





Chilliwack Campus

Agassiz Campus

Promontory Campus

Lake Errock Campus

Harrison Campus

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INTRODUCTION

- ADVENT GUIDE -

Gifts are exchanged on Christmas Day. Advent itself is a gift. It is a season of expectancy. A swelling anticipation of the coming of our Lord Jesus.

Behold, I bring you good news of great joy. Luke 2:10

Jesus came to bring us joy. *"I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full"* (John 15:11). Advent ushers in our celebration of the incarnation. The coming of Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to send a Messiah (saviour/deliverer) to overcome the two things we can't: sin and death. To deliver us safe and secure to God.

Our hope is that Advent will be a sweet season for you and yours. A season full of celebration of which Jesus – our King who has come – is the pinnacle.

*As December dawns, most families are busy putting Christmas programs and parties on the calendar, making holiday travel plans, and purchasing Christmas gifts. Those are all wonderful things, but if your family is anything like mine, these good things can squeeze out **the best thing—nurturing a longing in our hearts and our homes for a fresh sense of wonder that God has come to us in Jesus.** If we do not set aside time to focus together on what God's Word tells us about the promise of Christ, on Christmas morning we can find ourselves surrounded by mounds of torn gift wrap, our laps full of presents, but with hearts that are empty and unprepared. – Nancy Guthrie*

Let every heart prepare Him room this Advent season.



USING THE ADVENT GUIDE

- HOW TO -

We have created the Advent Guide as an easy to use resource to help you anticipate the coming of Christ this Christmas.

The guide consists of a **weekly devotional** along with a companion **family devotional**.

At the bottom of the weekly devotional you will find some verses listed as supplementary reading. These additional passages of Scripture can be read throughout the week.

The family devotional has been created with young children in mind and includes readings from children's bibles, songs and discussion questions. Parents, the devotionals *may or may not* be tailored just right for your family so we encourage you to read through it ahead of time and craft questions and activities that will serve your family best.

Our hope is that between the weekly and family devotional, everyone will be given the resources necessary to make the most of the advent season. We supply the guide, you supply an *engaged* heart.

May our longings for Jesus be richly satisfied as we spend time in God's Word, discussion, and prayer in anticipation of His coming.

Jesus has come and will come again.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Merry Christmas!



CHRISTMAS OUTREACH

- SPREADING THE LOVE OF JESUS -

The time of year that Canadians are most open to Jesus, the gospel, and the church, is *Christmas*. Here are a number of ideas that might help you spread the love of Jesus to those around you this advent season.

Adopt a Family

Is there a family that could benefit from a food hamper and turkey dinner this Christmas? Whether on your own, as a family, or a Life Group, this is a practical way to show a family the love of Christ at Christmas.

Advent Candle Lighting

The lighting of advent candles is a wonderful way to gather the family and anticipate the incarnation together each week. Maybe this is the year to invite those who don't know Jesus to join your family for this little tradition, whether it be the same individual(s) every week or different ones each time. Have a short Bible reading on the advent themes (hope, love, joy, peace), followed by a time of prayer – thanking God for sending His Son Jesus – and lighting of the candle.

Backpacks of Hope

Fill a backpack...or two...or three. Backpacks provided at our Nov 25th and Dec 2nd services to be brought back stocked up with items on the list by Dec 9th. There is also an opportunity to help sort them on Monday, Dec 10th. We are strategically donating the items to students and families in need in Chilliwack, Agassiz, and Lake Errock.

Carolling

Whether it be at a retirement home, assisted living, hospital, or hospice, call to see if you can bring a group to sing carols to seniors and the sick this Christmas season.



Central Kids Christmas Pageant

Central Kids will be performing a Christmas Pageant in our Sunday, December 23rd services at Chilliwack & Promontory, and Christmas Eve in Agassiz. Invite friends and relatives!

Christmas Baking

Get out the red and green sprinkles and do some Christmas baking. Deliver them to your neighbours. They'll be glad to have you in the neighbourhood and it will give you opportunity to bless and get to know them more.

Christmas Dinner Guests

Is there anyone you know who might be spending Christmas alone this year? Who could you invite to join you around the table for Christmas dinner?

Christmas Eve Services

These one-hour services are filled with carols, children, and a brief Christmas message. Most people get involved in church because of being invited by a friend. Many people are more open than ever at Christmas. Invitation Cards will be available throughout Advent with Christmas Eve service time details.

Chilliwack: 3.30pm, 4.45pm & 6.00pm

Promontory: 4.00pm

Agassiz: 4.00pm

Christmas Story Night

What better way to celebrate Christmas than to hear the old, old story? There will be various readings and presentations of the Nativity and other Christmas stories. Bring your blankets and pillows to nestle in while enjoying hot chocolate and Christmas treats. Bring your family and invite friends to church in an engaging, accessible way!

Dec 7th at 6.30pm in Chilliwack | Dec 9th at 4.45pm in Agassiz

Give Christmas Gifts to Your Service Providers

Bless your mail carrier, sanitation worker, doctor, teacher, etc. with a Christmas gift.



Host a Block Party

Invite the neighbours for a Christmas block party. Hot chocolate, baking, and a few games for the kids is all it will take to have your neighbourhood enjoying the season together and building relationship.

Shovel Snow

If it snows over the holidays, skip the gym and shovel your neighbours' driveways and sidewalks.

**Pray, consider, plan, and practice something or or things that bless those around you this Christmas. Consider what you, your family, and your Life Group can do.*

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THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

- HOPE -

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.

³You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

⁴For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle
tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 9:2-7



Reflection

Advent begins with the expectant hope of the prophets of old. An eager longing for the One who would break into the darkness with His life-giving light. An anticipation of a King like no other. Whose kingdom is not temporal but eternal. Whose attributes are divine: Wonderful Counsellor (Isa. 28:29); Mighty God (Deut. 10:17); Everlasting Father (Ps. 103:13); Prince of Peace (Eph. 2:14). We begin this season by slowing down and waiting with expectancy for Jesus, our hope.

As God's people long ago waited for their rescuer to come, we recognize our need of rescue in our lives. From sin and from this world in desperate need of redemption.

We await His return so that we can one day walk with God in an eternal garden where we will be unafraid and fully known.

Response

What has distracted me from fixing my gaze on Jesus at Christmas time in the past?

What have I put my hope in other than Jesus?

The fact that Jesus came to save me should produce a sense of wonder! What would renew that in me?

Candle: Lighting of the Candle of Hope

Also known as the Prophecy Candle, it marks the start of the Advent season—the anticipation of Christmas—and recalls those who first spoke the promise of Christ's coming.

Carol: Song of the Season

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus



Prayer

"Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things." (1 Peter 1:10-12)

Dear Lord Jesus, Advent has just begun, and I am praying it will be a season marked more by hush than rush. If I'm going to be busy with anything, may it be with quieting my heart, focusing my gaze, and setting my affection on things above—especially *on you*—the Author and Perfecter of my faith; the source and Lord of my salvation; the fountain and fullness of all grace.

Grant me the same intensity and care the prophets invested in searching out the promises of your coming. May old Scriptures come alive in profoundly new ways during this Advent season. Jesus, show me more of yourself throughout the Bible. Humble and gladden my heart with the realization that the prophets were serving me—even me—when they spoke of your coming, your sufferings, and the glories that would follow.

And if angels were on tiptoes with joy as they pondered your coming, so renew my awe and joy as well. I will never cease giving you thanks for those you sent into my life to preach the gospel to me by the power of the Holy Spirit. I will ever praise and worship you, Lord Jesus, for granting me the knowledge of my need and a love for yourself. Apart from the new birth, I would forever be a prisoner to my old life. O come, O come, Immanuel, and bring even greater freedom to my heart and glory to yourself. I pray, in the wonders of your love and the trustworthiness of your name. Amen.



Supplemental Reading

Deuteronomy 18:15-19; Isaiah 40:1-5; Matthew 1:1-17;
Luke 1:1-17; Galatians 3:15-26; Hebrews 10:19-25, 11:1-3

NOTES



CHRIST THE WORD

My Father,

In a world of created changeable things,
Christ and his Word alone remain unshaken.

O to forsake all creatures,
to rest as a stone on him the foundation
to abide in him, be borne up by him!

For all my mercies come through Christ,
who has designed, purchased, promised,
effected them.

How sweet it is to be near him, the Lamb,
filled with the holy affections!

When I sin against thee I cross thy will, love, life,
and have no comforter, no creature, to go to.

My sin is not so much this or that particular evil,
but my continual separation, disunion,
distance from thee,
and having a loose spirit towards thee.

But thou hast given me a present, Jesus thy Son,
as Mediator between thyself and my soul,
as middle-man who in a pit
holds both him below and him above,
for only he can span the chasm breached by sin,
and satisfy divine justice.

May I always lay hold upon this Mediator,
as a realized object of faith,
and alone worthy by his love to bridge the gulf.

Let me know that he is dear to me by his Word;

I am one with him by the Word on his part,
and by faith on mine;

If I oppose the Word I oppose my Lord
when he is most near;

If I receive the Word I receive my Lord
wherein he is nigh;

O thou who hast the hearts of all men
in thine hand,

form my heart according to the Word,
according to the image of thy Son,

So shall Christ the Word, and his Word,
be my strength and comfort

The Valley of Vision: Puritan Prayers and Devotions



FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

- WEEK 1 -

Getting Started

Set a time this week for a special family gathering to celebrate Week 1 of Advent.

You will need: 5 candles, lighter, Bible, music player.

Purchase the song **“Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”** by **Rain for Roots** from Google Play or App Store.

Lighting the Advent Candle

Select one child from your family to light the first candle marking the first week of Advent.

Song and Praise

Sing, listen or read, **“Come thou Long Expected Jesus”**. You can either sing together using instruments or play the song from a music player.

*Come thou long expected Jesus
Born to set thy people free
From thy sins and fears release us
Let us find our rest in Thee
Israel's Strength and Consolation,
Hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear Desire of every nation
Joy of every longing heart*

*Born thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever
Now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne*



Devotional Readings

Select one person to read the following passages aloud.

Long before Jesus was born, the Old Testament prophets told of His coming. God knew His people would need a way to be forgiven of their sins. And he had planned from the very beginning of creation to send His Son to be their Saviour. The prophet Isaiah said that a virgin would have a son, and He would be named Immanuel (which means "God is with us"; Isaiah 7:14). Jesus would be born from the family of Jesse, who was the Father of King David. Jesus would reign on David's throne, and His kingdom would last forever. And it was the prophet Micah who told of how Jesus would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). One by one, each of these prophecies - and the many more found in the Old Testament - came true in Jesus.

BIG PICTURE INTERACTIVE BIBLE

*For to us a child is born,
To us a son is given;
And the Government shall rest on his shoulder,
and his name will be called Wonderful Counsellor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 9:6

Reflection

What did the Old Testament Prophets know ahead of time about Jesus birth?

How did they know?

What things would the Messiah do when he came?

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for planning long, long ago to send your son to save us. you even planned what little town he would be born in. Thank you that you have good plans for each of your children. We trust your loving plans for us. Amen.



THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

- PEACE -

¹*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.*

²*Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.*

³*A voice cries:
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for
our God.*

Isaiah 40:1-3

Reflection

Whether it's putting up decorations, attending Christmas parties, buying and wrapping presents, shopping for, cooking, and serving Christmas dinner, or any of the other thousand to-do's at Christmas time, the season requires a lot of preparation.

As *Joy To The World* reminds us, "let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room. And heaven and nature sing," the most significant preparation of all at Christmas is that of preparing our hearts for our coming King. Jesus broke into human history to rescue fallen humanity. And we prepare to celebrate that astounding fact this Christmas.

Response

What is the most stressful part of the Christmas season?

What is one of your favourite parts about the Christmas season?

What would it look like for you to prepare room in your heart for Jesus this Christmas?

Candle: Lighting of the Candle of Preparation

Also known as the Bethlehem Candle, it signifies preparing for the arrival of Jesus.



Carol: Song of the Season

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Prayer

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:7)

Dear Lord Jesus, your righteousness is our surety and your sovereignty is our sanity. Hallelujah, many times over! How could we have possibly imagined that your humble Advent entrance through a stable would lead to the stabilization of the universe and that your cradle would eventually rock our placeless world?

Truly, there's only one government and one peace sufficient to meet the needs of our sinful hearts and broken world. You are already installed as "the ruler of kings on earth" (Rev. 1:5) and of everything else. King David's throne has become a throne of grace, from which you are actively ruling the world with your truth and grace. Joy to the world, indeed!

Truly, you are zealously working all things together after the counsel of your will. You—the Lamb of God, the Lord of Lords, and the Lamp of the New Jerusalem—are working in all things, for your glory and for our good. No one and nothing can derail, deter, or distract you from bringing to completion your good work of redemption and restoration.

You don't promise to do all things easy, but you are always doing all things well. Forgive me when I get impatient with your timing, don't enjoy all your providences, and second-guess your involvement. I've lived long enough to know you do some of your "best work" when I am actually feeling the absence of your presence.

As the gospel of your kingdom continues its transforming work in my life, may it advance through my life. Give me more joy than I've ever had before in loving and serving people. Intensify my hope in the day you will return and finish making all things new. I pray in your mighty and merciful name. Amen.



FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

- WEEK 2 -

Getting Started

Set a time this week for a special family gathering to celebrate Week two of Advent. You will need: 5 candles, lighter, Bible, music player. Purchase the song "**O Come O Come Emmanuel**" by Page CXVI from Google Play or App Store.

Lighting the Advent Candle

Select one child from your family to light the first and second candle marking the second week of Advent.

Song and Praise

Sing, listen or read to the, "**O Come, O Come Emmanuel**". You can either sing together using instruments or play the song from a music player.

*O Come, O come, Emmanuel
O Come, O come, Emmanuel
O Come, O come, Emmanuel
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
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel*

*O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel*



Devotional Readings

Select a family member or two to read the following:

Jesus is the Son of God, but when he came to earth as a baby, He needed human parents too! God chose Mary and Joseph. God first sent his angel Gabriel to tell Mary that she would have a son and she should name him Jesus. He would be the Son of God. Gabriel also told Mary about Elizabeth, her older cousin who was pregnant in her old age. Mary believed, and when the angel left, she hurried to see Elizabeth. Mary was engaged to Joseph, who was from the family of David. When Joseph found out Mary was pregnant, he decided to divorce her quietly. But an angel of the Lord came to him in a dream and told him to take Mary as his wife, because the child she carried was God's own Son. Joseph did as the angel said. Jesus would be born in the family of David, just as the prophets predicted.

BIG PICTURE INTERACTIVE BIBLE

Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

Matthew 1:20-21

Reflection

Why do you think God chose Mary and Joseph to be Jesus' parents?

Why does it take faith to obey God?

How did Mary respond to what God has said? (See Luke 1:38)

Prayer

Dear Father, Thank you for Mary and Joseph, who trusted your words and became Jesus' parents. Thank you for sending Jesus so we might have salvation through faith in Him. Amen.



THE THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

- JOY -

The Shepherds and the Angels

⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with
whom he is pleased!"

¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.

¹⁸And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Luke 2:8-20

Reflection

Shepherds were nobodies. But to God they were somebodies. When Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world was born, angels were sent to notify shepherds tending sheep in the fields so that they could be a part of the celebration.



They did what any person who truly encounters Jesus would do: they spend time with Jesus, then they go make Him known, and glorify and praise God for all that He has done for them.

We are invited to respond precisely the same way this Advent season. Jesus has come and is coming again. This is incredible news! News to make known to others.

God-glorifying news.

Response

What are the things that bring joy to your life?

What's something that you could do to bring joy to someone else?

Emmanuel is a name for Jesus that means, God with us.

How does that beautiful name and simple truth produce joy in us rather than fear?

Candle: Lighting of the Candle of Joy

Also known as the Shepherd's Candle, it signifies a shift from a season of repentance towards a time of celebration. It recalls those who joyfully shared the good news of the birth of Christ with others.

Carol: Song of the Season

Joy To The World

Prayer

Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth, and no one will even think about the old ones anymore. Be glad; rejoice forever in my creation! And look! I will create Jerusalem as a place of happiness. Her people will be a source of joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and delight in my people. And the sound of weeping and crying will be heard in it no more. (Isaiah 65:17-19)

Dear heavenly Father, I love meditating through the servant songs of Isaiah during Advent, because they remind me that the birth of Jesus wasn't a "merry little" event. Christmas represents the fulfillment of promises of immeasurable, irrepressible, indescribable proportions and delight. I praise you that every Christmas is colossal—irrespective of the economy or our discretionary spending.



With the first coming of Jesus, you inaugurated your plan to create a new heaven and new earth from the stuff of this very broken world—a new creation world in which you will find great delight. Though it will take the second Advent of Jesus, your kingdom has come, and it will come in fullness. I praise you for your generosity, tenacity, and felicity in doing all that you do, mighty and merciful Father.

You've promised to redeem a people from every race, tribe, tongue, and people group to populate that eternal world of peace and joy—a people in whom you find great delight and over whom you will rejoice forever. The gospel really is that big and that good. You've used stars, sand, and dust to describe the mathematics of your mercy. Free me from my unbelief, grace-full and loving Father.

Because you have sent Jesus to us and for us, we live with the blessed assurance that all of our sins have been wiped away and the glorious hope that all of our tears, likewise, will one day be wiped away. Until that day, free us to engage in your commitment to make all things new, wherever you have placed us and wherever you might send us. I pray with great joy and freshly fuelled hope, in Jesus' exalted name. Amen.

Supplemental Reading

Nehemiah 8:9-12; Isaiah 9:3-6; 12:1-6; Luke 1:46-80;
Romans 15:8-13; James 1:2-4

NOTES





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FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

- WEEK 3 -

Getting Started

Set a time this week for a special family gathering to celebrate Week three of Advent. You will need: 5 candles, lighter, Bible, music player. Purchase the song *"The Magnificat"* by **Rain for Roots** from Google Play or App Store.

Lighting the Advent Candle

Select one child from your family to light the candles 1, 2 and 3 marking the third week of Advent.

Song and Praise

Sing, listen or read to the, *"The Magnificat"*. You can either sing together using instruments or play the song from a music player.

*My soul magnifies the Lord, My spirit rejoices in God
My soul magnifies the Lord, My spirit rejoices in God
For He who is mighty, Has done great things for me
Holy holy, Holy holy, Holy holy
Is His name*

*His mercy flows in wave after wave
On those who are in awe before Him
He embraced his chosen child, Israel
He remembered and piled on the mercies, He piled them high!
It's exactly what He promised
Beginning with Abraham and right up to now. (Luke 1:50, 54-55
from The Message)*

*My soul magnifies the Lord, My spirit rejoices in God
My soul magnifies the Lord, My spirit rejoices in God
For He who is mighty, Has done great things for me
Holy holy, Holy holy, Holy holy
Is His name*



Devotional Readings

Select a different person to read each passage below

After the angel Gabriel visited Mary, she went to see her cousin Elizabeth. Gabriel had told Mary that Elizabeth was going to have a child, even though she was old. Mary went into her cousin's house and called out to her. At the sound of Mary's voice, the baby inside Elizabeth leaped for joy! Even the unborn baby knew that the Saviour was near! Elizabeth's baby would be John the Baptist, and he would tell all the people that Jesus was coming to save them - just as the prophet Malachi had said so long ago. Elizabeth and Mary praised God for his many blessings. Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months, then she went back home to Nazareth.

BIG PICTURE INTERACTIVE BIBLE

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby inside her jumped. And Elizabeth...called out... "As soon as I heard the sound of your voice, the baby inside me jumped for joy. You are a woman God has blessed. You have believed that the Lord would keep his promises to you!" Mary said, "My soul gives glory to the Lord. My spirit delights in God my Savior."

Luke 1:39-47 (NIRV)

Reflection

Why was John the Baptist special?
What gave baby John his joy?
What was Mary's delight?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you are the greatest joy we can ever know. Help our hearts to rejoice in you, just as John and Mary did. Thank you for the awesome reality of Christmas, that you came from heaven and were born as a helpless baby. Amen.



THE FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

- LOVE -

For God So Loved the World

¹⁶For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. ²⁰For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. ²¹But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."

John 3:16-20

Reflection

God loved the world so much, in it's state of brokenness and depravity, in it's idolatry and rebellion, that He sent His Son Jesus to live the life we couldn't, die the death we deserve, so that we could have abundant and eternal life. There is no greater love on the planet than this. And Christmas marks the time when Jesus broke into the mess, when eternal, holy God stooped to save.

Response

What are some of the most loving things someone has done for you?

What comes to mind when you consider the love of Christ?
How is the love of Christ being exhibited to others through your life?



Candle: Lighting of the Candle of Love

Also known as the Angels' Candle, it reminds us of the love fulfilled in Christ's first coming and our hope-filled anticipation of His second coming.

Carol: Song of the Season

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Prayer

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, so the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her. (Luke 1:34-38)

Dear heavenly Father, the one thing I share in common with Mary is incredulity over the mind-boggling, heart-encouraging promises you have made in connection with the birth of Jesus. I too say, "How will this be?" And I hear you answer back, from the Scriptures and the history of redemption, "Nothing is impossible with God."

Everything you've promised, with regard to Jesus, will come to pass, including the redeeming of Jesus' bride from every nation, tribe, people, and language and the renewal of this broken world into the new heaven and new earth. But, hallelujah, it also includes your plans for each of your children. Just as surely as you placed the life of Jesus in Mary, you have done the same for us. Though in an entirely different way than Mary, we too are "pregnant with glory" (See Rom. 8:18-27).

One day I will love perfectly, with the kindness and compassion of Jesus. I will only think and see with the wisdom and eyes of heaven. I will fully embrace your will as my favourite bread and utter delight.



One day I will never be selfish, petty, or defensive again. I will never get my feelings hurt, insist on being right, or demand more. I will think of others more highly and more often than myself. I won't keep a record of anybody's wrongs and will only and forever be an encourager. I will be free, so very free and whole.

To all of these promises, I find myself saying, "How will this be, since I'm still so very much not like Jesus?" And you answer back so grace-fully, "Things impossible with man are possible with God." To which I say and pray, "May it be as you have promised in the gospel, holy and faithful Father. I am yours and your servant." I pray in Jesus' exalted name. Amen.

Supplemental Reading

Luke 2:1-21; John 15:1-17; Romans 5:6-11; 8:18-25;
8:26-39; Galatians 2:15-21

NOTES





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FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

- WEEK 4 -

Getting Started

Set a time this week for a special family gathering to celebrate Week four of Advent. You will need: 5 candles, lighter, Bible, music player. Purchase the song **“Joy for all People”** by Seeds Family Worship. Download it from Google Play or App Store.

Lighting the Advent Candle

Select one child from your family to light the candles 1,2, 3 and 4 marking the fourth week of Advent.

Song and Praise

Sing or Listen to **“Joy for all People”**. You can either sing together using instruments or play the song from a music player.

Scripture Readings

Select different members of the family to read a section of the Scripture

In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a list be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. It was the first time a list was made of the people while Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone went to their own town to be listed.

So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. He went there with Mary to be listed. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby. While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. That's because there was no guest room where they could stay.



There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were taking care of their sheep. An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. It will bring great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said, "May glory be given to God in the highest heaven! And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!" The angels left and went into heaven. Then the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger. After the shepherds had seen him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over. The shepherds returned. They gave glory and praise to God. Everything they had seen and heard was just as they had been told.

Luke 2:1-20 (NIRV)

Reflection

What is your favourite part of the Christmas story?

Prayer

Thank you God for the message of the angels. Thank for the joyful message of our savior's birth. We praise you and bless you! Amen.



CHRISTMAS EVE

- THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD -

The Word Became Flesh

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") ¹⁶For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

John 1:1-18



Reflection

The prologue of John's Gospel is like the opening movement of a grand symphony. It is meant to grab our attention and draw us into the story—the story of all stories. The apostle sets the stage for the presentation of the gospel by highlighting the main plotline and central themes of the entire Bible—creation (vv. 1-4), the fall (v. 5), and redemption (vv. 9-13), all of which point to the person and culminating work of Jesus (vv. 23, 29).

Who is Jesus? This is John's main question and the quest of discovery that he bids us enter. John's Gospel helps us understand how to look for Jesus in Moses, the Prophets, and all the Scriptures. He wants us to see how Jesus is the "Yes!" and "Amen!" to every promise God has made (2 Cor. 1:20) throughout the history of redemption.

ESV GOSPEL TRANSFORMATION BIBLE

Response

In what ways is Jesus the light of humanity and our light? How has Jesus brought light into your life (vv. 4, 9)? What must you do to receive the salvation of Jesus (v.12)? God sent His Son Jesus as light into darkness, the pinnacle of His redemptive story, to extend grace upon grace, by making Himself known through His Son. How will you respond to such loving mercy this Christmas?

Candle: Lighting of the Christ Candle

This candle represents our adoration and praise to God for sending His Son Jesus into the world, *light of the world* and *joy to the world*.

Carol: Song of the Season

O Holy Night



Prayer

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. (Luke 2:1-7)

Dear Lord Jesus, whether or not you entered our world anywhere close to our December 25 is irrelevant. That you were born—that you actually came from eternity into time and space, not as a metaphor or myth, fable or tale, but as our Saviour—that's what matters.

We sing to you on this day with all the humility and felicity we can muster, "Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die. Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth." We praise, bless, and adore you.

Luke took great care to detail the history of your birth, but it's the quietness of your birth that is noteworthy. Any other king would've come with great fanfare and a royal entourage. But you came into our world in utter stillness and profound weakness. "No room in the inn" wasn't an insult to you; it was your choice, your plan, the way of the gospel.

For you didn't consider your equality with God something to be protected or hoarded. Rather, you made yourself "nothing," becoming one of us—tabernacling among us as God in the flesh, the Servant of the Lord. And with measureless humility and joy, you died in our place upon the cross.

"Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see! Hail, the incarnate deity! Pleased, as man, with men to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel!" "Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" Hallelujah, so many times over!

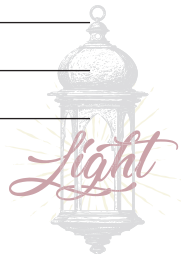


We long for the day when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that you are Lord, to the glory of God the Father. It's going to be a loud and large day, but on this Christmas Eve, we humble ourselves in quietness and stillness, gratefulness and peace. Thank you for coming to us, Lord Jesus—thank you for saving us from our sins. We pray in your great and gracious name. Amen.

Supplemental Reading

Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:18-25; Mark 1:1-3; Luke 2:1-7; John 1:9-14

NOTES





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The Gift of Gifts

*O Source of all good,
What shall I render to thee for the gift of gifts, thine own dear
Son, begotten, not created, my Redeemer, proxy, surety,
substitute, his self-emptying incomprehensible, his infinity of love
beyond the heart's grasp.
Herein is wonder of wonders:
he came below to raise me above,
was born like me that I might become like him.*

*Herein is love;
when I cannot rise to him he draws near on wings of grace,
to raise me to himself.
Herein is power;
when Deity and humanity were infinitely apart
he united them in indissoluble unity,
the uncreated and the created.*

*Herein is wisdom;
when I was undone, with no will to return to him,
and no intellect to devise recovery,
he came, God-incarnate, to save me to the uttermost,
as man to die my death,
to shed satisfying blood on my behalf,
to work out a perfect righteousness for me.*

*O God, take me in spirit to the watchful shepherds,
and enlarge my mind;
let me hear good tidings of great joy,
and hearing, believing, rejoice, praise, adore
my conscience bathed in an ocean of repose,
my eyes uplifted to a reconciled Father;
place me with ox, ass, camel, goat,
to look with them upon my Redeemer's face,
and in him account myself delivered from sin;
let me with Simeon clasp the new-born child to my heart,
embrace him with undying faith,
exulting that he is mine and I am his.
In him thou hast given me so much that heaven can give no
more.*

The Valley of Vision: Puritan Prayers and Devotions



FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

- CHRISTMAS EVE -

Getting Started

Set a time this week for a special family gathering to celebrate the final day of Advent. You will need: 5 candles, lighter, Bible, music player. Purchase the song **"O Come All Ye Faithful"** by your favourite artist.

Lighting the Advent Candle

Select one child from your family to light all the candles.

Song and Praise

Sing or Listen to **"O Come all ye Faithful"**. You can either sing together using instruments or play the song from a music player.

*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.*

*Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory given!
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore Him, (3x)
Christ the Lord.*

Scripture Reading

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea. This happened while Herod was king of Judea. After Jesus' birth, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, "Where is the child who has been born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose. Now we have come to worship him."



When King Herod heard about it, he was very upset. Everyone in Jerusalem was troubled too. So Herod called together all the chief priests of the people. He also called the teachers of the law. He asked them where the Messiah was going to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied. "This is what the prophet has written. He said,

"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are certainly not the least important among the towns of Judah. A ruler will come out of you. He will rule my people Israel like a shepherd." (Micah 5:2)

Then Herod secretly called for the Wise Men. He found out from them exactly when the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem. He said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report it to me. Then I can go and worship him too."

After the Wise Men had listened to the king, they went on their way. The star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them. It finally stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. The Wise Men went to the house. There they saw the child with his mother Mary. They bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures. They gave him gold, frankincense and myrrh. But God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they returned to their country on a different road.

Matthew 2:1-12 (NIRV)

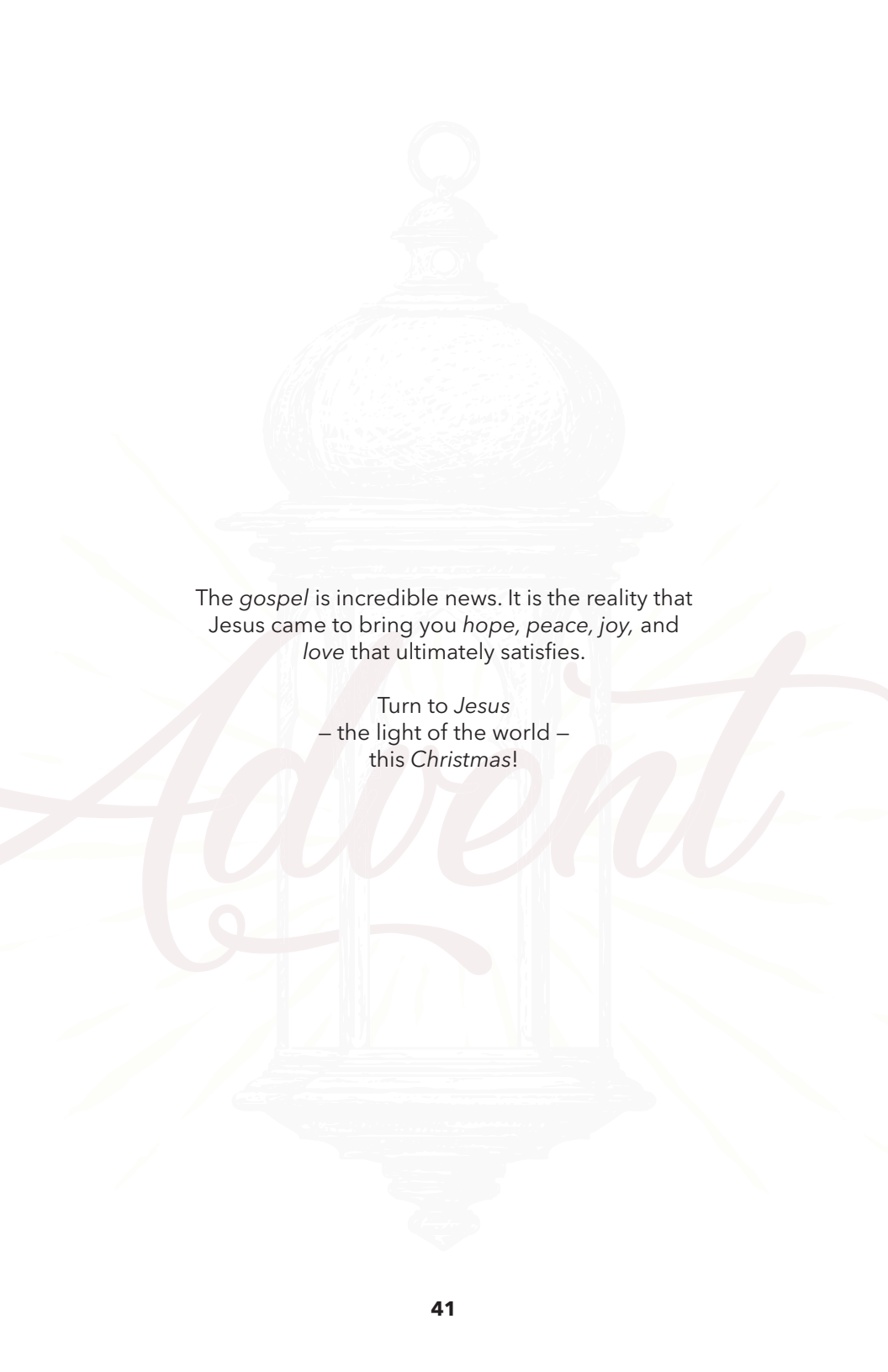
Reflection

Who saw Jesus' star in the east, and what did they want?
Read Rev 22:16. How is Jesus like a star?

Prayer

Father, thank you for showing your love for the whole world when you sent your bright Morning Star to shine on us. We adore you! Amen.





The *gospel* is incredible news. It is the reality that Jesus came to bring you *hope, peace, joy, and love* that ultimately satisfies.

Turn to *Jesus*
– the light of the world –
this *Christmas!*

Advent

NOTES

- REFERENCES -

Family Devotional

Big Picture Interactive Bible

Introduction Quote

Nancy Guthrie, "Let Every Heart Prepare Him Room: Daily Family Devotional for Advent"

Prayers

Scotty Smith, "Every Season Prayers: Gospel-Centered Prayers for the Whole of Life"

Poems

The Valley of Vision: Puritan Prayers and Devotions



This resource was created by and for
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You are permitted to use and share the Advent Guide,
as long as you do not change or add to it
in any way, or charge for the guide.

MISSION:

WE EXIST TO BE AUTHENTIC FOLLOWERS OF **JESUS** WHO LEAD OTHERS TO **FOLLOW HIM**.

VISION:

WE AIM TO SEE THE ENTIRE EASTERN FRASER VALLEY **TRANSFORMED** BY THE **GOSPEL** FOR THE **GLORY OF GOD** AND GOOD OF **ALL PEOPLE**.

VALUES:

CENTRED ON THE **GOSPEL**.
ROOTED IN THE **BIBLE**.
GATHERED IN **COMMUNITY**.
EMPOWERED BY THE **SPIRIT**.
EQUIPPED FOR **MINISTRY**.
SENT ON **MISSION**.



We have created the Advent Guide as an easy to use resource to help you anticipate the coming of Christ this Christmas.

The guide consists of **a weekly devotional** with a companion **family devotional**.

Jesus has come and will come again.

Merry Christmas!