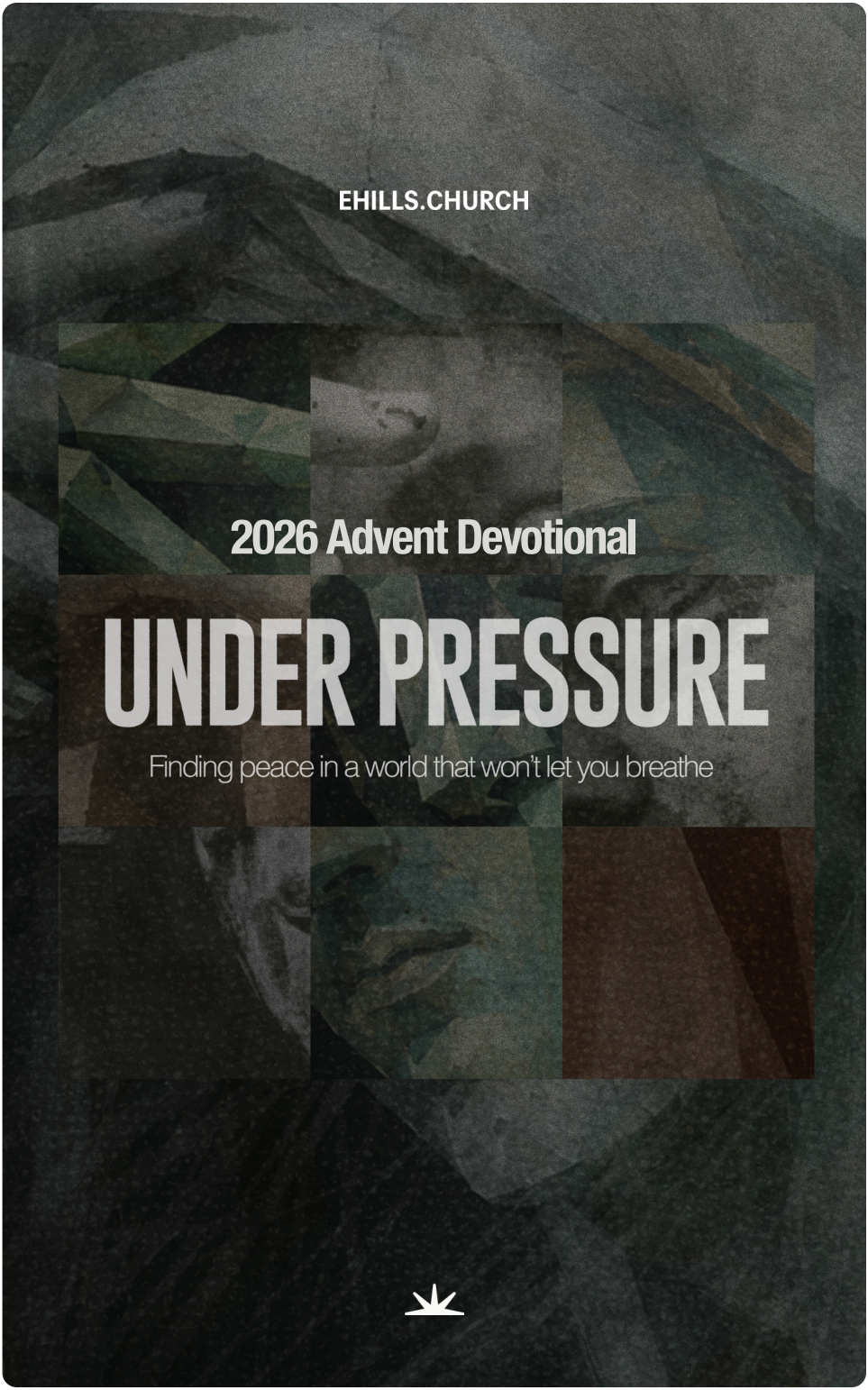
EHILLS.CHURCH



2026 Advent Devotional

UNDER PRESSURE

Finding peace in a world that won't let you breathe



Peace isn't found when the pressure disappears. Peace is found when God shows up in the pressure.

YOU CAN ALSO FOLLOW ALONG ON THE EHILLS APP.

How to Use the Advent Devotional and Reading Plan

This plan helps you slow down, create mental space, and experience the peace of Jesus during the Advent season. Whether you are walking through this individually, as a family, or with a group, here is a practical way to engage each week:

1. **Set a Daily Rhythm (5–10 Minutes)**

   Pick a consistent time and quiet space (early morning before the day starts, or late evening before bed).

   Follow the weekly readings. Read the assigned daily scripture passage Monday through Saturday. Don't rush—read slowly and ask: "What does this passage reveal about God's presence in my stress?"

2. **Engage with the Weekly Devotional (Sunday or Early Week)**

   Read through the **Devotional section** at the start of each week to anchor your mind around the week's theme.

   Pay attention to the **Advent Truth**—write it on a sticky note or set it as your phone lock screen for the week to keep it top of mind.

3. **Put Truth into Action (Personal Application)**

   Work through the 3-step **Personal Application** mid-week.

   Advent is a time of anticipation, not just about reading ideas. This year, focus on shifting practical habits as you anticipate Christmas. Be honest with yourself when naming your anxieties, identifying mental spirals, or stepping back from non-essential commitments to rest.

4. **Look Outward (Invitation Step)**

   Write the Name: Place the name of someone who feels far from God or overwhelmed somewhere you will see it often.

   Pray Daily: Ask God to give them hope and peace and open doors for authentic connection.

   Take Action: Take the small, practical step each week. These aren't big tasks, but what seems small and insignificant might be a turning point in someone's story of faith.

THE ANXIOUS GENERATION



ADVENT CHARACTER
Mary

ADVENT THEME
Peace begins when we trust God with what we cannot control.

ADVENT TRUTH
Anxiety asks, "What if?" Faith asks, "What if God is with me?"

Devotional

We live in an age of constant pressure. We carry devices in our pockets that deliver non-stop news, notifications, and comparison points. Our minds rarely get a break, and during the Christmas season, the volume turns up even higher. Financial pressures, family dynamics, packed schedules, and unmet expectations can make it feel like there isn't enough oxygen in the room.

Long before modern notifications existed, a young woman named Mary experienced a sudden, life-altering moment of overwhelming uncertainty.

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, her life wasn't disrupted by a minor inconvenience; her entire future was turned upside down. In her first-century context, an unexpected pregnancy meant potential social shame, broken relationships, and rejection from her community. Every logical circumstance in front of her was a blueprint for deep anxiety and fear.

Notice Gabriel's first words to her: "Do not be afraid, Mary."

God did not remove the complexity of her situation. He didn't promise it would be easy, that people wouldn't talk, or that the road ahead would be comfortable. Instead, He offered His presence and His favor.

Anxiety naturally spirals into "What if?" questions:

- What if everything falls apart?
- What if I can't manage this?
- What if people judge me?

Mary had every reason to ask those same questions. Yet, her response was anchored in trust: "May it be to me as you have said." Mary shifted her focus from her lack of control to God's presence. Faith didn't eliminate her questions; it reframed them into a single anchor: **What if God is with me?**

Peace does not require you to control your circumstances or fix every variable. True peace begins when you release your grip on what you were never meant to control and trust that God is present in the middle of the pressure.

Personal Application

Identify What You're Trying to Control: Take 5 minutes today to write down 2–3 things currently causing you anxiety or mental overwhelm (e.g., finances, health, family expectations, work deadlines).

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Name Your Anxiety: Speak these anxieties aloud to God in prayer. Simply say, "God, I am anxious about [Item], and I cannot control the outcome."

Surrender Daily: Every morning this week, physically open your hands, palm-up, and pray: "Lord, I give You what I cannot control today. Replace my worry with trust in You."

Invitation Step: Reaching Out

Christmas can be one of the most isolating times of year for people carrying silent burdens.

Write & Pray: Think of someone in your life—a neighbor, coworker, or friend—who seems overwhelmed, stressed, or far from God. Write their name on a note and stick it somewhere you will see it multiple times a day (on the fridge, bathroom mirror, in the car, etc.). Commit to praying for them by name every day this week.

Act: Text them or write them a simple note this week just to say, "I was thinking of you today and wanted to check in. How can I pray for you or help you this week?"

WEEKLY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Monday
Luke 1:26–38
(Mary's Calling)

Tuesday
Isaiah 26:1–4
(Perfect Peace)

Wednesday
Psalm 56:1–11 (Trusting God When Afraid)

Thursday
Philippians 4:4–7
(Do Not Be Anxious)

Friday
1 Peter 5:6–7
(Casting Your Cares)

Saturday
Proverbs 3:5–6
(Trust with All Your Heart)

BURNOUT PROOF



ADVENT CHARACTER
The Shepherds

ADVENT THEME
You cannot carry the weight of the world because a Savior already has.

ADVENT TRUTH
The weary don't need more responsibility. They need good news.

Devotional

Exhaustion has become a badge of honor in modern culture, but for many of us, it isn't a choice—it's just life. We feel the relentless weight of modern demands: perform at work, maintain a household, keep up with social obligations, manage budgets, and make sure everyone else is cared for. By mid-December, many of us aren't feeling festive cheer; we are running on empty.

The shepherds on the hills outside Bethlehem understood chronic weariness. In the first century, shepherds worked physical night shifts, carried heavy responsibilities, and lived on society's margins. People overlooked them, underappreciated them, and left them constantly exhausted. They didn't have the status or resources to lighten their load.

Heaven sent its greatest announcement to these specific, weary workers—not the religious elite or the powerful rulers.

The angel didn't show up with a list of new tasks, moral demands, or extra responsibilities for the shepherds. The message was simple: "I bring you **good news** of **great joy** for **all people**."

When we are burnt out, our instinct is often to work harder, practice more self-discipline, or push through the exhaustion. But the weary don't need a longer to-do list; they need good news. The good news of Christmas is that God sent a Savior so you don't have to save yourself. Your worth is not measured by your productivity, your output, or how much you can endure.

The shepherds left their fields to see what God had done. They paused their routine to receive the gift of His presence. When you realize that Jesus has already carried the ultimate weight on your behalf, you are freed from the illusion that you have to carry everything alone.

Personal Application

Create Margin: Look at your calendar for the coming week. What is one non-essential event, task, or commitment you can politely step back from or postpone?

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Prioritize Rest: Schedule a 30-minute block this week purely for quiet rest—no screens, no work, no multi-tasking. Spend time walking, reading Scripture, or resting in silence.

Reframe Your Worth: Whenever you feel guilty for resting, speak this truth aloud: "My worth comes from who Jesus is, not from how much I accomplish today."

Invitation Step: Reaching Out

Many people in our lives are running on empty right now, crushed under seasonal expectations or personal grief.

Write & Pray: Look at the name you wrote down last week (or add a second name). Ask God to show you how you can offer them His rest and kindness.

Service: Do a practical, low-pressure act of service for someone who is exhausted. Deliver a meal, buy a warm cup of coffee for a coworker, offer to run an errand for a busy neighbor, or bake cookies for an individual or a family in your neighborhood. Include a simple note: "I was thinking about you today and wanted to let you know you're appreciated."

WEEKLY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Monday
Luke 2:8–20 (The Shepherds)

Tuesday
Matthew 11:28–30 (Rest for the Weary)

Wednesday
Psalm 23:1–6 (The Lord is My Shepherd)

Thursday
Isaiah 40:28–31 (Renewing Strength)

Friday
Exodus 33:12–14 (Rest in God's Presence)

Saturday
Galatians 6:9–10 (Not Growing Weary)

STOP THE SPIRAL



ADVENT CHARACTER
Joseph

ADVENT THEME
Fear distorts reality. God invites us to trust His voice over our assumptions.

ADVENT TRUTH
Most of our anxiety comes from stories we're telling ourselves.

Devotional

Have you ever found yourself lying awake at 2:00 am, replaying a conversation, filling in the blanks of an uncertain situation, and mentally preparing for the worst-case scenario?

Our minds are storytelling machines. When we lack full information, anxiety steps in to fill the silence with assumptions, fear, and worst-case outcomes. Before long, a small concern spirals into a full-scale crisis in our thoughts.

Joseph found himself in a scenario where the facts on the surface looked devastating. The woman he was engaged to marry was pregnant, and he knew he was not the father. In his culture, his reputation was threatened, his plans for an honorable family were shattered, and his future felt ruined.

Joseph's initial plan came from his internal processing: he decided to quietly end the engagement to minimize public shame. His mind was likely racing with hurt, confusion, and fear. He was making decisions based on what he assumed was happening.

Then God stepped into Joseph's thought process through an angel in a dream: "Joseph… do not be afraid." (Matthew 1:20). God provided the true narrative—one that Joseph could never have imagined or engineered on his own.

Joseph was telling himself a story of betrayal and ruin. God was actually writing a story of redemption and salvation.

How many times does our anxiety stem from the narratives we construct in our own heads? We assume someone is angry with us; we assume a bad health result; we assume we aren't good enough. Fear distorts reality and magnifies our worst assumptions. God invites us to stop the mental spiral by bringing our thoughts into the light of His Word and listening for His voice. When we trade our assumptions for God's truth, we find the peace that surpasses understanding.

Personal Application

Identify the Lies: Write down the assumption driving your fear. Is it grounded in factual truth, or is it an unverified fear?

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Recognize the Spiral: When you feel your mind spiraling into worry or worst-case scenarios this week, stop and ask: "What story am I telling myself right now?"

Replace Assumptions with Truth: Find a scripture that counters your fear (e.g., "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind" — 2 Timothy 1:7). Read it aloud whenever the spiral starts.

Invitation Step: Reaching Out

Christmas Eve services are often the one time of year when people who feel far from God, lonely, or spiritually disconnected are open to attending church.

Write & Pray: Look at the name(s) you've written down. Pray specifically that God would open their heart and ease any anxiety they might have about faith or church.

Invite: Reach out personally to invite them to join you for one of the Christmas Eve services. You can use the invitations online (ehills.org/christmas) or a gentle, low-pressure approach like this:

> "Hey [Name], I'm heading to Christmas at EHills on [Day/Time]. I'd love for you to sit with me if you're open to coming! We can grab coffee/treats afterward if you're free."

WEEKLY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Monday
Matthew 1:18–25 (Joseph's Obedience)

Tuesday
Psalm 139:1–12 (God Knows Us Completely)

Wednesday
2 Corinthians 10:3–5 (Taking Thoughts Captive)

Thursday
Isaiah 43:1–3a (Do Not Fear)

Friday
Psalm 46:1–11 (Be Still and Know)

Saturday
John 14:25–27 (My Peace I Give You)

Notes

JOIN US THIS

CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 23 | 3PM, 5PM, 7PM

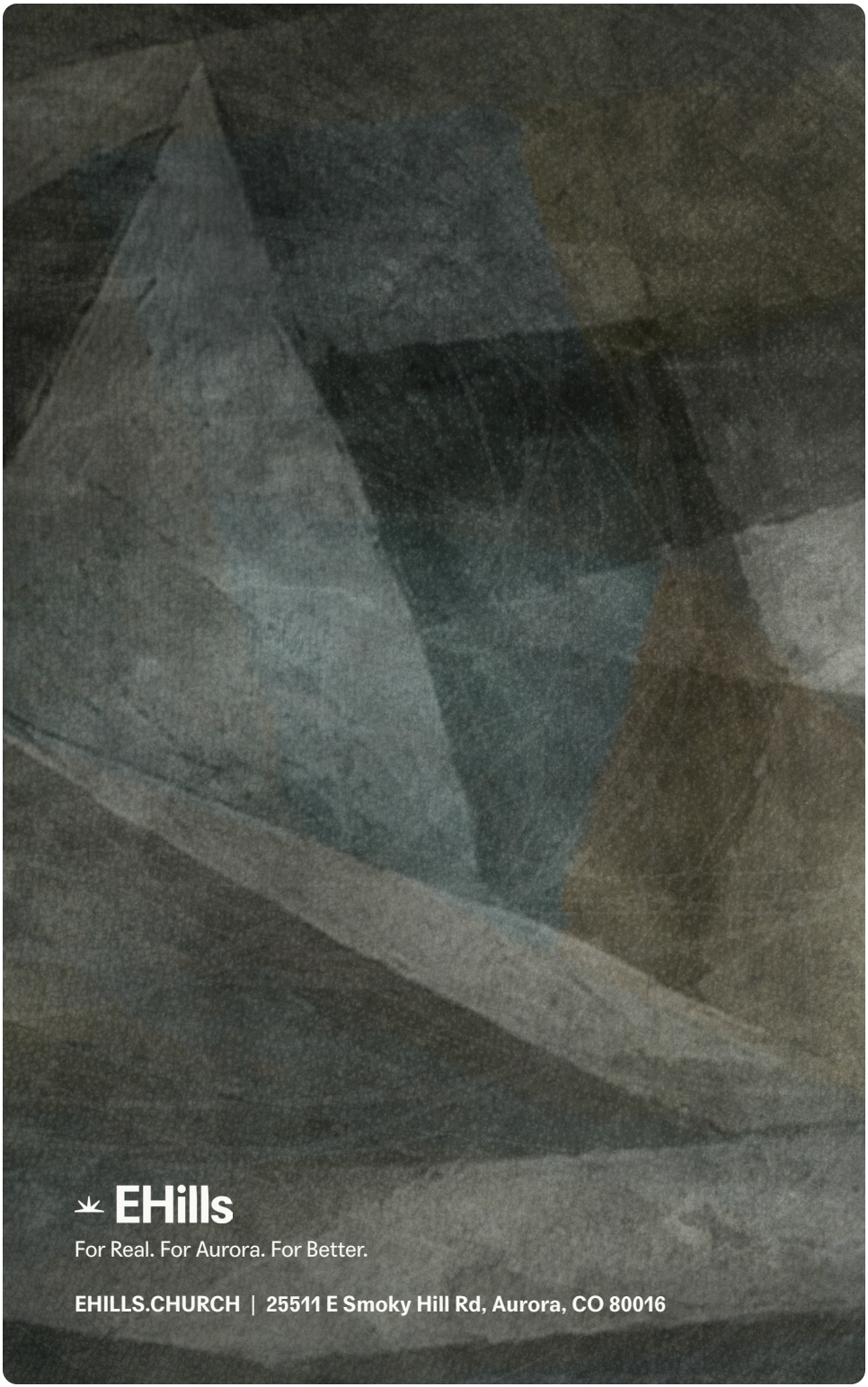
DECEMBER 24 | 11AM, 1PM, 3PM & 5PM

Join us on December 23 for carriage rides and a fun-filled night for the whole family!

Kids services will be available for newborns through third grade at all services with RSVP.

TO LEARN MORE AND RSVP, VISIT

EHILLS.ORG/CHRISTMAS


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