



Advent

PILGRIMS OF HOPE

ADVENT READING GUIDE
2025



Welcome

Welcome Church Family.

Each Advent season, sunlight diminishes as we journey through the Christmas story week- by-week, creating the feeling darkness may win in our world. Yet with every passing day, we come closer to the arrival of our Savior, Emmanuel, who is the embodiment of God's promise that the darkness cannot win.

This year, our invitation as a church family is to journey through the story of Jesus' birth as pilgrims of hope. Remembering our guiding light is Christ – our ultimate hope and the true reality we live in.

What does it look like to be a people who can remember the story we're in while we're still in the middle of the journey? How can we offer that hope to others along the way?

We will journey together through the prophets foretelling Christ's coming, the gospels recounting the events of His birth while turning to the Psalms of Ascent (Psalms for the journey) each week for wisdom. The darkness closes in and yet, we approach Messiah's birth when the light grows once again.

Each week of Advent is a signpost to remember how we are formed into pilgrims of hope and a people of hope throughout the journey.

We invite you to use this Advent Reading Plan to reflect more deeply on Scripture, and to lean into prayer throughout each week, remembering always that God's Presence is with us.

Welcome to Advent...

"The Lord is coming, always coming. When you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you will recognize him at any moment of your life. Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord." -Henri J.M. Nouwen

Christ Our King Sunday

Read the week prior to Sunday, November 23rd

SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:5–25; Isaiah 2:1–5; Psalm 131

PRAYER

Almighty God, as you have given Jesus Christ to be Savior and Lord, grant us now grace to accept and rejoice in our salvation and in His lordship.
Amen.

SONG

King of Kings – Brooke Ligertwood

READING¹

“[the term] Pilgrim tells us we are people who spend our lives going someplace, going to God, and whose path for getting there is the way, Jesus Christ. We realize that ‘this world is not my home’ and set out for ‘the Father’s house.’ Abraham, who went out, is our archetype. Jesus, answering Thomas’s question ‘Master, we have no idea where you’re going. How do you expect us to know the road?’ gives us directions: ‘I am the Road, also the Truth, also the Life. No one gets to the Father apart from me’ (John 14:5-6). The letter to the Hebrews defines our program: ‘Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we’d better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we’re in’ (Heb 12:1-2).”

BENEDICTION

See page 10

¹Source: Eugene H. Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* (HarperOne, 2000), pp. 17–18

Hope

Read the week prior to Sunday, November 30th

SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:26-38; Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 125

PRAYER

LORD God,

You are with us. Though we are greatly troubled, surrounded by darkness and struggle, we will not be afraid. For no word from You will ever fail.

You are with us. Though we get lost in our wandering, straying from the comfort of your rod and your staff, we will trust in You. For no promise of Yours will remain unfulfilled.

You are with us. You are our hope. May your word to us be fulfilled. Guide us to more fully find our hope in Your presence now, both in us and around us.

Amen.

SONG

Hope for Everyone – Matt Maher

READING¹

“Hope is what you get when you suddenly realize that a different worldview is possible, a worldview in which the rich, the powerful, and the unscrupulous do not after all have the last word.

Hope, for the Christian, is not wishful thinking or mere blind optimism. It is a mode of knowing, a mode within which new things are possible, options are not shut down, new creation can happen.”

BENEDICTION

See page 10

¹Source: N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (HarperOne, 2008), pp. 72–75

Peace

Read the week prior to Sunday, December 7th

SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:39-56; Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 126

PRAYER

In this season of waiting, we turn our hearts toward You.
You are our sufficiency when we lack, and our confidence when we fear.
Give us trust in Your goodness, even when life feels uncertain.
Let Your peace, which is the steady rest that comes from knowing You are enough; fill our hearts and shape our lives.
Come, Lord Jesus.
Bring Your peace to our world and to our hearts.
Amen.

SONG

His Name Shall Be – Matt Redman

READING¹

“The greatness and love of God forms my peace, and at the same time, my love and joy. Job had many worrisome questions in the midst of his troubled life. But when he beheld God, they simply did not matter and no longer seemed to need answering. He did not raise a single one of the questions he earlier had wanted to press upon God. He was not bullied into silence by God coming to him, but really saw the all-sufficiency of God to his life and his soul. And this brought love, joy and PEACE to him at one stroke.”

BENEDICTION

See page 10

¹Source: Dallas Willard, *The Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Image of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress 2002), pp. 138

Joy

Read the week prior to Sunday, December 14th

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18-25; Micah 5:2-5a; Psalm 132:8-18

PRAYER

Loving God,

As we journey through this life our circumstances might change, bringing tears or bringing smiles. Help us always remember that true joy does not come from changing circumstances but instead, it comes from You.

It grows deep within our hearts, filling us up and overflowing.

In You we find hope, peace, joy, and love.

We rejoice in You Jesus, and we sing Your praise!

Amen.

SONG

Joy to the World (acoustic) – Phil Wickham

READING¹

“I do not think that the life of Heaven bears any analogy to play or dance in respect of frivolity. I do think that while we are in this “valley of tears”, cursed with labour, hemmed round with necessities, tripped up with frustrations, doomed to perpetual plannings, puzzlings, and anxieties, certain qualities that must belong to the celestial condition have no chance to get through, can project no image of themselves, except in activities which, for us here and now, are frivolous. For surely we must suppose the life of the blessed to be an end in itself, indeed The End: to be utterly spontaneous; to be the complete reconciliation of boundless freedom with order – with the most delicately adjusted, supple, intricate, and beautiful order? How can you find any image of this in the “serious” activities either of our natural or of our (present) spiritual life? – either in our precarious and heart-broken affections or in the Way which is always, in some degree, a via crucis: No, Malcolm. It is only in our “hours-off”, only in our moments of permitted festivity, that we find an analogy. Dance and game are frivolous, unimportant down here; for “down here” is not their natural place. Here, they are a moment’s rest from the life we were placed here to live. But in this world everything is upside down. That which, if it could be prolonged here, would be a truancy, is likest that which in a better country is the End of ends. Joy is the serious business of Heaven.”

BENEDICTION

See page 10

¹Source: C. S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1964), Letter 17, para. 17.

Love

Read the week prior to Sunday, December 21st

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:1-20; John 1:1-14; Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 131

PRAYER

LORD Jesus,

Laid down in humble manger.

Laying down your life for us.

The perfect image of love.

In an age of counterfeit, let us know authentic.

In the moments where presence is fractured, let us become wholly aware.

When truth is treated like a suggestion, let us be obedient.

A people following in your footsteps of authentic, present, obedient love.

Bringing light where darkness once was.

Divine, incarnate Love.

Amen.

SONG

Noel – Chris Tomlin (featuring Lauren Daigle)

READING¹

“Where reason is indignant, where our nature rebels, where our piety anxiously keeps us away: that is precisely where God loves to be. There he confounds the reason of the reasonable; there he aggravates our nature, our piety—that is where he wants to be, and no one can keep him from it. Only the humble believe him and rejoice that God is so free and so marvelous that he does wonders where people despair, that he takes what is little and lowly and makes it marvelous. And that is the wonder of all wonders. That God loves the lowly... God is not ashamed of the lowliness of human beings. God marches right in. He chooses people as his instruments and performs his wonders where one would least expect them. God is near to lowliness; he loves the lost, the neglected, the unseemly, the excluded, the weak, and broken.”

BENEDICTION

See page 10

¹Source: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *God Is in the Manger: Reflections on Advent and Christmas* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), pp. 21-22

The Arrival

CHRISTMAS EVE

Read the week prior to Wednesday, December 24th

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 2:1-12; Isaiah 60:1-3; Psalm 134

PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

Light who meets us in both our longing and our joy...
on this holy night, we draw near.

We who have journeyed far now arrive at the manger seeking rest.
We who carry both hope and heaviness look for Your healing presence.
We who walk in darkness welcome the Light that has come.

Make our hearts still enough to see You,
humble enough to adore You,
and courageous enough to carry Your light into the world.

On this night of arrival we say,
“all our journeys end in You.”

Amen.

SONG

O Holy Night – Carrie Underwood

READING¹

“Once we have seen God in a stable, we can never be sure where He will appear or to what lengths He will go, or to what depths He will descend in His wild pursuit of humankind. If holiness and the awful power and majesty of God were present in this least auspicious of all events—this birth of a peasant’s child—then there is no place or time so lowly and earthbound but that holiness can be present there too. And this means that we are never safe, that there is no place where we can hide from God, no place where we are safe from His power to break into and recreate the human heart. The world is the manger of the Lord, and the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

BENEDICTION

See page 10

¹Source: Frederick Buechner, *The Magnificent Defeat* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 85–86

Devotional

Read on Sunday, December 28th

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:22–40, Galatians 4:4–7, Isaiah 42:1–9

PRAYER

Lord of light, teach us to sing a new song.

Lead us along your paths,

turn our darkness into light before us,

and open our eyes to see Your salvation.

You will not forsake us and in Your steadfast love, we find our hope.

All glory honor and power be to you, Jesus.

Amen.

SONG

All Glory Be to Christ – King’s Kaleidoscope

READING¹

“Hope is anticipation of good not yet here, or as yet unseen. It is, of course, inseparable from joy. Sometimes the good in question is just deliverance from an evil, which is here. Then ‘we are saved by hope’ and we ‘rejoice in hope,’ because ‘if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.’ That eager anticipation strengthens us to stay faithful to God and to stay on the path of what is right.

One of the remarkable changes brought by Jesus and his people into the ancient world concerned the elevation of hope into a primary virtue. Hope was not well regarded by the Greco-Roman world. It was thought of as a desperation measure. And while, according to the myth of Pandora’s box, it may be all we have left with which to endure the agonies of life, it must be grimly held in check or it will give rise to vain expectations that only cause more misery. Christ, by contrast, brings solid hope for humanity.”

BENEDICTION

See page 10

¹Source: Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), pp. 132

Benediction

Lord Jesus,

Master of both the light and the darkness,
send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We who have so much to do and seek quiet spaces to hear your
voice each day,

We who are anxious over many things look forward to your
coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of
your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"

Amen.

- Henri J.M. Nouwen

Community Blessing

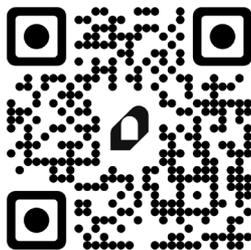
Community Blessing is a way for our church family to practice the giving and receiving of hospitality through the holiday season.

We can help support each other through challenges that some of us may be facing. Supporting each other might look like giving groceries, meals, rides, help decorating, purchasing gifts, household preparations, repairs, help wrapping, and mailing items, etc.

Check out the links below!



TO SHARE A
NEED...
NOV. 2 - 23



TO FULFILL A
NEED...
NOV. 23 - DEC. 14

