

Behold Him. This is our focus and call this season, to pare things back and remember why we even celebrate Christmas... because of Jesus! Our Savior who came as a baby, born to redeem the world. To “behold” something means to set our eyes on it, to wonder, to contemplate, to appreciate and examine, to intentionally meditate and muse, to sense and realize what is in front of us. So as we enter into this season of Advent today, let’s start by beholding Jesus through the Christmas story. Read Luke 2:1-20 slowly and thoughtfully. Then take a moment to pray, telling Jesus what stood out to you about his birth, and thanking him for coming into the world.

Optional Mini Adventure: Each Monday we will present a mini adventure that you can get supplies for and participate in at any point in the week. If you’d like to do it with others in our Adventure Family, join us on Sunday at 9am in the cafe to do this adventure together. (We will have some supplies available at the church) This week get some hot cocoa packets and candy canes, tie them together with some ribbon, and write and then attach some little cards with a blessing or encouraging note. Hand these out to a friend, a co-worker, or a random person at the store to brighten someone’s day. While you make these, consider watching *A Charlie Brown Christmas* and see if you can recognize where Linus’s speech about Christmas came from.

A true gift is something given freely and willingly with no expectation of payment in return. However sometimes, our natural tendency is to give and receive gifts with strings attached. (Think: if I give a friend a good gift, then they’ll give me something good.) Jesus was the first and greatest Christmas gift ever given, because God SO loved us (John 3:16). God’s greatest gift to us, shined the brilliant light of grace and truth into the darkness. Read John 1:14, consider who Jesus is in light of these words. Then take a moment to pray, thanking God for the gift of Jesus and asking him to reveal more of himself to you this season.

Listen to the song “Behold (Glory to God)” by Jesus Culture. You can find this on our Advent Spotify playlist linked here or anywhere you listen to music. Pay attention to the lyrics, meditate on who Jesus is as they point to him in the words. Consider listening a second time and singing along, making this song your prayer today.



Read John 10:22-30. What does Jesus say about who he is? What does Jesus say about our relationship with him? Consider trying to memorize verse 27 or 27-28 as a way to continue reflecting on Jesus today and this week. How might remembering these words give us hope this Advent season? Let this reflection and returning to these words be your prayer today.

Monday, December 1st

Tuesday, December 2nd

Wednesday, December 3rd

Thursday, December 4th

In the story of Jesus' birth in Matthew 1 it says: "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us)." This is the first quote from the Old Testament that Matthew includes to link Jesus' birth and life with prophecy, to show God's provision for his people and his faithfulness in following through. God has and continues to want to be with his people. This is truly mind-blowing when you think about it. God took on human form, became one of us, walked among us, ate, laughed, cried, slept, felt tired, angry and happy. He, the creator of the world, became as one of the created because he longs to be with us. And his name, Immanuel, means just that. Take time to respond to Jesus being with us by just spending a few minutes being with him.
(This doesn't have to require words, just turn your heart toward him!)

Read Isaiah 9:2. We have seen this great light, we have hope in our Savior. How can we put hope in action today and bring it with us to others? This can be as simple as intentionally looking people in the eyes and smiling as you pass them by. It could be in sending an encouraging text or reaching out to call someone who might be lonely. You could bring cookies to a neighbor. The point is not to do more stuff, but as we continue to behold our Jesus and his kindness to us, let us be a reflection of that to those we are around. This becomes our prayer and act of worship.

If you are doing the Advent Candle Lighting you'll note that this week's focus is peace. So today we'll also take a moment to dwell on the peace given to us in Jesus. John 14:27 says: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." Take a moment to reflect and pray: in the midst of the busyness and chaos of the Advent season, invite Jesus to cover you in his peace. Remind yourself that his presence dwells in you and that he readily extends his peace to us when we ask.

In the classic Christmas Hymn "Joy to the World" the lyrics read: "Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let earth receive her King. Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room, And heav'n and nature sing!" It is joyous news that the Lord is come, we should practice preparing our hearts for him. And it's not just us that proclaim his goodness, even his creation does (check out Psalm 19:1 and 24:1-2). Take a moment to be outside today, to savor God's creation as you rejoice in Jesus' coming.

Optional Mini Adventure: If you'd like to participate in this week's mini adventure you can get supplies and participate at any point in the week. If you'd like to do it with others in our Adventure Family, join us Sunday at 9am in the cafe to do it together. (We will have some supplies available at the church). This week make some pinecone bird feeders. Find or purchase pine cones, attach a string at the top, cover it with peanut butter and then dip it in bird seed so it sticks to the peanut butter. Hang these outside and watch the birds enjoy. Let us sing with the birds, rejoicing in God's creation. Every time you see this bird feeder, use it as a reminder to turn to Jesus in praise.

Friday, December 5th

Saturday, December 6th

Sunday, December 7th

Monday, December 8th

One thing the angels announced to the shepherds in Luke 2:14 was peace on earth. When we look around though, we don't often see peace reigning. We see squabbles with siblings or division over differences, we feel fear in our hearts or uncertainty about the future. Jesus didn't bring peace to every conflict in the world (yet!), but he did bring peace that is greater than any peace ever known – peace with God! Read Romans 5:1-5. What stands out to you about Jesus and our relationship with him? Spend a little time in prayer thanking God for sending Jesus to give you the gift of peace with Him. Ask for his help to keep your mind fixed on him when things in the world feel scary, confusing, or lacking peace.

Listen to the song "Holy Forever (Christmas)" by Chris Tomlin. You can find this on our Advent Spotify playlist linked here or anywhere you listen to music. Pay attention to the lyrics, meditate on who Jesus is as they point to him and the story of his birth in the words. Consider listening a second time and singing along, making this song your prayer of praise today.



Read Ephesians 2:13-17. What does this say about who Jesus is? What does Jesus say about our relationship with him? Consider trying to memorize verse 17 as a way to continue reflecting on Jesus today and this week. How might remembering these words give us and others peace this Advent season? Let this reflection and returning to these words be your prayer today.

In John 1:9 it says: "The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world." Throughout Scripture, darkness often represents evil while light represents goodness. We naturally fill our homes with light and do our best to avoid dark places where danger may linger in the shadows. Therefore it comes as no surprise that Jesus assumes the title as the Light of the World: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). The holiday season is filled with lots of lights all around us, it's almost easy to allow the commercial lights and distractions drown out the shining light Jesus placed within us. Today, ask the Spirit to shine God's light in your life and help you see God's works all around you, then ask Him to shine through you so that others may see the hope of Jesus.

Tuesday, December 9th

Wednesday, December 10th

Thursday, December 11th

Friday, December 12th

Read Isaiah 9:6-7. Among the names of Jesus listed is Prince of Peace. How can we put this peace into action today and bring it with us to others? This can be as simple as intentionally taking a moment to pause and breath amongst the chaos of the day, turn your heart toward Jesus, and recenter on Him. Recount to Jesus in that turning the names you might call him by - a God of goodness, faithfulness, who is always with us. As you find peace in God with you, how can you bring peace to those you are with today? Can you be present with someone who needs a listening ear? Can you share a moment or a prayer with someone who would be uplifted by that? As we look to those around us, or who are a phone call away, let these thoughts of peace be your prayer and act of worship today.

If you are doing the Advent Candle Lighting you'll note that this week's focus is on joy. So today we'll also take a moment to meditate on the joy we have in Jesus. John 15:11 says: "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." Take a moment to reflect and pray: Sometimes, we can let the excitement of this season distract us from experiencing the true joy that comes from Christ's presence with us. Ask Jesus to let you be more aware of the things that distract you from him, and to fill those moments instead with his true joy this Advent season.

A few days ago we spent some time on Jesus being the Light of the World. (Read John 1:9 and John 8:12 if you need a refresher!) Today we continue to dwell on the impact Jesus' light has on us during this season. What does it mean to you today to reflect on Jesus as the light of the world... and of our lives?! Let's be reminded of this today. Consider listening to "Light of the World" by We the Kingdom to get yourself in that headspace and reflect further on this truth today.

Optional Mini Adventure: If you'd like to participate in this week's mini adventure you can get supplies and participate at any point in the week. If you'd like to do it with others in our Adventure Family, join us Sunday at 9am in the cafe to do it together. (We will have some supplies available at the church). This week make or decorate some ornaments to add to your tree or gift to others. You could consider including things on these ornaments to point to Jesus as the light. (Glitter reflects light well!) When you glance at the lights on the tree, and the decorations among them, be reminded of who Jesus is, and who we are in "light" of him.

Read Luke 2:16-20. (It's not a bad thing to re-read scripture when we are practicing beholding in wonder...). Those shepherds, their parents and all their ancestors had prayed and longed for the Messiah their whole lives... and now he was here! Mary treasured this up in her heart, and the shepherds returned in praise and rejoicing. How can you offer your worship to our longed for Messiah today? Consider how different people did that in this passage, and how you might follow in their footsteps today. Thank God for giving us this opportunity to respond.

Saturday, December 13th

Sunday, December 14th

Monday, December 15th

Tuesday, December 16th

Listen to the song "The King is Here" by Crossroads Bigfork Worship. You can find this on our Advent Spotify playlist linked here or anywhere you listen to music. Pay attention to the lyrics, rejoice in who Jesus is as they point to him and all the blessings that flow from him in the words. Consider listening a second time and singing along, making this song your joyous prayer today.



Read Philippians 4:4-7. What does this say about who Jesus is? What does Jesus say about our relationship with him? Consider trying to memorize verse 4 as a way to continue reflecting on Jesus today and this week. How might remembering these words give us and others joy this Advent season? Let this reflection and returning to these words be your prayer today.

We read Isaiah 9:6-7 a few days ago, but today let's revisit this section in a different way, and with a slightly larger section of scripture. Check out the Message version of Isaiah 9:2-7. Can you hear the joy in this passage? Can you feel how Jesus didn't come just to restore peace in a way that ends conflict, but to bring a rich, full, abiding harmony of life? He's not just the Prince of Peace, but as this version relays the translation: a Prince of Wholeness. Let us rejoice in our Savior who came to bring about restoration and wholeness not just in the past, but in the Kingdom present. Today, ask Jesus for any reassurances you may need to be able to rest in and appreciate how he is working in the world. Rejoice that he is always working and always with us!

Read Psalm 97:11-12. We are quickly approaching Christmas, and the arrival of Jesus. Let us praise him and lean into the joy of him being near! How can we put that joy into action today and bring it with us to others? This can be as simple as turning up your favorite Christmas music and singing along, it can be joining others to go look at Christmas lights, it can be watching a Christmas movie and reflecting with a friend on what warmed your heart, it can be baking a sweet treat and sharing it with someone who has been working hard this season. As we go about intentionally seeking joy and bringing it to others, let it become your prayer and act of worship today.

Wednesday, December 17th

Thursday, December 18th

Friday, December 19th

Saturday, December 20th

If you are doing the Advent Candle Lighting you'll note that this week's focus is on love. So today we'll also take a moment to meditate on the love we have in Christ. 1 John 4:9-11 says: "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." Take a moment to reflect and pray: God didn't choose to love us because we were perfect or lovable. Scripture says he chose to sacrifice himself for us when we were still sinners (Romans 5:8). Thank him for revealing true love to us and ask him for opportunities to share that love with others in our every day.

This is our last Monday of Advent, so let's revisit some of our intentions for this season. Our goal was to *Behold Him*. To pare things back and remember why we celebrate Christmas. We've practiced wonder, contemplation, meditating, appreciating, and setting our eyes on Jesus in a variety of ways. This Jesus, Immanuel, God with us... just as the prophets foretold. Reflect on God's presence with you. How have you seen that this Advent season? What aspects of His presence with you have been encouraging or challenging? Consider taking those joys or frustrations to Jesus himself in prayer.

Optional Mini Adventure: Each Monday we've had a mini adventure to participate in at any point in the week. This week is simplified because it is Christmas Week! (And there will not be a gathering space for this at the church on Sunday). This adventure is simple: practice presence. Just as Jesus is with us, let us practice our presence with others. You can do this in what you already have planned, just aim to be intentional with how you are loving and engaging with others. Let it be a joy to be together. (And remember, practice does not always mean it will go perfectly, but it has value nonetheless!)

Read Matthew 2:8-11. When the wise men found Jesus in Bethlehem what was their reaction? The gifts they brought might seem strange to us as a gift for a baby, but they make perfect sense for Jesus! Gold is a precious metal associated with kings and royalty, frankincense is an incense that the priests would burn in the temple as a sign of God's presence, and myrrh is a perfume that was used in preserving and burying those who had died. It is fitting as Jesus is the King of Kings, God with us, and our Savior who came to earth to die for us. Take a moment to reflect on what a gift Jesus is to us, and be drawn into worship, prayer, and praise like the wise men when they came into His presence.

Listen to the song "O Come All Ye Faithful (His Name Shall Be) by Passion. You can find this on our Advent Spotify playlist linked here or anywhere you listen to music. Pay attention to the lyrics, meditate on who Jesus is as they point to him in the words and as we await celebrating his birth tomorrow! Consider listening a second time and singing along, making this song your prayer today. O come let us adore Him!

We'll praise your name forever!



SCAN ME

Sunday, December 21st

Monday, December 22nd

Tuesday, December 23rd

Wednesday, December 24th

Merry Christmas! Jesus is here! He is come to be with us! Rejoice!

If you are doing the Advent Candle Lighting you'll note that the focus is on Christ. So today, pause among the festivities, to reflect on Jesus. Consider reading again the story of Jesus' birth from Luke 2:1-21, to close these prompts out in the same way we started them, just focused on Jesus. Take a moment to pray and Behold Him, for He is here!

Thursday, December 25th