



*Christmas Advent
Devotional
2024*

Advent Devotional 2024

May your Christmas experience be filled with Hope. My hope is that you find this devotional of practical use during this Advent season and that you find inspiration, rest and encouragement within the days and moments that lie ahead. I hope you discover God's Word being written in your heart in a new way, bringing you into closer intimacy with Jesus. Finally, I hope this devotional is a source of light guiding each day for you during this Advent season. In the hustle and bustle we find ourselves in during this month, may His word and His Spirit draw you gently back to the truth of the season, the peace and joy of Christ being born for all of us.

So, we begin our advent journey on Sunday Dec 1 this year. Beginning Advent on the first Advent Sunday has special meaning for me, and my hope is that as we travel with the Holy Spirit through each day of Advent, you will be drawn to your own special moments and reflections with the Lord. Included each day is a space for notes, so feel free to jot down anything that stood out to you, or any questions that you would like to talk to the Lord about each during Advent. Each day ask the Lord what He would like to say to you through the particular bible passage. Most of all we want you to listen for His voice. Hearing God speak to us through His word, the Bible is the chief and primary way He speaks to us today, and how we hear His voice. May He speak new and refreshing words of hope and joy to you this Advent season.

Each Sunday is laid out with a Scripture and Prayer as well as a spot for notes on the Sermon. Sunday's are days for Rest, Reflection and Prayer. We trust that as you rest in Him and that Sunday will be a refuge for you as you prepare for the week ahead. Each weekday provides a scripture to read, meditate on, and pray over. Before you begin each day, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide and lead your heart and mind to the truth about Jesus, and the truth about who you are in Christ. You are God's child, you are united in Him and you are complete in Christ Jesus. May you find rich blessing through hearing His voice through these Advent readings. Let's begin our journey through Advent!

Merry Christmas – Pastor Stephen Budd



Sunday Dec 1, 2024

First day and First Sunday of Advent – Hope

Scripture: Mark 1:14-18

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news! As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him.

Prayer: Gracious God and Heavenly Father, on this **first Sunday** as we begin to light the **advent** wreath, turn our hearts and minds toward your son, Jesus Christ. Fill us with hope as we remember His coming and await His return. My Hope fill our hearts and minds to overflowing as we recall your faithfulness. You are a God who fulfills all promises and our hope is in you alone.

Sermon notes

Rest Reflect and Pray

Monday

Scripture: Jeremiah 33:14-16

The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah. " '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. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior.'

Notes, Thoughts or Questions

Reflect and Pray

Tuesday

Scripture: Psalm 25:4-5, 8-10

Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful toward those who keep the demands of his covenant.

Notes, Thoughts or Questions

Reflect and Pray

Wednesday

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

Notes, Thoughts or Questions

Reflect and Pray

Thursday

Scripture: Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near. Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.

Notes, Thoughts or Questions

Reflect and Pray

Friday

Connecting the Readings

From the prophet Jeremiah, we read a prophesy about the coming of the Messiah. He tells the people that at this time, Judah and Jerusalem will be safe, dwelling secure under the reign of this righteous ruler. Then, Jesus describes the end times in the Gospel of Luke. His depiction is not as picturesque as Jeremiah's. Jesus tells his followers that when the Son of Man comes, people will be frightened, there will be distress and dismay, and the whole world will be shaken. The Psalm gives us the key to see into Jesus' words. "To you O Lord I lift up my soul." Also in the Gospel, Jesus encourages his followers not to loose heart, but to "Stand erect and raise your heads." No matter what may come, we are called to lift our hearts and minds to always gaze upon Christ. Jesus calls for us to be vigilant, for the turbulence of the world can easily distract us.

Although we tend to think about saints as holy and pious, and picture them with halos above their heads and ecstatic gazes, true saints are much more accessible. They are men and women like us, who live ordinary lives and struggle with ordinary problems. What makes them saints is their clear and unwavering focus on God and God's people...The saints are our brothers and sisters, calling us to Christ
—Henri Nouwen

Reflect and Pray

Saturday

Use Today to catch up on any readings from the week that you may have missed.

There are natural rhythms and cycles to the year. Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. The school year. Advent is also a great time to begin reading through the bible in a year. Have you ever thought about that journey beginning at Advent? As we finish our first week of Advent, here are some questions to reflect upon: Does my schedule (and my family's schedule) encourage us to spend time each day in prayer? Have I reflected on my own heart and life this week? What did I surround myself with this week? Are they cultivating a pure heart within me? Do I find myself grateful at the end of the day, or do I hold onto any negative moments of the day? Consider adding your own questions as you think about one or two ways you would like to increase your focus on God.

Notes, Thoughts or Questions

Reflect and Pray

Sunday Dec 8, 2024

Second Sunday Of Advent — Joy

Scripture: Romans 7:4-6

So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

Scripture: Hebrews 10:19-23

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Prayer: Gracious God and Heavenly Father, prepare our hearts to celebrate your birth joyfully. Thank you for faithfully fulfilling your promise by sending your Son to earth. May the promise of Christ's second coming inspire us to live with hope and purpose. May we experience a Christmas free from turmoil and chaos, knowing that Jesus brings peace. May we rest in Him in Jesus name
Amen

Sermon notes

Rest, Reflect and Pray

Monday

Scripture: Philippians 4:1-7

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends! I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Notes, Thoughts or Questions

Reflect and Pray

Tuesday

Scripture: Psalm 126:1-6

When the LORD brought back the captives of Zion, we were like men dreaming. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with rejoicing. Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy. Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the torrents in the southern desert. Those who sow in tears shall reap rejoicing. The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy. Although they go forth weeping, carrying the seed to be sown, They shall come back rejoicing, carrying their sheaves.

Notes, Thoughts or Questions

Reflect and Pray

Wednesday

Scripture: Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11

In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Notes, Thoughts or Questions

Reflect and Pray

Thursday

Scripture: Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar-when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene - during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all people will see God's salvation.

Notes, Thoughts or Questions

Reflect and Pray

Friday

Connecting the Readings

How many times have we heard these words from scripture? Prepare the way of the Lord! Yes, yes, we know already, isn't the way prepared yet?! But if we pause and consider the theme carrying us from last week to this week, we know that there is still much work to be done. How often we stumble and fall, or even stray, from the path we are to be preparing. These scriptures are announcing the coming of the Lord. Make ready, get moving, see the wonders that will be wrought in the days ahead! It is intimidating. How can I prepare the way for God? What can I do, I'm just one person? We've had a long time, isn't everything ready already? I'm ok, you're ok, it'll all be ok, right? The Truth is that the kingdom of God is here in a "now" and a "yet to come" reality. The Psalm says it all, "The Lord has done great things for us, we are filled with joy." Each and every day, God is doing miraculous things in our lives. Each and every day we have the opportunity to respond to this generous love. Advent is a time when we look forward to the coming of Christ, both as a baby at Christmas but also in His second coming as King of Kings. Jesus is coming for us, what incredible news! The challenge is to not let this message grow stale. Be of good cheer The King is coming soon and very soon!

Reflect and Pray

Saturday

Use Today to catch up on any readings from the week that you may have missed.

Are you already filling with stress over the coming holidays? Have you already attended one too many festive gatherings, work parties, cooking decorating playgroups and feel sick at the sight of candy canes and ornaments? If you are feeling any of this, or find yourself heading down that road, use this week to pause. Consider doing one or more of the following to reconnect with the hope of Advent, rather than wallowing in false joy. Go out of your way to serve someone—make a meal, bake some cookies, offer to help hang holiday lights or decorations. And be sure to do it with an attitude of cheerfulness. As you go about your day, especially while shopping, let others go first. With a smile on your face and peace, rather than anxiety, in your heart. Be aware of your reactions to others and look deeply to see Christ in each person you encounter, regardless of how Christ-like they are acting in the moment.

Notes, Thoughts or Questions

Reflect and Pray

Sunday Dec 15, 2024

Third Sunday Of Advent — Love

Scripture: John 13:31-35 & 14:15-24

When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once. "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Scripture: John 14:15-24

"If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them. "Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

Prayer: Gracious God and Heavenly Father, let us rediscover the wonder of Your love this Advent. Help us to rejoice not just in the gifts we receive, but in the gift of Your Son. May our hearts overflow with gratitude and joy as we look forward to celebrating Your birth. Fill us with your love heavenly Father, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Your Son. We pray in the name of the one who loved us and gave himself for us. Amen.

Sermon notes

Rest, Reflect and Pray

Monday

Scripture: Zephaniah 3:14-18

Sing, Daughter Zion; shout aloud, Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, Daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm. On that day they will say to Jerusalem, "Do not fear, Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing." "I will remove from you all who mourn over the loss of your appointed festivals, which is a burden and reproach for you.

Notes, Thoughts or Questions

Reflect and Pray

Tuesday

Scripture: Isaiah 12:2-6

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. In that day you will say: "Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."

Notes, Thoughts or Questions

Reflect and Pray

Wednesday

Scripture: Philippians 4:4-7

Brothers and sisters: Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Notes, Thoughts or Questions

Reflect and Pray

Thursday

Scripture: Luke 3:10-18

What should we do then?" the crowd asked. John answered, "Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same. "Even tax collectors came to be baptized. "Teacher," they asked, "what should we do?" "Don't collect any more than you are required to," he told them. Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely-be content with your pay." The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.

Notes, Thoughts or Questions

Reflect and Pray

Friday

Connecting the Readings

We are told no less than 8 times in the readings to be full of joy, or to rejoice. The first 3 readings all exhort us to pause and look about us. The Lord is with us, how could we be anything but joyful? Yet our Gospel reading tempers our spirits a bit, for we are like those walking with John the Baptist. Is the Savior here, or will we find fulfillment over there? Should we reach for the next best thing, hoping it will satisfy our need for love and encouragement? Again, the Psalm is our key which highlights the Old Testament reading and informs our understanding of the Gospel. In the Gospel, the people were looking to John to be the Savior. But John, in his unique and vivid imagery, tells the people in no uncertain terms that the Christ · · is still coming. While holding that anticipation close to our hearts, we are able to still rejoice with the psalmist and the prophet Zephaniah, Jesus is here! Every Sunday of Advent we find the meeting of these two dynamic postures. We celebrate Jesus' presence with us in the Word, the Church body of believers, and through His indwelling Holy Spirit. But we also light the Advent candle, and sing songs like "O Come, O Come Emmanuel." Yes, Jesus is with us. But Jesus is also still on His way! This is the source of our joy. Jesus is with us, and Jesus is coming to us. The time of Advent returns us to the horizon of hope, a hope that does not disappoint because it is founded on the Word of God. A hope that does not disappoint, simply because the Lord never disappoints. He is faithful to His promises.

Reflect and Pray

Saturday

Use Today to catch up on any readings from the week that you may have missed.

Jesus is in the Midst. Last week one of the challenges was to look for Christ in each person we met. This week, let's take it one step further—seeking unity. God does not desire or seek uniformity from us, but He does long for our Unity! Remember Jesus' prayer the night before He died, "Father, may they all be one." (Jn 17:21) In this intense moment, Jesus wished for our unity. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, may our prayer and wish for unity be put into practice in Jesus' instruction that "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." (Mt 18:20) When we gather with others, be it at work, at a playgroup, in small group, or simply around our dinner table, we have an opportunity to bring Jesus into the midst of you. Jesus in the midst means mutual love, sacrificial love, trust, hope, forgiveness, and reconciliation. This week, how can you make yourself more open to experiencing Jesus in the midst? Quicker to listen. Slower to anger. Increased patience. Greater generosity. Free with forgiveness...

Notes, Thoughts or Questions

Reflect and Pray

Sunday Dec 22, 2024

Fourth Sunday Of Advent — Peace

Scripture: Ephesians 2:12-22

Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Prayer: Gracious God and Heavenly Father this advent season may you keep us in perfect peace as our mind stays on the truth of your powerful love. Help us to trust fully in you and rest in the peace that you offer. In this season of Advent, prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus, our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. In Jesus name Amen

Sermon notes

Rest, Reflect and Pray

Monday

Scripture: Micah 5:2-4

“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.” Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son, and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

Notes, Thoughts or Questions

Reflect and Pray



Tuesday Dec 24, 2024

Christmas Eve and Christ Candle

Scripture: Luke 1:39-45

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

Reflection: Elizabeth confirms the messiah for us with wonder and humility, "And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?...Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."...Elizabeth boldly blesses Mary. Mary's example of trust is a lesson for all of us to take to heart. Advent is a time set apart to prepare for Christ, not just as a baby but also in His second coming. Do we trust that He will return? Jesus said, "So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come" (Mt 24:44). How are we ordering our life so that when Jesus does come, He blesses us with the same words Elizabeth blessed Mary with? From Mary we learn to surrender to God's Will in all things. From Mary we learn to trust even when all hope seems gone.

Often forgotten about, the Holy Spirit is one of the major players in the Advent experience. After all, it is through the Holy Spirit that Jesus is conceived within Mary'. Incredibly, the Holy Spirit through our conversion gives to us a similar grace. Jesus desires to be born in each of our hearts. We have to learn from Mary that we too have the savior of the world dwelling in us. We follow her in joyful haste to share Christ born within us to everyone we meet. We prepare our hearts for the miraculous birth of Christ, both in our world and in us. Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

"Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise, Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me." - St. Patrick

Rest, Reflect and Pray



***May your hearts and homes be blessed this Advent Season,
and may our Lord, Jesus Christ, come to reign in both.***

Merry Christmas KBC!