Weekly Advent Devotional

Taking Faith Home



Over the course of these next four weeks, use this booklet to help center yourself on the birth of our Lord. The suggested scripture verses will help deepen your understanding of the gospel text each Sunday, and the prayers will prepare you for each week. Find time to sit down as a family and read the devotional and have the conversations that can help deepen your faith life.

NOVEMBER 29, 2026
FIRST SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

taking faith home

Stay awake, for God is coming with power.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Mark 13:24-37	The day and hour unknown
Monday	Isaiah 64:1-9	A communal prayer for help
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 1:3-9	God is faithful
Wednesday	Revelation 22:12-21	Jesus is coming soon
Thursday	Micah 4:1-5	Peace and prosperity
Friday	1 Thessalonians 5:1-11	Children of light
Saturday	Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19	Prayer for Israel's restoration
Sunday	Mark 1:1-8	The beginning of the good news

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. **Mark 13:26 (NRSVUE)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:
God, deliver us from harm. Let your loving face shine on us so that we may be safe in the arms of Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:
Dear God, we thank you for this food; may it strengthen us as we wait for your arrival in the birth of your Son Jesus and for him to come again to make all things right. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:
May Jesus give you hope and peace.

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The "Four Key Faith Practices"—Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals & Traditions—are a framework developed by the Rev. Dr. David Anderson. For a brief description, go to: https://milestonesministry.org/history-of-the-four-keys/.

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NOVEMBER 29, 2026

taking faith home

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn

WEEKLY MILESTONES

Tell or think about a recent mountain high and valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When have you had a challenging or scary experience?
- How does faith in Jesus give us hope and help us to face scary times?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Mark 13:24-37.

Advent begins with an awareness of life's frailty. We can protect ourselves with shelter and food, but there is always the threat of a sudden storm that can bring devastation, when the whole world seems to fall down around us. Everyone, young and old, experiences trials and sufferings. It happened to the Israelites returning from exile (Isaiah 64), it happened to Jesus' first followers, and, it happens around the world today. We need the God who promises to show up and make a difference. This Advent, we are reminded to be on the lookout for the same God who came into our world as Jesus. So, live life with joy, with courage, with hope! And stay awake, keep alert, and never give up. How does worshipping together, reading the Bible, and praying help you pay attention for when Jesus shows up in our lives?

Pray: **Almighty God, give us hope and confidence to await your coming into our lives, trusting in your healing and renewing power through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

Advent is a reminder to diligently do the work God calls us to do, including serving others. What are some specific ways you can "stay awake" this Advent season by caring for the needs of others?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The church year begins on the first Sunday in Advent. To launch this new year, gather all the Bibles in your home. If you have an Advent wreath, place the Bibles near the wreath. As you light the first candle, the candle of hope, use this prayer of blessing:

Pray: **God, we thank you for the Bible, and especially for the good news about Jesus our Lord. Make us into people who are strong in faith and full of love. Amen.**

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DECEMBER 6, 2026
SECOND SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

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God has good news for all people.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Mark 1:1-8	The beginning of the good news
Monday	Isaiah 40:1-11	Comfort my people
Tuesday	2 Peter 3:8-15a	Promise of the Lord's coming
Wednesday	Malachi 4:1-6	The great day of the Lord
Thursday	Matthew 3:1-11	The preaching of John the Baptist
Friday	1 Timothy 1:12-17	Gratitude for God's mercy
Saturday	Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13	A prayer for God's peace
Sunday	John 1:6-8, 19-28	John's witness to the light

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" **Mark 1:3 (NRSVUE)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:
God, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for your Son Jesus. Help us to know how to prepare your way to the people around us and the strength to do it. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:
Generous God, may this gift of food and fellowship strengthen us to walk in your way of comfort, hope, and peace through the good news of Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:
May God wrap you in love so that you can love others.

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DECEMBER 6, 2026

taking faith home

HYMN OF THE WEEK

There's a Voice in the Wilderness

WEEKLY MILESTONES

Tell or think about a recent mountain high and valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What is some good news you have heard recently?
- How is the coming of Jesus into our world good news for you? For others?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Mark 1:1-8.

The beginning of a book sets up what the book is about and where the story is going. This is true of the Gospel of Mark as well. Mark 1:1-8 give us information that helps us follow the story as it unfolds. Mark's point is that Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah (Christ) whom God had promised to send into the world to bring us God's love. This is good news ("good tidings" in Isaiah 40:9) for us and for all people. John the baptizer called the people—and us—to repent, to turn from our way of living to God's way. But this repentance is not the good news. The good news is that the love of God that Jesus brings us is powerful enough to change us—and the whole world! Where do you see the good news of Jesus happening today?

Pray: **God, we thank you for giving us the good news of Jesus your Son, who brings us your all-powerful love. Help us to turn from our ways to yours. Amen.**

SERVICE

Good news has a positive effect on people. What word of comfort or encouragement can you give to someone this week?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Set up a Christmas nativity set in your home (if you do not have one, draw the various parts or even set it up with toys!). Place the wise men further away from the set for now, and wait to place Jesus in the manger until Christmas Eve. On your Advent wreath, light the first candle of hope and the second one of peace. Sit in silence for a moment and look at the nativity set, thinking about Jesus coming to us.

Pray: **Lord, help us prepare your way as we wait. Give us peace and hope. Amen.**

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DECEMBER 13, 2026
THIRD SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

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Jesus brings good news.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 1:6-8, 19-28	John's witness to the light
Monday	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	Good news of deliverance
Tuesday	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	A call to rejoice
Wednesday	Romans 10:14-17	Those who bring good news
Thursday	1 Thessalonians 3:6-13	Timothy's encouraging report
Friday	Genesis 18:1-18	A son for Abraham and Sarah
Saturday	Psalm 126	A people who dream
Sunday	Luke 1:26-38	The birth of Jesus foretold

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners. **Isaiah 61:1 (NRSVUE)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:
Loving God, help us to be aware of the needs of others and be prepared to bring them joy and good news through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:
God, may this food fill our hearts with laughter and make us shout with joy. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:
May the true light of Jesus guide you now and always.

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DECEMBER 13, 2026

taking faith home

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Joy to the World

WEEKLY MILESTONES

Tell or think about a recent mountain high and valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When have you felt sad or brokenhearted? What helped you feel better?
- How does Jesus make a difference for your life and the lives of others?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11.

An American emailed his friend in Zimbabwe and asked if he was well. His friend responded, "I am well if you are well." This is a communal understanding of wellness. We cannot be well on our own. We are not truly well even when we are safe and protected if our neighbor is not. The prophet Isaiah brings good news for all people, especially those who are oppressed, brokenhearted, captive, imprisoned, mourn, or suffering in some other way. God's work of justice and mercy will bring joy to every place and is for every person, not just for a special few. How do you see the wellbeing of others as important for your own wellbeing?

Pray: **God of justice, we give you thanks that your goodness and mercy is for us and for all the world through Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

God promises to bring joy that overcomes pain, disappointment, and fear. Think of someone currently experiencing difficulties. How can you bring them joy this week?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

If you have not already done so, set up a Christmas nativity set in your home. On your Advent wreath, light the first candle of hope, the second one of peace, and the third one of joy. Sit in silence for a moment and look at the nativity set, thinking about the good news and joy the coming of Jesus brings us.

Pray: **Lord God, thank you for being with us in times of sadness and times of joy. Give us hope, peace and joy as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Amen.**

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DECEMBER 20, 2026
FOURTH SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

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God favors the peasant girl Mary.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Luke 1:26-38	The birth of Jesus foretold
Monday	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	The Lord's message to David
Tuesday	Romans 16:25-27	Paul's closing prayer
Wednesday	Luke 1:46b-55	Mary's song of praise
Thursday	Luke 2:1-20	The birth of Jesus
Friday	John 3:11-16	For God so loved the world
Saturday	Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26	God's promise to David
Sunday	Luke 2:22-40	Jesus presented in the temple

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus." **Luke 1:30-31 (NRSVUE)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:
Lord God, just as you favored your servant Mary, grant all of us faith and trust in your power to bring salvation to all through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:
With this food we receive your steadfast love, O Lord; with our mouths we proclaim your faithfulness to all generations through Jesus. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:
May the love of God bless you with the good news of Jesus' birth.

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DECEMBER 20, 2026

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HYMN OF THE WEEK

Wait for the Lord

WEEKLY MILESTONES

Tell or think about a recent mountain high and valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When have you received special attention from friends or family?
- What does it mean to you that our Savior was born from a young peasant girl?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Luke 1:26-38.

When the angel came to tell Mary that she would become the mother of God's Son, he said that God favored her. God's favor—grace—is unconditional kindness and blessing. In the beginning of the Gospel of Luke, God gave favor to Elizabeth, an older woman who could not have a child, Mary, a young peasant girl, and shepherds who were the first people to share the good news of Jesus' birth. These people were no more special than the rest of us, but God gave them the remarkable gift of being part of the story of Jesus, the Son of God and king of the whole world. We, too, are given God's favor and blessings. How has God come to you with divine favor?

Pray: **God, thank you for your favor and blessings in our lives. Help us share your blessings with others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

SERVICE

During this Advent season, think of those who are not favored in our society, like people in need. How can you show God's love to them through an act of kindness?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

From your nativity set, hold each piece in silence for a moment, passing them around as needed. Then place the pieces back in the scene. Have Mary and Joseph arrive first, followed by the shepherds, and then the wise men. Wait to place Jesus in the manger until Christmas Eve. On your Advent wreath, light the first candle of hope, the second one of peace, the third one of joy, and the fourth one of love.

Pray: **God, thank you for showing us love even when we are afraid like Mary. Give us hope, peace, joy, and love as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Amen.**

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The Advent Wreath

One of the best-known customs for the season is the Advent wreath. The wreath and winter candle-lighting in the midst of growing darkness strengthen some of the Advent images found in the Bible. The unbroken circle of greens is clearly an image of everlasting life, a victory wreath, the crown of Christ, or the wheel of time itself. Christians use the wreath as a sign that Christ reaches into our time to lead us to the light of everlasting life. The four candles mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent and the growth of light. Each candle represents the themes of the Advent season: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Sometimes the wreath is embellished with natural dried flowers or fruit. Its evergreen branches lead the household and the congregation to the evergreen Christmas tree. In many homes, the family gathers for prayers around the wreath.



Share your thoughts and discussions from *Taking Faith Home*: