

Advent

an invitation to wait



2019



Tis' the season to receive invitations
to celebrate, commune, and feast!
And the invitation to wait may sound
wasteful, quite comical, at the least!

This “waiting” is not about passing the
time and giving you something to do.
It’s about “being”—waiting with expectancy
—an entirely different view.

Advent is a time of anticipation as
we celebrate the coming of Christ!
Is how you’re waiting pleasing to Him?
What word best describes your plight?

Each day will be a simple invitation to
draw near to God and learn to wait well.
Powerful and practical experiences allow
His love, joy, hope, and peace to dwell.

For it is in the sacred waiting that you come
to know that the focus is not on you.
It’s about abiding in Christ, practicing
His presence, and letting His Spirit move.

To fully experience life during Advent,
something has to give.
And when you give Him space to move,
He’ll show you how to live.

by Kristen Torres

an invitation to wait

OBSERVING ADVENT:

Love, Hope, Joy, Peace

ADVENT means “coming.”

The first Advent of Christ was in His incarnation, which we remember and celebrate at Christmas. The second Advent is Jesus’ future second coming, for which we wait. We live in the space between.

What do we learn from those who waited for the first coming of Christ? How does this inform and shape the ways we wait for the Savior’s second coming?

During this season of Advent, we pause to prepare our hearts to celebrate Christ’s first coming at Christmas. We are given an invitation to wait.

What do we learn from those who waited that first Christmas?

A digital version of this guide is available at dawsonchurch.org/Advent2019.

AS A FAMILY OF FAITH, we will wait upon the Lord in love, in joy, in hope, and in peace, experiencing the weekly rhythms of practicing His presence in meaningful ways daily.

SUNDAYS... Waiting through SCRIPTURE

MONDAYS... Waiting through CONTEMPLATION

TUESDAYS... Waiting through WORDS

WEDNESDAYS... Waiting through THE ARTS

THURSDAYS... Waiting through APPLICATION

FRIDAYS... Waiting through EXPERIENCES

SATURDAYS... Waiting through REFLECTION

Family Advent Experience Kits are provided by Dawson's Preschool and Children's Ministries and available to pick up at the Arendall Building Welcome Center. The kits will be used each Friday leading up to Christmas as a family "experience."



SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 1ST

WAITING IN LOVE THROUGH SCRIPTURE

⁶And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. ⁷But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great before the Lord."

⁴¹And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴²and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy."

Luke 1:6-7, 13-14, 41-44

**LORD, THANK
YOU FOR YOUR
GREAT LOVE!
TEACH ME,
HELP ME, AND
SHOW ME
HOW TO WAIT
IN LOVE LIKE
ZECHARIAH
AND ELIZABETH
IN THE DAYS
AHEAD.**

AMEN

MONDAY,
DECEMBER 2ND

WAITING IN LOVE THROUGH CONTEMPLATION



Author James K.A. Smith asserts, “You are what you love...it’s your desires, it’s your hungers, it’s your deepest cravings for something ultimate that really define you.” Elizabeth and Zechariah could have allowed childlessness to define them. Instead, they chose to live righteous lives loving God. Think about what you allow to define you.

In *You Are What You Love*, Smith poses that we might not love what we think we love. You are “trained and shaped and oriented and directed through the rhythms and rituals and practices you are immersed in.” Ask God to guide you as you reflect on the rhythms, rituals, and practices in your daily life. Consider how these highlight what you really love.



ZECHARIAH AND ELIZABETH WERE WELL-PRACTICED IN WAITING.

Advanced in years, barren, praying all the while for a child. They could have waited in bitterness, in grief, in relentless disappointment. But Luke tells us they lived righteously, walking blamelessly before the Lord in all of His commandments. “If you love me, you will keep my commandments,” God the Father later voices through Jesus (John 14:15).

GOD REVEALED HIS EXTRAVAGANT LOVE...

...to Zechariah and Elizabeth setting in motion His plan for the salvation of the world through their unexpected but long-hoped-for child, John. They waited for God to answer their prayers, while loving Him with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength (Luke 10:27).

**GOD, HELP ME
TO RECOGNIZE
MY TRUE
DESIRES AND
CRAVINGS. I
WANT TO DESIRE
AND LOVE YOU
ABOVE ALL ELSE.
FILL MY LIFE
WITH PRACTICES
THAT POINT ME
TO YOU.**

AMEN

TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 3RD

WAITING IN LOVE THROUGH WORDS

The poem, “*Love Came Down at Christmas*,” was written in 1885 by Christina Rossetti. It has been set to music as a Christmas Carol by many composers including John Rutter, and most recently, by Jars of Clay. The first stanza says:

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love Divine,
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and Angels gave the sign.

As we wait in love this Advent season, we remind ourselves that one way love comes down is through us, through God’s people, through the church.

The season of Advent is a gift to us. It is not a checklist to get through or just a build up to Christmas. It is a posture of heart to be sought, a perspective to be taken as we ready ourselves for His coming at Christmas and when He returns to make all things new.

Love comes down as we open our homes to neighbors and strangers, as we visit the hospital or prison, or as we journey alongside a struggling friend.

Love comes down as we are faithful servants of Christ.

Is there someone whom you might invite to one of Dawson’s Christmas services or to your own Christmas gathering? Ask the Lord to show you those to whom you should reach out with the love of Christ. Offer an invitation to the people God puts on your heart.

**LORD, USE
ME AS AN
INSTRUMENT
TO EXPRESS
YOUR LOVE
TO SOMEONE.
GIVE ME THE
COURAGE TO
REACH OUT
WITH YOUR
LOVE BY**

*

AMEN

* Fill in blanks

WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 4TH

WAITING IN LOVE THROUGH THE ARTS

1 JOHN 4:16: So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Today, we invite you to find moments to wait in love. Often this happens when we abide in His presence for, as the above Scripture states, He is love. Here is a list of artists and song titles to listen to as you wait. As you listen in the car, as you clean, stand in line, or wherever you find moments to do so, reflect on His love. Abide in that love.

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
I Will Wait for You (Psalm 130)
Zechariah
Of the Father's Love Begotten
Benedictus
Hungry (Falling On My Knees)
Magnificat
My Story
My World Needs You
We Wait for Thy Loving Kindness
Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing
Greater
Gabriel's Message
Rorate Caeli
O Come O Come Emmanuel

Find on dawsonchurch.org/Spotify.

**LORD, AS YOU
ABIDE IN ME,
HELP ME TO
ABIDE IN YOUR
LOVE. MAY I
LOVE WELL AS I**

*

AMEN

* Fill in blanks

Chris Tomlin
Shane and Shane
Rain for Roots
New Scottish Hymns Band
The Priests
Vineyard Worship
Rain for Roots
Big Daddy Weave
Kirk Franklin
Robert Dixon & Alexander Beetschen
Fernando Ortega
MercyMe
Matt Maher
Choeur des Moniales Benedictines
Lauren Daigle

THURSDAY,
DECEMBER 5TH

WAITING IN LOVE THROUGH APPLICATION

We moved from waiting room to waiting room as my husband was prepared for serious and unexpected surgery. As word got out, our Christian friends arrived one by one until the room was filled. That stark and scary waiting room was transformed into a waiting room filled with love!

Like Elizabeth and Zechariah, my faithfulness to God didn't exclude waiting rooms in my life, but I was reminded of His vivid love for me through the love of Christian friends who waited alongside of me.

Whether we are advanced in years, waiting for a child, or waiting for an answer, our waiting should be characterized by loving God "with all our heart, soul, and mind."

Who do you know who is experiencing a waiting room in their life?

Christmas is a difficult time for those celebrating the season for the first time without a special friend or family member. Look around for someone you can pray with and encourage—someone whose life you can transform by "waiting in love" with them.

**LORD,
LEAD ME
TO SOMEONE I
CAN PRAY FOR
AND PRAY WITH.
LET ME BE A
SOURCE OF
ENCOURAGEMENT
DURING THIS
SEASON.**

AMEN

FRIDAY,
DECEMBER 6TH

WAITING IN LOVE THROUGH EXPERIENCES

(Before reading, gather a Bible, candle, ornament, and a Nativity Set.)

Christmas is a time to celebrate the birth of God's Son, Jesus. 1 John 4:9 reads, "God loved us and sent His Son." Jesus lived on Earth and set an example for us—how to obey God's word and share God's love with others. He lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. We want to thank God for sending Jesus and worship Him. During this time of worship, we will think about God sending Jesus, thank Him, and praise Him.

Give each family member a Christmas item mentioned above to hold during 1-3 minutes of silence. Guide them to use the time to think about the Christmas Story and ways they can live like Jesus. After the time of silence, re-read Mark 12:30, then lead your family in singing some Christmas songs that everyone knows. Suggestions: *Away in a Manger, Joy to the World, Jesus Loves Me, O, Come Let Us Adore Him*. Close your time of worship with prayer.

Love the Lord your God
with all your heart and
with all your soul and
with all your mind and
with all your strength."

Mark 12:30

**DEAR GOD,
THANK YOU FOR
SENDING YOUR
SON, JESUS!
HELP US TO USE
THIS CHRISTMAS
SEASON AS
A TIME TO
LIVE MORE
LIKE HIM AND
TO WORSHIP YOU.
WE LOVE YOU!**

AMEN

SATURDAY,
DECEMBER 7TH

WAITING IN LOVE THROUGH REFLECTION

What did you learn from waiting in **LOVE** this week?



SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 8TH

WAITING IN JOY THROUGH SCRIPTURE

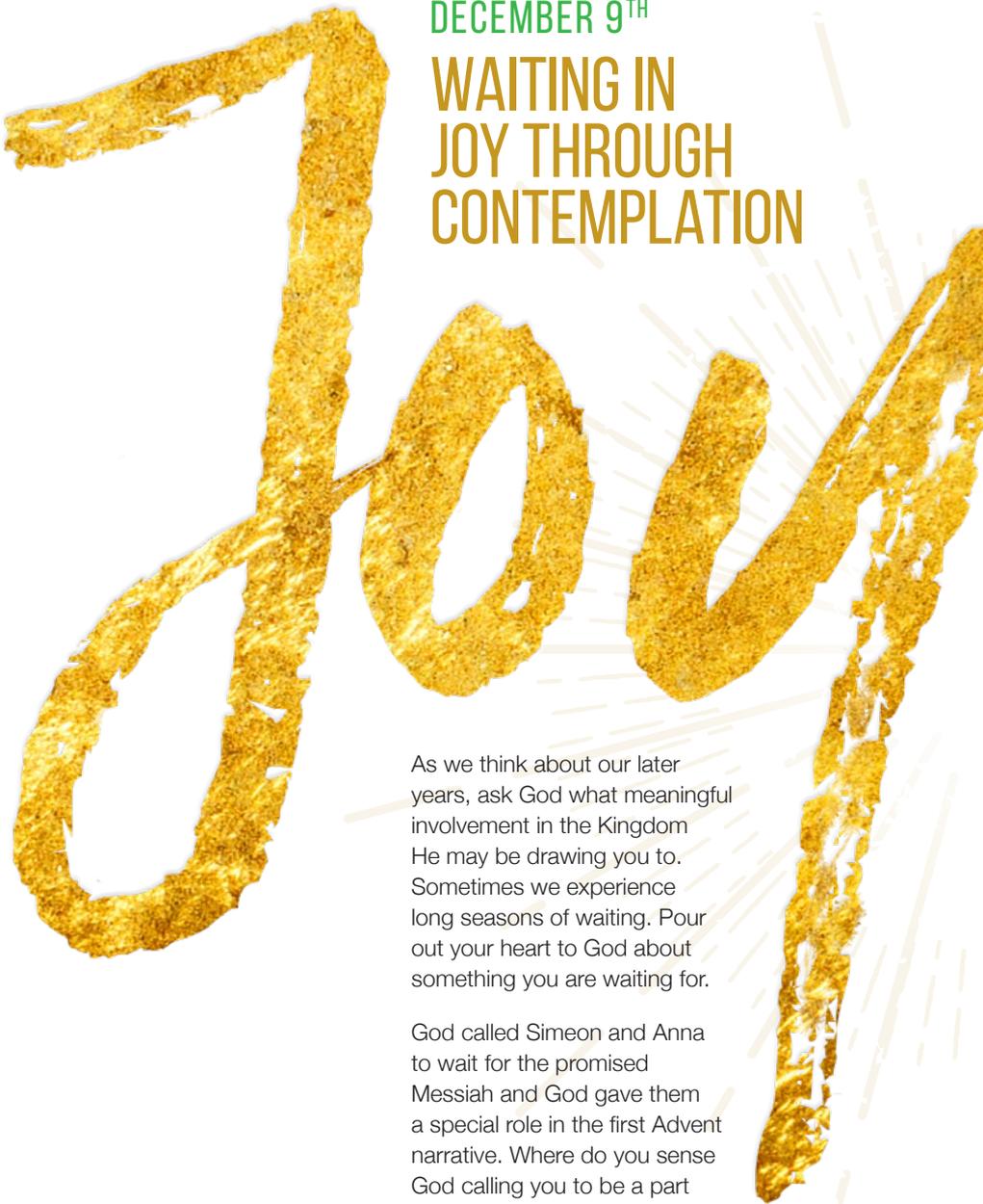
²⁸ He [Simeon] took him [Jesus] up in his arms and blessed God and said, ²⁹ "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; ³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation ³¹ that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."

³⁸ And coming up at that very hour she [Anna] began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Luke 2:28-32, 38

DEAR GOD,
GIVE ME A
GRATEFUL
HEART LIKE
ANNA'S AND
A JOY LIKE
SIMEON'S AS
I EXPERIENCE
FULFILLMENT
OF YOUR
PROMISES.

AMEN



MONDAY,
DECEMBER 9TH

WAITING IN JOY THROUGH CONTEMPLATION

As we think about our later years, ask God what meaningful involvement in the Kingdom He may be drawing you to. Sometimes we experience long seasons of waiting. Pour out your heart to God about something you are waiting for.

God called Simeon and Anna to wait for the promised Messiah and God gave them a special role in the first Advent narrative. Where do you sense God calling you to be a part of His unfolding story?

Spend some time praising God for a life-changing gift in your own life.

WAITING INHERENTLY
IMPLIES ANTICIPATION AND
EXPECTANCY.

ANNA AND SIMEON were devout followers of God who actively awaited the promised Messiah. Anna was a prophet, an aged and long-time widow who spent her days and nights in the area of the Jerusalem temple worshipping and praying. Simeon is described as devout and righteous, [a man to whom God's Spirit revealed he would see the coming Messiah before he died.]

After Jesus was born, **MARY AND JOSEPH** fulfilled the Jewish law to present Jesus in the temple. On that same day, Simeon was led there by the Spirit. "At that very hour" Anna also came. Laying eyes upon the baby, Simeon and Anna erupted with joy! The long-awaited Messiah, the Savior of the world, was in their midst!

THEY WAITED IN EXPECTANT JOY, a joy that gushed from their spirits when they personally encountered the Messiah. Simeon felt his life was complete. Anna's spirit was invigorated to extol anew the goodness of God and His salvation plan.

**GOD,
PLEASE GIVE
ME PATIENCE
DURING MY
SEASONS OF
WAITING.
I WANT TO
BE A PART
OF YOUR
UNFOLDING
STORY. I
PRAISE YOU
FOR THE
GIFTS YOU
HAVE PLACED
IN MY LIFE.**

AMEN

TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 10TH

WAITING IN JOY THROUGH WORDS

Richard Foster writes in his book *Celebration of Discipline*, “Christ entered the world on a high note of jubilation: ‘I bring you good news of great joy,’ cried the angel ‘which shall come to all people.’ And he left the world bequeathing his joy to all disciples: ‘these things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.’”

Foster reminds us, “In the spiritual life only one thing will produce genuine joy, and that is obedience. The old hymn tells us that there is no other way to be happy in Jesus but to ‘trust and obey.’ . . . Joy is found in obedience.”

How can we wait in joy this Advent? We can be joyful because we know the end of the story. We know that the baby in the manger, born to be the Savior of the world, will come again and, as C. S. Lewis puts it, “everything sad is going to come untrue.” We can be joyful as we walk in step with the Spirit in obedience remembering that Jesus said, “Blessed are those . . . that hear the word of God and keep it!” (Luke 11:28)

What love could
remember no wrongs
we have done?
Omniscient, all-
knowing, He counts
not their sum. Thrown
into a sea without
bottom or shore. Our
sins, they are many,
His mercy is more.

*Ask God to show you
one time in the last 24
hours where you were
out of step with His
will and ways. Ask His
forgiveness and rejoice
that His mercy is more.*

**FATHER,
MY SINS ARE
MANY AND I
THANK YOU
THAT YOUR
“MERCY IS
MORE.” HELP
ME FIND JOY
IN OBEDIENCE.
AMEN**

WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 11TH

WAITING IN JOY THROUGH THE ARTS

PSALM 40:1-3: I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.

Sometimes a “song of praise” is the best way to express the joy of the Lord in us. Sometimes our mouths cannot do it justice. Watch the video clip below and ponder the following: How is the joy of God best expressed in you?

WAITING IN JOY: video
“*Why I Dance*”
<https://tinyurl.com/qtejm53>

**LORD, HELP
ME TO WAIT
PATIENTLY.
INCLINE MY
HEART TO
YOU. HEAR
MY CRY!
THANK YOU
THAT I
CAN WAIT
PATIENTLY
BECAUSE YOU
HAVE SET MY
FEET UPON A
ROCK (JESUS)
AND MAKE
MY STEPS
SECURE. PUT
A NEW SONG
IN MY MOUTH,
A SONG TO
PRAISE YOU!**

AMEN

THURSDAY,
DECEMBER 12TH

WAITING IN JOY THROUGH APPLICATION

The month of December is a time of so much anticipation and joy! We help our children pace themselves through the waiting of Christmas using tools like an Advent calendar that they open each day and look forward with such joy to December 25!

Like Simeon, who was encouraged in his wait by God's promise to him and the presence of the Holy Spirit, we can find joy in the wait by claiming one of God's promises each day and receiving the daily present of His presence.

Using the spiritual disciplines of prayer and Bible study, "wait in joy" through this season of anticipation by claiming His presence and promises. As you make joy an intentional part of your waiting, take time to confess to God when you catch yourself waiting with discouragement and misery. How can you help someone else experience the truth behind the words "Joy to the World, the Lord Has Come!"?

**FATHER,
FORGIVE ME
WHEN I
WAIT WITH
DISCOURAGEMENT
AND MISERY.
FILL ME WITH
ANTICIPATION
AS I WAIT
FOR YOUR
PROMISES.**

AMEN

FRIDAY,
DECEMBER 13TH

WAITING IN JOY THROUGH EXPERIENCES

At Christmas, we celebrate that God took on flesh and came to earth—we celebrate Jesus. But Jesus didn't come to earth just to be born in a manger, Jesus came to earth for a greater purpose. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 1:1; *The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.* That is great news.

Jesus came to save sinners through His sacrifice dying on the cross. This is why the cross of Christ is central to the Christmas story. Jesus came to earth to save sinners. Hebrews 12:2 says: *Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Sometimes we get joy and happiness confused. Happiness depends on our circumstances, but joy depends on Jesus. We can be in the middle of something really hard and not be happy, but we can have joy and trust Jesus.

Waiting can be hard, can't it?

We can be impatient, cranky, and even selfish when we wait, but there were two people waiting for Jesus who chose to wait with joy. Simeon and Anna waited patiently with *great* joy to meet the promised Savior, and guess what? They were not disappointed.

**Continue to the next
page for the Family
Advent Experience.**

WAITING IN JOY THROUGH EXPERIENCES

Continued

Give each family member a sheet of paper and a pen. Ask them to draw a symbol that they think represents Christmas and allow everyone to share their drawing and how that symbol represents Christmas.

Take out the balloon from the Family Advent Experience Kit available at the Arendall Building Welcome Center and handle it carefully because there are beads inside.

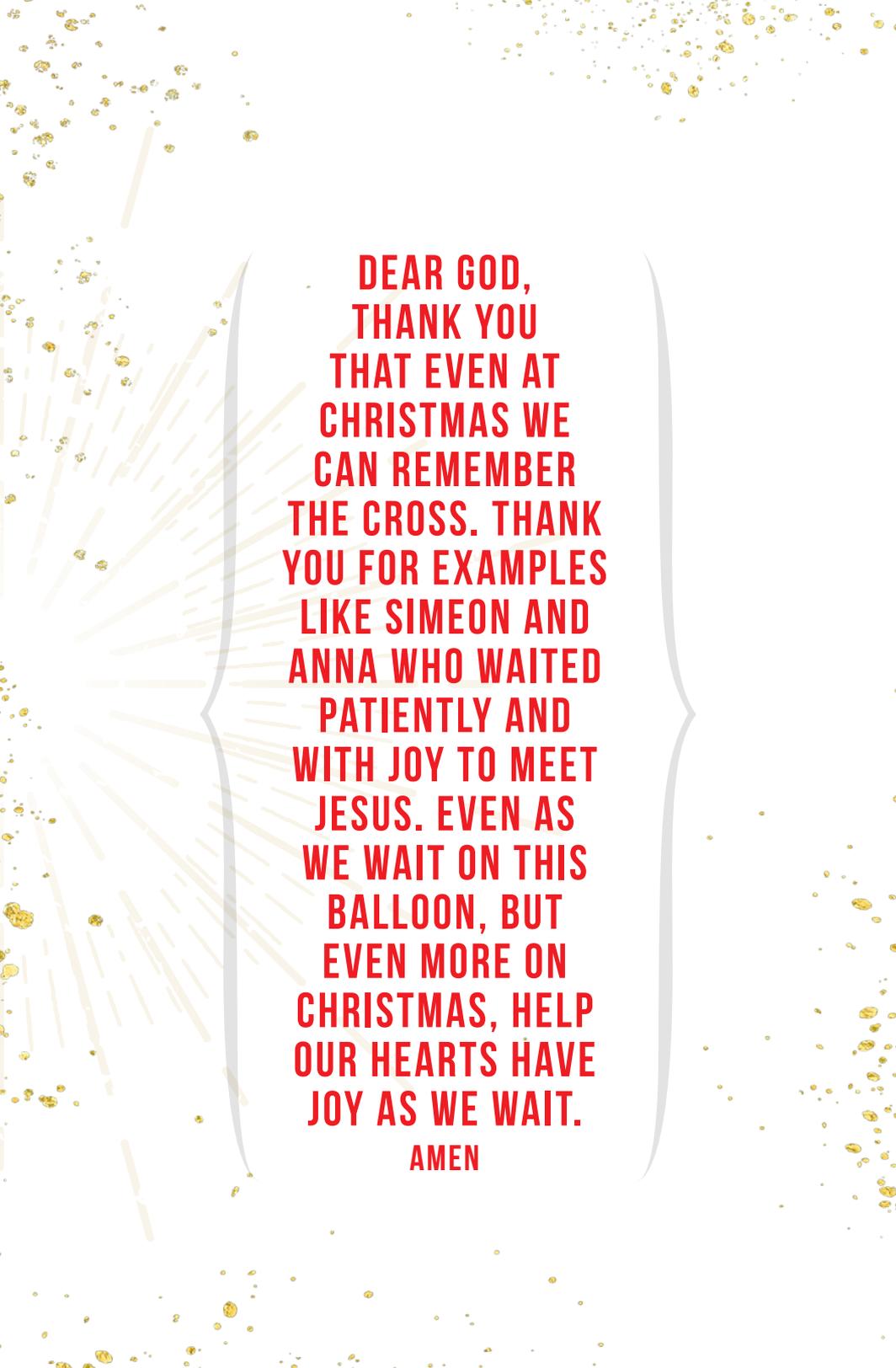
Next, fill the balloon with water to about the size of a baseball. Tie off the water balloon and pass it around to family members.

What do you think will happen to the balloon?

We will have to wait several hours to see what this balloon becomes.

This will be a great chance for us to **wait patiently and with joy** to see what happens. Let's pray and ask God for help.

Set the balloon aside. In 4-8 hours, the beads inside will expand, and the balloon will become a sensory ball and family members can play with it. Be sure to gather back around the balloon when the beads have expanded. Look at the balloon, what was once a balloon with just water and beads is now full and transformed! It was worth the wait, wasn't it? Let's pass the balloon around and as we play with it each share a way that Jesus brings us joy.



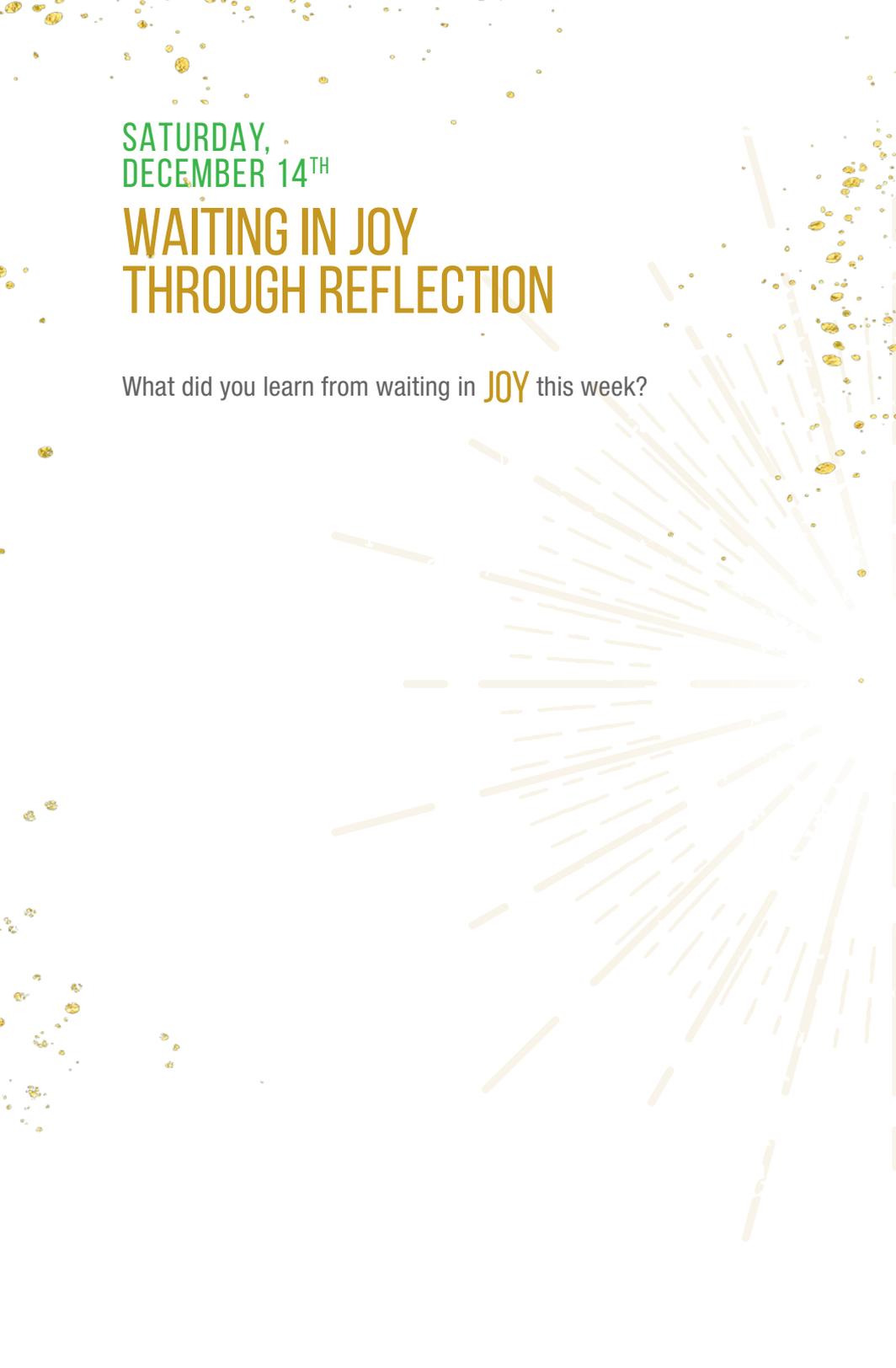
**DEAR GOD,
THANK YOU
THAT EVEN AT
CHRISTMAS WE
CAN REMEMBER
THE CROSS. THANK
YOU FOR EXAMPLES
LIKE SIMEON AND
ANNA WHO WAITED
PATIENTLY AND
WITH JOY TO MEET
JESUS. EVEN AS
WE WAIT ON THIS
BALLOON, BUT
EVEN MORE ON
CHRISTMAS, HELP
OUR HEARTS HAVE
JOY AS WE WAIT.**

AMEN

SATURDAY,
DECEMBER 14TH

WAITING IN JOY THROUGH REFLECTION

What did you learn from waiting in **JOY** this week?



SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 15TH

WAITING IN HOPE THROUGH SCRIPTURE

³⁵ And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.”

³⁷ “For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸ And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

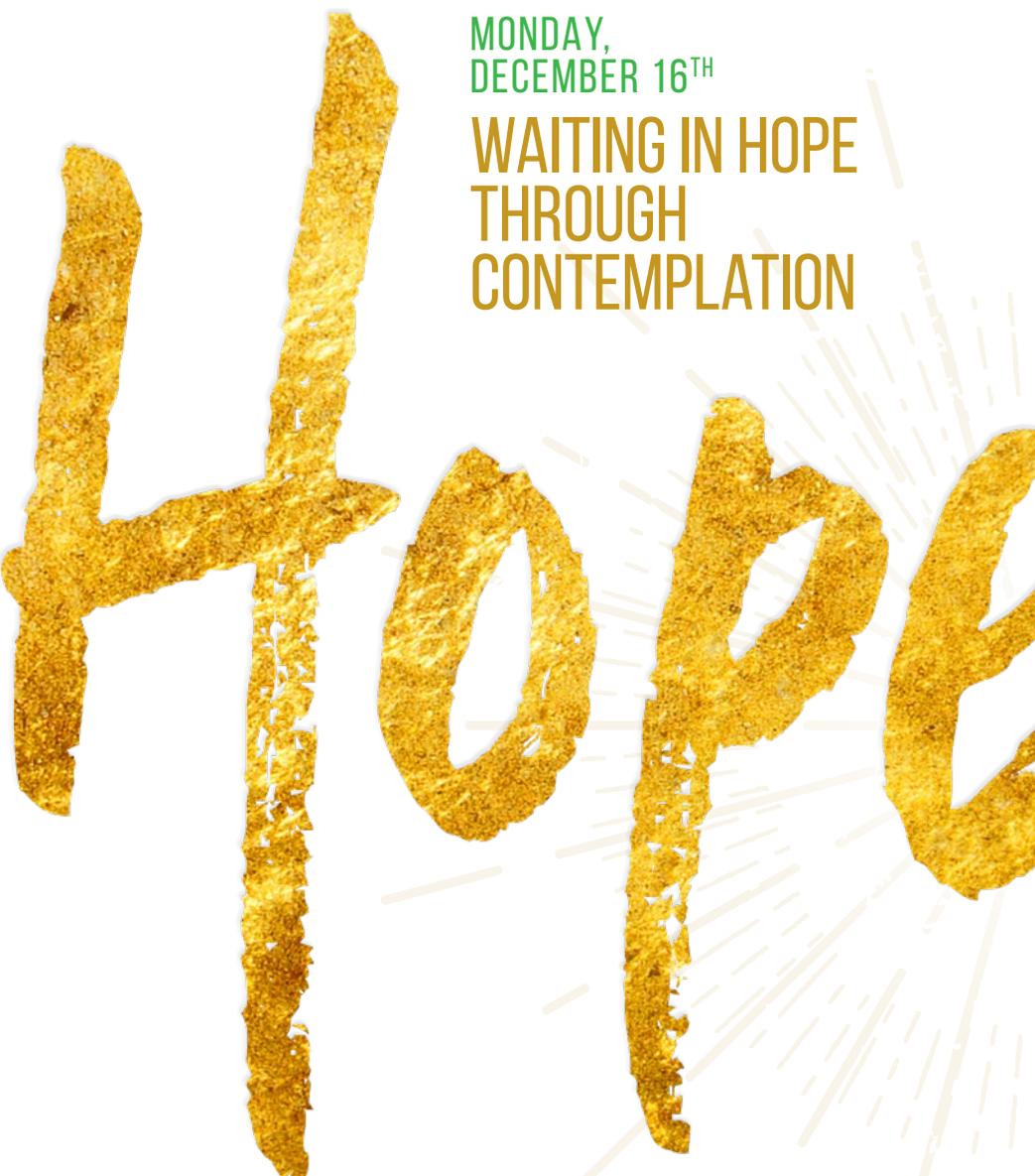
⁴⁶ And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹ for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

⁵⁰ And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; ⁵² he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; ⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵ as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

**GOD,
SHOW ME
HOW TO
WAIT IN
HOPE, LIKE
MARY AND
JOSEPH, AS
I “PREPARE
HIM ROOM”
IN THE WEEK
AHEAD.**

Luke 1:35, 37-38, 46-55

AMEN



MONDAY,
DECEMBER 16TH

WAITING IN HOPE THROUGH CONTEMPLATION

Are you waiting on God to fulfill a purpose or a promise in your life? If so, how do Mary and Joseph's responses apply to your situation?

Is God asking you to wait on His timing in any area of your life?

When the unexpected happens, what is your typical response?

If we also are children of the promise and called according to God's purposes, how is God inviting you to wait in hope right now?

CHRISTIAN HOPE IS THE
ANTICIPATION OF THE FULFILLMENT
OF GOD'S PURPOSES AND PROMISES
ROOTED IN GOD'S COVENANTAL
FAITHFULNESS.

A small, inconsequential town. A young girl, a righteous carpenter preparing to bring his bride home. A quiet life.

Then, an angel appears and life changes dramatically. As Hebrews they had been waiting for some word from God and faithfully living out their lives, and now the fullness of time had arrived. God was at last sending the long-awaited Messiah. God chose Mary and Joseph to fulfill His purposes and His promises to His people.

MARY WAITED WILLINGLY.

"I am the servant of the Lord. May it be to me as you have spoken."

Luke 1:38

JOSEPH WAITED OBEDIENTLY.

"When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him" Matthew 1:24, marrying his mysteriously pregnant fiancée.

Mary and Joseph waited through the long months of pregnancy, including an unexpected relocation—which would be followed by more unexpected relocations after the child was born. All the while we see them waiting in hope—in anticipation of the fulfillment of God's purposes and promises in their lives, for their Israelite people, and for the whole world.

**FATHER,
I AM NOT
PROUD OF
MY TYPICAL
RESPONSES
WHEN THE
UNEXPECTED
HAPPENS.
REMAND ME
I AM A CHILD
OF THE KING.
HELP ME TO
CLING TO YOUR
PROMISES AS
I WAIT IN HOPE
THIS WEEK.**

AMEN

TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 17TH

WAITING IN HOPE THROUGH WORDS

Come, thou long expected
Jesus, born to set thy people
free; from our fears and sins
release us, let us find our rest
in thee. Israel's strength and
consolation, hope of all the
earth thou art; dear desire
of every nation, joy of every
longing heart. Born thy people
to deliver, born a child and
yet a King, born to reign in
us forever, now thy gracious
kingdom bring. By thine
own eternal spirit rule in all
our hearts alone; by thine all
sufficient merit, raise us to thy
glorious throne.

This beautiful Advent hymn was
written by Charles Wesley in 1744.
The hymn is about hope and longing
and promises fulfilled. The people of
God waited many long years for the
coming of Messiah and that longing
was eventually fulfilled in the birth of
Jesus. And now we long for the
day when we are with Him in a
New Heaven and New Earth,
when all things are made new.

As we wait in hope, we affirm that
Christ is the fulfillment of all our
expectation and longing. Everything
we desire is found in Him. He is
the joy of our longing hearts.

This week tell someone
the story of God's
faithfulness in what
seemed like a hopeless
moment in your life.
Ask them to share a
time when they have felt
hopeless and pray
that it might lead to a
deeper conversation.

**GOD,
SOMETIMES
I FEEL SO
HOPELESS
WHEN I LOOK
AT THE WORLD
AROUND ME.
PLEASE FILL
ME WITH
GRATITUDE AS
I REMEMBER YOUR
FAITHFULNESS.
AMEN**

WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 18TH

WAITING IN HOPE THROUGH THE ARTS

PSALM 39:7: And now, O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you.

The future can be a scary thing, with numerous uncertainties. Who knows what tomorrow might bring? When we have faith in Christ, however, we have hope, not only in this life, but in the next. The future, while uncertain, can be entrusted to God. He is our hope... today, tomorrow, forever.

Take a moment to experience waiting in hope as you watch the video below.

WAITING IN HOPE:
video with song/painting
<https://youtu.be/Wdlj0p087NY>

**LORD,
YOU ARE LIGHT
IN THE DARK,
HEALING FOR
THE BROKEN
HEART; YOU
ARE HOPE:
YOU ARE LIFE.
REMAND ME
AGAIN AND
AGAIN THAT
I CAN TRUST
IN YOU. TODAY,
I WILL WAIT IN
HOPE IN THE
MIDST OF**

*

AMEN

* Fill in blanks

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19TH

WAITING IN HOPE THROUGH APPLICATION

“A watched pot never boils.” We know it is going to come to a boil, but it seems to take forever when we just stand there and wait! If we get busy with something else, it may just *spill over* and *explode*!

Our waiting spiritually can't be a passive process. Despite many unknowns and cultural pressures, Mary and Joseph journeyed towards Bethlehem with the hope they knew was true. And yes, that night “the heavens *exploded* with music everywhere! And the angels *spilled over* heaven's edge and filled the air!”

We too know His promises are true and that He is faithful!

Hallelujah! Praise the One who set me free!
Hallelujah! Death has lost its grip on me.
You have broken every chain, there's salvation in His name. Jesus Christ,
my **Living Hope!**

Are you waiting passively through a difficult time? Choose to wait in active hope. Find ways you can serve those in your community who need the hope of Christ—someone who has received a devastating medical diagnosis or is experiencing family conflict. When you are at a Christmas party, look past the frivolity to find that person who needs you to share the reason for your hope.

**FATHER,
GIVE ME THE
STRENGTH
TO WAIT IN
ACTIVE HOPE
BY FINDING A
PERSON AND
PLACE TO
SERVE.**

AMEN

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20TH

WAITING IN HOPE THROUGH EXPERIENCES

Jesus is the Messiah, the reason for our hope! Before Jesus was born, God's people had been waiting a long time for God's promised Messiah, who would save them from their sins. That's why the story of Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection is called the good news. Today, we wait with hope for God's promise that Jesus will come to earth again as our Lord and King. While we wait, we thank God for making and loving us, seek ways to honor God with our choices, and share the good news of Jesus with others.

**DEAR GOD,
THANK YOU FOR
JESUS! HELP
US SHARE THE
NEWS THAT
JESUS LOVES
AND OFFERS
FORGIVENESS
(SALVATION)
TO EVERYONE.
AMEN**

Gather together and give each family member one M&M candy. Read the "M&M Christmas Story," turning M&M's to make each letter or number mentioned in the poem.

As you hold these candies in your hand and turn them, you will see.

The **M** becomes a **W**, and **E** and then a **3**.

They tell the Christmas Story - It's one, I'm sure you know.

It took place in a stable a long long time ago.

The **E** is for the East, where the star shone O so bright.

The **M** is for the Manger, where the baby Jesus slept that night.

The **3** is for the wise men, bearing gifts, they say they came.

W is for worship, Hallelujah, Praise to His name!

So as you eat these candies or share them with a friend,

Remember the Spirit of Christmas and never let it end.

Share the hope of Jesus with others by taking a "M&M Christmas Story" card and a container of M&Ms or M&M Cookies to a neighbor, community helper, or friend.

SATURDAY,
DECEMBER 21ST

WAITING IN HOPE THROUGH REFLECTION

What did you learn from waiting in **HOPE** this week?



SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 22ND

WAITING IN PEACE THROUGH SCRIPTURE

Christmas is a yearly reminder and celebration that God came!

Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God...emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:5-7

The Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6

In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Colossians 1:19-20

And until He returns, we can wait in peace. Jesus tells us, "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."

John 14:27

**FATHER,
HELP ME
TO CLAIM
THE PEACE
THAT YOU
BROUGHT
INTO THE
WORLD.**

AMEN



MONDAY,
DECEMBER 23RD

WAITING IN PEACE THROUGH CONTEMPLATION

Jesus chose to humble Himself and come to the world, to walk around like one of us, to identify with us. God could have sent Jesus any way He wanted. He chose to come as a vulnerable baby born to a poor family from an inconsequential small town.

He did that for you.

What is your internal response to this?

What are you hoping for this Christmas?

What do you long for from God?

**THANK YOU,
GOD, FOR
COMING TO
DWELL AMONG
US AND FOR
BRINGING
PEACE TO
MY HEART.**

AMEN

TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 24TH

WAITING IN PEACE THROUGH WORDS

One verse of the old hymn,
“Dear Lord and Father of Mankind,”
has these words written by John
Greenleaf Whittier:

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain
and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.

Peace on earth, goodwill to men, was
the angels’ message to the shepherds.
As we wait during Advent, do we let
the strain, stress, and strivings of the
season drive us?

Isaiah 26:3 says, “You (God) will keep
in perfect peace him whose mind is
steadfast, because he trusts in You.”
Prayer and trust are essential to
serenity and peace. The daily peace
we seek is found in accepting God’s
gift of grace and is maintained through
attentiveness to the Holy Spirit who
lives in us. It is an interior work of the
heart to “turn our strivings into works
of grace” as expressed in the Getty
hymn we sing, “Holy Spirit.”

The good news of the Gospel is that
Christ is our peace. What better time
than Christmas to tell people to not be
afraid, and that peace can be found in
a relationship with Jesus.

**FATHER,
GIVE ME EYES
TO SEE THOSE
WHO NEED
TO HEAR THE
MESSAGE OF
CHRIST AND
COURAGE TO
TELL THEM
WHERE TRUE
PEACE CAN
BE FOUND.**

AMEN

WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 25TH

THE WAITING IS OVER

This Christmas Day, take time to immerse yourself in God's word and experience the peace that is found through spending time with Him.

In the version of the **Christmas Story** in the book of John, we are reminded that the Word became flesh and "moved into our neighborhood.

(The Message)

Read the Christmas story in John 1.
Contemplate His title and role as the Prince of Peace.

Thanks be
to God for His
incredible
gift!

FATHER,
THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
INDESCRIBABLE
GIFT AND FOR
PROVIDING
THE PRINCE
OF PEACE
FOR ME.

AMEN & AMEN

**GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST HEAVEN,
AND ON EARTH PEACE TO THOSE ON
WHOM HIS FAVOR RESTS.**

LUKE 2:14



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