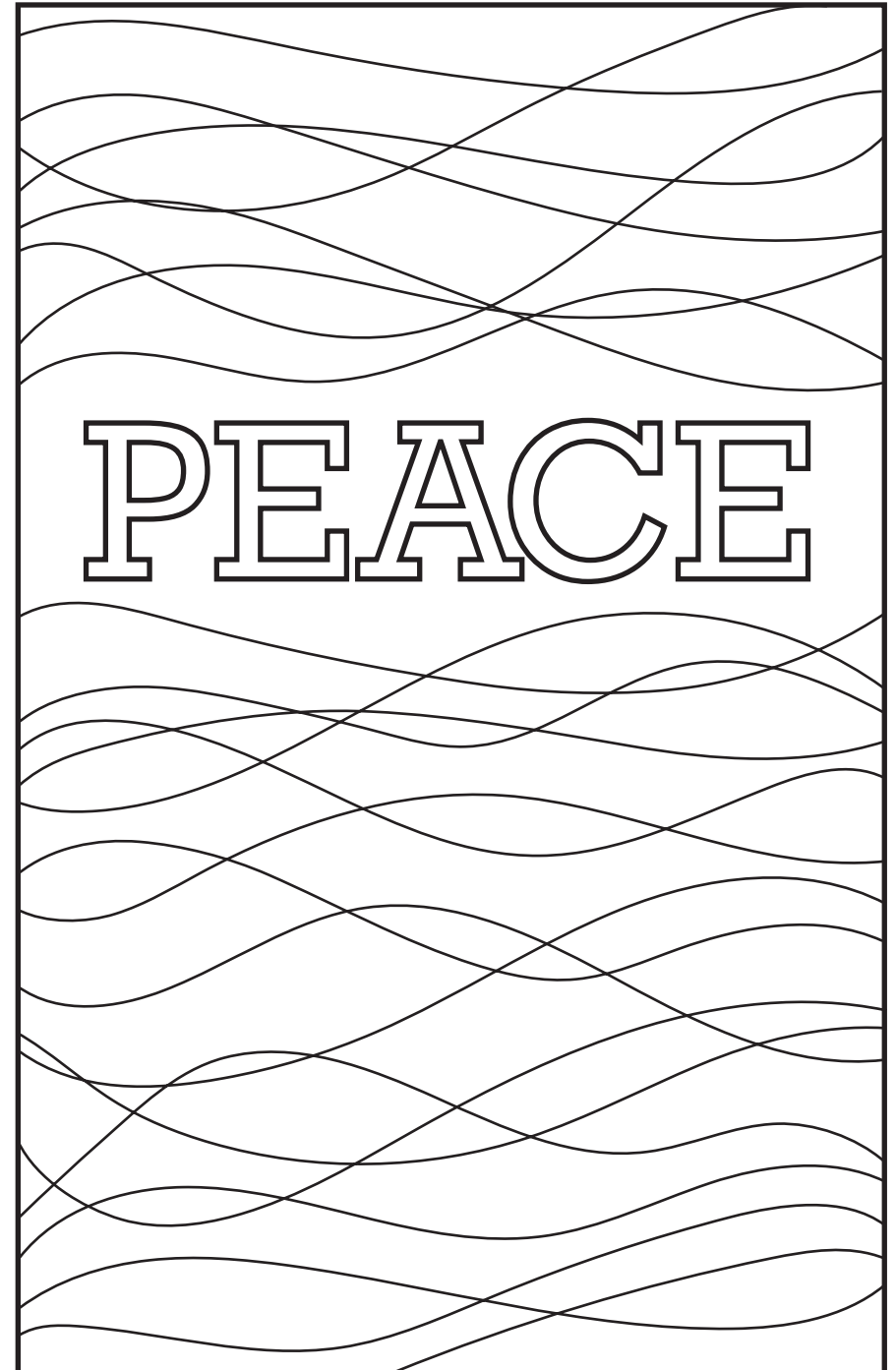
While I am not a theologian who can explain the intricate meanings of this passage, I can understand, albeit in a small way, the longing that undergirds the words “very jealous.” It is “a beautiful jealousy,” explains a friend of mine; one “that leads us to His love. He wants us to be His and His alone. He wants to be our first love and for us to have the same burning passion for Him that He has for us.”

I know that God’s deep love and longing extends beyond His chosen people to my neighbors from Vietnam, Brazil, England, the Philippines, to me... and to YOU. Tears are close as I contemplate the greatness of His love and His yearning—yes, jealousy, for us all.

Question to Ponder: How is the Holy Spirit inviting you to love God and people in a deeper, fuller, richer way? What is one small step you feel challenged to take today?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. Bring us your joy.

Action: Individually, take that one small step that came to mind as you pondered! As a household or with friends, build a fire and roast marshmallows.



SUNDAY DECEMBER 4

Give Less Stuff

Candle Lighting and Song

All: Why do we light the first candle?

One: We light the candle of hope to express our longing for the coming of Christ into our dark world.

[Light the first candle.]

All: Why do we light the second candle?

One: We light the candle of peace to remind us to watch for Jesus to bring peace into our dark world.

[Light the second candle.]

Sing two verses of *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*]

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:1-7

Reflection

1. Today's candle is the candle of peace. What are some things you are worried or anxious about?
2. The holiday season can be busier than usual, adding to our stress and anxiety. As you consider how Jesus came to earth quietly and humbly, are there choices you can make to simplify your schedule in the next few weeks?
3. Spend a few minutes in silence, becoming aware of Jesus' presence. If you'd like, try a breath prayer silently with every exhale: "Jesus, I receive your peace."

Closing Prayer

Say together: Come, King Jesus. We ask for your peace.

Action: Carve out some time today to rest and be refreshed! Some might want to turn off the devices in the house for a period of time, while others might curl up under a blanket to read; however it looks for you, make a space to "just be" and rest from the constant "doing" that our culture promotes.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 16

Just Sheep

"I will shepherd the flock with justice." Ezekiel 34:16

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.20).

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 34:11-31

Reflection

"If you want something done, you've got to do it yourself." This seems to be God's tone in Ezekiel 34 as he gives a condemning indictment of Israel's corrupt and oppressive leadership. Where those "shepherds" have been gluttonous, uncaring, selfish, harsh, and neglectful, God himself promises to come and seek out his lost sheep, care for them, and bless them. Echoing Psalm 23, God promises to lead his sheep to restful, green pastures. These images would have been at the forefront of the minds of listeners as, five hundred years later, Jesus declared boldly that he was "the good shepherd", and took the analogy further by saying that he would lay down his life for his sheep (John 10).

In our current social location of relative peace and prosperity where very few of us have to question where the next meal comes from, we may identify more closely with the hashtag-blessed sheep in their rich pastures and abundantly-yielding crops. But there is a word of warning in Ezekiel that strikes at our production-and-profit-focused culture: Do our buying and consumption habits, our voting and politics, or our unevenly-applied theology muddy the waters and trample the pasture for others?

None of us want to be the bullying sheep or the bad shepherds in this story, but at times, prophetic words are meant to force us to take a hard look in the mirror. And with the good shepherd beside us—his life laid down for our freedom and blessing—we can all do hard things.

Question to Ponder: To what injustices in the world do your personal habits contribute? What is one small change in your habits that you can make today?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. Bring us your joy.

Action: Read one or all of the passages mentioned above (Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, John 10:1-18), then draw a picture inspired by the images. If you are doing this with others, share your picture and talk about it.

THURSDAY DECEMBER 15

Nobodies from Nowhere Special

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” Micah 5:2

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.20).

Scripture Reading: Micah 5:2-5

Reflection

The song “O Little Town of Bethlehem” is accurate: Bethlehem really was a little town, too small a community to be even counted among the clans in Judah. With its agriculture and sheep-raising, it wouldn’t be given a second thought when compared with the magnificent city of Jerusalem five miles to the north, or Rome, the center of the empire, west across the sea.

But Jesus—the Creator of all things, The Ruler from eternity, the Judge of all people who would become our peace—was born there as a child of a peasant couple. God chose the small and insignificant places and people to bring the great savior into history: it’s just how God does things!

When you feel insignificant—that you are not as impressive, capable or wonderful as you want to be—remember that God delights in using plain people, regular things, and common places (1 Corinthians 1:26). Like Bethlehem, like donkeys, like stables, like Mary and Joseph, like us.

Question to Ponder: What insignificant people and places have served as the Lord’s special influence, challenge, and encouragement in your life?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. Bring us your joy.

Action: Take a walk in your town to enjoy the sights of Christmas lights. Consider how God knows and loves each of the people who live or work in these spaces.

MONDAY DECEMBER 5

For Those Who Could Use Some Good News

“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.” Isaiah 61:1

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.12).

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4

Reflection

“Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.” This quote (attributed to Rev. John Watson) pops up on my social media often, and it’s always helpful. Even on a quick trip to the grocery store, I never know if the person standing in line uncomfortably close behind me is someone who just had an awful day at work, or if the stoic-looking man two aisles down is watching his marriage crumble, or if the chirpy checkout person is masking anxious thoughts about a medical diagnosis behind a smile.

As Jesus unrolled a scroll in his hometown synagogue and read these words out loud, there were people who resonated with the pain of poverty and oppression that Isaiah described centuries before. And in our own church pews (or well-cushioned seats) today, there are certainly people who are financially burdened... who are brokenhearted... who are imprisoned by addiction, lies, or other forms of oppression... who mourn... whose dreams have burned to ashes... who are laid low by despair. Looking further outward to our local or global community, it may be overwhelming to consider how many billions of other people are suffering in some way, at this very moment.

Into this darkness, Jesus came—backed by the all-mighty, creative, loving Spirit of God—to personally bring freedom, healing, justice, and joy—such good news for our hurting, broken world!

Question to Ponder: Which situation resonates with you the most (poor, brokenhearted, etc.)? After reading the passage again, what is Jesus speaking to you in your situation?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. We ask for your peace.

Action: Jesus’ freeing work continues through his people! Gary Haugen and the many others at International Justice Mission are committed to free people from trafficking, forced labor, and other forms of oppression. Visit www.ijm.org/sharing-resources for a family-friendly introduction to their work.

TUESDAY DECEMBER 6

Nesting Gifts

“But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law...” Galatians 4:4

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.12).

Scripture Reading: Galatians 4:4-6

Reflection

Giving gifts at Christmas is something to look forward to. We have wish lists that we share with family and friends to give them ideas. We have hopes of what people might thoughtfully surprise us with in their gifts. We might face the awkwardness of receiving well-intentioned gifts that, in truth, we really don't like. Fruitcake, I'm looking at you.

God joined in the gift giving when he sent his Son at Christmas. What's more, the gift of Jesus is multi-layered, like those nesting gift boxes where opening one gift uncovers another one inside. Paul points out the four nested gifts God has embedded in the ultimate gift in his Son.

First, there is the gift of redeeming us so as to free us from the power of sin, evil, and death. Though we still encounter them, they no longer have the final power over us that they once did before Jesus came to us. Second, there is the gift of adoption so as to choose us and make us his own. We know God's perpetual acceptance and love of us as our truest heavenly Father. Third, there is the gift of the Spirit who comes into our lives to assure us of being God's own child. Lastly, there is the gift of being an heir to all of God's promises.

The great gift of Christmas certainly is Jesus, but there are other big gifts also nested in his coming to appreciate. Those gifts are beyond our deepest wishes, and our biggest hopes that will surely not disappoint.

Question to Ponder: Which nested gift in Jesus' coming do you need most this season?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. We ask for your peace.

Action: December 6th is Saint Nicholas Day—learn about the real-life man behind Santa Claus (look up “Who is Santa Claus Everyday Emmanuel” to see a video from the creator of Veggie Tales).

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 14

Sunshine Hope

“In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land.” Jeremiah 33:15

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.20).

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-17

Reflection

I am blessed to share an office with a colleague I like and admire. When we had the chance to choose a paint color for our walls, we immediately agreed on a warm yellow. We call it the “sunshine” office and we aim to keep an attitude that matches our surroundings. Our other colleagues know that when they come to share a difficult situation or knotty work problem, we will look for the opportunity lying beneath the challenge, or at least try to offer some encouragement.

This positive outlook has long been my default and I cannot find any other reason for it but the knowledge that God is good and loves us dearly. We are reminded of this fact throughout scripture. God's goodness feels especially weighty during the advent season as we anticipate Jesus' birth, for we know he came to earth and we celebrate that each year.

In the centuries before Christ's birth, the prophet Jeremiah held fast to God's promise to deliver Israel. Jeremiah spoke of God's promise to “...make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line” (Jer 33:15). This “Branch” would, of course, be Jesus, who did what was “just and right in the land” (Jer 33:15). God has always been working to bring beauty and restoration to the world. We have every reason to believe his plans will be brought to full fruition and that Jesus' birth was but a foretaste of God's immense love and commitment to us.

Question to Ponder: Which of God's gifts feels immensely encouraging to you?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. Bring us your joy.

Action: Celebrate the color yellow (or some other favorite color)! Wear it, build a meal around it, or point out all the things you can see in the room with that color.

TUESDAY DECEMBER 13

Choose Your Words

“Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?” ‘I am,’ said Jesus.”
Mark 14:61-62

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.20).

Scripture Reading: Mark 14:60-65

Reflection

Have you ever had someone trying to bait you into an angry reaction? They know they can trigger you to say something that you might regret. Maybe it's on social media, maybe it's in a work conversation, or even over a family meal.

As we read Mark we see that Christ teaches us there is no need to get in a pointless argument that could harm you or lead you to say things that could harm someone else.

Jesus knew that he had been born as the Messiah but had kept that quiet for most of his life. He remained silent when people tried to trick him. He was quiet when baited. But when it was finally time to speak, He did not hesitate to declare boldly that he was the son of God, even though his accusers responded with disbelief and insults.

We might spend much of the year being quieter about Jesus, maybe because it's just not wise in our situation to say anything, or perhaps because we fear people's disbelief and insults ourselves. But sometimes it is time to speak, and at Christmas we get an opportunity to share the gospel boldly. The Lord has come! It might not always be easy to share your relationship with Christ with those around you. But it is worth it in the end.

Question to Ponder: How can you share clearly about Jesus this week without giving in to an argument?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. Bring us your joy.

Action: Invite a few friends to go Christmas caroling together on your street—it's a great way to meet your neighbors!

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 7

Christmas v2.0

“Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.”
1 Thessalonians 4:17

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.12).

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Reflection

Many would say Christmas is their favorite season of the year. Christmas—or the first advent of Jesus—is a season of hanging lights, decorating trees, wrapping presents, preparing delicious foods, singing songs, and gathering with friends and family. It's a season of good news, joy, and peace as we remember that Jesus came to earth as a baby, to live a sinless life, to die on the cross for our sins, and to rise again to new life. As each day of the season passes, our anticipation builds until it reaches its crescendo on Christmas day.

In this passage, Paul points us into the future, to an event far better than Christmas v1.0. He reminds us of the second advent of Jesus, Christmas v2.0. He gives instruction to those of us who remain concerning believers (those “in the Lord”) who have died. He admonishes us to “do not grieve like the rest of mankind, as those with no hope.” Hope in what? Just as we can be certain of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection in Christmas 1.0, in Christmas 2.0 we will certainly be reunited with our loved ones in the Lord who have passed away, and *together we will be with Him always*. This is the great hope of the church. This is the greatest of good news. Can you imagine that day? It is a day in which we should be eagerly anticipating. We should encourage one another with these words of hope.

Question to Ponder: What would it look like to celebrate Christmas (and the memory of Jesus' first coming) in a way which points to his future coming, or Advent?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. We ask for your peace.

Action: Look at Christmas carols such as *O Holy Night* or *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*. Notice the ways they reflect both back to Christmas 1.0 and also hint at the future hope of his second return in Christmas 2.0.

THURSDAY DECEMBER 8

Ready Already

*“Encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”
1 Thessalonians 5:11*

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.12).

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Reflection

Have you ever trained for something? Maybe it was a running race; you spent months building up your miles, doing all the right things. The day finally comes and you do it, you run the furthest you ever have. You finish and the feeling of accomplishment is amazing. Did you have any doubts along the way? Maybe so, but you prepared for it. You were ready. You did everything you needed to do to accomplish your goal.

Paul’s encouragement to the Thessalonians—and us—is that we must get ready for the coming of Christ. But lest they get anxious about it, he reassures the church that they’re readier than they realize. They are not like the non-believers. They have lived their life in a way that reflects Christ. They should not take that lightly and stray, but they should have the confidence that comes from the way they live.

This season we anticipate the birth of Christ. We “prepare our hearts” to celebrate his coming, even as we stand comforted that because of His birth, death and resurrection, we’re ready already.

Question to Ponder: Even though Jesus has already come, during Advent we sing “let every heart prepare him room.” What does it mean for you to “prepare room” in your heart?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. We ask for your peace.

Action: Set up, make, or create a nativity scene to physically represent space for Jesus in your home. (You can get creative with how to represent the different characters!)

MONDAY DECEMBER 12

Righteousness Now

“We are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.” 2 Peter 3:13

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.20).

Scripture Reading: 2 Peter 3:13-18

Reflection

Peter tells us that “we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” Implicit in this statement is the idea that righteousness is coming but it is not yet here. It is tempting to think that righteousness can be experienced only in the new creation, but Christ made it abundantly clear that he has restored the path to a right relationship with God and his kingdom on earth, in which righteousness dwells. It is available not just to Jews but to all who believe. It’s not just for the future, it’s for now. To enter this right relationship with God, we simply accept God’s precious gift to humanity: His son Jesus Christ.

The term righteousness implies a right relationship with God in his kingdom. All other relationships—with people and creation—are to be understood within this framework. In other words, the eternal kingdom has entered the temporal dimension and is fully operational. This right living with God is a dynamic concept and begins on the day we give our life to Christ. At that moment, we become one with the Spirit of the Lord and begin collaborating with him in everything we do on this earth.

This is the best of news: we are not alone on this earth, contrary to popular belief. In all the experiences of our lives—joy, sorrow, grief, spiritual death through sin, and physical death—the Holy Trinity is intimately connected with us.

Question to Ponder: How can you (and those around you) “grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ” this Christmas? What and who is God inviting you to pray for?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. Bring us your joy.

Action: Choose a friend, neighbor, colleague, or family member and do something to enhance your relationship—pray for them, write them a note, invite them for a meal, etc.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 11

Give More of Yourself

Candle Lighting and Song

All: Why do we light the first candle?

One: We light the candle of hope to express our longing for the coming of Christ into our dark world.

[Light the first candle.]

All: Why do we light the second candle?

One: We light the candle of peace to remind us to watch for Jesus to bring peace into our dark world.

[Light the second candle.]

All: Why do we light the third candle?

One: We light the candle of joy to open ourselves to the joy that Jesus will bring into our dark world.

[Light the third candle.]

Sing three verses of *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

Scripture Reading: John 3:16

Reflection

1. What is a memorable or meaningful gift that you've received? What made it special?
2. Talk about each word of John 3:16 and talk about their nuances and implications. Since this verse is so familiar, pausing on each word can help us to think about it in a fresh, deeper way.
3. Today's candle is the candle of joy. Go around in a circle and share things that bring you joy or that you are thankful for. You can go around several times if you want!

Closing Prayer

Say together: Come, King Jesus. Bring us your joy.

Action

Bake Christmas cookies and give some out to neighbors.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 9

Long Live the King

"For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death." 1 Corinthians 15:25-26

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.12).

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

Reflection

When Queen Elizabeth died this year, a crescendo of voices called for an end to the British monarchy. Royalists praise the importance of the crown, noting the historical and cultural value of having a regal figure-head sitting atop the Empire. The subtext is: King Charles III's power is *symbolic* rather than *functional*.

The question for us is: what kind of King is Jesus? Is he a cosmic King Charles—deeply symbolic, but lacking in function? Is his Kingship anything beyond being the epicenter of a culture or a religion, someone to put on t-shirts to make us feel like we're part of something? In other words, does Jesus *do anything* as King?

Paul's words to the Corinthian church give us an answer. *Jesus is the kind of King who will not stop until all that is wrong in His Kingdom has been made right.*

During Advent, we don't wait with eager expectation for a figurehead or a cultural symbol; we go tell it on the mountain that the King who will *do something* about the evil and ugliness in the world has finally come.

Paul is writing in the present tense. This isn't a story about a great man who did something remarkable a long time ago. This is a story about a King who is ruling *right now*. A King who sees all the ugliness and darkness—including that which terrifies you or breaks your heart—and won't stop until it's replaced with beauty and light.

Question to Ponder: What seems wrong in the world? Can you tell your King what you want him to do about it?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. We ask for your peace.

Action: Have a Christmas movie night with family or friends. (Or stay on-theme and watch a movie with the word "king" in the title.)

SATURDAY DECEMBER 10

Jesus With Skin On

“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things.” Colossians 1:19

Open your time with the Candle Lighting and Song from Sunday (p.12).

Scripture Reading: Colossians 1:15-20

Reflection

During a scary storm, a child cried out for his daddy. His father responded, “You know that Jesus is always with you, right?” “I know,” replied the child, “but I just need someone with skin on!” Searching for a visible representation of our invisible God is a human, natural reaction. It takes incredible faith to believe in what we cannot see.

Christmas is a time when we have many physical representations of the baby Jesus, but this isn’t where we can truly see Jesus—the Jesus who grows up and dies for our sins. Colossians 1 reminds us that we have the fullness of God in Jesus and that it is through him that all things—including us—will be reconciled to God. This is the real joy we celebrate at Christmas: that God gave us a physical representation of himself who would then make reconciliation with our Father God possible.

While Christmas is a joyous time for those of us who recognize Jesus’ sacrifice, it is also one of the most difficult times of the year for many who don’t know him. However, Christmas is when the Church (those of us who are walking representatives of Jesus), is most visible and we can become the “skin” of Jesus that the lonely and the lost need. Let us be the comfort that leads them to faith in our invisible God made visible through Jesus.

Question to Ponder: In what way can you represent Jesus in your interactions with the lonely and the lost, whether in your families or in your communities, this holiday season?

Closing Prayer: Come, King Jesus. We ask for your peace.

Action: Take a look at one of the holiday “gift catalogs” put out by relief agencies such as World Vision or Compassion or Preemptive Love, and make a donation.

