

FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
GASTONIA

# Follow the Light

## Devotions for the Advent Season

2026

# 2026 Advent Calendar



**December 13**

**Christmas Dinner & Music Extravaganza**
*Fellowship Hall*
5:30 pm

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**December 20**

**Combined Service With Lessons & Carols**
*Sanctuary*
11:00 am

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**December 24**

**Christmas Eve Nativity Service**
*Fellowship Hall*
11:00 am

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**
*Sanctuary*
5:00 pm

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We hope you will gather with us in joy and anticipation as
we celebrate the birth of the Christ child!

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Contributions to this book were written by members and staff
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Please note that scripture texts for this publication were selected using the Revised Common Lectionary Year A. You may notice that certain passages are used more than once. This repetition allows us to dwell more deeply in God's word as we ponder the truth that it holds.

May we experience the Advent Season through God's revelation to us!

# Follow the Light

Dear First Presbyterian Church,

One of my favorite activities this time of the year is to see the Christmas lights in McAdenville. Every year, our family makes a point to find a cold night to bundle up and walk the neighborhood in order to witness the joy of all the decorations that transform that community into Christmas Town U.S.A. It's always a wonder to see how each house illuminates a different aspect of the Christmas spirit. We are spoiled! People from all across the region drive for hours to see something that is practically in our back yard. There is something about those lights that draws people in from both near and afar, inviting us all to follow their glow.

Today, we enter the season of Advent, which is a time of waiting, anticipation, and preparation for Jesus' arrival. In one sense, our waiting ended the day God gave Christ to the world on Christmas Day. In another, we continue to wait for Jesus' return. As we wait, it's hard not to notice just how dark it is outside these days. Our morning walks that used to be in the fullness of the sun over the summer months are now dreary and devoid of light. We often awake in the dark and return home in the dark. Events in our own lives and in our world make us wonder if darkness will have the final word. That's what makes trips to McAdenville so special. There, the lights shining from those homes remind us that darkness doesn't win in the end. In the same way, we wait for the light of Christ to illuminate our world once and for all. Until then, we rely on the way he illuminates our path through his life, death, and resurrection. Jesus is our light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. My prayer is that this devotion booklet written by members and staff of this congregation will help point us to that light.

May we follow the light of Christ this season of Advent.



Advent Blessings,

We'd love for you to experience the connection and belonging that comes with joining us at FPC Gastonia. If you're interested in learning more about us, feel free to scan the QR code, visit fpcgastonia.org, or call us at (704) 864-2651.

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Sunday, November 29, 2026

# A Special Christmas Light

By Ellen Cinq-Mars

## Psalm 80:1–7, 17–19

Family traditions can be an important part of Advent and Christmas. For many years our family attended the candlelight service here at FPC, went to a Christmas drop-in at the home of good friends, then hopped in the car and drove through McAdenville to see the lights. This last part was received by my children in various degrees of enthusiasm based on their age at the time. However, for me, seeing the lights never failed to fill me with a sense of wonder and excitement.

In Psalm 80, the people of Israel cry out to God, asking him to restore them: "Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved." Just like the people of Israel, we may feel lost, broken, and distant from him. And just like them, the answer is not found in ourselves but in turning back toward God's light.

Following the light means following Jesus even when the path is uncertain. The wise men followed a star because they believed it would lead them to the Savior. In the same way, we are invited to follow Christ—not simply during Christmas, but every day. His light leads us through darkness, gives us hope when circumstances are difficult, and reminds us that God has not abandoned us.

For sure, we need to follow the Christmas light and not just admire it. But I confess that I still marvel at the McAdenville lights. I am no longer driving through with my children but instead riding on the Covenant Village bus. May you find awe and wonder during this season, too!



Artwork by: Annie Levy

## Prayer

Lord, shine your light into our hearts this Christmas. When we feel lost, lead us back to you. Help us follow Jesus faithfully and reflect his light to those around us. Restore us, guide us, and draw us closer to you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Monday, November 30, 2026

# The Peace We're Waiting For

By Linda and Jim Ratchford

## Read Micah 4:1–5

We live in a world that desperately needs peace. We see it in the headlines, in our communities, and sometimes even in our own homes and relationships. We long for a day when people will stop fighting and start living together in peace. Micah gives us a glimpse of that day.

He describes a time when people from every nation will come to the Lord to learn his ways. God will settle their disputes, and the weapons they once used against one another will be turned into tools for growing food. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares." What a picture! Instead of preparing for war, people will be preparing for life.

That's the kind of world God is moving us toward.

And Advent reminds us that this promise isn't just wishful thinking. Jesus came into the world as the promised King. His birth was announced with the message of peace, and his life showed us what God's kingdom looks like. But we also know that the world is not yet as it should be. We are still waiting for the day when Christ will return and make all things right.



Artwork by: Charlie Trogdon

In the meantime, Micah gives us something to do: "We will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever."

We don't have to wait for that future day to begin living differently. Today, we can choose forgiveness instead of resentment, peace instead of hostility, and trust instead of fear.

This Advent, as we celebrate the Christ who has come, let's also look forward with hope to the King who is coming again.

## Prayer

Jesus, thank you for coming into our broken world. Help us trust your promise of peace and live as people of your kingdom today. Teach us to walk in your ways while we wait for the day when you will make all things new. Amen.

Tuesday, December 1, 2026

# Small Miracles, Great Faith

By Lil Lanier

## Read Revelation 18:1

When Martha and Jimmy had been married for several years, they moved to the Washington, D.C. area along with their dog and bird, a cockatiel. Their bird could talk, laugh, and pretty much had the run of the house. One day Jimmy walked outside, forgetting the bird was on his shoulder. The bird flew off, higher and higher until he could no longer see him. After waiting several days for the bird to come back, they put an ad in the newspaper. A lady called to say she thought she had their bird. The bird had flown down onto her daughter's shoulder. Since she already had a birdcage, she brought him into her house and bought him some food. When Jimmy came to get him, the bird recognized him and immediately started talking to him. There was no doubt that he was their bird.

He had flown about a mile from their house (the way the bird flies). It was such a miracle she had been able to catch the bird and return him to them. He lived about 20 more years!!

Jesus performed many miracles when he was on earth. Does he still perform miracles today? Yes! However, oftentimes I'm lamenting over the past or projecting the future, and I miss miracles of today. I had prayed for a miracle during a dark period in my life at the same time Martha and Jimmy lost their bird. This was not the miracle I was expecting. However, if God could bring a tiny bird home against all obstacles, I knew he would take care of me.

This brings to mind one of the greatest miracles of all: the birth of our Savior. He was born in a stable and laid in a manger, an unlikely place for the Messiah of the world to be born.
There were no telephones to spread the news, no GPS to direct the way, no newspapers to announce his birth, but an angel who brought the news of Jesus' birth to the shepherds and a light from the star that guided the wise men.



Artwork by: Hart Frisk

## Prayer

As we come into the Advent season, help us to put aside our busyness and focus on miracles and the light of Jesus, who will lead us to our eternal home. Amen.

Wednesday, December 2, 2026

# God Who Works Through the Unexpected

By Heather Elkin

## Read Micah 5:1–5

Advent is a season of hope as we celebrate Jesus' birth and wait for his second coming. Many of the Old Testament prophets foretold Jesus' coming many years before the prophecies were fulfilled. Micah was a prophet who was brokenhearted over the rebellion of God's chosen people. In his ministry, he tried to urge them to turn their hearts back to God.

Micah prophesies that out of a small and insignificant town called Bethlehem would come a ruler over Israel. He tells his people that this ruler will stand, and shepherd his flock and he will be their peace. Hundreds of years later, his prophecy was fulfilled when God sent his only Son to be born in a humble stable. God didn't choose a grand capital like Jerusalem or a fancy castle for his Son to be born into. Instead, he chose a small, insignificant town, and two humble people to be the origins of the savior of the world.

Jesus lived a humble life without fanfare or fame. He lived his life among the insignificant, doing very significant things. And God continues to use seemingly insignificant people like you and me to build his kingdom. I love the reminder that we don't have to be grand or famous for God to work through us. He can use us all, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant we feel. God is always working, even when we cannot see the bigger picture. What may look insignificant to us can be the very place where God chooses to do the most significant work of his kingdom.

In Jesus, we see the ruler that Micah foretold. And he is exactly what was promised, bringing security and peace. The peace that Micah speaks of is true peace that can only be found in Christ; a peace that is not merely a concept or a feeling, but a person. This Advent season, let us be reminded of Jesus' humble beginnings and that God can use our lives, no matter our circumstances, for his purpose.



Artwork by: Harper Humphrey

## Prayer

Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus to be our Savior, shepherd, and Prince of Peace. Help us remember that you can use ordinary people to do extraordinary things for your kingdom. When we feel small or uncertain, remind us that you are always working, even when we cannot see the bigger picture. During this Advent season, fill our hearts with the peace that can only be found in Jesus. We pray this in his name. Amen.

Thursday, December 3, 2026

# Morning is Coming

By Sarah Sumner

## Read Hosea 6:1–3; Psalm 85:8–13

When I think of Christmas, I see the oak steps of my childhood home. My brother Jeff and I had a ritual: matching red (scratchy) flannel pajamas (which he hated), and running downstairs together to see what Santa had brought. Jeff always slept late. I would tap, tap, tap gently on his door, trying to wake him without letting him know. Christmas morning couldn't begin until we were together.

I can't think of Christmas without remembering that waiting. There is new joy, and there are new memories, but the hard parts of life remind us that even our happiest moments can carry longing. It is in this tension between joy and heartache that we turn to God's promises.

The prophet Hosea calls us to return to God, promising that "he will heal us" (Hosea 6:1). The psalmist tells us that God "will speak peace to his people." (Psalm 85:8) And Hosea assures us of God's faithfulness: "His appearing is as sure as the dawn." (Hosea 6:3)

But these promises don't mean our hearts will never ache or that we will never grieve. God's faithfulness sustains us through the night, even as we wait for the morning when all things will be made right.

Advent reminds us that we live between the light already come into the world in Christ and the fullness of salvation we still await. We don't need to pretend there isn't darkness; we can trust the light who meets us there.

Following Christ's light means learning to wait with both blessings and trials, trusting that the God who meets us in the darkness will also lead us into the morning.

## Prayer

Faithful God, be near to us in the darkness. When we cannot see the way forward, help us trust your promises. Teach us to wait in hope for the morning when sorrow will be no more, and your light will never fade. Amen.



Artwork by: Grady Rawls

Friday, December 4, 2026

# The True Meaning of Christmas

By Adriel Apau-Kese

## Read Jeremiah 1:1–9

Christmas is the most popular holiday in the world; it is also the favorite holiday for many children around the world. It is certainly my favorite holiday. Every year, my mum asks me to write down my Christmas list after my birthday, which is in May. I start my list early, so I don't forget what I need. On Christmas Day, as my brothers and I open our presents, our parents remind us what the true meaning of Christmas is. Jesus was born on Christmas. He came into the world so that we may have life. In Jeremiah (1:5), the Lord chose Jeremiah. He told Jeremiah, "I am your Creator, and before you were born, I chose you to speak for me to the nations." God knows us and knew us before we were born.

Every year during Christmas, we are reminded of how well Jesus knows us and how his birth reassures us of the gift of life. This is what reaffirms our faith and strengthens our bond with God. Christmas doesn't just mean spending time with family and eating cookies; it also means that God's bond with us is still strong. It's the time of year when we also must learn to follow in Jesus' footsteps by loving one another and doing God's work in our own little ways. I enjoy volunteering, and Christmas time is a great time to give back to our communities by volunteering or feeding the homeless. Jeremiah (1:7-8): "Don't say you are too young, the Lord answered. If I tell you to go and speak to someone, then go! And when I tell you what to say, don't leave out a word. I promise to be with you and keep you safe, so don't be afraid." When we keep God's words in our hearts, they will guide us even when we are afraid.

## Prayer

Dear Jesus, as we celebrate Christmas, help us to remember the true meaning of Christmas. Help us to appreciate and love one another and to renew and reaffirm our faith in you. Amen.



Artwork by: Elizabeth O'Donohue

Saturday, December 5, 2026

# New Hearts, New Hope

By Sylvia Seawell

## Read Ezekiel 36:24–28

Ezekiel is a somewhat startling Biblical figure to appear in an Advent study. This eccentric gloom-and-doom prophet had spouted rebukes and admonitions to warn his fellow Judeans of the consequences of their failure to follow God's commands. And these grim prophecies have now come true: they are exiled in Babylon, captives of their conquerors, filled with regret and self-loathing, and void of hope for their future.

But in this Scripture today we see this oracle of doom become an oracle of hope. Ezekiel assures his people that God will return them to their homeland, cleanse them of their sinful nature, and transform them from within. He will replace their hardened, distrusting hearts, "heart of stone" with new obedient hearts, "heart of flesh." They will be filled with a new spirit that will restore their relationship with God as they follow his path for them.

Perhaps then, Ezekiel is not such an unlikely Advent prophet. Does any event trigger more hope in us as human beings than the anticipation of a baby's birth? Does any chilly heart not melt at the sight of a baby's smile? Is any drive more urgent than meeting the needs of, and deepening our relationship with, our children? Maybe Ezekiel was the perfect person to foretell the hope for the world and change that a small baby would bring. Perhaps his message to the Israelites directs us to allow our own hearts to be softened as we humbly follow God's light to the manger and the Christ Child.

## Prayer

Heavenly Father, at times when hope seems dim in our lives and our world, we pray for your reassurance that you are steadfast and restorative. Please grant that the new hearts and new spirits which you have created in us will empower us to do your will as we celebrate the birth of your Son. In his name we pray. Amen.




Artwork by: Sam Elkin

Sunday, December 6, 2026

# Waiting with Hope

By Beth Silvers

## Read 2 Peter 3:8–15a

Advent is a season of waiting. We wait to celebrate Christ's birth, and we wait in hope for his promised return. Yet waiting is not easy. We live in a world that values immediate results and instant answers. When God's timing differs from ours, we may wonder if he has forgotten his promises. We are frustrated by God's timing.

Peter reminds believers that God's perspective on time is very different from our own. What feels like a long delay to us is not slowness on God's part. Instead, God's waiting reveals his patience and mercy. Verse 9 tells us that the Lord is patient, "not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance." As we light the candles of Advent and prepare our hearts for Christmas and his return, we remember that God's promises are always fulfilled. Just as he faithfully sent his Son into the world at the appointed time, he will complete his work in his perfect timing. Our task is not to grow weary in waiting but to live faithfully and expectantly.

Peter encourages believers to live lives of holiness and godliness while looking forward to God's future. Advent invites us to do the same: to prepare our hearts, study his Word, deepen our faith, pray, and share God's love with others as we anticipate Christ's coming.

Waiting is not wasted time when it is spent trusting God's promises. Every day becomes an opportunity to grow in faith, serve others, and bear witness to the hope we have in Christ.

## Prayer

Gracious God, during this Advent season, teach us to trust your timing. Help us to wait with hope, live with faithfulness, and remember your patience and mercy. Prepare our hearts to receive Christ anew and strengthen us as we look forward to the fulfillment of all your promises. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Artwork by: Jud Stewart

Monday, December 7, 2026

# Finding the Light

By Caroline and Dustin Letts

## Read Psalm 27

Thanksgiving 2008. I stood in the hospital hallway holding the hand of my then two-year-old as Dustin's doctor, a family friend, delivered news that would split our lives into before and after. Dustin had cancer, and it didn't look good. What? His words hit me like a physical blow to the chest, knocking the wind and warmth right out of me. Our children were still babies. He was our rock… the glue that held us all together. What were we going to do? And it was the holidays. How would we make things special for our kids?

As Christmas approached, we made sure there was joy when we needed joy, but behind closed doors, there was worry, tears, and what felt like a dark cloud hanging over our home. We were struggling. And then one Sunday afternoon, a bus full of FPC children pulled into our driveway, and the most angelic voices began to serenade our family with beautiful Christmas music. There was no way they could have known how much that small gesture would bless our family. It was the first time in weeks that I had felt peace. Through those sweet voices, I saw God's heart. The light was there. We were just lost.

In Psalm 27, we are reminded that the Lord is our light and our salvation. He is the stronghold of our life, and we have nothing to fear. God often uses us to reveal his light and love to others. We don't always know how and when he will call on us, so it is important to keep the line of communication with him open and free of static.

## Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, thank you for filling our hearts with your love and light. May we always remember that even the smallest act of kindness can make a big difference. Let your light shine through us so others may see your goodness and feel your love. Help us to be a bright light in a world that sometimes feels dark. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



Artwork by: Hadley Rawls

Tuesday, December 8, 2026

# The Light That Leads Us

By Lane Alexander

## Read Isaiah 4:2–6; Acts 11:1–18

There is something about Christmas lights that has always drawn me in. As a child, I remember riding through neighborhoods at Christmas and looking out the window at houses covered in twinkling lights. Even now, some of my favorite Christmas memories are the simple ones, driving around after dark, listening to Christmas music, and seeing ordinary homes transformed by light.

In Isaiah, we are reminded of God's presence as a cloud by day and a glowing fire by night, a covering and a light for his people. God doesn't promise that the path will always be easy or completely clear. He promises to be with us along the way.

In Acts 11, Peter learns that God's light is not meant for only one group of people. God is opening doors that Peter never expected and teaching him to see others differently. Peter follows where God leads, even when the path challenges what he thought he understood.

Christmas reminds us that Jesus came as the light of the world, not just to shine where we are comfortable, but to lead us beyond ourselves.

Sometimes following the light means taking the next step even when we cannot see the whole path. It may mean welcoming someone we might otherwise overlook, forgiving when it is difficult, or trusting God when his plan looks different from ours.

This Advent, I want to remember that I don't have to know exactly where the road leads. I simply need to follow the light.

## Prayer

Gracious Father, you sent your Son into the world as the perfect expression of your love. As we wait for Jesus' coming this Advent, help us reflect that same love to everyone we meet. Amen.



Artwork by: Jonah Shames

Wednesday, December 9, 2026

# Knowing What is Coming

By Elizabeth and Tripp McLean

## Read Malachi 2:10–3:1; Luke 1:5–17

One Christmas, when Will was around six, he discovered where I had hidden his Christmas presents. I had carefully stashed them in an upstairs closet, looking forward to seeing his excitement when he opened them. But like many children who know that presents are somewhere in the house, he was on a mission to find them. He knew what he was getting, but he still had to wait for Christmas morning. In a way, that is what Advent is like for us. We already know what is coming.

In Malachi, God's people are waiting for the promised messenger and for the coming of the Lord. Malachi tells them, "The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple." Generations later, in Luke, we begin to see that promise being fulfilled. Zechariah and Elizabeth had waited and prayed for a child for years. Then an angel tells Zechariah that they will have a son, John, who will prepare the way for Jesus.

Unlike the people who first heard these promises, we know how the story turns out. We know that Jesus is coming. We have heard the Christmas story many times, just as Will already knew what was waiting for him under the tree.

Will may have ruined the surprise that Christmas, but he could not make Christmas morning come any sooner. Maybe there is something important in the waiting. We know what is coming, but Advent gives us time to prepare our hearts to receive it again. In the middle of a season that can become busy very quickly, it gives us a reason to slow down and turn our attention back toward Christ.

## Prayer

Gracious God, help us to slow down during this Advent season and prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. Help us follow your light and remember the gift at the center of Christmas. Amen.



Artwork by: Nathan Finley

Thursday, December 10, 2026

# A Barn, a Star, and a Man Who Loves Jesus

By Sherry Coleman Moore

## Read Psalm 126

One of my favorite Christmas memories is from the early days of my marriage to Jeff. We have a blended family of four boys. We live on the farm where Jeff was raised, and "The Barn" has always been a daily part of our lives. At the back of the barn, there's an old dug-out place, covered by a makeshift shed. It's probably the ugliest, most primitive area of the entire place.

Jeff approached me one afternoon with joyful excitement. He wanted to host an event at the barn… to tell the story of Jesus' birth. The backdrop would be that old dug-out part of "the barn" that I was telling you about.

You see, Jeff is the best storyteller ever, and the most authentic person I've ever known. The best part is that he loves Jesus in the most precious way. His excitement was contagious, and before you knew it…we went to work. His vision was simple…a star hung, hay bales for folks to sit on, borrowed costumes from our church, us, and our boys. Most importantly, a story of our Savior, born in Bethlehem, and laid in a manger.

In the early days of preparing, I said something about the barn being so old, and how I wished we had time to fix it up before doing something like this. The way Jeff always has, he grounded me…gently reminding me of how God chose a stinky, damp, dark stable for the light of the world to be born, and that our old barn would be just fine to tell the story. And we did just that. Our barn was full, the story was told, and joy was abundant. That day was a gift, and a memory I will cherish all of my days!

I'm so thankful to God for bringing me out of dry places, into a life full of his goodness. A life where memories like these have been made, joy felt, and peace realized.



Artwork by: Mac Levy

## Prayer

During this Christmas season, fill our homes with family, friends, joy, and love. May we never forget to marvel at the wonder of our Savior's birth. Amen.

Friday, December 11, 2026

# The Light that Moves Us

By Jill Kimbirl

## Read Philippians 3:12–16; Habakkuk 3:2–6

This year, Christmas came early in Belmont. On a hot August night, Chip needed some holiday cheer as he continued a dark and challenging battle with cancer. If you know Chip well, then you know that there are two things he loves next to his beautiful family: Christmas lights and Christmas carols.

Knowing this fact, local neighbors, close friends, and the church youth from FPC-Belmont decided not to wait till December to bring him holiday cheer. Hundreds of caring people, decked out in all manner of Christmas attire, bringing with them strings of battery-powered lights shining brightly, descended upon Chip's front yard, flooding it with light. There was carol singing and voices raised together, everyone singing some of Chip's favorite carols, chasing away the dark shadows to bring in the light of Christ's amazing love.

This beautiful act of love captures the fierce, defiant spirit of Advent found in Habakkuk 3. The prophet stood in a time of deep distress and fear, yet he looked to the horizon and saw a vision of God: "The brightness of your glory covered the heavens, and your praises were heard everywhere on earth. Your glory shone like the sun, and light flashed from your hands." God's light is never static. It doesn't wait for the darkness to clear; it aggressively breaks into it. By singing carols in hot, hot August, our community mirrored that divine sunrise, actively pushing back the darkness of sickness and grief with the radiant joy of Christ.

Following this light requires action. In Philippians 3, the apostle Paul writes about forward-leaning faith: "...I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own." The neighbors and the whole crowd of people embodied this posture. They didn't sit frozen in passive sorrow. They moved. They pressed forward. They took hold of the hope of Christ and carried it right to a front lawn. Advent reminds us that we are not called to just sit and wait for the light of Christ to appear in the world. Like singers on a lawn in late August, we are called to be the light. We follow Jesus by pressing into the dark corners of our communities, carrying his love, and singing of his arrival, no matter how dark the season around us feels.

## Prayer

Lord God, your splendor is like the sunrise, breaking through our darkest nights. We confess that we often prefer the comfort of our shadows to the movement of your light. Forgive us for looking back when you are calling us forward. Give us the courage of Habakkuk to stand in awe of your power, and the endurance of Paul to press on toward the prize. May your Holy Spirit guide our steps this Advent as we seek to follow the Light of Christ in everything we do. Amen.

Saturday, December 12, 2026

# The Promise that Carries Us

By Josie Conner

## Read Habakkuk 3:13–19

As I write this devotion, our calendars have changed to a new season, and our family finds itself in a season of waiting, just as the prophet Habakkuk talks about in today's Scripture. Our family is anxiously awaiting the arrival of our sixth grandchild and experiencing a time of unknown with the medical emergency our daughter-in-law is encountering.

Habakkuk is writing about a time when great destruction at the hands of the Babylonians is anticipated. Habakkuk starts off by informing God about how he feels things should be handled but ends with learning to trust God, even in times of uncertainty. In verses 18 and 19, Habakkuk says, "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take great joy in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places."

As our family is also journeying through a season of uncertainty, we are reminded that God is our strength and our salvation, and we can always rejoice in this certainty. As we await the celebration of the birth of Christ in a world that often presents uncertainty, let us all be reminded to rejoice in our Lord and rest in his strength and our salvation that comes from him. That certainty that we are promised through Scripture will always carry us through.

## Prayer

Dear God, you are our strength and our salvation! Help us to be mindful in this season of Advent and throughout the year, to rejoice in you daily! Like Habakkuk you will also make us sure-footed like the deer in extreme circumstances. Thank you for the gift of your precious Son! Amen.



Artwork by: Abram Elkin

Sunday, December 13, 2026

# From Tender Stem Hath Sprung: A Rose Blooms in Winter

By David Jennings

## Read Isaiah 61:11

One of my favorite analogies for Christ's Advent to earth at Christmastime is that of a rose blooming in winter. Just as a flower springing forth from a cold, barren landscape, so too did Jesus appear in our dark world, offering the free gift of salvation. God sent his Son into a dormant and hopeless world to bring life and light where there was none.

This metaphor appears in the texts of several beloved Christmas carols, some of which are found in our own hymnal. The familiar words of "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" come from Theodore Baker's 1894 translation of the original German Catholic text, "Es ist ein Ros entsprungen," first published in 1599 by an unknown author.

In the familiar English text, "Christ is the blossoming rose." The imagery traces his lineage, or "roots," back through King David to David's father, Jesse, recalling the prophecy of Isaiah: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." (Isaiah 11:1)

**Christ is the blossoming rose**

*Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming*
*From tender stem hath sprung!*
*Of Jesse's lineage coming,*
*As men of old have sung.*
*It came, a floweret bright,*
*Amid the cold of winter,*
*When half spent was the night.*

**There Is No Rose Of Such Virtue**

*There is no rose of such virtue*
*As is the rose that bare Jesu.*
*For in this rose contained was*
*Heaven and earth in little space.*
*By that rose we may well see*
*That he is God in persons three.*

Rose imagery also appears in the lesser-known medieval English Advent carol "There Is No Rose Of Such Virtue," written in the fifteenth century, with symbolism focusing more directly on Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary is portrayed as a perfect, virtuous rose who bore the Savior of humankind. Through her humility and obedience, God joined heaven and earth in the mystery of the incarnation. His perfect Son was born in the lowliness of a stable and would ultimately give his life upon the cross for our sins.

## Prayer

Father in heaven, please ready our hearts to receive the gift of your Son, the spotless rose, who came to our bleak and hopeless world when we needed him the most. May our lives reflect our Savior Jesus in all that we say and do, and please help us remember his sacrifice at Advent and throughout the year. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Monday, December 14, 2026

# Trusting God On and Off the Field

By Brynn DuBois

## Read Psalm 125:1–2 and Ephesians 6:10–17

One of my favorite things to do is play soccer. When I'm on the field, I have to stay focused, trust my teammates, and keep playing even when the game isn't going my way. Sometimes life feels a lot like soccer. There are great days when I play well, make a good grade, or have fun with my friends. But there are also days when I make mistakes, feel left out, or worry about what others think.

Psalm 125:1 says, "Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever." I like the words "cannot be shaken." In soccer, another player might knock me off the ball, my team might fall behind, or I might miss an important shot. But even when things don't go my way, my faith doesn't have to be shaken.

Ephesians 6 tells us to "put on the full armor of God." Just like I put on my uniform, cleats, and shin guards before a game, God gives me special equipment for life: truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and his Word. When I start believing things about myself that aren't true, I can remember God's truth. When I'm worried or afraid, I can use my shield of faith and trust that God is with me. It also tells us to stand firm. I understand that as a soccer player. You don't quit because the other team scores or because you make a mistake. You get back into position and keep playing.

Psalm 125 tells me to trust God and not be shaken. Ephesians 6 tells me to put on God's armor and stand firm. Trust God. Put on his armor. Stand firm. And keep going.

## Prayer

Dear God, thank you for always being with me. Help me trust you when things are going well and when life gets difficult. Help me put on your armor every day and stand firm in what I believe. When I make mistakes, give me the courage to get back up and keep going. Help me show your love through the way I treat my family, friends, teammates, and opponents. Amen.



Artwork by: Paris Odugba

Tuesday, December 15, 2026

# The Spirit of God Leads Us to the Light

By Lenise Melton

## Read 2 Kings 2:9–22; Acts 3:17–4:4

How do you know what to believe when it comes to faith, society, politics, or other important issues? We (mostly) know we should never 'blindly' follow the direction and guidance of others: not our pastor, not our preferred political party, not even our loved and respected elders. Relying on the guidance of others whose opinions we respect can be a good thing, but we really need to rely on our Messiah, the light of the world, and the Holy Spirit he has left with us.

In our 2 Kings passage, Elisha knows that his mentor, Elijah, is leaving him. When asked what he would like to inherit from Elijah, Elisha asked for a double share of Elijah's spirit. Elijah is taken away, and Elisha returns to a guild of prophets gathered at Jericho. They can tell immediately that the spirit of God, the very same spirit that was upon Elijah, is now upon Elisha. It was a presence they were distinctively able to sense.

In Acts, Peter and John amaze a crowd by healing a man well known to be a lifelong, lame beggar. Peter asks the crowd why they are so surprised that the God who breathed the breath of life into creation has also breathed his healing spirit into this man. Now that they are reminded what the spirit of God can do, they must decide for themselves what and in whom they will believe. The presence of the spirit of God brings "times of refreshing." Just as the prophets could sense the presence of the spirit of God upon Elisha, just as the temple crowd could see the change in the lame man, so too can the spirit of God bring clarity and refreshment to our thoughts, words, and deeds. So, when we long for guidance and clarity, let us search our hearts for the presence of the spirit of God. When we look to others for guidance, may we earnestly search for those who emulate that same spirit.

## Prayer

Lord, we humbly seek your light. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear your spirit at work in the world today. Turn us from clinging to human voices and human direction as we seek to share your light and salvation with a broken world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



Artwork by: Braxton DuBois

Wednesday, December 16, 2026

# Go Tell it on the Mountain

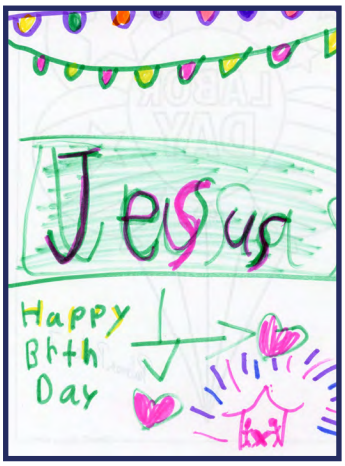
By Rev. Daniel J. Commerford

## Read Mark 9:9–13

Every year, Rachel and I approach Advent prepared to maximize the season. Our Christmas tree is up and decorated by the day after Thanksgiving. We strike hard and fast, purchasing gifts for our children and loved ones so we can place them under our tree. Everything is always ready to go by the first of December. Then, we wait in silence because we do not want to spoil the surprises waiting for our children. As tempting as it is to tell them what they are receiving as soon as they see the wrapped gifts under the tree, we know that ruining the secret would make it lose its meaning. Christmas must arrive before we can share in the fullness of the joy of giving those gifts. So, for the entire season of Advent, we wait while keeping the secret.

In today's passage, Jesus, Peter, James, and John are descending from the mountain, basking in Jesus' glory revealed in the Transfiguration. That's why it must've been confounding to receive orders from Jesus to keep the whole thing a secret until he rose from the dead. Jesus reminds them that Elijah has already come and suffered rejection. In the same way, Jesus' glory shown on the mountain could only be fully understood through the lens of his death and resurrection. The disciples had glimpsed the former, but had not yet witnessed its fullness in the latter. At that point, the disciples did not understand what Jesus was saying. But in good time, they would. When Jesus fulfilled his promises, the disciples obeyed him by telling it on the mountain that Jesus was born, lived, died, and rose again for all humanity.

We have the benefit of knowing how Jesus' story goes. Christ has lived, Christ has died, Christ has risen, and Christ will come again. But even though we don't have to keep the secret anymore, we still must wait for Jesus' return as he has foretold. While we wait, we prepare for his arrival by telling everyone Jesus' Good News. Christ has come, and Christ will come again! What a gift worth waiting for!



Artwork by: Palmer Peak

## Prayer

Gracious God, thank you for the gift of your Son, whose death and resurrection revealed his glory and your love. Help us to await his arrival by telling it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born. Amen.

Thursday, December 17, 2026

# Through Every Storm

By LeeAnn and Rusty Harris

## Read Psalm 89:2

In 1989, we were newly married and living in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. Rusty was a young engineer with South Carolina Electric & Gas, and I was teaching science at Moultrie Middle School. Life felt young, busy, and full of promise. Then, on September 22, Hurricane Hugo came ashore.

The storm brought havoc to the South Carolina coast—and to the lives of so many people we knew. In the weeks and months that followed, life was filled with uncertainty, worry, long workdays, and seemingly endless cleanup. The familiar landscape we loved was changed. Trees were down, homes were damaged, and enormous piles of debris seemed to be everywhere.

By Christmas, we were weary. We had grown accustomed to the bleakness left behind by the storm and longed to see something beautiful again. Then, on Christmas Eve, something extraordinary happened. An unprecedented snowfall blanketed the Low Country. Thick, white snow covered the broken landscape. The debris, the fallen trees, and the scars of the storm were softened beneath a beautiful blanket of white. It felt like a gift. Not because the storm had somehow been erased, it hadn't. The damage was still there, and the work of rebuilding would continue. But for a little while, we were given a different way to see the landscape.

I have often thought of that Christmas Eve snow as a reminder of God's faithfulness. The storm had been fierce, but it had not lasted forever. The landscape had been broken, but beauty could still appear. And in the midst of uncertainty, God had been there all along. Psalm 89 reminds us that God's love stands firm forever. His faithfulness isn't dependent on calm circumstances or easy seasons. It doesn't disappear when the winds rise or when our lives are covered with the debris of things we never expected.

God is there through every storm. And he is there when the storm has passed, helping us rebuild, renew, and see beauty again. The Christmas Eve snow was gone within days, but its message has stayed with me for generations. God's faithfulness stands firm. Storms come. Seasons change. Our lives may look very different from what we imagined. But God's love remains. So when the next storm comes, and it will, may we remember the God who has been faithful through every generation, who meets us in the middle of the storm, and who can bring unexpected beauty even to a landscape we thought was forever changed.



Artwork by: Sam Stewart

## Prayer

Faithful God, remind us that your love stands firm forever. When storms come and our lives feel uncertain, help us trust that you are with us. Give us eyes to recognize your presence, even in the hardest seasons, and hearts that remember the beauty you can bring after the storm. Amen.

Friday, December 18, 2026

# Let's Dance

By Claude Hathcock

## Read 2 Samuel 6:12-19

David had been king of Judah for seven years and six months. With the death of the king of Israel, members of Israel's ten tribes visited David in Judah's capital, Hebron, seeking him as their new king. David entered a covenant with them and became the new king of the united kingdom. He then made Jerusalem his new capital.

David had made Jerusalem his kingdom's political center. He knew moving the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem would also make it the religious capital. Numbers 4 details how the ark of the covenant and the other holy items used in the worship of God in the tabernacle were to be prepared for transport. The Kohathite clan of the Levite tribe was responsible for transporting the holy items after Aaron and his sons had prepared them. Touching the surface of any holy item meant instant death. David's first attempt to move the ark of the covenant began joyfully, with the ark placed on a new cart drawn by 2 oxen, probably unaware that he was completely disobeying the God-given directions in Numbers 4.

"David and all the house of Israel were dancing before the Lord with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and symbols." (NRSV, 2 Samuel 6:5) Then tragedy struck when one of the men escorting the cart touched the ark to steady it and immediately dropped dead. David felt the ark was too dangerous to be allowed in his capital and sent it away. Those at the new location were very blessed by God. Hearing this good news, David had the ark properly carried to Jerusalem, dancing joyfully with all his might.

Everyone dancing with all their might at my son's wedding to "Shut up and Dance with Me" and the children doing the same to "Cotton Eye Joe" at last year's Montreat church retreat are wonderful memories for me.



Artwork by: Ellie Mudd

## Prayer

Lord, may we all be so joyful as we worship you. Amen.



Artwork by: Jack McLean

Saturday, December 19, 2026

# Seeing Jesus with New Eyes

By Helen and David Rogers

## Read John 7:40–52

One Christmas Eve, my sister and I were sleeping together. We woke early the next morning and quietly crept into the darkened living room to see what Santa had brought. On a table, we spotted what we were convinced was a portable television. We were thrilled! Without making a sound, we hurried back to bed, knowing we had to wait for our parents to let us get up and open our gifts.

When the time finally came, we returned with our parents, who turned on the lights. To our surprise, what we had mistaken for a television was my sister's gift, a Shirley Temple doll and accessories in a box designed to look like a TV. In the darkness, we had seen something but misunderstood what we were seeing.

In John 7:40–52, the people and Jewish leaders also misunderstood what they were seeing and hearing in Jesus. Some said, "Surely this man is the prophet." Others said, "He is the Christ." But the Pharisees dismissed Jesus because he came from Galilee, insisting that no prophet came from there.

Like my sister and me in that darkened room, the people were making judgments without seeing the whole picture. They focused on Galilee and overlooked the larger story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem; the city identified in Scripture as the birthplace of the Messiah.

How often do we make the same mistake? We see only part of what God is doing and allow our assumptions to keep us from recognizing the truth. We need the light of Christ to help us see clearly.

## Prayer

As we celebrate Christmas, may we open our hearts, look beyond our assumptions, and recognize Jesus for who he truly is. Amen.



Artwork by: Hilty Alexander



Artwork by: Micah Commerford

Sunday, December 20, 2026

# Love is All Around

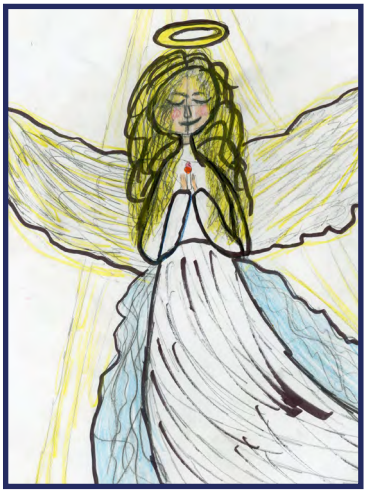
By Zac Phelps

## Read Matthew 25: 37–40

To be completely honest, it is becoming increasingly difficult to look around this world that I am living in and to see signs of love. Hate seems to get louder and louder every day, and the voices and words of hate seem to be said much louder than the words of love. I think it is clear to see that hate generates clicks, discussions, and ultimately, money. It's not hard to find heartbreaking news about war, violence, or good people being cheated by the system. It's not hard to go online and find someone saying something that degrades someone or a group of people.

Love feels like a rarity nowadays, and as someone who is relatively young and as someone who works with young people in middle and high school, I am afraid for what the world is becoming. Why must we operate like this? Why do we believe that we can bomb our way to peace, and why do we feel as if we can boost our worth more easily by trying to lower someone else's worth? It feels like we have forgotten the point of what it means to live a life that Jesus has called us to. To live out what Matthew 25 taught us. To feed the hungry. To give those who are thirsty a drink. To welcome the stranger. To visit the sick and the lonely. That's what love looks like.

And in a world where it is so easy to find the stories that scare us, we must be intentional about looking for the good in our world and shining a light on it. There is love all around us, and there is good that happens every day. This doesn't mean that we ignore the hate in the world. That means that we hope that those acts of love will persevere through the darkness. I think of the words on the scoreboard during this year's Super Bowl halftime show by Bad Bunny, "The only thing more powerful than hate is love."



Artwork by: Charlotte Elkin

Hate has a lot of power. It can scare us and control us if we let it. But hate can't compete with love. Love binds us together, and it brings us back to God even when the hate in our world seems inescapable. And I think that's what Advent is all about. In a world that was dark, chaotic, and controlled by fear, love appeared in a manger.

## Prayer

God, it is easy to let the hate of our world distract us from the love that you place in our lives every day. Give us the strength and the courage to be beacons of hope as we live out the love that you have instilled in our hearts with all who we meet. Amen.

Monday, December 21, 2026

# Impossibility to Divine Promise

By Sally and Gwin Hilton

## Read 1 Samuel 1:1–18

This is the story of Elkanah's wife Hannah, who, initially, was unable to have children. Elkanah's other wife Pininnah, who had children, would taunt Hannah for her inability to conceive.

Hannah endured much grief. While praying silently to God, mouthing words with no sound, the priest, Eli, thought she was drunk. She assured him she was not drunk but desperately praying to God for the blessing of a son. If blessed, she promised God she would give her son back to him to be used for his service. God blessed Hannah and Elkanah with a son, Samuel.

Mary's song of praise in the Christmas story (Luke 1: 46-55) directly sounds like Hannah's song of praise (1 Samuel 2: 1-10).
Hannah: "My heart exalts in the Lord…He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap."
Mary: "My soul magnifies the Lord…He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate."

Sally and I had been married just over a year and wanted to add to our family; we ran into some roadblocks. Our first pregnancy ended in a miscarriage. After this loss, Sally endured a procedure which came with complications that could possibly affect chances of future pregnancies. After months of prayer, Sally became pregnant again. Sally carried the baby two weeks past full term and delivered a baby three pounds larger than the doctor said she could handle. Two years later, we were blessed with another boy.

God has been faithful, and we are forever grateful to him for walking with us during this time.



Artwork by: Hannah Commerford

## Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you above all for the precious gift of your Son, Jesus Christ; our Savior, our hope, and the Light of the world. We ask for your continued blessing upon our family, our church, and our nation. Keep us close in love and unity. Protect us, grant wisdom and integrity to our leaders. Help us to never grow weary of doing good. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Tuesday, December 22, 2026

# Beyond the Wrapping Paper

By Stephanie Blevins

## Read 1 Samuel 1:19

I remember when my oldest daughter was five; we celebrated Christmas with a traditional tree and gifts. But afterward, I found myself reflecting deeply. Why do we wait for one time of the year to spend money we don't really have, watching children open toys that last only moments before being forgotten? I wanted Christmas to have more meaning. Most of all, I wanted my children to know what I was taught: the true meaning of Christmas is celebrating the birth of Jesus.

So, we changed our tradition. We taught our children that we would buy gifts throughout the year instead of working multiple jobs to pay for one day. We didn't need to stress over commercial expectations; Jesus already paid it all. To avoid the heartbreak of unpredictable times, we replaced the pile of toys with a new tradition: a family vacation and attending church together. Decades later, when we gather, we don't talk about toys. We talk about the unforgettable memories we made together. Money cannot replace those moments.

In 1 Samuel, Hannah prayed deeply for a child. When God answered her prayer, she didn't cling to her son as a possession. Instead, she dedicated Samuel back to the Lord, recognizing that he belonged to God first. Like Hannah, shifting our traditions required surrendering worldly expectations. It meant releasing the pressure of material gift-giving to focus entirely on the ultimate gift we have already received.



Artwork by: Caroline Mudd

This Advent, as we "Follow the Light," we are reminded that Christ's light doesn't shine through plastic toys or retail store windows. It shines through the intentional time we spend together, the faith we pass down, and the memories that time cannot fade.

## Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for the ultimate gift of your Son, Jesus, who paid it all for us. Help us to release the pressures of commercial seasons and focus on what truly matters: faith, family, and celebrating you. Guide us to create meaningful memories and to always follow your light. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Wednesday, December 23, 2026

# Joy, a Gift from God

By Mary F. Taneti

## Read 1 Samuel 2:1–10; Mark 11:1–11

Christmas is unique to everyone. My Christmas memories are uniquely mine and different from others. The first and most important Christmas announcement in my neighborhood in India came when people started lighting paper stars on top of their front doors. Everyone in town slowly started lighting their beautiful paper stars on the first Sunday of Advent. Our non-Christian neighbors clearly noticed that the Christmas season had begun. More importantly, the paper star, glowing brightly on top of our front door, signaled to all near and far that we were Christians, followers of Jesus Christ, and that Christmas Day was around the corner. My sisters and I could not wait for it to get dark each night as we looked up at that star, amazed by the light shining through the holes. We spent many nights walking through the streets and rating each star as good, better, or best. As we walked through the streets, looking at everyone's stars, my heart was happy to be in my sisters company and see the beauty of the light shining forth. We followed those stars with joy and hope.

God answered Hannah's prayer for a son, as we read in 1 Samuel chapter 2. When the Lord granted her prayer, she praised God and rejoiced in God's favor. Hannah gave her son back to God as an offering. Her experience of blessing was unique to her; only she could do what she did, and it brought joy to her and praise to God.

Joy awaited those in the streets of Jerusalem as narrated in the gospel according to Mark. Only the people knew what they felt in their hearts when they saw Jesus, riding on a donkey as he entered Jerusalem. No one told them what to do or feel as they saw their Messiah on that donkey and in their streets. They were filled with joy and responded with shouting and praise to the blessed one, the highest in heaven.



Artwork by: Henry Humphrey

God fills our hearts with joy, and we respond with praise and worship. The paper stars, the birth of a son, and the Messiah are God's blessings for us. May your unique Christmas memory fill your heart with joy so that you may exult the Lord and shout God's praise.

## Prayer

Dear God, we thank you for the gift of joy. May every experience of joy inspire us to praise and worship your holy name. Amen.

Thursday, December 24, 2026

# The Courage to Begin Again

By Wendy M. Gem

## Read Isaiah 9:2–7

This fall, I began a new chapter in my life as a graduate student at East Carolina University. After years of building a career, I found myself returning to the classroom, reading textbooks, writing research papers, and discovering just how much there is left to learn.

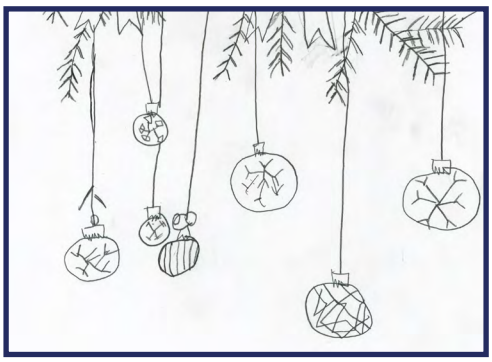
What surprised me most wasn't the challenge of graduate school. It was the excitement of rediscovering my own curiosity. Questions I had never considered were suddenly opening doors to new ideas and possibilities. I began to see familiar things from different perspectives, and with each discovery came another question worth exploring.

Of course, the journey hasn't been without moments of uncertainty. Balancing work, school, and everyday life requires patience, determination, and occasionally a little courage. But I've come to realize that growth often begins when we are willing to step beyond what is comfortable and familiar.

In Isaiah, we hear the promise of a great light shining into darkness. Christians recognize the fulfillment of this promise in the birth of Jesus, a reminder that God's presence brings hope and possibilities beyond what we can imagine. As I reflect on this scripture during Christmas, I am reminded that God's light doesn't simply illuminate the path before us. It can also help us recognize paths we never knew existed.

Returning to school has taught me something I didn't expect. We are never finished becoming who God created us to be. There are always new things to discover, new ways to serve, and new opportunities to grow in faith and understanding.

This Christmas, I am especially grateful for the gift of curiosity, the courage to follow an unfamiliar path, and the assurance that God's light continues to guide us, wherever life's journey may lead.



Artwork by: Gray Stewart

## Prayer

Loving God, thank you for the gift of new beginnings and the curiosity that inspires us to keep learning and growing. Give us courage to embrace unfamiliar opportunities, wisdom to recognize your presence along the way, and faith to trust that you are still working in our lives. May the light of Christ continue to guide our steps and open our hearts to all that is possible. Amen.

Friday, December 25, 2026

# At Journeys' End

By Rev. Josh Woodsmith

## Read John 1:1–14

Christmas is here! The culmination of the Advent season, the joyful birth that we've been anticipating for four weeks. This is the moment all our excitement, preparation, and waiting have led to: this celebration of Jesus' birth. Every lectionary reading for this day lifts up the joyous nature of God's wondrous incarnation as Immanuel, God with us.

Sing to the Lord a new song, says Psalm 98. Make a joyful noise, all the earth, for God is doing a new thing. Let the seas roar and the hills break forth with shouts of joy; let the stones of the city proclaim the good news that the Lord has brought comfort to the people. The Word, who is God and was God and was with God in the beginning, has become flesh and dwelt among us. God has come to us in the form of a babe, the very presence of the Lord, Immanuel.

It is an exciting day, Christmas. At the same time, it was a long road to get here. Consider how you prepare for a journey, as Mary and Joseph must have done to reach Bethlehem. Consider also what it takes to prepare for a new child. Think of the excitement and the anxiety, the joyful hopes and the tearful fears. Surely Mary and Joseph aren't all that different from us? Perhaps that first Christmas brought not only cries of joy, but also sighs of exhausted relief? After all, part of the miracle of Christmas, of God with us, is the knowledge and experience of all God's people had suffered before Christ's birth.

Every year, Advent gets overshadowed by the demands of the hectic holiday season: decorations, family gatherings, gifts, travel. The season of waiting and preparation might have felt more like an arduous journey, and perhaps you wanted to pull your hair out more than once. But now it is Christmas. The long journey is over; the Christ child has been born safe and sound. Take a breath. Let it out. Smile. Rejoice, and make a joyful noise with all the earth. Merry Christmas!



Artwork by: Adriel Apau-Kese

## Prayer

Creator God, whose Spirit dwells in us, guiding our hearts, we give you thanks this day for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ. As we celebrate with family and friends, tearing open presents and eating good food, help us to remember that we too are your children. Let our joy be boundless, and let it be rooted in the promise of Christmas–that we are yours, and you are always with us. Amen.

# With Grateful Hearts

A heartfelt thank you to the volunteers who generously shared their time and talents to proofread this year's *Follow the Light* Advent Devotional. Through your thoughtful attention to every word and detail, you helped bring together a collection of reflections that encourages us to recognize God's presence, trust his guidance, and discover the light of Christ in our everyday lives.

Your care and dedication helped each story shine with clarity and meaning, inviting our church family to reflect on the hope, peace, joy, and love of this sacred season. As we journey through Advent together, may these reflections remind us that even when the path ahead is uncertain, God's light continues to guide our way.

Betty Davenport

Pat Glenn

Trip Stewart

Debbie Stuart

Cindy Wilson

Barbara Winkles

Barbara Yarbrough

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