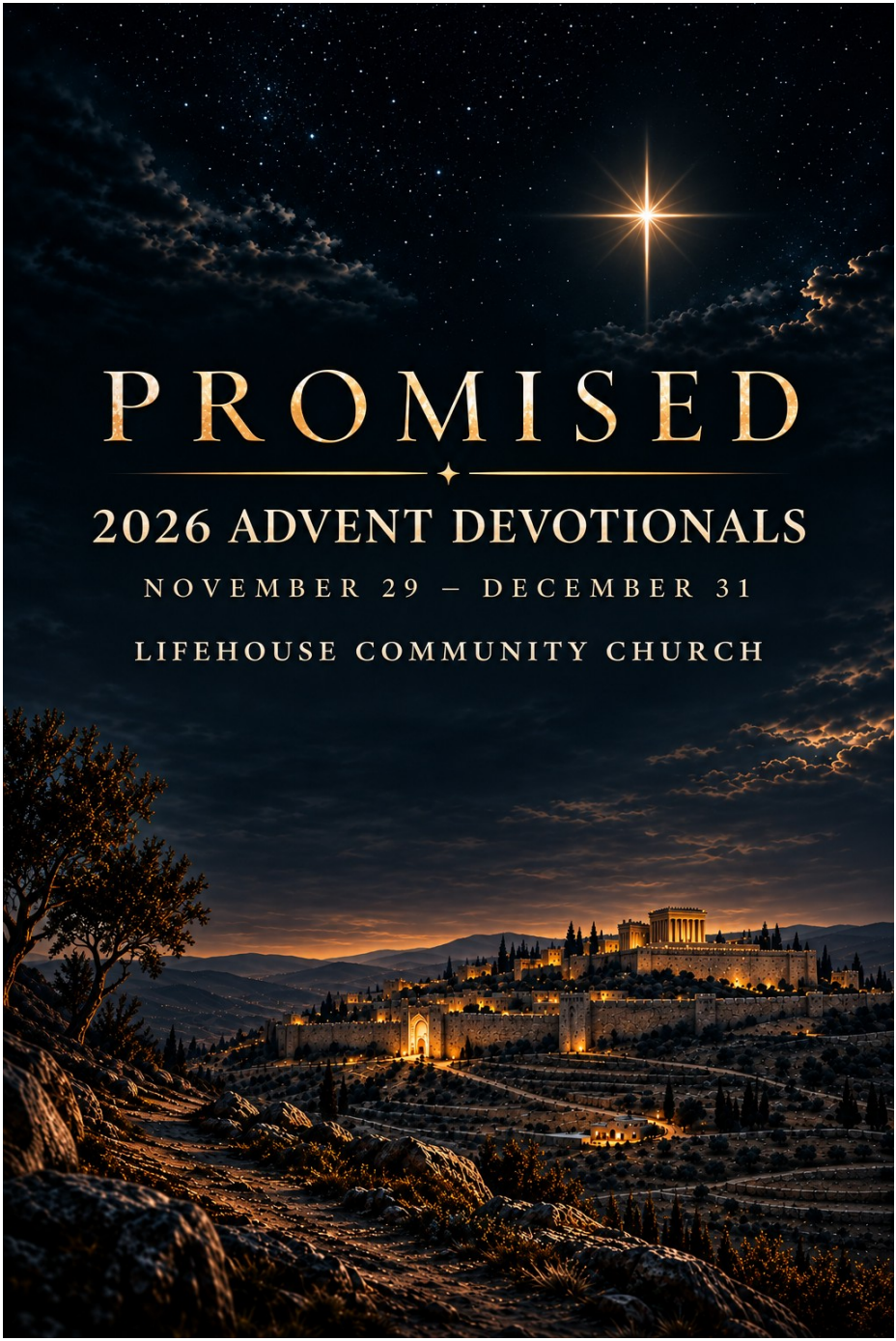

PROMISED
2026 ADVENT DEVOTIONALS
NOVEMBER 29 – DECEMBER 31
LIFEHOUSE COMMUNITY CHURCH

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A daily Advent devotional

Christmas begins long before Bethlehem. This Advent, we'll follow God's promise from the garden to Abraham, from David's throne to the prophets, and finally to Jesus. Along the way we'll meet people who had to trust God for things they couldn't yet see. After Christmas, we'll remember what God has done, share our testimonies, and close the year in prayer.

Set aside a few minutes each day. Read the Scripture and reflection, take a moment with the response, then pray. If you're reading together, take turns and let each person answer in their own words.

READING GUIDE

Nov. 29–Dec. 5 · The Promise in the Ruins

Dec. 6–12 · The Promise for the Nations

Dec. 13–19 · A King Is Coming

Dec. 20–23 · The Promise of God With Us

Dec. 24–25 · The Promise Arrives

Dec. 26–31 · Remembering God's Faithfulness

Scripture quotations are from the World English Bible (WEB), a public-domain translation.

NOVEMBER 29

Where Are You?

Genesis 3:8–15 (WEB)

8 They heard the LORD God's voice walking in the garden in the cool of the
day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the
LORD God among the trees of the garden.
9 The LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"
10 The man said, "I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because
I was naked; so I hid myself."
11 God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the
tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"
12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me
fruit from the tree, and I ate it."
13 The LORD God said to the woman, "What have you done?"
The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."
14 The LORD God said to the serpent,
"Because you have done this,
you are cursed above all livestock,
and above every animal of the field.
You shall go on your belly
and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.
15 I will put hostility between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring.
He will bruise your head,
and you will bruise his heel."

Adam and Eve heard God coming and hid. God already knew what they had done, yet He called out to them. Even as He named the consequences of their sin, He spoke of a day when the serpent would be defeated. Christmas begins here, with a God who comes looking for people who have turned away from Him. Through Jesus, we can come out of hiding and tell God the truth about ourselves.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

What have you been reluctant to bring to God? Tell Him plainly today.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, give me courage to come out of hiding and trust Your mercy. Amen.

NOVEMBER 30

When Trust Gives Way

Genesis 3:1–7 (WEB)

1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any animal of the field which the
LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Has God really said, ‘You
shall not eat of any tree of the garden’?”
2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees of the
garden, 3 but not the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden.
God has said, ‘You shall not eat of it. You shall not touch it, lest you die.’ ”
4 The serpent said to the woman, “You won’t really die, 5 for God knows
that in the day you eat it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,
knowing good and evil.”
6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a
delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she
took some of its fruit, and ate. Then she gave some to her husband with her,
and he ate it, too. 7 Their eyes were opened, and they both knew that they
were naked. They sewed fig leaves together, and made coverings for
themselves.

The serpent began with a question about what God had said. Before Adam and Eve reached for the fruit, they began to doubt the goodness of the One who had given them the garden. We know that feeling. When obedience seems to cost us something we want, we can start to wonder whether God is holding out on us. Advent gives us time to remember what the Father has given us in His Son.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Where is it hard to trust God’s goodness right now? Name one choice in which that trust would make a difference.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, help me remember Your goodness when obedience is hard. Amen.

DECEMBER 1

The Blame We Pass Along

Genesis 3:9–13 (WEB)

9 The LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”
10 The man said, “I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; so I hid myself.”
11 God said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”
12 The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”
13 The LORD God said to the woman, “What have you done?”
The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

When God asked Adam what happened, Adam pointed to Eve. Eve pointed to the serpent. It’s an old pattern, and it comes naturally to us, too. We explain what someone else did before we admit what we did. The hope of Advent gives us room to stop defending ourselves. The Savior has come, and we can own our part in what went wrong.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Think about a recent conflict. Is there something you need to own before God or another person?

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, help me confess my own sin and make things right where I can. Amen.

DECEMBER 2

East of Eden

Genesis 3:21–24 (WEB)

21 The LORD God made garments of animal skins for Adam and for his wife, and clothed them.
22 The LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand, and also take of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever—” 23 Therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Adam and Eve left the garden wearing clothes God had made for them. Hold those details together for a moment. They had lost their home, and the God they had disobeyed still clothed them. His care met them as they faced the consequences of their choices. We can ask for that same care when we have to live through the hard work of rebuilding.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Where do you need God’s help to take responsibility and begin again?

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, thank You for caring for me. Give me strength for the next step. Amen.

DECEMBER 3

How Long, Lord?

Psalm 13 (WEB)

For the Chief Musician. A Psalm by David.
1 How long, LORD?
Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul,
having sorrow in my heart every day?
How long shall my enemy triumph over me?
3 Behold, and answer me, LORD, my God.
Give light to my eyes, lest I sleep in death;
4 lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed against him;”
lest my adversaries rejoice when I fall.
5 But I trust in your loving kindness.
My heart rejoices in your salvation.
6 I will sing to the LORD,
because he has been good to me.

David brings his impatience and sorrow into prayer. He asks how long he will have to wait, then remembers God’s faithful love. Both belong in the same prayer. As we wait in Advent, we can bring God the question we keep circling back to. The coming of Jesus gives us a reason to trust Him while the question is still open.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Pray one honest sentence about something you’re waiting for. Then name one way God has shown you His care.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, You know how long this has felt. Help me trust Your love today. Amen.

DECEMBER 4

The Work Jesus Came to Do

1 John 3:4–8 (WEB)

4 Everyone who sins also commits lawlessness. Sin is lawlessness.
5 You know that he was revealed to take away our sins, and no sin is in him.
6 Whoever remains in him doesn’t sin. Whoever sins hasn’t seen him and doesn’t know him.
7 Little children, let no one lead you astray. He who does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.
8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. To this end the Son of God was revealed: that he might destroy the works of the devil.

John says the Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil. That helps us see the connection between the garden and the manger. Jesus entered a world in which sin already had a hold on people, and He came to break that hold. When you find yourself returning to the same temptation, remember what He came to do. You can ask Him for help before you take the next step.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

What familiar temptation could you bring to Jesus in prayer today?

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, help me recognize temptation and turn to You when it comes.

DECEMBER 5

Waiting with Hope

Romans 8:22–25 (WEB)

22 For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now.
23 Not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for adoption, the redemption of our body.
24 For we were saved in hope, but hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for that which he sees?
25 But if we hope for that which we don’t see, we wait for it with patience.

Paul writes about a creation that groans, and he includes us in the picture. We belong to Christ, and we still wait for the redemption of our bodies. That gives us a way to understand why Christmas can be joyful and hard in the same year. Jesus has come, and we’re still waiting for the day when everything He came to restore will be made whole.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

What part of God’s promised restoration do you most long to see?

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, give me patience in what I cannot hurry and hope in what You have promised.

DECEMBER 6

All the Families of the Earth

Genesis 12:1–3 (WEB)

1 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Leave your country, and your relatives,
and your father’s house, and go to the land that I will show you.
2 I will make of you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name
great. You will be a blessing.
3 I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who treats you with
contempt. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you.”

When God called Abram to leave his home, He told him that the blessing would reach all the families of the earth. We see the reach of that promise whenever someone hears the good news of Jesus for the first time. It reached us because others carried it beyond their own homes and circles.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Who comes to mind when you think of someone who has yet to hear what Jesus has done? Pray for them by name.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, thank You that Your blessing reached us. Give us love for the people still waiting to hear.

DECEMBER 7

The Next Step

Genesis 12:4–9 (WEB)

4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him. Lot went with him. Abram
was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.
5 Abram took Sarai his wife, Lot his brother's son, all their possessions that
they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and
they went to go into the land of Canaan. They entered into the land of
Canaan.
6 Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, to the oak of
Moreh. At that time, Canaanites were in the land.
7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your
offspring." He built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.
8 He left from there to go to the mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched
his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Ai on the east. There he built an altar
to the LORD and called on the LORD's name.
9 Abram traveled, still going on toward the South.

Abram went as the Lord had told him. The story gives us the next step he took, and then the one after that. At Shechem and near Bethel, Abram stopped to worship. If you're asking God for clarity about a decision, you can take time to worship Him where you are. Then give your attention to the step He has already made clear.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

What's one thing you already know God is asking you to do?

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, teach me to worship You here and obey You in the next step.

DECEMBER 8

God Keeps His Word

Genesis 22:15–18 (WEB)

15 The LORD’s angel called to Abraham a second time out of the sky,
16 and said, “ ‘I have sworn by myself,’ says the LORD, ‘because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son,
17 that I will bless you greatly, and I will multiply your offspring greatly like the stars of the heavens, and like the sand which is on the seashore. Your offspring will possess the gate of his enemies.
18 All the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring, because you have obeyed my voice.’ ”

After the test on the mountain, God reaffirmed His promise to Abraham. Again, the nations were in view. Abraham would see only a small part of what God had promised, yet the promise would reach generations he would never meet. As we prepare for Christmas, we can thank God for people who trusted Him in their own generation and carried the good news forward to ours.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Who helped you hear or understand the good news of Jesus? Thank God for that person.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, help me faithfully pass on what others took the time to share with me.

DECEMBER 9

Room in Abraham's Family

Galatians 3:6–9, 26–29 (WEB)

6 Even so, Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him for
righteousness."
7 Know therefore that those who are of faith are children of Abraham.
8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith,
preached the Good News beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you all the
nations will be blessed."
9 So then, those who are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham.
26 For you are all children of God, through faith in Christ Jesus.
27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there
is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
29 If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring and heirs according
to promise.

Paul tells the Galatians that those who belong to Christ are Abraham's offspring and heirs of the promise. In Jesus, people from very different backgrounds can call one another family. That takes on meaning when we look around the room at church. Who have we gotten to know, and who is still waiting for someone to learn their name?

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Take time this week to learn the name of someone you usually just greet in passing.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, help me welcome the people You have welcomed.

DECEMBER 10

Peace for Those Far Away

Ephesians 2:13–18 (WEB)

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off are made near in the blood of Christ.
14 For he is our peace, who made both one, and broke down the middle wall of separation,
15 having abolished in his flesh the hostility, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man of the two, making peace,
16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, having killed the hostility through it.
17 He came and preached peace to you who were far off and to those who were near.
18 For through him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

Paul tells Gentile believers that they have been brought near through the blood of Christ. Jesus gives them peace with God and makes peace between people who had been divided. The child we celebrate at Christmas grew up to give His life for that peace. We can ask Him to shape the way we speak about people we find hard to understand.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Think of one person or group you’re quick to dismiss. Pray for them today.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, let the peace You made change the way I see and speak about others.

DECEMBER 11

Blessed So Others May Know

Psalm 67 (WEB)

1 May God be merciful to us, bless us, and cause his face to shine on us. Selah.
2 That your way may be known on earth, and your salvation among all nations,
3 let the peoples praise you, God. Let all the peoples praise you.
4 Oh let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you will judge the peoples with equity, and govern the nations on earth. Selah.
5 Let the peoples praise you, God. Let all the peoples praise you.
6 The earth has yielded its increase. God, even our own God, will bless us.
7 God will bless us. All the ends of the earth shall fear him.

The psalm begins by asking for God's blessing and then tells us why. The writer wants God's ways to be known on earth and His salvation among all nations. That changes how we can pray over our homes, our work, and our church. We can ask God to provide for us and to help us use what He provides so others can come to know Him.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Name one blessing you could share this week. Decide who might receive it.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, let the good You give us help others see Your goodness.

DECEMBER 12

A Song in Every Language

Revelation 7:9–12 (WEB)

9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could count, out of every nation and of all tribes, peoples, and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.
10 They cried with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation be to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”
11 All the angels were standing around the throne, the elders, and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before his throne, and worshiped God,
12 saying, “Amen! Blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and might, be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

John sees a crowd too large to count, made up of people from every nation, tribe, people, and language. They stand before the throne together and give praise to God and to the Lamb. The promise God gave Abram has that kind of reach. When our own concerns take up most of our attention, this picture helps us pray beyond the people and places we already know.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Choose a nation or people group and pray for the church there today.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, strengthen Your people around the world and help them speak of Jesus with courage.

DECEMBER 13

The Child Who Reigns

Isaiah 9:2–7 (WEB)

2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. The light has shined on those who lived in the land of the shadow of death.
3 You have multiplied the nation. You have increased their joy. They rejoice before you according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the plunder.
4 For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as in the day of Midian.
5 For all the armor of the armed man in the noisy battle, and the garments rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire.
6 For a child is born to us. A son is given to us; and the government will be on his shoulders. His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, on David's throne, and on his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from that time on, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of Armies will perform this.

Isaiah speaks to people who know what it means to walk in darkness. He gives them a reason to rejoice. A child will be born, and His rule will be marked by justice and righteousness. As we light the candle of joy, we remember who that child is. Jesus is the King whose reign will endure when the powers we know have passed away.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

What about the way Jesus reigns gives you reason to rejoice today?

CLOSING PRAYER

King Jesus, give me joy as I remember whose kingdom I belong to.

DECEMBER 14

A House for David

2 Samuel 7:8–16 (WEB)

8 Now therefore tell my servant David this: ‘The LORD of Armies says, “I
took you from the sheep pen, from following the sheep, to be prince over my
people, over Israel. 9 I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut
off all your enemies from before you. I will make you a great name, like the
name of the great ones who are on the earth. 10 I will appoint a place for my
people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place and
be moved no more. The children of wickedness will not afflict them any
more, as at the first, 11 and as from the day that I commanded judges to be
over my people Israel. I will cause you to rest from all your enemies.
Moreover the LORD tells you that the LORD will make you a house.
12 When your days are fulfilled and you sleep with your fathers, I will set up
your offspring after you, who will proceed out of your body, and I will
establish his kingdom. 13 He will build a house for my name, and I will
establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his father, and he
will be my son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of
men and with the stripes of the children of men; 15 but my loving kindness
will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before
you. 16 Your house and your kingdom will be made sure forever before you.
Your throne will be established forever.” ’ ”

David had a house of cedar and wanted to build a house for God. God answered by promising to establish David’s house, his royal family. There would be failures among David’s descendants, yet God’s promise would reach its fulfillment in Jesus. In Advent, we look back at years when people could see only a piece of what God was doing. We often live with that same limited view.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Where would it help to admit that you can only see part of the story right now?

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, help me trust Your faithfulness with the parts of the story I cannot see.

DECEMBER 15

The King Who Defends the Poor

Psalm 72:1–4, 12–14 (WEB)

1 God, give the king your justice; your righteousness to the royal son.
2 He will judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice.
3 The mountains shall bring prosperity to the people. The hills bring the fruit of righteousness.
4 He will judge the poor of the people. He will save the children of the needy, and will break the oppressor in pieces.
12 For he will deliver the needy when he cries; the poor, who has no helper.
13 He will have pity on the poor and needy. He will save the souls of the needy.
14 He will redeem their soul from oppression and violence. Their blood will be precious in his sight.

This prayer for the king tells us what to look for in a righteous reign. The king hears the needy, defends the afflicted, and values the lives of people others overlook. As we look to Jesus, that prayer can change who we notice. Someone you pass regularly may be carrying a burden that few people have stopped to ask about.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Who could you check on this week? Make time to listen to what they need.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, give me eyes to notice people in need and a willing heart to respond.

DECEMBER 16

The Branch from the Stump

Isaiah 11:1–5 (WEB)

1 A shoot will come out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots will bear fruit.
2 The LORD’s Spirit will rest on him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.
3 His delight will be in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by the sight of his eyes, neither decide by the hearing of his ears;
4 but he will judge the poor with righteousness, and decide with equity for the humble of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked.
5 Righteousness will be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his waist.

Isaiah pictures new growth coming from a stump. From Jesse’s family, the family of David, a ruler would come who judges with righteousness and sees beyond what appears on the surface. We can see that character in Jesus. He knows people fully and deals with them rightly. That gives us a reason to ask Him to examine the judgments we’ve made about others.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Where have you formed an opinion about someone based on very little? Ask Jesus to help you see clearly.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, teach me to be fair, patient, and attentive to the truth.

DECEMBER 17

A Throne Without an End

Luke 1:26–33 (WEB)

26 Now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,
27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man whose name was Joseph, of David's house. The virgin's name was Mary.
28 Having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, you highly favored one! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women!"
29 But when she saw him, she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered what kind of salutation this might be.
30 The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.
31 Behold, you will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and shall name him 'Jesus.'
32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,
33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. There will be no end to his Kingdom."

Gabriel told Mary her son would receive the throne of David and reign forever. Imagine hearing that promise in a town like Nazareth, in the middle of an ordinary day. What God had promised generations earlier was taking shape in Mary's life. We can honor that King in our own ordinary places today, especially in the choices few people will ever see.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

What ordinary decision could you make today out of loyalty to Jesus?

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, let my choices show that You are my King.

DECEMBER 18

A King Who Serves

Mark 10:35–45 (WEB)

35 James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came near to him, saying, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we will ask.” 36 He said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?” 37 They said to him, “Grant to us that we may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left hand, in your glory.” 38 But Jesus said to them, “You don’t know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” 39 They said to him, “We are able.” Jesus said to them, “You shall indeed drink the cup that I drink, and you shall be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with;
40 but to sit at my right hand and at my left hand is not mine to give, but for whom it has been prepared.” 41 When the ten heard it, they began to be indignant toward James and John. 42 Jesus summoned them and said to them, “You know that they who are recognized as rulers over the nations lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 But it shall not be so among you, but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 Whoever of you wants to become first among you shall be bondservant of all. 45 For the Son of Man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

James and John wanted places of honor beside Jesus. He gathered the disciples and showed them what greatness looks like in His kingdom. The Son of Man came to serve and give His life for others. If we spend Advent considering what it means that Jesus is King, this is part of the answer. He uses His authority to do good for people who cannot repay Him.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Who could you serve today in a way that asks for nothing in return?

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, teach me to use what You’ve given me to serve others.

DECEMBER 19

Joy While We Wait

Philippians 4:4–7 (WEB)

4 Rejoice in the Lord always! Again I will say, “Rejoice!”
5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.
6 In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.
7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Paul tells the church to rejoice and then gives anxious people something to do with their worries. They can bring their requests to God with thanksgiving. That gives us a way to practice Advent joy in a difficult week. We can name what’s weighing on us and remember who is near enough to hear us.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Bring one concern to God and thank Him for one specific way He has helped you.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, You are near. Receive what’s weighing on me and guard my heart with Your peace.

DECEMBER 20

God With Us

Matthew 1:18–25 (WEB)

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was like this: After his mother, Mary, was
engaged to Joseph, before they came together, she was found pregnant by the
Holy Spirit.
19 Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a
public example, intended to put her away secretly.
20 But when he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord
appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to
take to yourself Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of
the Holy Spirit.
21 She shall give birth to a son. You shall name him Jesus, for it is he who
shall save his people from their sins.”
22 Now all this has happened that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by
the Lord through the prophet, saying,
23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall give birth to a son. They
shall call his name Immanuel,” which is, being interpreted, “God with us.”
24 Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded
him, and took his wife to himself;
25 and didn’t know her sexually until she had given birth to her firstborn son.
He named him Jesus.

Joseph had a decision to make when an angel told him to take Mary as his wife. The angel also told him what the child would do. Jesus would save His people from their sins. Matthew connects this to Isaiah’s promise of Immanuel, God with us. Jesus comes near enough to share our life and takes on what we could never do for ourselves.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Where do you most need to remember that Jesus has come near?

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, thank You for sending Jesus to be with us and to save us.

DECEMBER 21

The Little Town

Micah 5:2–5 (WEB)

2 But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, being small among the clans of Judah, out of you one will come out to me who is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings out are from of old, from ancient times.
3 Therefore he will abandon them until the time that she who is in labor gives birth. Then the rest of his brothers will return to the children of Israel.
4 He shall stand, and shall shepherd in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. They will live, for then he will be great to the ends of the earth.
5 He will be our peace when Assyria invades our land and when he marches through our fortresses, then we will raise against him seven shepherds, and eight leaders of men.

Micah names Bethlehem, a small town, as the place from which God's ruler will come. He describes that ruler as a shepherd who cares for His people in the strength of the Lord. If you feel far from where important things happen, take some time with this passage. God kept His promise in an ordinary town, and Jesus knows and cares for people whose lives rarely draw attention.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Who might feel overlooked this Christmas? Find a simple way to remember them today.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for seeing us. Help me pay attention to someone who feels forgotten.

DECEMBER 22

When Someone Shows Up

Luke 1:39–45 (WEB)

39 Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah,
40 and entered into the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.
41 When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.
42 She called out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!
43 Why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?
44 For behold, when the voice of your greeting came into my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy!
45 Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord!”

Mary went to see Elizabeth, and Elizabeth welcomed her with joy. Mary had received an extraordinary promise, and now she had someone with whom she could share what God was doing. Sometimes one of the simplest ways to encourage faith is to show up and listen. Give someone your attention long enough to hear what they are carrying or where they have seen God at work.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Whose door could you knock on, or whose voice could you make time to hear today?

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, help me be present with someone who needs encouragement.

DECEMBER 23

He Shared Our Humanity

Hebrews 2:14–18 (WEB)

14 Since then the children have shared in flesh and blood, he also himself in
the same way partook of the same, that through death he might bring to
nothing him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,
15 and might deliver all of them who through fear of death were all their
lifetime subject to bondage.
16 For most certainly, he doesn’t give help to angels, but he gives help to the
offspring of Abraham.
17 Therefore he was obligated in all things to be made like his brothers, that
he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to
God, to make atonement for the sins of the people.
18 For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to help those
who are tempted.

Hebrews says Jesus shared our humanity and suffered when He was tempted. When we ask Him for help, we are coming to One who knows what it is to suffer. Think of that as you prepare to celebrate His birth. Whatever temptation or fear has been especially hard to name this week, you can bring it to Him honestly.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Ask Jesus for help with one specific temptation or fear before the day gets busy.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You for sharing our humanity. Help me in the place where I feel weakest.

DECEMBER 24

Good News in the Night

Luke 2:8–20 (WEB)

8 There were shepherds in the same country staying in the field, and keeping
watch by night over their flock. 9 Behold, an angel of the Lord stood by
them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.
10 The angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for behold, I bring you good
news of great joy which will be to all the people. 11 For there is born to you
today, in David’s city, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 This is the sign to
you: you will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth, lying in a feeding
trough.” 13 Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly
army praising God and saying,
14 “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men.” 15
When the angels went away from them into the sky, the shepherds said to
one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem, now, and see this thing that has
happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” 16 They came with haste
and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby was lying in the feeding
trough. 17 When they saw it, they publicized widely the saying which was
spoken to them about this child. 18 All who heard it wondered at the things
which were spoken to them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these
sayings, pondering them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying
and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, just as it was
told them.

The shepherds heard the news while they were working at night. They went to Bethlehem and found Mary, Joseph, and the child, just as they had been told. After they saw Jesus, they told others what they had heard about Him. Then they returned, glorifying and praising God. Tonight, when we light the Christ candle, we celebrate the same news. The Savior God promised has come.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Before the evening ends, tell someone one reason the birth of Jesus is good news to you.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, You are the Light of the World. Thank You for coming to save us.

DECEMBER 25

The Word Became Flesh

John 1:1–5, 14 (WEB)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2 The same was in the beginning with God.
3 All things were made through him. Without him, nothing was made that has been made.
4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness hasn't overcome it.
14 The Word became flesh and lived among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the only born Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John takes us back before Bethlehem, before even the garden. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. Then the Word became flesh and lived among us. Today we celebrate Jesus, through whom all things were made, coming to share our life. Take a moment in the middle of whatever this day holds to thank Him for coming to us. God kept His promise.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Read John 1:14 once more, slowly. What about Jesus do you want to thank Him for today?

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, we worship You. Thank You for coming among us and showing us the Father's grace.

DECEMBER 26

What Mary Kept

Luke 2:16–20 (WEB)

16 They came with haste and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby was lying in the feeding trough.
17 When they saw it, they publicized widely the saying which was spoken to them about this child.
18 All who heard it wondered at the things which were spoken to them by the shepherds.
19 But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart.
20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, just as it was told them.

The shepherds told people what they had heard about Jesus. Mary treasured those things and thought about them. The day after Christmas can give us room to do what Mary did. Before we move on to the next thing, we can sit with something we heard or saw this season and consider what it tells us about Jesus.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Write down one thing from this Advent you want to remember. What did it help you see about Jesus?

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, help me hold on to what You've shown me and give it time to take root.

DECEMBER 27

Come and Hear

Psalm 66:16–20 (WEB)

16 Come and hear, all you who fear God. I will declare what he has done for my soul.
17 I cried to him with my mouth. He was extolled with my tongue.
18 If I cherished sin in my heart, the Lord wouldn't have listened.
19 But most certainly, God has listened. He has heard the voice of my prayer.
20 Blessed be God, who has not turned away my prayer, nor his loving kindness from me.

The psalmist invites others to hear what God has done for him. He tells them how he cried out and how God heard his prayer. On Testimony Sunday, we have a chance to do the same for one another. Hearing how God helped someone else can give us words to pray when we're still waiting for an answer ourselves.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

What could you tell someone about a time God helped you this year? As you hear others' stories today, thank God for one thing He did in someone else's life.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, thank You for hearing us when we pray. Give us courage to tell what You've done and ears to hear one another.

DECEMBER 28

Remember the Whole Story

Psalm 77:7–15 (WEB)

7 “Will the Lord reject us forever? Will he be favorable no more?
8 Has his loving kindness vanished forever? Does his promise fail for generations?
9 Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he, in anger, withheld his compassion?” Selah.
10 Then I thought, “I will appeal to this: the years of the right hand of the Most High.”
11 I will remember the LORD’s deeds; for I will remember your wonders of old.
12 I will also meditate on all your work, and consider your doings.
13 Your way, God, is in the sanctuary. What god is great like God?
14 You are the God who does wonders. You have made your strength known among the peoples.
15 You have redeemed your people with your arm, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.

The psalmist asks whether God has forgotten to be gracious. Then he reaches back into Israel’s story and remembers the Lord’s deeds. His questions are still there, and now he has something else to sit with. When the hardest part of this year takes up most of your attention, take time to remember a specific way God has shown His care, in Scripture or in your own life.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Name one question you’re carrying and one act of God’s faithfulness you can remember alongside it.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, hear the question I’m still asking. Help me remember what You’ve done as I wait for what I can’t yet see.

DECEMBER 29

Tell the Next Generation

Psalm 78:1–7 (WEB)

1 Hear my teaching, my people. Turn your ears to the words of my mouth.
2 I will open my mouth in a parable. I will utter dark sayings of old,
3 which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.
4 We will not hide them from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, his strength, and his wondrous deeds that he has done.
5 For he established a covenant in Jacob, and appointed a teaching in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children;
6 that the generation to come might know, even the children who should be born; who should arise and tell their children,
7 that they might set their hope in God, and not forget God's deeds, but keep his commandments,

God's people were to tell their children what the Lord had done so those children could put their hope in Him. A story told at the table or on the way home can become part of how someone learns to pray. Think of a time God gave you help, brought you to repentance, or stayed with you through a hard season. Someone younger in years or in faith may need to hear it.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Share one story of God's faithfulness with someone who hasn't heard it before.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, help me speak simply and honestly about what You've done so someone else can learn to trust You.

DECEMBER 30

New Every Morning

Lamentations 3:19–26 (WEB)

19 Remember my affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the bitterness.
20 My soul still remembers them, and is bowed down within me.
21 This I recall to my mind; therefore I have hope.
22 It is because of the LORD’s loving kindnesses that we are not consumed, because his mercies don’t fail.
23 They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness.
24 “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul. “Therefore I will hope in him.”
25 The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.
26 It is good that a man should hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.

The writer remembers his suffering, and it still weighs on him. Then he calls to mind the Lord’s steadfast love and gives himself a reason to hope. As the year closes, you may be carrying something that a new calendar can’t resolve. You can bring it with you into prayer tomorrow morning and ask God for the mercy you need for that day.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

What will you carry into the new year? Ask God for one specific mercy as you face it.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, thank You that Your mercies meet us morning by morning. Help me receive what I need for the day ahead.

DECEMBER 31

The One Who Promised Is Faithful

Hebrews 10:19–25 (WEB)

19 Having therefore, brothers, boldness to enter into the holy place by the
blood of Jesus,
20 by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the
veil, that is to say, his flesh,
21 and having a great priest over God’s house,
22 let’s draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts
sprinkled from an evil conscience and having our body washed with pure
water,
23 let’s hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering; for he who
promised is faithful.
24 Let’s consider how to provoke one another to love and good works,
25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but
exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day
approaching.

Hebrews urges us to hold firmly to our hope because the One who promised is faithful. Then it tells us to keep meeting and encouraging one another. We’ve spent these weeks tracing God’s promise from the garden to Jesus. As we turn toward a new year, we can carry that hope together by remembering what God has done and making time to encourage one another in what comes next.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Before the year ends, thank God for one gift from this year. Then reach out to one person you want to encourage as the next year begins.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, thank You for keeping Your promise in Jesus. Help us hold on to our hope and encourage one another in the year ahead.

LIFEHOUSE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Promised

Read the devotionals online

lifehousedsm.org/advent-devos-2026