

L O N G I N G | H O P E | P R E P A R A T I O N

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a
Son is given, and the government
shall be upon His shoulder; and
His name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of
Peace.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMASTIDE

Devotional

J O Y | M I S S I O N



ADVENT & CHRISTMASTIDE

A DEVOTIONAL FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Advent:

This devotional is designed for us to walk through the Advent and Christmastide season together, in community. By definition, Advent means the arrival of something, or someone, important. It is fitting, therefore, that we spend ample time to prepare our entire being for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. While God created the world and humanity and declared them both very good, the willful rebellion of Adam and Eve brought sin and destruction. This sin devastates the entire world and impacts everyone. While many in our culture will try to numb themselves to the devastation of sin with the lure of material gifts, this season is really about God's faithful work to redeem his creation. It is also about embracing the tension we experience as redeemed people in a fallen world, looking forward to the day when Jesus comes again! The weekly themes for Advent will engage the biblical story, honing in on our **longing** for God's saving work, the **hope** found in God's promises, and our **preparation** for the coming of Jesus.

Christmastide:

While many celebrate Christmas for one or two days before quickly shifting their focus to New Year's, the Church spends 12 days in a season known as Christmastide. Following the preparation of Advent, Christmastide is a time of joyfully praising God for sending his Son to earth. As people who live in a fast-paced, hyper-scheduled society, spending an extended time celebrating the coming of Jesus might seem strange to us. That is exactly why this season is so important. By taking time to ponder God's amazing work and praising God for his steadfast love and grace, we will realize that worship should be the undergirding theme of our lives. The weekly themes for Christmastide are **joy** and **mission**: leading us to praise God with unbridled joy, and then going into the world to proclaim the work of Jesus, the Savior of that world!

HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL

Read through this brief guide so you are familiar with how to use each part of this devotional as we walk through Advent and Christmastide together.

Invitation/Blessing:

This is a short segment of Scripture that coincides with each of the weekly themes. Use it as a prayerful introduction to prepare your heart for time in God's Word, and as a word of hope and blessing as you go into your day. (Note: all Scripture is from the ESV.)

Daily Scripture Readings:

The passages selected for each day follow the redemptive narrative in Scripture, which anticipates the coming of Jesus. Read these once, then look to the Dwelling for further meditation.

Dwelling:

Follow these rotating instructions to slow down, engaging with the daily Scripture reading in a way that drives you to the Lord in prayer.

Guided Prayers:

These prompts flow from the weekly themes and daily Scripture readings. They can be used for both private and corporate prayer in your homes.

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Confessional Prayers:

These prayers are based on historic confessions of the Church and were written by members of Green Lake Presbyterian Church. The intent of these prayers is for you to engage with the Church, both past and present, as we anticipate and celebrate the coming of our Lord and Savior. The confessions and catechisms used in this guide are:

- BGC – Belgic Confession
- BHC – Belhar Confession
- CD – Canons of Dort
- HC – Heidelberg Catechism
- NCC – New City Catechism
- WSC – Westminster Shorter Catechism
- WLC – Westminster Larger Catechism

We offer our thanks to those who contributed to these confessional prayers:

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Sundays:

Since our journey through Advent is both a communal and individual experience, there are no daily devotionals assigned for Sundays. Corporate worship with your local church serves as the devotional for the day. While at church, consider striking up a conversation with someone about what God has been teaching you during this season. Please note that the very first day of Advent this year is a Sunday, so there will not be a devotional for that day.

Week 1: Longing

ADVENT DAY 2: MON, DEC 4

Invitation - Psalm 130:5

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope.

Scripture Reading - Genesis 1:1, 26-2:1a

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

Dwelling

Humble yourself before God. Read again, out loud if possible. Which words or phrases are particularly striking? What do they reveal about God? What do they reveal about us? Respond to God accordingly, resting in Him.

Guided Prayer

- Praise God for the goodness of all creation.
- Confess how you might not care for God’s creation.
- Ask God for the eyes to see the inherent goodness in all that he has made.

Confessional Prayer - WSC 9 & 10

Lord, it is an amazing, even inconceivable, reality that you created all things out of nothing. We praise you for your infinite power and your abundant care in creating a world that is not only complex, but is truly beautiful. Our hearts delight in how you have made us in your image and likeness! Restore us to the goodness that you intended for all creation. Amen.

Blessing - Psalm 130:7-8

O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

ADVENT DAY 3: TUE, DEC 5

Invitation - Psalm 130:5

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope.

Scripture Reading - Genesis 3:1-7

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Dwelling

Thank and praise God for revealing himself to you. Read again, slowly this time. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct your prayers through the Word, leading you into a faithful and devoted response.

Guided Prayer

- Grieve over our willful rebellion against God and the shame it has brought into our lives.
- Confess how we continually fall into the temptation to take matters into our own hands.
- Ask for God's mercy and forgiveness.

Confessional Prayer - WSC 16 & 17

Righteous and Holy Lord, though you made all creation good, the sin of our forebearers, Adam and Eve, brought death, destruction, and misery. And we are not innocent in this, but stand guilty of this transgression. We are faithless, but you are forever faithful. Grant us your forgiveness for the sake of Christ and his blood. Amen.

Blessing - Psalm 130:7-8

O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

ADVENT DAY 4: WED, DEC 6

Invitation - Psalm 130:5

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope.

Scripture Reading - Genesis 3:16-19

To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children.

Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”

And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Dwelling

What does this passage awaken in you? Stop and ask God about the response this passage has caused in you. Ask him to help you as you explore your emotions, doubts, concerns, and fears. Let God’s Holy Spirit assure you of the truth.

Guided Prayer

- Grieve over the perversion of creation.
- Confess ways our sin emboldens the curse upon creation.
- Ask for God’s healing in this world.

Confessional Prayer - WSC 18 & 19

You are the source of all that is right and true, yet our eyes turn to the broken wisdom of this world. We avoid the gaze of your judgment upon us; we choose false hope and false promises. You call creation out of chaos; you are the great Redeemer. By your voice this universe was created and it is only in your voice that we are brought to safety. Amen.

Blessing - Psalm 130:7-8

O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.



ADVENT DAY 5: THUR, DEC 7

Invitation - Psalm 130:5

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope.

Scripture Reading - 1 Samuel 8:4-9

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations." But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them."

Dwelling

Pause and remind yourself that God is a Father who loves and instructs his children. Ask God what he might be teaching you through his Word. How might God be stirring your heart to respond to him today?

Guided Prayer

- Grieve that the ways of the world are not God's ways.
- Confess how we give in to the temptation to be like the world.
- Cry out to God for him to reign over the world and our lives.

Confessional Prayer - WLC 45

Just as the Israelites were fickle and demanding, so are we. Please forgive us. Help us to trust in your plan, one which has shown us the greatest goodness in Jesus coming to the world. He has made us full citizens in his Kingdom. More than that, he has made us family. Praise be to God for the King of kings! Amen.

Blessing - Psalm 130:7-8

O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

ADVENT DAY 6: FRI, DEC 8

Invitation - Psalm 130:5

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope.

Scripture Reading -

1 Samuel 15:10-13, 24-29

The word of the Lord came to Samuel: "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments." And Samuel was angry, and he cried to the Lord all night. And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned and passed on and went down to Gilgal." And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed be you to the Lord. I have performed the commandment of the Lord." Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may bow before the Lord." And Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you. For you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel." As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore. And Samuel said to him, "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret."

Dwelling

Humble yourself before God. Read again, out loud if possible. Which words or phrases are particularly striking? What do they reveal about God? About us? Respond to God accordingly, resting in Him.

Guided Prayer

- Grieve over the many ways the world has rejected God.
- Confess how, at times, we don't even want to obey God.
- Ask God to cultivate in us a desire and yearning to obey his good commands.

Confessional Prayer - WLC 45

Lord Christ, you are the perfect King, and it is our good to obey you; yet we consistently choose our own way. But you have wondrously called us to yourself; give us now grace to obey you, to seek you, to wait for you, to humbly submit to your correction, to overcome temptation, to endure suffering, and this for the sake of your glory and our good. Amen.

Blessing - Psalm 130:7-8

O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.



ADVENT DAY 7: SAT, DEC 9

Invitation - Psalm 130:5

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope.

Scripture Reading - 2 Samuel 12:7b-14

“Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ Thus says the Lord, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.’” David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said to David, “The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, the child who is born to you shall die.”

Dwelling

Thank and praise God for revealing himself to you. Read again, slowly this time. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct your prayers through the Word, leading you into a faithful and devoted response.

Guided Prayer

- Lament sin’s power in this world and its consequences.
- Confess the stubbornness of our hearts and our desire to justify sin.
- Ask God to help us overcome sin in our lives.

Confessional Prayer - WLC 45

LORD Jesus, you are a perfect King. Unlike any human ruler, when you accomplish glory for yourself, we are safe and blessed. You use your power to protect us, to cause us to flourish. Our enemies are no match for you! No oppression will stand forever. You break down the strongholds of sin in our lives and bring justice for the sin done against us. King of Glory, work in our lives and order them as you will. Amen.

Blessing - Psalm 130:7-8

O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Week 2: Hope

ADVENT DAY 9: MON, DEC 11

Invitation - Isaiah 9:2

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

Scripture Reading - Genesis 3:14-15

The Lord God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

Dwelling

What does this passage awaken in you? Stop and ask God about the response this passage has caused in you. Ask him to help you as you explore your emotions, doubts, concerns, and fears. Let God’s Holy Spirit assure you of the truth.

Guided Prayer

- Look forward in hope to the offspring that will bruise the serpent’s head.
- Express gratitude for God’s promise amidst our rebellion.

Confessional Prayer - BHC 17

LORD God,

When we had rejected your wisdom, taken our lives in our own hands, and run from you in fear,

you sought us out. In your divine wisdom, you confronted us with truth. In your divine goodness, you comforted us with the hope of triumph over our deceiver. LORD, you truly are abounding in steadfast love, and it is marvelous in our eyes. Amen.

Blessing - Lamentations 3:22-24

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”



ADVENT DAY 10: TUE, DEC 12

Invitation - Isaiah 9:2

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

Scripture Reading - Genesis 8:1, 9:7-17

But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it." Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on

the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

Dwelling

Pause and remind yourself that God is a Father who loves and instructs his children. Ask God what he might be teaching you through his Word. How might God be stirring your heart to respond to him today?

Guided Prayer

- Voice gratitude for God's commitment to his creation.
- Consider ways to pursue stewardship and care for God's creation.

Confessional Prayer - HC 27

Father, we thank you that you govern all things, from the hearts of kings to the breezes of the wind. Help us to be content whether your fatherly hand brings plenty or hunger, abundance or need, and enable us to be fruitful stewards of the resources you provide. Amen.

Blessing - Lamentations 3:22-24

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

ADVENT DAY 11: WED, DEC 13

Invitation - Isaiah 9:2

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

Scripture Reading - Genesis 12:1-3

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Dwelling

Humble yourself before God. Read again, out loud if possible. Which words or phrases are particularly striking? What do they reveal about God? About us? Respond to God accordingly, resting in Him.

Guided Prayer

- Express gratitude for how God has been faithful to his promise to Abraham, both in the world and in your life.
- Look forward to all the families of the earth being blessed through God's people.

Confessional Prayer - CD 2.5

Lord Jesus, we can hardly take in the truth that because you took on our humanity we will one day stand before you shoulder to shoulder with people from every tribe and language and nation

to worship you, the Lamb and King of kings. For the sake of your Name, fill our hearts with hope, make our lives radiant with your beauty, free us to love and declare your glory to our families, friends, coworkers, and neighbors that they will one day join with all the redeemed to sing your praises. Amen.

Blessing - Lamentations 3:22-24

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."



ADVENT DAY 12: THUR, DEC 14

Invitation - Isaiah 9:2

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

Scripture Reading - 2 Samuel 7:8-9, 12-16

Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever."

Dwelling

Thank and praise God for revealing himself to you. Read again, slowly this time. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct your prayers through the Word, leading you into a faithful and devoted response.

Guided Prayer

- Recall that God has established a Kingdom that is greater than the kingdoms of man.
- Look forward to the rightful King sitting on his throne.

Confessional Prayer - WLC 45

King Jesus, Son of David: We eagerly await the full realization of your good and gracious rule. Even now we ask that you rule in our hearts, in our church. Teach us to walk in your ways that we might display the goodness of your governance. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. Amen.

Blessing - Lamentations 3:22-24

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

ADVENT DAY 13: FRI, DEC 15

Invitation - Isaiah 9:2

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

Scripture Reading - Isaiah 9:3-7

You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Dwelling

What does this passage awaken in you? Stop and ask God about the response this passage has caused in you. Ask him to help you as you explore your emotions, doubts, concerns, and fears. Let God's Holy Spirit assure you of the truth.

Guided Prayer

- Yearn for the light of God to shine in this broken world and in our lives.
- Praise the Lord for his zeal both to redeem and reign.

Confessional Prayer - NCC 21 & 23

Eternal Savior, at the coming of your birth, hope entered the world. You are the one and only God-man, fully God yet fully man. It is only by your unique personhood that hope and salvation are made possible to your brothers and sisters. Enliven hope in our hearts and make us instruments to display that hope to the world. Amen.

Blessing - Lamentations 3:22-24

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."



ADVENT DAY 14: SAT, DEC 16

Invitation - Isaiah 9:2

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

Scripture Reading - Jeremiah 31:31-34

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Dwelling

Pause and remind yourself that God is a Father who loves and instructs his children. Ask God what he might be teaching you through his Word. How might God be stirring your heart to respond to him today?

Guided Prayer

- Long for God’s law of life to be written on our hearts.
- Express gratitude that God will forgive our iniquity and forget our sins.
- Find hope in the truth that God is actively working to draw people to know him.

Confessional Prayer - NCC 7 & 34

Holy God, by nature our hearts are rebellious and seek to establish our own rules for life; yet such things prove only to lead to death. Grant us a love for your law—your righteous instruction to your people—that it may be a lamp for our feet and a light to our path. Amen.

Blessing - Lamentations 3:22-24

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”

Week 3: Preparation

ADVENT DAY 16: MON, DEC 18

Invitation - Isaiah 40:3

A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

Scripture Reading - Psalm 89:1-4, 34-37

I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations. For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness." You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: 'I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'" I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips. Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David. His offspring shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me. Like the moon it shall be established forever, a faithful witness in the skies."

Dwelling

Humble yourself before God. Read again, out loud if possible. Which words or phrases are particularly striking? What do they reveal about God? About us? Respond to God accordingly, resting in Him.

Guided Prayer

- Thank God for his steadfast love.
- Be assured that God will be faithful to his covenant.
- Anticipate the coming and everlasting King.

Confessional Prayer - BGC 13

You are the God who sees, as Abraham proclaimed after you interceded for him and his sacrifice of Isaac. Trials and difficulties assail us in numerous ways, but you are our constant and steady rock. Remind us of your fatherly care. Daily recall to our hearts that we are your sheep for whom you care and provide. Amen.

Blessing - Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

ADVENT DAY 17: TUE, DEC 19

Invitation - Isaiah 40:3

A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

Scripture Reading - Isaiah 42:1-9

Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law. Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it: "I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them."

Dwelling

Thank and praise God for revealing himself to you. Read again, slowly this time. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct your prayers through the Word, leading you into a faithful and devoted response.

Guided Prayer

- Thank God for his commitment to carrying out his perfect justice.
- Be reassured that God will bring hope to the weak and the oppressed.
- Anticipate the new things that God will bring.

Confessional Prayer - BHC 4

Oh Lord, the wealth and beauty of this world belong to you, and yet you give ear to the groans of the hungry, and the lament of the oppressed. This world is burdened with the weight of injustice, our commerce is tainted with false balances, our poor are crushed and mute. You have called us, as your image bearers, to take pity on the helpless, to speak for justice, to be the hands of mercy in this world. Hear our cry, oh Lord. Amen.

Blessing - Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

ADVENT DAY 18: WED, DEC 20

Invitation - Isaiah 40:3

A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

Scripture Reading - Daniel 7:9-14

As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. "I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

Dwelling

What does this passage awaken in you? Stop and ask God about the response this passage has caused in you. Ask him to help you as you explore your emotions, doubts, concerns, and fears. Let God's Holy Spirit assure you of the truth.

Guided Prayer

- Thank God for his power and holiness.
- Recollect that evil will not reign forever.
- Await a Kingdom that will not be destroyed.

Confessional Prayer - WSC 102

You have been and always will be. Your Kingdom will go on forever, in perfect peace and unity. We thank you for your holiness, which will not allow evil to win. Give us perseverance in the present day, and fill our hearts with anticipation for the fulfillment of your justice. Amen.

Blessing - Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.



ADVENT DAY 19: THUR, DEC 21

Invitation - Isaiah 40:3

A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

Scripture Reading - Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Dwelling

Pause and remind yourself that God is a Father who loves and instructs his children. Ask God what he might be teaching you through his word. How might God be stirring your heart to respond to him today?

Guided Prayer

- Thank God for bestowing favor on his people.
- Be reminded that nothing is impossible for God.
- Anticipate the birth of Jesus, the Son of the Most High God.

Confessional Prayer - WSC 22

God, we praise you for your power and wisdom, and for your love that led you to enter into our world as a humble infant. Your power and love know no physical or spiritual limitation! May we rest in awe of you and eagerly watch for you, both in our daily lives and for your second coming. And grant us to grasp more deeply this year than ever before the magnitude and significance of your incarnation. Amen.

Blessing - Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

ADVENT DAY 20: FRI, DEC 22

Invitation - Isaiah 40:3

A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

Scripture Reading - Matthew 1:18-23

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

Dwelling

Humble yourself before God. Read again, out loud if possible. Which words or phrases are particularly striking? What do they reveal about God? About us? Respond to God accordingly, resting in Him.

Guided Prayer

- Thank God that he wants to be with us.
- Recollect that we do not have to be driven by fear.
- Anticipate the miraculous work of the incarnation.

Confessional Prayer - NCC 22

Emmanuel, thank you for your body, that flesh that still lives and made you like us. Your perfect holiness prevailed in spite of your subjection to every human frailty and temptation. Because you are able to sympathize with every weakness, we are never alone, never without help. When we succumb where you did not, your perfect sacrifice covers us. We owe every triumph over our own sin to the life in the Spirit you made possible by coming to us. Bring us to be with you forever, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Blessing - Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.



ADVENT DAY 21: SAT, DEC 23

Invitation - Isaiah 40:3

A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

Scripture Reading - Luke 1:46-55

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked on the humble
estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all
generations will call me blessed;
for he who is mighty has done
great things for me,
and holy is his name.

And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the
thoughts of their hearts;
he has brought down the
mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever."

Dwelling

Thank and praise God for revealing himself to you. Read again, slowly this time. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct your prayers through the Word, leading you into a faithful and devoted response.

Guided Prayer

- Thank God that he uses the weak and the humble to work his salvation.
- Call to mind that God will show mercy on those who fear him.
- Anticipate the coming, incarnate King.

Confessional Prayer - WSC 27

Loving Lord,

When you took on human flesh, you did not hold your low condition against us. Rather, you seemed to delight in bringing joy to the humble. You lived a humble life with magnanimity. And even of the death you would die in our place, you said, "I give my life willingly." Lord, you took on all of these things out of your deep love for us, and we are humbled and comforted in return. Amen.

Blessing - Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.



Week 1: Joy

CHRISTMASTIDE DAY 1: MON, DEC 25

Invitation - Psalm 98:1-2

Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.

Scripture Reading - Luke 2:1-7

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.

Dwelling

Pause and remind yourself that God is a Father who loves and instructs his children. Ask God what he might be teaching you through his Word. How might God be stirring your heart to respond to him today?

Guided Prayer

- Praise God for the birth of Jesus, the Son of God and the Savior of the world.
- Rejoice in God who is fulfilling his promise.

Confessional Prayer - HC 35

Father, how humble is Jesus! Thank you that he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but became nothing for our sake. May he afresh be our treasure this Christmas. Make within our hearts and lives much space for the Lord Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Blessing - Luke 2:14

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!

CHRISTMASTIDE DAY 2: TUE, DEC 26

Invitation - Psalm 98:1-2

Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.

Scripture Reading - John 1:1-5, 9-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Dwelling

Humble yourself before God. Read again, out loud if possible. Which words or phrases are particularly striking? What do they reveal about God? About us? Respond to God accordingly, resting in Him.

Guided Prayer

- Praise God for sending the inextinguishable light: his Son Jesus.
- Find joy in being God's children.

Confessional Prayer - HC 33 & 34

Jesus Christ, by your incarnation you began a new creation and brought Light into our darkness. You took on our flesh, embodying Truth and Grace, and began redeeming our humanity—paving the way for us to be in relationship with the Father as his children. How can we thank you? What can we give you but our all, in adoring love and worship, as we wait for the day when we will see you face to face! Amen.

Blessing - Luke 2:14

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!

CHRISTMASTIDE DAY 3: WED, DEC 27

Invitation - Psalm 98:1-2

Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.

Scripture Reading - Colossians 1:15-20

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Dwelling

Thank and praise God for revealing himself to you. Read again, slowly this time. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct your prayers through the Word, leading you into a faithful and devoted response.

Guided Prayer

- Praise God for creating, sustaining, and reconciling all things.
- Take heart that the Church will follow Christ in his resurrection from the dead.

Confessional Prayer - BGC 10

Dear Heavenly Father: Truly it is a wonder and a delight that you have shown us yourself in your only-begotten Son, Jesus. We thank you for his saving work on the cross, his creating work in the beginning and with each new day. All this was to bless us and glorify you. We praise you, God the Father; we praise you, God the Son; we praise you, God the Spirit. Amen.

Blessing - Luke 2:14

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!



CHRISTMASTIDE DAY 4: THUR, DEC 28

Invitation - Psalm 98:1-2

Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.

Scripture Reading - John 1:29-34

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

Dwelling

What does this passage awaken in you? Stop and ask God about the response this passage has caused in you. Ask him to help you as you explore your emotions, doubts, concerns, and fears. Let God's Holy Spirit assure you of the truth.

Guided Prayer

- Praise God for preparing the way for our Savior and King.
- Rejoice that the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world.

Confessional Prayer - CD 3 & 4

Heavenly Father, how merciful you are that you send messengers to proclaim the joyous news of freedom and reconciliation through Jesus. We are eternally grateful that you have adopted us as sons and daughters, delivering us from your wrath, and granting to us an inheritance of life with you. Amen.

Blessing - Luke 2:14

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!

CHRISTMASTIDE DAY 5: FRI, DEC 29

Invitation - Psalm 98:1-2

Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.

Scripture Reading - Luke 2:25-35

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,

according to your word;

for my eyes have seen your salvation

that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

a light for revelation to the Gentiles,

and for glory to your people Israel."

And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in

Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

Dwelling

Pause and remind yourself that God is a Father who loves and instructs his children. Ask God what he might be teaching you through his Word. How might God be stirring your heart to respond to him today?

Guided Prayer

- Praise God that we do not have to wait in vain.
- Be glad for the salvation of the Lord that has come for all people.

Confessional Prayer - WSC 20

Compassionate Lord, we give you thanks for delivering us from sin and misery. This state we brought upon ourselves, but in your kindness and care you redeemed us through your Son. While we wait in expectation for your restoration of all things, grant us perseverance through the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessing - Luke 2:14

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!



CHRISTMASTIDE DAY 6: SAT, DEC 30

Invitation - Psalm 98:1-2

Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.

Scripture Reading - Mark 2:1-12

And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic—"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home." And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and

glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

Dwelling

Humble yourself before God. Read again, out loud if possible. Which words or phrases are particularly striking? What do they reveal about God? About us? Respond to God accordingly, resting in Him.

Guided Prayer

- Praise God for being unlike anything we have ever seen.
- Give thanks that Jesus came to both heal the sick and forgive our sins.

Confessional Prayer - HC 15 & 18

Lord of light and love who delighted to walk among us, we rejoice that we are created in your image and are called to be your sons and daughters. Help us to always seek your will in our lives and let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts. Amen.

Blessing - Luke 2:14

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!

Week 2: Mission

CHRISTMASTIDE DAY 8: MON, JANUARY 1

Invitation - Isaiah 60:1

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

Scripture Reading - Luke 2:8-21

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. And

at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Dwelling

Thank and praise God for revealing himself to you. Read again, slowly this time. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct your prayers through the Word, leading you into a faithful and devoted response.

Guided Prayer

- Be in awe that God came to earth as a human baby.
- Ask for boldness to declare the glory of God in our own communities.

Confessional Prayer - CD 5

Glorious Lord, humanity's unbelief is of our own doing, but salvation is entirely of your doing. Lift our hearts and give us courage to proclaim you as our Savior and King in a broken and unbelieving world. Amen.

Blessing - Revelation 7:17

For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

CHRISTMASTIDE DAY 9: TUE, JANUARY 2

Invitation - Isaiah 60:1

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

Scripture Reading - Matthew 2:1-12

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel." Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return

to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Dwelling

What does this passage awaken in you? Stop and ask God about the response this passage has caused in you. Ask him to help you as you explore your emotions, doubts, concerns, and fears. Let God's Holy Spirit assure you of the truth.

Guided Prayer

- Worship through offering our very selves to God.
- Ask for courage to proclaim that Jesus is the King of all kings.

Confessional Prayer - HC 31

Lord Jesus, we praise you that you are the Christ, the anointed one of God! Through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, you teach us the secret counsel and will of God, deliver us through the amazing sacrifice of your body, and govern all things as our eternal King. Lead us through the Holy Spirit to a moment by moment worship of you as our Prophet, Priest, and King. Amen.

Blessing - Revelation 7:17

For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

CHRISTMASTIDE DAY 10: WED, JANUARY 3

Invitation - Isaiah 60:1

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

Scripture Reading - Mark 1:14-20

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

Dwelling

Pause and remind yourself that God is a Father who loves and instructs his children. Ask God what he might be teaching you through his Word. How might God be stirring your heart to respond to him today?

Guided Prayer

- Find hope that God is building his Kingdom here on earth.
- Petition God for hearts to respond to the call of Jesus and become fishers of men.

Confessional Prayer - BHC 3

Lord, not only have you called the Church to yourself, you have established her to be a blessing and a light to the nations. We thank you for the unparalleled reconciliation that comes through Jesus alone, for without it we would have no hope. By your grace, continue this work in us, your Church, and empower us as we witness to and disciple the nations, all for your glory. Amen.

Blessing - Revelation 7:17

For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.



CHRISTMASTIDE DAY 11: THUR, JANUARY 4

Invitation - Isaiah 60:1

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

Scripture Reading - Philippians 2:1-11

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Dwelling

Humble yourself before God. Read again, out loud if possible. Which words or phrases are particularly striking? What do they reveal about God? About us? Respond to God accordingly, resting in Him.

Guided Prayer

- Find courage in Jesus, who humbled himself to death to save the world.
- Grant us dispositions of humility, actively seeking the interests of God and others.

Confessional Prayer - WSC 27 & 28

Lord Jesus, we stand amazed at the depths of humiliation you took upon yourself on our behalf. You were born as a human, undergoing the miseries of this life, culminating in the receiving of God's wrath as you died on a cross only to triumphantly rise again! May we see you as you are, risen from the dead and exalted, sitting at the right hand of the Father. Amen.

Blessing - Revelation 7:17

For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

CHRISTMASTIDE DAY 12: FRI, JANUARY 5

Invitation - Isaiah 60:1

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

Scripture Reading - Revelation 7:9-12

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

Dwelling

Thank and praise God for revealing himself to you. Read again, slowly this time. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct your prayers through the Word, leading you into a faithful and devoted response.

Guided Prayer

- Long for the day when a great multitude will praise our Lord and Savior.
- Seek for a heart that longs for the day when all nations will praise Jesus.

Confessional Prayer - NCC 52

Gracious Lord, thank you for providing us with hope through everlasting life. Help us to live as your redeemed people now, as we look forward to the new heaven and new earth, where we will be freed from sin and live with glorified bodies in a renewed and restored creation. Amen.

Blessing - Revelation 7:17

For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMASTIDE

Devotional

