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CHURCH IN  
BETHESDA

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ADVENT, WEEK 1 , NOVEMBER 27

# THE LIGHT OF PEACE

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ABOUT TODAY'S LESSON ON  
TUESDAY EVENING AT 7 PM  
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## Isaiah 2:2-5

2 In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it.

3 Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of God. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from heaven, the word of the Lord from the city.

4 He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

5 Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

### FOR NOTES

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ADVENT, WEEK 1

# READINGS FOR MIDWEEK

PSALM

## Psalm 122

1 I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord." 2 Our feet are standing in your gates, Jerusalem.

3 Jerusalem is built like a city that is closely compacted together. 4 That is where the tribes go up— the tribes of the Lord— to praise the name of the Lord according to the statute given to Israel. 5 There stand the thrones for judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May those who love you be secure. 7 May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels."

8 For the sake of my family and friends, I will say, "Peace be within you." 9 For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your prosperity.

EPISTLE

## Romans 13•11-14

11 And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension

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and jealousy. 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

GOSPEL

## Matthew 24•36-44

36 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, [a] but only the Father. 37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; 39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

Lections are from the Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library.



# CHRISTMAS EVE AT MIDNIGHT

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ADVENT, WEEK 2, DECEMBER 4

# THE LIGHT OF JUSTICE

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## Isaiah 11:1-10

1 A shoot will come up from the stump; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord— 3 and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; 4 but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. 5 Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

6 The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. 7 The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.

9 They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

10 In that day the Root will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.

## FOR NOTES

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# READINGS FOR MIDWEEK

## PSALM

### Psalm 72

1 Endow the king with your justice, O God,  
the royal son with your righteousness.

2 May he judge your people in righteousness,  
your afflicted ones with justice.

3 May the mountains bring prosperity to the  
people, the hills the fruit of righteousness.

4 May he defend the afflicted among the  
people and save the children of the needy; may  
he crush the oppressor.

5 May he endure as long as the sun, as long as  
the moon, through all generations.

6 May he be like rain falling on a mown field,  
like showers watering the earth.

7 In his days may the righteous flourish and  
prosperity abound till the moon is no more.

## EPISTLE

### Romans 15:4-7

4 For everything that was written in the past  
was written to teach us, so that through the  
endurance taught in the Scriptures and the  
encouragement they provide we might have  
hope.

5 May the God who gives endurance and  
encouragement give you the same attitude of  
mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had,  
6 so that with one mind and one voice you

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may glorify the God and Father of our Lord  
Jesus Christ.

7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ  
accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

## GOSPEL

### Matthew 3:1-7

1 In those days John the Baptist came,  
preaching in the wilderness of Judea 2 and  
saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven  
has come near." 3 This is he who was spoken  
of through the prophet Isaiah:

"A voice of one calling in the wilderness,  
'Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.'" [a]

4 John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and  
he had a leather belt around his waist. His  
food was locusts and wild honey. 5 People  
went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea  
and the whole region of the Jordan. 6  
Confessing their sins, they were baptized by  
him in the Jordan River.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and  
Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing,  
he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who  
warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8  
Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. 9  
And do not think you can say to yourselves,  
'We have Abraham as our father. I tell you  
that out of these stones God can raise up  
children for Abraham.

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# CHRISTMAS EVE AT MIDNIGHT

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ADVENT, WEEK 3, DECEMBER 11

# THE LIGHT OF RESTORATION

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## Isaiah 35:1-5

1 The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, 2 it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. Glory will be given to it. People will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God.

3 Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; 4 say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.”

5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. 6 Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. 7 The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

### FOR NOTES



# READINGS FOR MIDWEEK

## PSALM

### Psalm 146:5-9

5 Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God. 6 He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them— he remains faithful forever.

7 He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free, 8 the Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous.

9 The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

## EPISTLE

### James 5:7-10

7 Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. 8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. 9 Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

10 Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

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## GOSPEL

### Matthew 11:2-11

2 When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples 3 to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

4 Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. 6 Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

7 As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? 8 If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. 9 Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is the one about whom it is written:

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

11 Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

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ADVENT, WEEK 4, DECEMBER 18

# THE LIGHT OF QUESTIONS

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## Isaiah 7•10-14

10 Again the Lord spoke, “Ask the Lord your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.”

12 But I said, “I will not ask; I will not put the Lord to the test.”

13 Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The young woman will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

### FOR NOTES

# READINGS FOR MIDWEEK

## PSALM

### Psalm 80:1-7

1 Hear us, Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock. You who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth 2 before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Awaken your might; come and save us.

3 Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

4 How long, Lord God Almighty, will your anger smolder against the prayers of your people? 5 You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have made them drink tears by the bowlful. 6 You have made us an object of derision[b] to our neighbors, and our enemies mock us.

7 Restore us, God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

## EPISTLE

### Romans 1:1-7

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God — 2 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3 regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, 4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. 5 Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's

HAPPY HOLIDAYS! WE  
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sake. 6 And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

## GOSPEL

### Matthew 1:18-23

18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. 19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet[b] did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us")

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