

# *A Light for the World*

GBC 2016 Advent Devotional



Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means “coming”. The season of Advent is a time of patience and excitement, as we eagerly await the arrival of the birth of Jesus.  
*O Come, let us adore Him!*

### **How to use this devotional**

We encourage you to start a new tradition this year by adding an Advent devotional into your Christmas preparation routine. We welcome you to use this devotional with your family, your friends, or by yourself, working slowly through the Scripture reading, reflecting on the passage and the weekly themes, singing and listening to Advent carols, and putting your thoughts into action by following the practices at the end of each devotional. We hope that this devotional guide will help you to participate fully in this season as we eagerly await the celebration of the birth of our Savior!



## WEEK 1 OF ADVENT

### Scripture Reading

Isaiah 40:1-5

### Reflection

The Israelites had been imprisoned and oppressed for a long time and they were in desperate need of hope. The words of comfort in Isaiah 40 are hopeful – the end of the suffering is near and they are to prepare a way for God's presence. In what ways should we be more hopeful, particularly as the Christmas season approaches? How can the presence of hope change our lives and our commitment to bringing God's kingdom to Earth?

### Prayer

God, we thank you for giving us a reason to hope. Even when the darkness of winter closes in, we know that a light is coming. Thank you that we can celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ together. Amen.

### Preparing with Song

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

### Spread the News

Begin thinking of ways that you can spread Christmas cheer & serve God's people with your family this advent season. We challenge you to pick a **new** ministry to support, learn as much as you can about them – why do they do what they do? What are their needs? Consider volunteering some time this month as a family with the organization and set aside some money each week to donate to this organization. Chances are, they have identified needs of people that we have never even considered!

# patience

## WEEK 2 OF ADVENT

### Scripture Reading

Isaiah 11:1-10

### Reflection

Is it all sewn up, my life?  
Or is it so predictable—  
so orderly, neat, well-arranged, right—  
that I don't have the time or space  
for listening for the rustle of angels' wings  
or running to the stable to see a baby?  
Could this be what he meant when he said  
Listen, those who have ears to hear...  
Look, those who have eyes to see?  
O God, give me the humility of the shepherds  
who saw in the cold December darkness  
the coming of Light; the advent of Love! ~ Ann Weems, *Kneeling in Bethlehem*

### Prayer

God, waiting is hard. It's difficult to be patient. But, we know that we grow through the journey more than we ever could if we skipped immediately to the end results. Help us to exercise patience in our lives, especially as we await the celebration of the birth of your Son. Amen.

### Preparing with Song

Come Thou long expected Jesus  
Born to set Thy people free  
From our fears and sins 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.

### Spread the News

This week, plan an activity that requires patience. If you are used to grabbing quick dinners and heating up frozen meals, plan to cook a dinner that requires more preparation and time. If there is a nice day this week and you are in physical shape to do so, plan a hike that ends with a beautiful overlook. Remember the beauty along the way as you are working toward that scenic site. If you watch television for an extended period each night, pick a different activity for entertainment one night this week. Put together a puzzle, play a board game with friends, or plan a short trip to visit a historical site!

# peace

WEEK 3 OF  
ADVENT

## Scripture Reading

Matthew 3:1-12

## Reflection

Often people think they are lost. They think that nothing in the world can help them. And then God looks and says, "It is time." And all at once everything looks different. Everything comes into a different light, and all at once you see that all is not lost, but won. Remember this, all is not lost in His eyes. "The lowly shall be lifted up, the first shall be last." – Ger Koopman, *Home for Christmas*

## Prayer

God, we know that you love this world and all of your creation in it more than we could ever imagine. While we wage wars, spew harmful words, and stifle each other, you pour your love, grace, and mercy over all of us. Help us to practice peace and reconciliation with both our friends *and* our enemies. Let us recognize the times when we are acting against your peace and justice and help us to turn from our wicked ways. God, let there be peace on earth. Amen.

## Preparing with Song

O Little Town of Bethlehem  
How still we see thee lie  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by  
But in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting light  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight

## Spread the News

Is there anyone that you need to make amends with? Do you have anybody in your life that you do not get along with very well? Practice peace and reconciliation by reaching out to them. Write them a letter, give them a call, or send them a Christmas card. What better time to heal broken relationships than the time of year where we are reminded of God's peace through the birth of a sweet, innocent baby?



## WEEK 4 OF ADVENT

### Scripture Reading

Isaiah 12:1-6

### Reflection

There are seasons when it is difficult to be joyful. It seems as though nothing can take away the pain of grief and loss. Lean into God's presence, remember the Christmas story and the light that rises during the cold, dark, winter night. For the harvest times, when good news comes, spread your joy to others. They say that joy is contagious. It spreads from person to person, bringing light to dark days. Your joy can light the spark for someone else. What are some ways you can reflect joy in your own life? Does the Advent season help you prepare with a joyful heart?

### Prayer

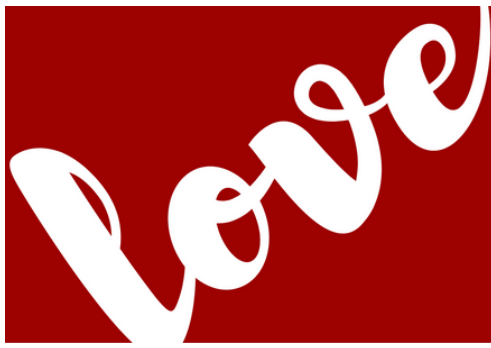
God, we are anxiously awaiting Christmas day! Thank you for giving us a day to celebrate with such great joy! May we continue to find joy in You, while helping others to experience your love and grace, as well. Amen.

### Celebrating with Song

Silent night, Holy night  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin, mother and child  
Holy infant so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Sleep in heavenly peace

### Spread the News

Reflect on some of your favorite Christmas memories. Share these memories with family & friends, journal your favorite memories, or take a look through old photos. How was God present in these memories? Why are they your favorites? How do you see the traditional themes of Advent – Hope, Joy, Peace, Love – at work in these times? Did you exercise patience leading up to these meaningful moments?



## CHRISTMAS DAY

### Scripture Reading

Luke 2:1-20

### Reflection

"Truly wondrous is the whole chronicle of the incarnation. From the time when Christ came, the ancient slavery is ended, the devil confounded, demons take to flight, the power of death is broken, paradise is unlocked, the curse is taken away, sin is removed from us, error driven out, truth has been brought back, and the speech of kindness diffused. **A heavenly way of life has been implanted on the earth.**" – Leo the Great

### Prayer

God, today we celebrate the gift of your Son, Christ Jesus! What a glorious day it is! Your love for us is taller than mountains, deeper than the great seas. It manifests itself in the birth of a sweet baby who came to bring us peace, hope, joy, and love. It meets us where we are, here in this place. Your love is beyond anything we deserve and yet it is more than we could ever understand. Thank you for loving us. May we love as You love. Amen.

### Celebrating with Song

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King  
Let every heart prepare Him room  
And heaven and nature sing  
And heaven and nature sing  
And heaven and heaven and nature sing

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 (x3)  
Christ the Lord

### Spread the News

Share the love of the precious Christ child with your loved ones and your neighbors. Celebrate this day, but don't let it end here! Christmas lasts for twelve days and its cheer impacts the rest of the year! God is with us, here on earth. *Merry Christmas, born is the King, O Come let us adore Him!*

*devotional compiled by devin harris-davis  
for Georgetown Baptist Church*