



More Light Presbyterians

2025 Advent Devotional





Advent invites us to breathe, to pause, and to remember that God's light is already breaking into the world — especially through the beauty, resilience, and brilliance of our queer community.

This devotional gathers voices from our board and staff that remind us that waiting is not passive; it is sacred, embodied hope.

As we move through these weeks, may each reflection help you feel held, affirmed, and accompanied.

The Light is coming —
and it looks a lot like us.





Romans 13:11-14

How odd it is to see people tremble
when they hear “this is woke”
when the gospel calls us
to wake up now
from the slumber
of violence, war, and greed
to see that salvation is near
every time we go, openhearted,
and face the oppressor
and do the opposite of what
they expect us to do:
love relentlessly,
have each other’s backs
to the point of perishing,
create systems that challenge
the very foundations of empire
— the us and them
the hoarding of everything,
the lie of greatness...
We are invited
to be the people at 5:59
opening our eyes
while it’s still dark,
knowing daylight is coming
any minute now.

— Rev. Claudia Aguilar

For Reflection

Claudia writes about being “the people at 5:59... opening our eyes while it’s still dark.” What does faithful anticipation look like for you right now?



Psalm 124

If the Creator hadn't been for us—
let the people say again!—
if the Creator hadn't been for us,
when our people attacked us
Then they would have swallowed us up whole
with their isolating rage burning against us!
The waters would have drowned us;
the torrent would have come over our heads.

But...bless the Creator
because we have chosen our found family!
because we have participated in creation!
because we have clung to each other!
because we have kept us safe!
We escaped like a flamboyant bird from the hunters'
trap;
the trap was broken so we escaped!
this system was overturned so there are no more
cages!

Our help and hope and courage is in the name of the
Creator,
who teaches us to cultivate liberation with Them
and with our kin, each day.

—Rewritten by the Rev. Addie Domske

For Reflection

Addie imagines cages breaking and systems being overturned.
What “traps” — external or internal — are you longing to escape
in this season? What might liberation look like for you?





Psalm 124:2-3, 6

If it had not been the Lord who was on our side when our enemies attacked us, they would have swallowed us up alive. Blessed be the Lord, who has not given us as prey to their teeth.

O LORD, we pray for our trancelors:
those joyful offenses, those pioneers
who were swallowed up by our enemies
whose blood was shed without a reckoning
for the crime of existing freely in Your creation.
And we bless You.

We pray for the martyrs gone before, untimely so:
who now live and reign with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit
secure in the body of Christ to which they cleaved
while here.
And we bless You.

For despite our enemies' best efforts
You have continued to populate the earth with us,
never diminishing us, only multiplying.
We bless You, for You have not given us all as prey to
the teeth of our enemies.
We are not all swallowed up alive.
Queer help is in the name of the Lord, who made
heaven and earth.

—Kate Davoli

For Reflection

Kate names our “trancelors” as joyful offenses — people whose very existence challenged oppression. Who are the queer or trans ancestors, elders, or heroes whose courage helps you live more freely today?





Isaiah 54:1-10

Every human bears something into this world. Something that lives with us for a while and then, through our labor, is birthed into the world. Yet there are times we feel very barren. Empty of ideas of what will make a difference. A void of hope altogether.

These times feel as if God has turned away from us. Isaiah reminds us that, while the mountains of injustice cause our world to quake, our God's love can not be shaken off of us. While the once safe hills of refuge disappear, our God's peace is ever-present.

Find a rock today that will remind you that God's presence is persistent.

—Rev. Bethany Peerbolte

For Reflection

Bethany says each of us “bears something into this world.” What are you carrying right now — a dream, a wound, a calling — that might be slowly taking shape within you?





Isaiah 4:2-6

In a world scorched by injustice, Isaiah imagines a branch that blooms anyway. This tender shoot reminds us that God's glory often takes root in scorched places where Black, queer, and womanist bodies have refused to die. God's sheltering canopy covers us not in spite of who we are but because of the divine beauty we carry.

Advent is our season of sacred refusal: to wither, to disappear, to shrink beneath empire's shadow. We wait, and we build shade for one another, crafting sanctuaries of belonging under branches of resistance and hope. God's promise is not distant; it's already budding in our becoming.

—Shani McIlwain

For Reflection

What does “sacred refusal” mean for you this Advent? What are you refusing — to shrink, to be silent, to disappear — and what holy space are you claiming instead?





Isaiah 30:19-26

Advent is not about forcing cheer.
It is about trusting that every ache, every longing,
every wordless prayer
is received by God with tenderness.

Isaiah speaks of a God who stays close,
close enough to notice the tremble in our voice,
the fatigue in our bones,
the quiet courage it takes to hope again.

Restoration doesn't arrive in a single blazing
moment;
it unfolds, like healing soil softening after drought.

Beloved, nothing in you is too much.
Your longing is welcome.
Your becoming is holy.

Love is already moving toward you
and making room for your future.

—Rev. Ashley McFaul-Erwin

For Reflection

“Your becoming is holy.” What new version of yourself is emerging — even if fragile or unfinished — and how can you bless that becoming instead of judging it?





Isaiah 40:1-11

Beloved, does the world around you feel more and more wild with each day that passes? Do the streets you once knew as familiar now look like a wilderness, with danger lurking behind the next corner? But wait! What's that? Do you hear it? A voice cries out: the way of the Lord will go through this wilderness.

These rough places will be made into a plain and God's glory shall be revealed so that ALL flesh shall know it. Our Lord comes this way, to feed the flock, to gather the lambs in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

—Rev. Keith Thompson

For Reflection

God gathers lambs close and leads with gentleness. What would it look like to let yourself be gathered, carried, or tenderly led today — especially as a person who is often expected to be endlessly strong?





Isaiah 11:1-10

Isaiah invites us to imagine the impossible: predators and prey living in peace. A wolf residing with a lamb? A lion giving up meat for hay? Pretty unbelievable!

Applying this allegory to the human world, it's just as unbelievable. But Advent is a time to dream impossible things: What would it take to actualize Isaiah's vision — without the most vulnerable ending up hurt?

Isaiah highlights one key step: The privileged must give up power and a lot of comfort. The wolf doesn't pretend the lamb would be safe in its pack; rather, it leaves its fellow predators behind, humbly accepting the lamb's hospitality. Their relationship is built on the lamb's turf, on the lamb's terms.

— Avery Arden

For Reflection

What would it look like to build relationships “on the lamb's terms” in your own life — honoring the wisdom, boundaries, and leadership of those who are most vulnerable?





1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

As I read through the opening of 1 Thessalonians 4 as a sacred practice of following the Lectionary, I'll admit that I am triggered. All of the rules that were instilled in me through "purity culture" and caused me to devalue my body and my sexuality as a beloved child of God through the abuse of Scripture come flooding back to me.

But then I am again reminded of Jesus — the way of love, the revolutionary message of justice and equity seen in the Gospels, the completely badass command to topple the patriarchy and scatter the "proud in the imagination of their hearts."

Paul, or whomever collected the writings that make up the epistle to the Thessalonians, reminds me that I'm human and that I don't always get it right. Sometimes my fervor for things to be the way that I want them to be, even with the best intentions of reflecting who Christ is, can be truly misplaced. I hope that, like the folx in Thessalonika, I might be trying to lean into the discomfort that comes from being in community. Sometimes the only light we see in the darkness can be the glow of a dumpster fire. But when we look just past the flames, we see our beloveds, reaching out, waving us over to come and join them, standing together with us in the fire.

—Dr. Matt Webb

For Reflection

Matt names the discomfort of being in community — and the way communal light sometimes looks like a dumpster fire. When have you experienced messy, imperfect community that still held you, challenged you, or called you toward authentic living?





Psalm 21

Psalm 21 sings of joy born from trust — of a heart strengthened by divine presence. In Advent, we remember that true power does not dominate; it delights. The Holy One crowns creation not with gold, but with glory that restores balance and breath.

The psalm invites us to see strength not as conquest but as compassion that radiates through us, between us, and around us. As we wait for light to break through shadowed places, we are reminded that every act of love, every moment of courage, is itself a coronation — God's glory revealed in the flourishing of all that lives.

—Shani McIlwain

For Reflection

Shani writes that “true power does not dominate; it delights.” What examples in your life or community show power rooted in compassion rather than control? How does that reshape your understanding of God's power?





Matthew 12:33-37

"Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me."

Whoever wrote that clearly hadn't read Matthew — or done some inner dismantling — because Jesus is clear: our words reveal the truth of our hearts.

Words matter. They can wound, distort, and deny the image of God in us. But they can also speak life. So hear this: **You are enough. You matter in this world. You were created whole and resourceful. You are seen and known. You are worthy of love and goodness.**

When the world tries to tell you otherwise, let these words take root.

— Jesy Littlejohn

For Reflection

Which life-giving words do you most need to let "take root" right now — especially in a world that often tries to shrink or distort queer identity and dignity?





Ruth 1:6-18; 2

In Advent, we look toward the birth not only of God into the world, but of a whole new world — the Kin(g)dom that demolishes hierarchies and capsizes the status quo. Ruth lives into these holy possibilities by choosing what is foolish in the eyes of the world — leaving her biological family behind to become a foreigner in a land that stigmatizes and stereotypes Moabite women — out of devotion to another woman.

Regardless of whether Ruth and Naomi were ever romantically or sexually involved, theirs is a queer story because of how they transgress societal norms, risking social (and literal) death by prioritizing their commitment to each other over their commitment to any man. In God's realm there are no borders, and kinship is not bound by blood.

— Avery Arden

For Reflection

Ruth steps into holy risk by leaving behind what is familiar to embrace chosen kinship with Naomi. What risks — relational, spiritual, communal — is God inviting you to consider for the sake of love or liberation?





Ruth 4:13-17; 2



Hope stirs where we least expect it —
In quiet corners, in chosen families, in love that
refuses to hide.
Like Ruth's devotion, God's promise threads through
every heart —
bold, tender, and radiant with color.
In our waiting, joy blooms.
In our togetherness, grace is born anew.
The Holy breath moves through us still,
lifting the humble, mending the broken,
calling us to live love out loud.

—Rev. Pamela Anderson

For Reflection

The devotional connects joy to togetherness and chosen family.
Who are the people who help joy bloom in you? What
relationships feel like a grace born anew?





Saturday, December 13, 2025

1 Samuel 2:1-8; Luke 3:1-18



The dawn breaks for those long silenced.
God lifts the forgotten, dances with the joyful, and
whispers love into every heart.
Like Hannah's song and John's cry, we rise — radiant
in our truth, fierce in our hope.

The Holy One moves among us, weaving justice in
every color of the rainbow.

—Rev. Pamela Anderson

For Reflection

How can we join God's work of lifting the forgotten and
centering the silenced — in our churches, families, and queer
spaces?





Isaiah 35:1-10

Sometimes we find ourselves wandering, trying to force our way toward hope — like chasing a cross we can see but never reach. Isaiah's promise of a "Holy Way" reminds us that God's path isn't one we build alone. It's already here, winding through the dry, uncertain places of our lives.

This Advent, many of us travel through deserts of grief, injustice, or exhaustion. Some of us are still waiting for the world to make room for our full, queer, embodied selves. Yet Isaiah dares to say: even the desert will rejoice. The ground beneath us (cracked, weary, overlooked) will bloom.

We don't need to rush to Christmas to find Christ. God has already chosen to meet us in the dust, in the in-between, in our imperfect becoming. The Holy Way is a two-way road: God comes to us, even when we've lost our way.

—Rev. Ófe Abreu-Rosario

For Reflection

The Holy Way is described as something God forms with us, not something we must build alone. How is God meeting you "in the dust" right now — in your in-between places, your unfinished becoming, or your queer embodiment?





Acts 5:12-16

Healing flowed through the streets, not confined to temples or titles, but carried in the shadows of those who dared to believe. Acts reminds us that wholeness is possible when we move together, trusting the Spirit that stirs in every corner of creation.

Advent invites us to expect restoration beyond what systems can sanction, to see miracles in ordinary moments, in touch, in breath, in being. The same power that healed through the apostles still pulses through the earth, through us, and through every living thing. The Spirit moves freely, making sacred even the places the world has called unworthy.

—Shani McIlwain

For Reflection

Shani writes that healing was not confined to temples or titles. Where have you experienced healing — physical, emotional, or spiritual — in unexpected or “unsanctioned” places?





Ezekiel 47:1-12

In my dreams — when I dream of salvation — there is a river so wide and deep, that the Amazon is nothing but a creek. This river is both powerful and calm: powerful enough to destroy the dams that seek to control access, and calm enough to float in it and observe the clouds change shape. And her waters are enough to feed all of creation, to carve nooks and canyons where every living creature can make a home and thrive.

That's what peace is about: the flourishing of all created beings, knowing the river of God will bring enough for all, so there's no need to compete or win, for victory means every mouth is fed, every heart is loved, every soul is safe.

—Rev. Claudia Aguilar

For Reflection

The river feeds all creation without competition. Where do you see God cultivating a spirit of abundance rather than scarcity in you or your community?





Zechariah 8:1-17

As Zechariah laments the downturn of his city, he specifically names the sight of men leaning on canes as they chat in the streets as something he deeply misses. A nonchalant moment, but if you have ever tried to convince an aging parent to actually use the cane their doctor says they need, you know how remarkable this moment is.

These men with canes exist in a public space where there is no shame in their disability. While children play nearby, moving easily with their young bones and tendons, so too can these men exist. Both are necessary to a thriving community, and both are lamented when they are gone.

What sights are signs to you that your community is thriving?

—Rev. Bethany Peerbolte

For Reflection

What barriers—visible or invisible—keep certain people from being fully present in your community? What might restoration look like if those barriers were removed?





Galatians 3:23-29

“In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.” With whomever gathers around your table through these holidays — friends, family, chosen family, family you wish you could escape, empty spaces for those missing — we are all one in Christ Jesus.

There is no line that separates us in Christ. No matter who might tell us we don’t belong at the table or in the home, there is a place for you.

This holiday season, in whatever way is safe for you, we pray that you will know your belovedness and know that you, too, are an heir to the promise of God’s abundant goodness. For you are worthy. Just as you are.

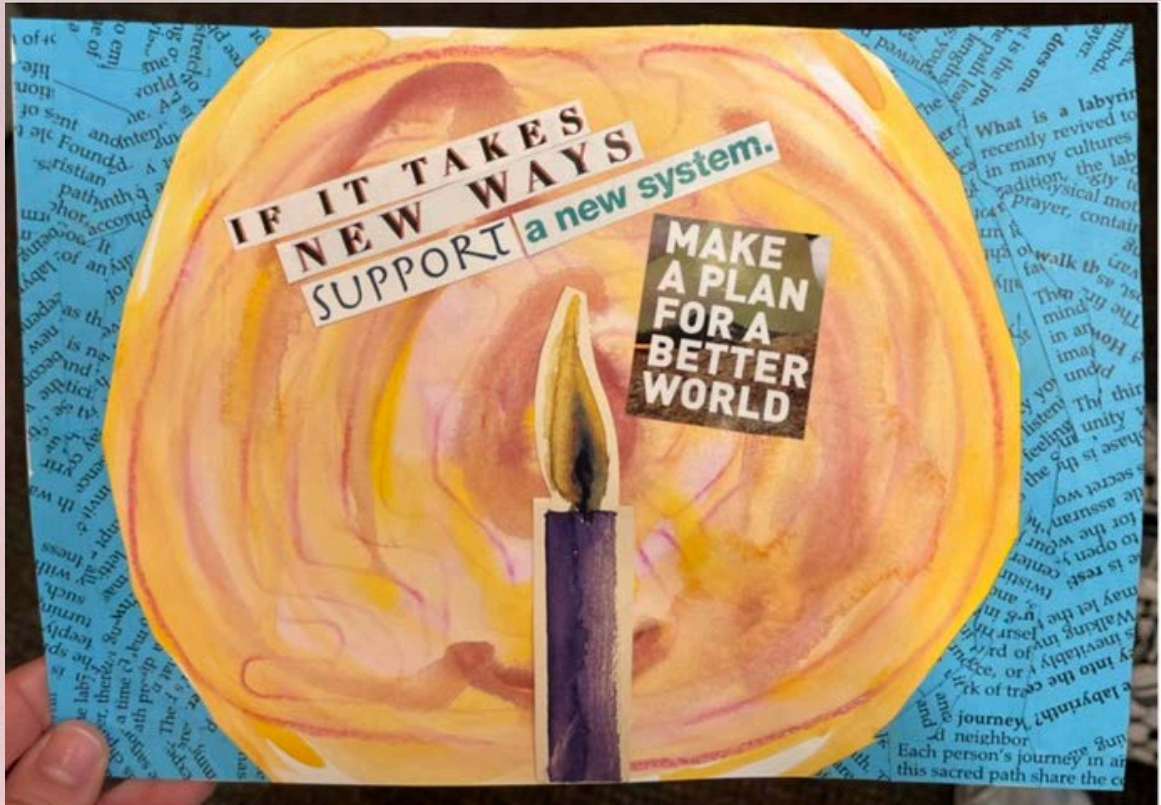
—Rev. Keith Thompson

For Reflection

Keith writes that “there is a place for you” at God’s table, no matter what messages you’ve received otherwise. Where have you struggled to believe you belong, and what does God’s voice of belovedness sound like in contrast?



Galatians 4:1-7



Mixed Media Collage by Addie Domske, mixed at Zephyr Point 2024

Alt text: a collage of blue paper print overlaid with a candle whose flame forms a huge orange–yellow halo, in which text reads “If it takes new ways support a new system” and “make a plan for a better world”

—Rev. Addie Domske

For Reflection

What is this picture bringing up in you in relationship to the Galatians passage?





John 3:31-36

Scarcity is the lie we're trained to believe:
that there is only so much love,
so much welcome,
so much room.

But this passage whispers a different truth:
God's presence is not rationed.
Not portioned out only to the acceptable.
Not measured by conformity.

The Spirit is given without limit
overflowing, boundary-breaking,
spilling into every life the world tries to confine.

In Advent, we wait not for permission to belong,
but for our hearts to trust
that we already do.

Beloved, your life is not too wide, too bright, or too
queer.
You are held in a Love that cannot be

—Rev. Ashley McFaul-Erwin

For Reflection

What would it take for your heart to trust — even a little —
that you already belong, without permission, without conditions,
without shrinking?





Isaiah 7:10–16

This Advent, we find ourselves, like Ahaz, caught between heaven and hell, between what we fear and what we hope for.

The prophet's sign doesn't come through power or certainty, but through vulnerability: a young woman is pregnant... she will name him Immanuel, God with us. God chooses to meet us here, not above the mess of our lives but within it. In the middle of political turmoil, fractured families, and weary hearts. God-with-us is not a slogan for the serene, but a promise for the restless and the real.

Like Ahaz, we're tempted to trust control over courage. Yet God's sign arrives small, tender, and ungovernable. A reminder that liberation often begins with what looks fragile: a baby, a queer act of hope, a yes whispered in the dark.

God is with us here, between heaven and hell;
turning fear into freedom, and power into peace.

—Rev. Ófe Abreu-Rosario

For Reflection

Ófe writes that we, like Ahaz, stand “between heaven and hell” — between fear and hope. Where in your life do you feel caught between what terrifies you and what you long for?





Luke 1:46b-55

Mary's song is not quiet.
It is a revolution sung from the margins,
a lullaby for the world that could be,
and a challenge to the world that refuses to change.

She does not apologize for her joy,
her power,
her body's participation in God's liberation.

In her voice we hear our own:
God unsettles the systems that harm,
scatters pride,
lifts the lowly,
fills the hungry with real nourishment.

This is not a metaphor.
It is a call.

Beloved, your life is part of this holy reordering.
Your embodied hope is sacred.
Your joy is an act of courage.
Our joy is an act of courage.

—Rev. Ashley McFaul-Erwin

For Reflection

Ashley writes that Mary's song is "a revolution sung from the margins." What part of your story, identity, or body feels like it is singing from the margins — and what holy truth is it trying to proclaim?





Before the Marvel of This Night” by Jaroslav Vajda, 1979

Set to music by Carl Schalk, 1979, arranged by
Matthew Culloton

Before the marvel of this night,
Adoring, fold your wings and bow;
Then tear the sky apart with light
And with your news the world endow.
Proclaim the birth of Christ and peace,
That fear and death and sorrow cease:
Sing peace; sing peace; sing gift of peace;
Sing peace; sing gift of peace.

Awake the sleeping world with song;
This is the day the Lord has made.
Assemble here, celestial throng,
In royal splendor come arrayed.
Give earth a glimpse of heavenly bliss,
A teasing taste of what they miss:
Sing bliss; sing bliss; sing endless bliss;
Sing bliss; sing endless bliss.

The love that we have always known,
Our constant joy and endless light,
Now to the loveless world be shown,
Now break upon its deathly night.
Into one song compress the love
That rules our universe above:
Sing love; sing love; sing God is love;
Sing love; sing God is love!





Titus 2:11-14

*"We are called (Jesus commands us)
to love one another
This is the law above all
Welcome the stranger, comfort the orphan
Reflecting God's love in your ways*

*We are a People of Hope,
Joyfully Singing, Faithfully Clinging
To the Promise God made at our birth
We are the Children of God
Hungry for Justice,
Filled with Compassion
We are a People of Hope"*

—Jesy Littlejohn

For Reflection

What does it mean to you personally to "joyfully sing" and "faithfully cling" to God's promise? Where are you holding onto hope even when circumstances make it difficult?





Luke 2: 12-14

This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, goodwill among humanity!"

WHITE FLAG

One is a haunt, a life forever changed.
Two is annihilation; towns unmade.
What capsize coup, what scandal assembled
myriad such weapons at this trough
whose bundle, selvages of white flag weeps,
and tuned them not to trump the world's walls
to bits but sing, and to sing, "Peace!
Peace!"

— Kate Davoli

For Reflection

What does "peace" mean for you this Advent — not as sentiment or passivity, but as the courageous, justice-rooted peace sung by the angels?





Holy One,
You have met us in poems and prophets,
in rivers wide with promise,
in deserts beginning to bloom,
in the tender courage of Mary,
in the fierce joy of our queer and chosen kin.

Through every reflection, you have reminded us:
We are beloved.
We are held.
We are becoming.

As we close this season of waiting,
root us in the truth that your Light rises
not in perfection,
but in our real and restless lives.
Give us eyes to see you in vulnerable beginnings,
ears to hear you in the songs of the marginalized,
and hearts brave enough to believe that
liberation can start small—
in a whispered yes,
a carried hope,
a love lived out loud.

Emmanuel, God-with-us,
go with us as we leave these pages
and return to our daily lives.
Keep us awake to wonder,
awake to courage,
awake to love that cannot be rationed or silenced.

Amen

