

ADVENT

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

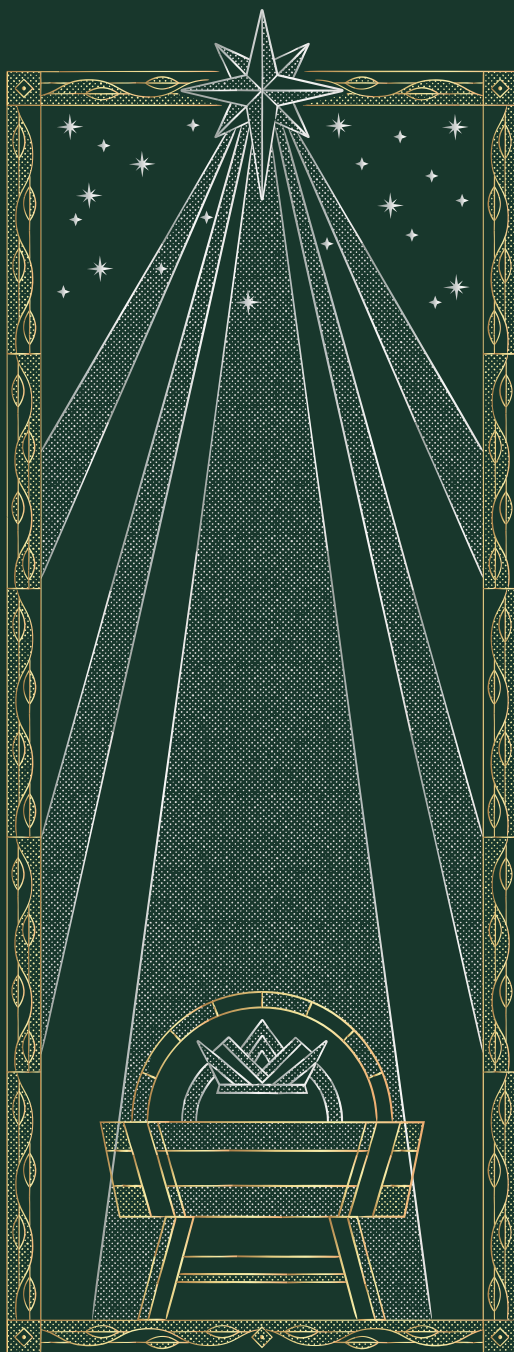


Today in the
town of David
a Savior has been
born to you;

**he is
the Messiah,
the Lord.**

.....

LUKE 2:11



Hope

.....



Sunday	Isaiah 7:14
Monday	Isaiah 61:1-2
Tuesday	Isaiah 53:12
Wednesday	Malachi 4:5-6
Thursday	Psalms 2:1-12
Friday	Daniel 7:13-14
Saturday	Isaiah 52:13

Read each scripture and meditate on its meaning.
Pray, asking God to show you truth.



DEVOTIONAL

In Norman Maclean's short story *A River Runs Through It*, the closing lines are, "Then in the Arctic half-light of the canyon, all existence fades to a being with my soul and memories and the sounds of the Big Blackfoot River and a four-count rhythm and the hope that a fish will rise. I am haunted by waters." Maclean recalls his younger years when much of his life revolved around family relationships interwoven with trout fishing. Even in his old age he hopes for a rising trout. It is a hope fueled by memories, and deep desire.

Advent season in the Christian liturgical calendar is a period of preparation and anticipation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ on Christmas Day. Each of the four weeks of Advent has a specific theme, and the first week typically centers around the theme of "Hope" or "Expectation."

Why is this so? Most scholars conservatively estimate that there are over 300 Messianic prophecies that gave specific details about the coming Messiah.

- He would be born to a virgin mother (Isaiah 7:14)
- He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
- He would spend time in Egypt (Hosea 11:1)
- He would come from the house (i.e., the family line) of David (Ezekiel 37:24)
- He would start his ministry in Galilee (Isaiah 9:1-2)
- He would be the figure that Daniel referred to as "the Son of Man" (Daniel 7:13-14)
- He would teach "hidden things, things from of old" (Psalm 78:1-2)

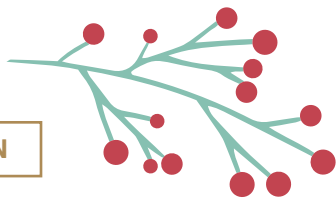
- He would be holy, a rock that would make people stumble and fall because they didn't believe in him (Isaiah 8:14)
- He would be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6)
- God would call him, "my son" (2 Samuel 7:14) (Psalm 2:1-9)
- He would gather the Israelites back together (Isaiah 11:12)

When Israel left Egypt it's freedom from bondage ignited a hope that would continue through Israel's history. Even during the Babylonian exile, hope was kept alive through prophecies that proclaimed the Messiah would come and bring God's salvation. Several prophecies described the Messiah as a king, which sparked the belief that he would one day rule an independent Israel. Matthew's gospel presents King Herod as a paranoid and jealous ruler who took these prophecies to heart and explains why he tried to have Jesus killed after hearing the wise men report the birth of the king of the Jews.

Jesus was the Messiah, but not the one that people expected. He came as a suffering savior, to die as a sacrifice for people's sins, not as a conquering king. He was rejected and killed by those he had come to save. Yet what man intended for evil God intended for good and raised Christ Jesus from the dead. Jesus' promise to return is what gives us a hope that does not disappoint since God has poured out his love into our hearts. It too is a hope fueled by memories and deep desire. Memories of promises kept by God and a deep desire for God's Kingdom to come when hope is realized and peace, love and joy rise to satisfy every longing of the redeemed heart.

- John Free

REFLECTION



In Romans 5 Paul writes,
 “...and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly...” Romans 5:5-6

Notice that Paul says the hope that is the result of suffering, endurance, and character will not put us to shame. In other words, the hope that we have will never be shown to be empty or merely wishful thinking. Notice also that God’s timing was perfect regarding Jesus’ rescuing death. This is why we can anticipate the Lord Jesus Christ at Advent. This is why we look forward, in hope, to Jesus’ second advent when, at just the right time, the Day Star will rise.



An Advent Prayer for Currey Creek

Lord Jesus, this time of year our focus is not on you. Instead, we fill our time with preparations and activities that distract us and often bring stress. We look at the affairs of the world and it can seem like everything is spinning out of control which can lead to despair rather than hope. Remind us Lord that just as you were faithful to send Jesus the first time, you will be faithful to send him a second time and fulfill all our hope. Show us Lord how to put our hope in you this day, and gain the perspective we need. Be glorified in Currey Creek today, Amen.

Advent Calendar Family Activities

Dec. 1

Put up a nativity scene and talk about Jesus being born.

2

Do a Christmas craft as a family

3

Watch a Christmas movie as a family.

FOR THE FAMILY

- 1 What is something that you are looking forward to? What are you most excited for right now?
- 2 In Isaiah 9:6-7, the people hoped that a Messiah would be born and rescue them. They knew that the Messiah would surely come, because God had promised them in his Word that he would send a Savior. They could hardly wait for Jesus to be born! Read Isaiah 9:6-7 together.
- 3 Revelation 22 is the last chapter of the Bible. In it, Jesus tells us 3 times that he is coming soon. Just like the people in Isaiah 9, we have a promise in God's Word that Jesus is coming. We get to look forward to that day when we will see him face to face and he will complete the work he has begun in the world! How does knowing that Jesus is coming again give you hope?
- 4 What will happen when Jesus comes again?



4

.....
Make paper
snowflakes.

5

.....
Decorate the
Christmas tree.

6

.....
Drink hot
chocolate
together as a
family.

7

.....
Make a popcorn
garland together.



Peace

.....

Sunday	Matthew 11:28-30
Monday	Philippians 4:6-9
Tuesday	Isaiah 26:3-4
Wednesday	Ephesians 2:11-22
Thursday	Isaiah 9:6-7
Friday	Isaiah 53:1-12
Saturday	John 16:31-33

Read each scripture and meditate on its meaning.
Pray, asking God to show you truth.



DEVOTIONAL

“Advent” and “peace” are not typically words that we associate with one another. Advent is a time of expectant waiting in the life of a believer. But expectant waiting typically does not bring our minds to peace. In an age where anxiety is labeled as an epidemic, with one in five adults wrestling with some kind of anxiety disorder and this number only increasing among teenagers and young adults, waiting seems to lead to anxiety or restlessness instead of peace.

The modern world impresses on us that peace comes through external circumstances in our lives. We tell ourselves, “Once I get through this busy season of work, I will find peace”, “Once the kids are able to sleep fully through the night, I will find peace”, or even, “Once I get away on vacation, then I will find peace.” Yet the moment we finish a busy season of work, a busy season of life, or we return from vacation, we find ourselves anxious and restless once again. This cycle of striving to find peace in our external work, or lack of work, continues until we find ourselves weary, burdened, and distant from God.

What if this very feeling, weary and burdened, is what qualified you to come to the only One who can offer peace?

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

Jesus invites all who are weary and burdened to take upon his yoke, or his way of life, to experience his rest, or peace. The life that Jesus models for us in the four gospels is a life of relationship with, and submission to, the Father. This is why Paul urges us to not be anxious about anything, but rather to share with our Father our

requests because in this we experience peace (Philippians 4:6-9). But how do we do this in our day-to-day life?

“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.” Isaiah 26:3

To keep our minds “stayed” on Jesus is to first place our trust in Jesus. To trust that Jesus Christ is both Lord and King, and that through his death and resurrection we have access to a new way of life. When we fix our minds on Jesus, we see that peace is not experienced from our external results, but peace is rather experienced through an internal recognition of what has already been accomplished on the cross.

Though waiting is not always associated with peace, we find that we are expectantly waiting on the wrong things. Though our lives might be filled with chaos, we must eagerly wait for and anticipate the coming of King Jesus. For it is in this anticipation that the things of this world grow strangely dim. Though we are busy and restless, we find peace that the day is coming where we are filled with an eternal rest. Though we walk through the trials of life, we find peace that the day is coming where every tear is wiped away. Peace is found not in our external circumstances, but rather in a relationship with the very one that brought peace between us and the creator of the universe. His name is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His name is Jesus.

- Pearson Segina



REFLECTION

As you consider the fullness of shalom peace found in Jesus, reflect on what it means to have that peace be present and available to you as his disciple. In what ways can you live in shalom peace where you feel peace has been taken away? The true fulfillment and enjoyment of shalom peace is yet to be experienced.

Advent means “waiting”, and we await Christ’s return when he will reign fully, and His peace will heal our broken land.

Spend time praying this week for His peace to be tangibly present in our community, our nation, and our world through his church.



Advent Calendar Family Activities

Dec. 8

.....

Take a drive around your neighborhood to see Christmas lights.

9

.....

Make Christmas cards to give to your teachers and friends at school.

10

.....

Look at photos of Christmas in years past. Talk about your favorite Christmas memories.



FOR THE FAMILY

- 1 Hand each of your family members a piece of paper and pen or some colors. Isaiah 11 talks about the peace that the Messiah will bring. Read Isaiah 11:6-9. Have each person draw a picture of one of the verses in this passage. Show the pictures to one another. Does this passage seem strange?
- 2 The point of Isaiah 11:6-9 is that God brings peace even when we think that peace is not possible. What does peace mean?
- 3 Read Colossians 1:19-20. What does this passage mean? How does Jesus bring us peace "by the blood of his cross?"
- 4 Read Romans 12:18. How can you obey this verse when you are at home with your parents, brothers, and sisters?



11

Have a family "snowball" fight using balled-up tissue paper, socks, or marshmallows.

12

Write a letter to Jesus, thanking him for what he has given you!

13

Have a family dance party with Christmas songs.

14

Read a Christmas book together.

Joy

Sunday

Luke 2:8-20

Monday

Psalm 30:5, Romans 5:1-2
John 16:22, James 1:2-3, Romans 15:13

Tuesday

John 15:11, Philippians 2:1-2
1 Peter 1:8-9, Isaiah 55:12

Wednesday

Psalm 16:11, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
Romans 12:12, Psalm 16:8-9

Thursday

Galatians 5:22-23, Isaiah 51:11
Matthew 25:21, Revelation 21:4

Friday

Luke 15:6-7, Acts 15:3
Romans 15:32, Romans 14:17

Saturday

Psalm 32:11, Philippians 4:4
Romans 12:15, Psalm 100:2



DEVOTIONAL

Read Luke 2:8-20. Shepherds were considered of low stature in society. They spent most of their time in fields, tending to sheep and often smelling like animals. Yet, in the book of Luke, we see them being approached by an angel of the Lord.

“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.” (Luke 2:8-9)

The shepherds were simply doing their tasks – keeping watch over their flocks at night. What mundane thing do you do every single day? Do you choose to wait on the Lord in those moments? In the middle of what was just a normal work night, one that they had probably done over 100 times, an angel of the Lord appeared to them and spoke. But not only did the angel speak – the Glory of the Lord shone around them. What a terrifying thing to experience! One second, they are tending to their sheep; the next, the Lord has chosen them to experience His own Glory. His glory pierced through the darkness, revealed to lowly men. And instead of experiencing joy in that moment, they were filled with fear. Do you ever feel that? Not wanting to step into what the Lord is speaking to you because fear rules your life, rather than choosing to see the Glory of the Lord set before you? But God still came to them, regardless of their fears. The angel already knew what they were feeling and reminded them not to fear. Why? Because, “I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.”

I often wonder what was happening in the shepherds’ minds at that exact moment. What was the news the angel was speaking about? That the angel would come down from heaven,

in the middle of the night, and speak to lowly shepherds like them? And then we learn... the news was Jesus. Our Messiah. The One they had been waiting for!

“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.” (Luke 2:11-12)

Then, one of my favorite moments in the Bible happens:

“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.’” (Luke 2:13-14)

Multitudes of angels came down from heaven to bring praise and honor to God’s name. Can you just picture that with me? A field full of angels, God’s glory shining around them. What a beautiful sight to behold! I imagine the shepherds standing in awe, struck by wonder. Here, we see what authentic joy looks like. Real joy – the angels coming down to PRAISE God. Authentic joy leads to real worship. And when we have experienced that authentic joy – the joy the angel said our Messiah would bring to the world – we can’t stay where we are. We MUST go and worship our Savior. And that’s exactly what the shepherds did.

“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.” (Luke 2:15-19)

God led the shepherds to be some of the first people to meet our sweet and precious Savior. Their obedience allowed them to be led straight to Jesus and experience true joy. What is holding you back from experiencing authentic joy this Christmas season? What is holding you back from going to our Savior and worshipping Him?

“And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.” (Luke 2:20)

When we meet Jesus, when we encounter Jesus – our immediate response should always be worship. Out of that worship, we will experience unspeakable joy. A joy that only someone who has encountered Jesus can understand... “It’s because I met our Messiah.” Great joy has come! Joy is more than just a happy feeling. It’s a profound sentiment that comes from the choice to trust that God will fulfill His promises.

Has your joy faded? Has your trust in God’s faithfulness diminished? If you find that you’re lacking joy, these questions might be good to reflect on:

- What mundane thing do you do every single day? Do you choose to wait on the Lord in those moments?
- What fear is ruling your life instead of trusting in Jesus?
- What is keeping you from experiencing authentic joy this Christmas season?
- What is holding you back from going to our Savior and worshipping Him?

Whether you’re desiring a fresh cup of joy for yourself or for someone in your life, I pray today that this good news of great joy (Luke 2:10) will remind you that knowing Jesus is more than enough to find true joy today.

- Josh Robinson



Advent Calendar Family Activities

Dec. 15

.....

Donate a toy
or gift to a child
in need.

16

.....

Decorate a
gingerbread
house.

17

.....

Send Christmas
cards to local
nursing homes.

REFLECTION

On a scale of 1 to 10, how joyful have you been this week?

What are some practical ways you can focus on Jesus this Christmas season, and find your joy in him?

FOR THE FAMILY

- 1 Read Luke 2:8-20. What was the news that the angels told the shepherds?
- 2 Why was this news “good news of great joy?”
- 3 How do you think the shepherds felt after they heard what the angels had to say?
- 4 Does the story of Jesus’ birth still give people joy today? Why or why not?

18

.....
Play a game
of Christmas
charades.

19

.....
Wrap presents
together while
listening to
Christmas music

20

.....
Make Christmas
cookies together
– deliver some to
your neighbors.

21

.....
Dress up as the
wise men and act
out their visit to
Jesus. Talk about
the gifts they
brought to him.





Love

.....

Sunday	John 3:16-21
Monday	1 John 4:7-21
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 13
Wednesday	Colossians 3:1-17
Thursday	Psalms 86
Friday	Mark 12:28-34
Saturday	Luke 6:27-36

Read each scripture and meditate on its meaning.
Pray, asking God to show you truth.



DEVOTIONAL

If you look up the definition of LOVE, most of what you will find are definitions that are based on emotions and feelings. God absolutely has emotions and feelings for us, but his love for us does not stop with his emotions and feelings. God's love for us also includes action on our behalf. He followed up his emotions and feelings for us with action. The act of his love is the greatest act of love ever demonstrated. God sent his son Jesus to die for us. God sent his son Jesus to bear for us all the penalty of our sins – past, present and future. God sent his son Jesus to allow us to be in a right relationship with him as it was intended from the beginning.

His greatest act of love was demonstrated to us, for us, while we are at our worst. Romans 5:8 tells us something important about when God demonstrated this love for us: “but God shows his love for us in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” God did not wait for us to get our life in order. God did not wait for us to get our act together. God did not wait for us to be ready. No, while we were still sinners, God demonstrated the greatest act of love for us, by sending his son Jesus to die for us.

God sets the example of love for us. We need to look to him and love people the way that he has loved us. We cannot let our emotions and feelings be the determining factors for who we love, how we love and when we love. If we let our feelings and emotions define who, how and when we love, we will no doubt miss many opportunities to love people as he has loved us. We need to rely on God to lead us in actions that are demonstrations of our love for others.

Not only does God set the example for love, but he also shows us that he is the one who initiated love. 1 John 4:19 says, “We love because he first loved us.” The love that God has for you

is initiated by him. Love is his idea. Love is his design. John 15:12 says, “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” We are called to be initiators of this same kind of love regardless of how we feel and regardless of how lovable we might think somebody is. That somebody was made in the image of God so we should love them accordingly.

We do not need a dictionary to define love. We have God's word that shows us repeatedly what God's love is and how he loves us. It is a love that 1 Corinthians 13 tells us is patient, kind, it does not envy, it does not boast, it is not arrogant or rude, it does not insist on its own way, it is not irritable, it is not resentful, it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but it is a love that rejoices with truth, it bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things.

God's love is steadfast, it is unfailing, it is unconditional, and it is also available to you today. If you have never experienced the love that God has for you, my prayer is that you will experience his love today. If you have experienced God's love, my prayer is that you can boldly and confidently love the people that God has placed in your life in the same way that he has loved you.

- Bobby Langenbahn



REFLECTION

The greatest gift one could ever receive is the gift of Jesus Christ. God the Father so loved the world that he gave us his only Son. Nearly 2,000 years ago, Mary gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger. This baby boy was God incarnate. Immanuel. God with us.

What an amazing gift that was born out of the amazing love that the Father has for you and for me. And that love is not based on who we are but on who he is. God is love. God loves. He loved so much that he gave. Marvel in that truth this Christmas and reflect that same love to others.



FOR THE FAMILY

- 1 Read 1 John 4:7-12. What are some things this passage teaches us about God?
- 2 How has God shown us his love (vs 9-10)?
- 3 Read verse 11 again. We do not deserve God's love, but loving people is what God does. It is who he is. His love never ends, and it is bigger than anything we can wrap our minds around! When we really receive the love of God, we cannot help but overflow with love for other people. What is one way you can show the love of God to someone else today?
- 4 Read verse 12 again. Verse 12 teaches us that God's love isn't finished working on our hearts until we love others like he has loved us. Because God loves us, he wants us to not only feel his love for us, but he also wants us to feel the joy of loving other people. Spend some time praying for the Holy Spirit to help you to love others as God has loved you.



Advent Calendar Family Activities

Dec. 22

.....

Have a family game night by the fire.

23

.....

Make a homemade gift for someone in your family. Wrap it up for Christmas morning.

24

.....

Attend a Christmas Eve Service at Currey Creek as a family.

25

.....

Read the Christmas Story from the Bible. Luke 2:1-20.





CURREY CREEK
CHURCH

curreycreek.com