



# Celebrate

# CHRISTMAS

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## A Journey Through Advent

Five Weekly Devotionals



It's easy to lose focus on Jesus during the chaos of Christmas. Engage with Scripture this year and find true hope.



hope peace joy  
love faith



Hello!

The term “Advent” may not be familiar to you, but the Christmas season certainly comes as no surprise to our schedule. The concept of Advent is a preparation, longing, and anticipation of the coming Christ. As we prepare our hearts to celebrate this Christmas, let’s come with new perspective, new hope, and new anticipation. Our prayer is that your season will be filled with more of Jesus.

Advent reminds us that just as Jesus came into the world the first time, He has promised He will come again. At my house, we have added a simple saying to the coming weeks. “Christ has come! Christ will come again!” Consider adding this phrase into your holiday traditions and make it responsive with your family (where one person says the first part and the others say the second). Each time you say it, allow your heart to long for the day when Jesus will return to fully eliminate sin, evil, and death.

*“But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God’s righteousness.”  
2 Peter 3:13 NLT*

**Christ has come! Christ will come again!**

Blessings,  
Pastor Chad

WE ARE  
LOOKING  
*forward*  
TO THE  
**NEW HEAVENS**  
**AND NEW EARTH**  
*He has promised*



week one **HOPE**

The last time the Lord spoke through a prophet of the coming Messiah was through Malachi. For over four hundred years, the people of God waited in silence for the Messiah to come, because God did not fulfill his promise right away. This time of waiting and anticipation was brought to an end in Luke 1, through Zechariah and Elizabeth who had also been waiting and anticipating God's blessing. God broke his silence by sending an angel to announce the birth of John the Baptist. This very elderly couple would have a son, a son who would be a voice in the wilderness announcing the arrival of the long awaited Messiah.

**Read Luke 1**

As you read this passage, feel the angst, the sorrow of wanting, and the need of something more. As you understand the deep emotion of the Scripture, bring it into this Advent season as we anticipate the coming Messiah.

**Christ has come! Christ will come again!**

**ISAIAH 9:6-7 NLT**

"For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the Lord of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!"

**HEBREWS 1:1-2 NLT**

"Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe."



## PRAYER

*Almighty God, give us your grace to stand strong against the works of darkness. Help us put on the armor of light, given to us by your Son Jesus, who came into the world with great humility. Prepare our hearts for the day he will come again in his glorious majesty, that we may anticipate his return with great hope. Amen.*

## FAMILY ACTIVITY

Promise your kids you will have a fun Advent surprise for them this week. Maybe it is an activity, a meal, or a gift. Don't tell them what or when they will get it. Let the excitement and expectation grow.

This is a great opportunity to talk to them about the waiting of humanity on a Messiah. Be sure when you give them the fun surprise to point to Jesus as our greatest surprise and blessing.

## SONG OF MEDITATION

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high,  
who ordered all things mightily;  
to us the path of knowledge show  
and teach us in its ways to go. Refrain

O come, O come, great Lord of might,  
who to your tribes on Sinai's height  
in ancient times did give the law  
in cloud and majesty and awe. Refrain

O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem,  
unto your own and rescue them!  
From depths of hell your people save,  
and give them victory o'er the grave. Refrain

O come, O Key of David, come  
and open wide our heavenly home.  
Make safe for us the heavenward road  
and bar the way to death's abode. Refrain

O come, O Bright and Morning Star,  
and bring us comfort from afar!  
Dispel the shadows of the night  
and turn our darkness into light. Refrain

O come, O King of nations, bind  
in one the hearts of all mankind.  
Bid all our sad divisions cease  
and be yourself our King of Peace. Refrain

hope



week two

# LOVE

The years of silence have passed and a newborn baby is born in Bethlehem. The cry of that baby sounds out as a declaration of hope, an announcement of love, and a trumpet of victory. God has come to live among his creation and make a way for humankind to have peace with God. Although this was prophesied many centuries before, no one was ready for the incredible outpouring of God's love.

Meditate for a minute on all the reasons that God should be angry with you. Remind yourself that God keeps His word to not only send his Son, but to forgive us just as He said He would.

**Christ has come! Christ will come again!**

## **MICAH 5:2 NLT**

"But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf."

## **PHILIPPIANS 2:5-7 NLT**

"You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being."

## **LUKE 2:1-4 NLT**

"At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee."



## PRAYER

*Lord, thank you for giving us the gift of Scripture. As we read your word, help us to understand the depth of your love for us and for the world around us. Help us to hold tight to the promise of love, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.*

## FAMILY ACTIVITY

Some of life's greatest moments are wrapped in unexpected blessings. Discuss with your family someone who you can unexpectedly bless. Whether a specific person comes to mind or you have a specific ministry close to your heart, be sure to follow through actively by volunteering, giving a gift, or being a blessing in whatever way the Lord leads.

Be sure to remind your family that many were expecting God to send a Messiah, but none expected God to come and live with his people and bring them freedom in Christ.

## SONG OF MEDITATION

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth  
the everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary,  
and, gathered all above  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep  
their watch of wond'ring love.  
O morning stars, together  
proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King  
and peace to all the earth.

How silently, how silently,  
the wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
the blessings of his heav'n.  
No ear may hear his coming,  
but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him, still  
the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,  
descend to us, we pray,  
cast out our sin and enter in,  
be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Immanuel

love



week three

# JOY

We can only imagine that before the invention of electricity, nighttime was a pretty scary and dangerous time. As a shepherd, you would need to keep a careful watch to protect against predators. It's in this serious and dark situation that the angel appeared to the shepherds. Shock may be too mild of a word for what they felt. But the message was so filled with good news and joy that they immediately responded and went to find this Savior.

Has there ever been something so fantastic that you had to stop what you were doing and just praise the Lord? The Advent season comes with that same sense of awe, wonder, joy, and excitement! Ask God to fill you with excitement, gratitude, and wonder around the good news of the Messiah's birth.

**Christ has come! Christ will come again!**

## COLOSSIANS 1:3-6 NLT

"We always pray for you, and we give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God's people, which come from your confident hope of what God has reserved for you in heaven. You have had this expectation ever since you first heard the truth of the Good News. This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace."

## LUKE 2:8-14 NLT

"That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger." Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."



**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, create in us a fountain of joy as we celebrate with all of creation just like the angels did when they heard the news of Jesus' birth. Renew our awe of your amazing grace and fill us with excitement, gratitude, and wonder around the good news of the Messiah's birth. Amen*

**FAMILY ACTIVITY**

Take time for each person to share how and when they heard the Good News (the Gospel) for the first time. Maybe reach out to the person who shared that Good News with you and thank them for doing that.

**SONG OF MEDITATION**

*Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

Hark! the herald angels sing  
Glory to the newborn King  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild  
God and sinners reconciled

Joyful, all ye nations, rise  
Join the triumph of the skies  
With th' angelic host proclaim  
Christ is born in Bethlehem

Hark, the herald angels sing  
Glory to the newborn King  
Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of peace  
Hail! the Son of Righteousness  
Light and life to all he brings  
Risen with healing in his wings

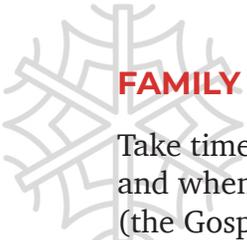
Mild he lays his glory by  
Born that man no more may die  
Born to raise the some of earth  
Born to give them second birth  
Hark! the herald angels sing  
Glory to the newborn King

Hark, the herald angels sing  
Glory to the newborn King  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild  
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Joyful, all ye nations, rise  
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Christ is born in Bethlehem

Hark, the herald angels sing  
Glory to the newborn King

joy





week four

# PEACE

The wise men were a group of astrologers or scientists of the day. Their job was to study the sky and interpret it for their nation. It's through this seemingly worldly means that God used a star to lead a foreign people from the East (probably near Persia) to discover the birth of Christ. The presence of Jesus is not just for a select group of people, but for everyone. Have you wondered if people in other parts of the world see Christmas the way you do? Do we engage others about the true meaning of Christmas? God's relentless pursuit of us is not because He is working to win a contest, but because He is working to bring peace to a desperate world.

**Christ has come! Christ will come again!**

## **MATTHEW 2:9-12 NLT**

"After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod."

## **ACTS 4:32-35 NLT**

"All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need."



## PRAYER

*Lord, we come before you thankful for the gift of peace. Despite the chaos of the life and world around us, would you draw us near to you? If there is sin in our life keeping us from experiencing your peace, would you in your grace and mercy help and deliver us? Thank you for true peace through Jesus Christ. Amen*

## FAMILY ACTIVITY

Spend some time imagining how you would explain Christmas to a new family in your neighborhood who have never heard of Christmas before. Write down what you would say or maybe draw a few pictures that you could use to help explain the true meaning of Christmas.

## SONG OF MEDITATION

*Go! Tell it on the Mountain*

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere;  
go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their watching  
o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold, throughout the heavens  
there shone a holy light.

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere;  
go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.

The shepherds feared and trembled  
when lo! above the earth  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed our Savior's birth.

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere;  
go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.

Down in a lowly manger  
the humble Christ was born,  
and God sent us salvation  
that blessed Christmas morn.

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere;  
go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.

peace



week five **FAITH**

Christmas Eve.

We made it! Sometimes our preparations for Christmas are a counter message to the true Gospel. The Gospel proclaims that we come to God broken, sinful, and far from perfect, but God transforms our brokenness through the finished work of His Son. Take a deep breath and rest in God's mercy and grace tonight. Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith. Remind yourself the true meaning of the season isn't to perform, but to accept God's gracious gift in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Christ has come! Christ will come again!**



**LUKE 2:1-7 NLT**

"At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child. And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them."

**PRAYER**

*God, thank you for this holy night that shines with the brightness of your Son, the light of the world. All our faith rests on you. We thank you tonight for the gift of your son. Help us share the faith we have in you with the lost world around us. Amen.*

**FAMILY ACTIVITY**

Take some time (maybe 5-10 minutes) as a family to pray for others. In a season focused on God's love, let us as God's people show love by praying for one another.



## SONG OF MEDITATION

*Joy to the World*

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
let ev'ry heart prepare him room  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow  
nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

## SONG OF MEDITATION

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

O come, all ye faithful,  
joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!  
Come and behold him,  
born the King of angels.

O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest.

O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n!  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing.

O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord!

faith