



Advent Meditations

Practicing the Way

Holy Spirit,
awaken us to Love,
let our being know it,
our hearts receive it,
our minds believe it,
and our souls inhabit it,
that in letting you love us,
we may become what you desire,
your intimate, your friend,
your beloved.

Advent, like all seasons in the church calendar, is an invitation to a journey.

Not the journey of self-discovery and personal triumph so often celebrated in the hyper-individualistic West, but one of awakening.

Because Advent isn't a story about what we can do when we really set our minds to something. Nor is it about the power of the human spirit to overcome any and every challenge. It's not even about humanity realizing its dire mistakes and collectively repenting in a way worthy of God's full healing.

Advent is the opposite of all of these things.

It's the story of God interrupting history to love, heal, and save us from our poverty. Showing us that we're not strong enough to win the day, but that he is. Advent reveals the true burning desire of God, his pursuing heart, his plan to meet us exactly where we are.

In this story, our role is nothing more than to receive the magnitude of this loving invitation and give our yes in response.

It's to awaken.

In that spirit, we've created a set of Advent meditations that will help you in your feeling, anticipating, listening, and ultimately receiving the wonder of this story, not only as an historical event 2,000 years ago, but as a perpetual, living invitation.

Today, Jesus seeks you. Not for judgment or condemnation, but with a thrill of hope and a word of peace.

This Advent, may you know the joy that comes from giving him your yes in return.

All our love,
Practicing the Way



Week 01: Hope

Read

Luke 1v5-7

The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God

—Mark 1v1

Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive

—Luke 1v6-7

Before every dawn, there is deep night. Between each breath, a quiet and trusting suspension. Before the earth drinks the rain, it travels in silence from the clouds that send it.

Every good arrival is preceded by a waiting, a suspension, a liminal moment.

So it is with hope.

It must begin with awakening. With a felt awareness of what isn't and what can't be. We

only need hope when the moment seems bleak, when it looks as though life is unchangeable, on a path toward greater pain, grief, or loss.

That loss may be in the dreams we once had for ourselves or someone we've lost. It may be in the physical or mental healing we've been seeking without respite or the deep loneliness we feel. It may even be our sense of the absence of God, our inability to love him like we long to, our lack of spiritual vitality.

It's important to feel all that. To truly know that neither we, nor this world, can fix ourselves. Because without an admission of our little or large terminalities, we'll have no room for the miracle of hope.

Luke begins the story of Advent right here, with a barren woman named Elizabeth. He tells us she's a true believer, righteous, blameless even, but lacking in what was likely her very greatest longing — a child. Luke wants us to remember that healing starts in our pain, in our darkness.

But also that to live in the spirit of Advent is to anticipate God in the midst of it.

Hopelessness beckons the Miracle.

Touching our longings honestly, and allowing ourselves to feel them, is the true beginning of hope. It necessitates it. In the midst of our great need arises the first in-breaking light of incredible news. Christ is soon arriving.

Reflect

What is your most vulnerable grief or hope this Advent season? If you like, take a moment to open this longing up to God and sit with him in it. You could journal your feelings, draw a picture that illustrates them, or sit in deep silence with the Spirit, feeling them and directing them toward the loving gaze of God.

This week, carry something with you that signifies your grief or hope. Holding it before God, beckoning the miracle.

Holy Spirit,
allow me to feel again,
in the very places I've been afraid to,
that I may dwell in the
Good News of Advent,
continuing my journey of
holy liberation.



Week 02: Peace

Read

Luke 1v7-25

A voice of one calling in the wilderness

—Luke 3v4

Do not be afraid

—Luke 1v13

Do not be afraid … you have found favor with God

—Luke 1v30

There's a quietness that comes to us when we take a moment to feel the barrenness in our lives. We discover our inner wilderness. A wilderness that, as it turns out, becomes the very womb of our hearing the voice of the Spirit.

That seems to be where Luke wants to take us in his advent story because he immediately moves us from Elizabeth's barrenness to Zechariah's encounter with the angel of God in the temple. It's there during Zechariah's time of burning incense — a type of prayer — that the angel visits him

with good news. He's alone, Zechariah's attention is toward God, and finally, he's quiet enough to listen to the voice calling in his wilderness.

Feeling our own barrenness does that, anticipation does that. It increases our faith, makes room for God to speak, sharpens our spiritual ears.

Because God isn't so interested in competing with the noise of our world. And it is noisy. Now more than ever, it's possible to live from wake to sleep again without ever being quiet enough to feel the depths of us where God lives. We can become foreigners to ourselves, unwittingly crowding God out.

Like Zechariah, we need to turn toward our own inner temple, toward prayerful silence, solitude, and stillness, and not toward the quick satisfactions of our noisy world, that we might hear the Spirit speaking to our aches. And how does the voice of God arrive to us? The same way it did to Zechariah, with the word of peace; "Do not be afraid" (Luke 1v13).

When we un-noise our life and build the place of prayer within us, peace becomes a continual

reality. We no longer live at the mercy of circumstance but can experience firsthand what Jesus meant when he said, "the kingdom of heaven is within you" (Luke 17v21), experiencing the peace that "transcends all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

To anticipate the arriving Christ, we must make room, draw ourselves away, and listen. When we do, we inherit Advent peace, and as we're about to see, it's in this very place of prayerful listening that the seed of our promise is about to be planted within us.

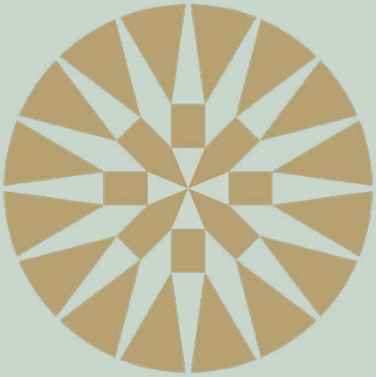
Reflect

Sitting in the quiet and in your place of greatest need, take a minute to still yourself and invite the Spirit to speak a word of peace to you.

This week, consider holding Psalm 46v10, "Be still, and know that I am God," in your heart. When anxiety, lowness, distraction, or fear beckon, recall the passage in your heart, creating an inner room for the King of Peace to dwell.

The angel of the Lord spoke to Zechariah when he was burning the incense, which is a biblical image for prayer. If you don't already, try practicing moments of intentional silence, solitude, and stillness each day as a way of making yourself available to the voice of the Spirit to speak.

Holy Spirit, I still my mind,
my heart and my life,
that I may be attentive to your voice,
welcoming the arrival of your
supra-circumstantial, abundant
and eternal peace.



Week 03: Joy

Read

Luke 1v26-38, 2v19

I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way

—Luke 7v27

You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus

—Luke 1v31

But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

—Luke 2v19

It's not only for peace that the Spirit visits our listening, but for the promise. All this barrenness, anticipation, hope, and the word of peace in the story of Advent is drawing us toward one profound and cosmos-shaping revelation: Christ is arriving to us.

But it's no small thing that he arrives himself as a seed, sown into the darkness of our lives, carried

in the womb of humanity. God's beatific vision is one that grows up in our midst, as ordinary and common as any of the rest of us.

Christ is the same with you and I today.

We, too, are invited to hold Christ and his promises within us, gestating in the midst of our daily living as hidden miracles, anticipating their full birth in God's timing. That's the great beauty of Advent — God has come to us and is in our midst. Like Mary, we're invited to "ponder these things in our hearts" as we carry the presence of Christ in each season and in every place of need.

Because if we're living listening lives, we'll hear God saying to us in many little ways that we too will "conceive and give birth" (Luke 1v31). Through Scripture, a visit of God's joy to the heart, a passing comment in a conversation with a friend, or through a line in a book or song, God speaks to our everyday needs and longings.

All these little messengers are meant to stir anticipation. To alert us and begin to open us up. Each one awakens us to a bigger picture,

the expectation of change, the arriving presence within us of his love.

And it's through this practice of holding God's promises within us, and living into them, that true spiritual joy springs up.

Because joy is living in the delight of what God is going to do, as much as what he already is. It's prophetic like that. That kind of joy, like God's peace, is transcendent because it can live untouched by the taunts and terminalities of this world. It's not based on what we experience today, but on who God is and what he has said he will do.

Be they biblical promises of Christ's ultimate victory or his own personal word to us today, by calling them to memory and holding them within our hearts, we can more fully live in the joy that God is and will arrive to us.

Yes, Christ is coming, but in Mary's story we discover that he's also already here. Sown in our midst, growing up within us, pouring out his peace and love.

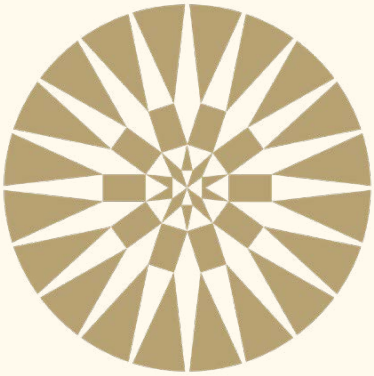
Reflect

Reflecting on recent times, what little messengers has God sent to you that are a source of joy?

Consider taking some time this week to ponder God's promises, be they biblical or personal, and to "ponder them in your heart." You might like to write them down, journal about them, or share them with a friend as a way of remembering.

You might like to sit with the scripture, "On that day you will realize … I am in you" (John 14v20), and allow the joy of Christ's presence in your very soul to fill your daily living.

Help me to see and notice, Father,
the places in and around me
where your miracle is growing up,
awakening to holy ordinariness,
inhabiting Advent joy.



Week 04: Love

Read

Prepare the way for the LORD, make straight paths for him.

—Isaiah 40v3

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us.

—1 John 4v10

All who heard it were amazed

—Luke 2v18

No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

—John 1v18

From the filling of Elizabeth and Mary's wombs, to the messages of peace and proclamation that came with them, Advent is about one crucial thing: God pursuing us.

We are, every one of us, Elizabeth's empty womb. Burdened by our tiny love, in the darkness,

desperate for divine infilling. The gospel isn't that an empty womb can bring itself into life, but that Life indeed brings itself to it. Or as the Apostle John eloquently puts it, "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us." (1 John 4v10)

God promises himself, gives himself, and finishes what he started. All he asks for in return is our yes. That's what all our feeling, anticipating, listening, and pondering this month has been about, the preparation of our hearts for the magnificent inbreaking of Christ who is always moving toward us in deeper and deeper waves.

It's in that spirit that Advent is as alive today as it was then. Because God's love is continually being born in us as we learn day by day to receive him now in our souls just as humanity did then. We are now ourselves the inn, singing to our deepest places with carolers of history past, "Prepare him room!" as Christ himself stands knocking on the door, longing to come and be with us (Rev 3v11:10).

This is the beginning of all communion, simply taking time to receive this kind of love into our

minds, hearts, and bodies. It doesn't happen by accident, but by intentionally turning toward this God, the one who goes to any length to have us and who thinks good thoughts about us long before we think about him.

Advent is about living that into our lives, then turning it toward the world, as God did.

We discover this Advent love when we un-noise our lives, enter into the stillness of God's peace, and practice the joy of living into a reality bigger than we can feel or understand. Then, this revolution of love and peace bursts out of us with nuclear light amidst the barrenness of our own communities and spaces of living.

In Christ, God's pursuing love sows pursuing love in us.

It's because of this letting-in of Love into our darkness, and our hoping and trusting in his desire to finish what he started, that we can obliterate divine insecurity and truly receive and respond with the angels, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." (Luke 2v14) Hallelujah!

Reflect

Receiving God's love isn't ultimately an intellectual exercise, but an experiential one. This week, as we live into Christmas, consider taking five minutes a day to simply receive God's love for you. The best time for this is in the morning, before you pick up your phone or begin your day. You might like to sit in a comfortable place with your palms facing up, and pray a simple prayer like 'Father, I receive your love for me into my mind, my heart, and my body.' Then, as your mind drifts here and there, repeat the prayer and allow it to soak you through. Remember that God says he is loving, patient, kind, gentle, and protecting; allow yourself to just receive that into your deepest place. You may feel something or you may not, that's okay. The most important thing is making yourself available to receive. Allow God to do the rest.

Christ who pursues,
who seeks and knocks,
with all hope, joy, and love,
I say yes to your love,
welcoming you to my depths,
that you may have my being
as your throne,
now and forever more,
Amen.

ADVENT 2026

Hours of Prayer

with Pastor Paul

This Advent, join Pastor Paul in a daily rhythm of prayer as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Listen to the Christmas story, pray the Lord's Prayer along with Paul, and use the quiet moments to bring what's on your heart to God.

Scan the QR code to listen. Find this week's theme below, then choose a prayer to begin your morning, pause at midday, or close your evening.

When to listen	Prayer theme
Week 1 · Nov 29–Dec 5	Hope
Week 2 · Dec 6–12	Peace
Week 3 · Dec 13–19	Joy
Week 4 · Dec 20–23	Love
Christmas Eve & Christmas Day · Dec 24–25	Salvation

JACOB'S WELL CHURCH