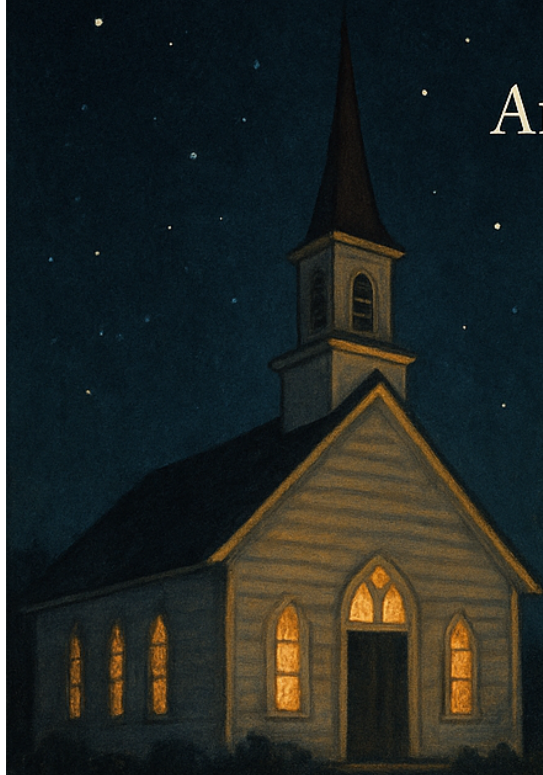


# Light *in the* Night

An Advent Journey  
from Longing  
to Revelation



## Preface

For seventy Advent seasons now, I have watched the candles burn their quiet witness into the dark. The first few, of course, are lost to the fog of infancy. But by the time I was four, the rhythms of Presbyterian liturgy had already begun their slow, steady work in me. The wreaths, the hymns, the prayers spoken in unison, and the carols lifted year after year—all of it seeped into my bones before I had the language to understand what was happening. Those early Christmases in the church my late Great Uncle Frank founded—the first Italian Protestant Chapel in New York City—left an imprint far deeper than I could have imagined then. That congregation, “not many wise, not many noble,” was gathered from every tribe and race and tongue long before I understood how rare such a community was. It was in that little church, in those candlelit Christmas Eve services, that I first sensed the tenderness and weight of the Cross shaping what would later become my understanding of Kingdom culture.

As I wandered in my teenage years, trying my best to outrun the God who had already marked me, those memories never left. Only later, at the middle passage of my life—when ministry had aged me in the best and hardest ways—did I look back and see what had been forming in me. What I once glimpsed only on the surface became insight. And what became insight would eventually grow into foresight, given by grace, as the years of pastoral ministry deepened their own imprint. Advent’s cadence, its longing and its light, has a way of calling forth remembrance.

So, when Pastors Mario and Misty asked if I would create this Advent Devotional, I felt both honored and deeply inadequate. I have read so many Advent devotionals through the years, crafted by voices far more eloquent and learned than I am. But I knew that what I offered did not need to be new, it needed to be true. And truth, when welcomed, carries its own freshness. But I also knew that “my” voice is not truly my own. It is woven from many voices that have shaped me both personally and through the pages of their work.



Across the years, those certain voices have shaped the way I read Scripture, listen for God, and understand the mystery of Christ. Rowan Williams has helped me perceive Christ and creation with a contemplative attentiveness that attunes the heart to grace. Walter Brueggemann has opened the Old Testament as a landscape where lament and hope stand side by side, forming a prophetic imagination that refuses despair. Stanley Hauerwas has shown me how holiness becomes visible in the daily life of communities shaped by worship, truth-telling, and fidelity. Sarah Coakley has drawn me deeper into the life of the Trinity, teaching me that prayer awakens the spiritual senses by which we learn to behold God. J. Louis Martyn has reoriented my reading of Paul, revealing the Christ event as God's decisive interruption that remakes the world from the inside out. Maggie Ross has schooled me in the reverent silence where the Holy arrives quietly, without spectacle, inviting surrender rather than explanation. Daniela Augustine has revealed to me the hospitality of the Spirit, where Pentecostal fire and Orthodox tenderness meet in a love that welcomes, gathers, and heals. And Martin Shaw has reminded me that we live by the stories we inhabit, rekindling in me the sacred art of hearing and telling the gospel as the great, ongoing story that shapes our becoming.

These are only a few of the voices who have shaped me, and only eternity will reveal the countless ways their wisdom has re-formed my own. If I could gather them all, and the many others who have shaped my faith and theology, this devotional would stretch beyond volumes. So, I have, with difficulty, chosen these few to honor here. What you will hear in the pages that follow is not their exact tone or diction, but the echoes of their voices carried through my own.

And so, after seventy Advent seasons, seasons that have shaped me in ways I understood only in glimpses as a child but have come to treasure deeply in these later years, I write this devotional not as an expert, nor as one trying to craft something clever or novel, but as a pilgrim who has learned to honor the long, slow work of God. These weeks before Christmas, and the bright unveiling of Epiphany that follows, have become for me a school of longing, listening, and revelation. They have taught me that Christ comes again and

again to the places we least expect, and that every return to Advent is a return to hope, quiet, steady, and luminous. This is why I offer,

***“A Light In the Night: An Advent Journey from Longing to Revelation”***

It is a humble attempt to share the grace that has formed me across decades, woven through the voices of saints, scholars, poets, and prophets who have helped me listen more deeply for Christ. My prayer is that as you enter these meditations, you will find room within your own heart to notice the nearness of the Lord, to wait with a renewed hunger, and to be surprised by the way His light breaks in. May this journey draw you into the mystery, the beauty, and the transforming presence of the One who still steps into the long night with glory on His face.

Bishop Mark J. Chironna, PhD.

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## **Prelude to Advent**

### **In Honor of Rowan Williams**

Rowan Williams has shaped my way of seeing Christ and creation more than any theologian of our time. He has a way of showing that the incarnation is not a single event but the unveiling of how God relates to all that exists—with patience, depth, and quiet fire. His vision of divine life moving through the ordinary has trained me to listen for grace in places that look like silence and to see redemption as the slow, steady work of love reclaiming what has fallen apart. This Prelude to Advent carries something of that rhythm, each meditation and prayer inviting us to hear, beneath the noise of our age, the sound of Christ gathering creation back to Himself.

**Thursday, November 27, 2025**

**Psalm 122; Daniel 9:15–19; James 4:1–10**

**Theme:** *The prayer for peace begins in repentance; Daniel's confession and James's humility reveal that reconciliation starts within the heart.*

#### **Meditation:**

Before the peace of God can dwell among us, it must first find a home within us. Daniel's prayer is not a plea from a righteous man demanding justice, but from one who identifies himself among the guilty. He refuses to stand apart from the sins of his people. Likewise, James reminds us that conflict begins in the restless desires of the heart, and peace begins when those desires are yielded to God. Advent begins not with triumph but with turning, a movement from self-assertion to surrender. The humility that bows low before God opens the way for divine reconciliation to take root.

#### **Prayer:**

Lord of mercy, teach us the humility that does not excuse or defend, but confesses. Where we have sought peace without repentance, turn us back to You. Let the light of Your truth search our motives, that Your peace may be born not as an idea, but as a life within us. Gather the scattered thoughts of our hearts and draw them toward Your stillness, where Christ, our peace, waits to be born again in us. Amen.

**Friday, November 28, 2025**

**Psalm 122; Genesis 6:1–10; Hebrews 11:1–7**

**Theme:** *Amid corruption, Noah's faith mirrors the Psalm's longing for harmony—the righteous sustain creation by trust.*

**Meditation:**

The story of Noah stands as a witness to faith amid unraveling. While violence and corruption filled the earth, one man's trust became an ark of preservation. Faith, in this sense, is not withdrawal from the world but participation in God's patience with it. The Psalmist's cry for peace in Jerusalem is the same longing that sustained Noah, a desire for creation to be set right again, for human life to dwell in order and praise. In every generation, God calls forth those who will trust that His purpose endures beyond the floodwaters of our age. To live by faith is to live as one who believes creation is still worth saving.

**Prayer:**

Faithful God, when the world grows weary of righteousness, keep us steadfast. Let our faith be a shelter for others, a place where hope finds refuge. Teach us to build, plank by plank, the quiet obedience that endures the storm. May our trust, like Noah's, bear witness to Your covenant love that renews the face of the earth. Amen.





**Saturday, November 29, 2025**

**Psalm 122; Genesis 6:11–22; Matthew 24:1–22**

**Theme:** *The world trembles, yet divine order holds; watchfulness preserves peace when foundations shake.*

**Meditation:**

The shaking of the world is never the end of the story. Noah's ark, built in obedience, becomes a sign that divine order holds even as creation groans. Jesus' words about the end are not meant to breed despair, but to summon attention, to awaken a watchful heart. To watch is not to fear the tremors but to remember the hand that steadies them. Peace is not found in escaping uncertainty, but in learning to live from the unshaken center, where God's purpose quietly unfolds. Advent watchfulness means trusting that in every disruption, God is preparing a new beginning.

**Prayer:**

Eternal Lord, when all around us quakes, be our steady ground. Keep our eyes fixed on the promise that outlasts every ruin. Awaken us from distraction, that we may discern Your quiet order beneath the world's noise. Let our waiting be filled with faith, our faith with peace, and our peace with endurance, until Your new creation dawns. Amen.



## **First Week of Advent**

### **In Honor of Walter Brueggemann**

Walter Brueggemann's voice has been one of the great prophetic gifts of my lifetime. His reading of the Old Testament has opened for me a living world where lament and hope speak side by side, where poetry and protest share the same breath. He has taught me that the vision of *shalom*, God's wholeness for creation, is not sentimental idealism but the fierce reordering of life around justice, mercy, and truth. His words have called me to a faith that resists despair, a hope that acts, and a prophetic imagination that refuses captivity to fear. And in that sense, his work has shaped my understanding of Advent itself, the season that lives between promise and fulfillment, where we are summoned to hope before evidence and to trust that peace is being born even in the world's fractures. This first week carries that inheritance: the call to remember that peace is not passive but born from the courage to trust God's new world into being.

### **First Sunday of Advent - November 30, 2025**

**Isaiah 2:1–5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11–14; Matthew 24:36–44**

**Theme:** The call to awaken and walk in light fulfills Isaiah's vision of nations streaming to God's peace.

### **Meditation**

Advent always interrupts us. It walks into the settled rooms of our lives and speaks of a world we have not yet dared to imagine. Isaiah stands in front of empires and says that nations will one day stream toward a mountain that does not command by threat but teaches by truth. Psalm 122 echoes that same hope. Jerusalem becomes less a city of stone and more a picture of God's dream for human community, where peace is not a slogan but a way of organizing life. Paul tells us the night is nearly over. He does not flatter us about how well we are doing. He names our sleep and asks us to put on a different way of being. Matthew calls us to stay awake, not in fear, but in readiness for the God who keeps showing up in unplanned moments. Advent is God's refusal to let us settle for the world we have made. It is a summons to wake up to the world God is making. These readings refuse denial. They refuse panic. They ask us to drop the tired habits that keep us from noticing grace. Advent invites us to trust that God is working a new day into the old one. And we are asked to walk into that day with clear eyes, honest hearts, and a readiness to learn peace again.



## Prayer

Holy One,  
break through our familiar patterns and wake us to Your newness.  
Let Your promise stir us out of resignation.  
Teach us to seek the peace You imagine for the world.  
Pull us toward the light that is growing even now.  
Make us ready for Your arrival in the small corners of our lives,  
and strengthen us to walk into the day You are bringing.  
Amen.



**Monday, December 1, 2025**

**Psalm 124; Genesis 8:1–19; Romans 6:1–11**

**Theme:** *Deliverance from the flood becomes baptism's pattern—rescued life offered back in thanksgiving.*

**Meditation:**

The flood was not only destruction, it was also new creation. When the waters receded, the earth took a long, shuddering breath. Noah stepped out into a world washed clean, bewildered but alive. Paul names that moment again when he speaks of baptism, of being buried and raised. God's rescue is not a mere escape from danger; it is an invitation to live differently—to live grateful. Psalm 124 remembers: *If it had not been the Lord who was on our side...* The survivors of every flood know that line by heart. Deliverance leads not to pride but to thanksgiving, not to possession but to praise.

**Prayer:**

God of the second chance, You remember us when the waters rise. You lift us from what we could not survive. Teach us the gratitude that refuses to forget. Let our rescued lives be lived toward You, as offerings of thanks, as testimonies of Your mercy. Amen.





**Tuesday, December 2, 2025**

**Psalm 124; Genesis 9:1–17; Hebrews 11:32–40**

**Theme:** *Covenant mercy endures; the Psalmist's gratitude joins the faith of those awaiting perfection in Christ.*

**Meditation:**

The rainbow arches across the wreckage, a covenant painted in light. God binds Himself to creation, to its frailty and failure, to its relentless hope. Hebrews gathers the long line of those who trusted that promise: Abraham, Rahab, Gideon, David, all unfinished, all waiting. The Psalmist joins their chorus of survival. "Our help is in the name of the Lord." That name is not a theory; it is a testimony born from experience. Advent reminds us that covenant mercy is not abstract. It endures through history's floods and deserts, through empires and exiles, through our disbelief and forgetfulness. And still, God remembers.

**Prayer:**

Promise-keeping God, You have not abandoned Your word. You remember Your covenant when we do not. Bind us again to Your mercy. Give us faith to wait with those who trusted before us, and gratitude to see Your faithfulness made new in Christ. Amen.



**Wednesday, December 3, 2025**

**Psalm 124; Isaiah 54:1–10; Matthew 24:23–35**

**Theme:** *God's steadfast love remains when all else passes; judgment yields to compassion that cannot be shaken.*

**Meditation:**

Isaiah sings to the barren one, to the forsaken, to the shamed. His song is a strange one, commanding joy before evidence, promising comfort amid ruins. God's love, he insists, is more certain than the mountains. Jesus says heaven and earth will pass away, but His words will not. Everything that looks permanent will crumble; everything that looks fragile: mercy, compassion, and forgiveness, will endure. The world runs on fear and power, but the holy story runs on covenant love. And when the shaking begins, that love will be the only steady ground.

**Prayer:**

Unshakable God, we live in a world that trembles. Teach us to trust what cannot be destroyed, Your compassion, Your promise, Your steadfast love. Let that love steady our hearts, and through us bring comfort to those still in exile. Amen.



**Thursday, December 4, 2025**

**Psalm 72:1–7, 18–19; Isaiah 4:2–6; Acts 1:12–17, 21–26**

**Theme:** *Justice and righteousness crown true leadership; the apostles seek guidance under the same divine kingship the Psalm celebrates.*

**Meditation:**

Psalm 72 is a royal prayer, a dangerous one. It dares to imagine leadership shaped not by control but by compassion, not by greed but by justice. Isaiah dreams the same dream: a day when the branch of the Lord will shelter the weary and cleanse the city's wounds. In Acts, the disciples gather, leaderless but not without hope, seeking direction under that same kingship. The kingdom is God's, not theirs. Advent reminds the Church that power is never possession. True rule is the rule of righteousness, the rule that lifts the poor and guards the weak.

**Prayer:**

Holy King, grant us rulers and shepherds who love what You love. Deliver us from the arrogance that crowns itself. Let Your justice flow through our hands and Your mercy guide our choices. May we live beneath the shelter of Your reign, where righteousness and peace embrace. Amen.





**Friday, December 5, 2025**

**Psalm 72:1–7, 18–19; Isaiah 30:19–26; Acts 13:16–25**

**Theme:** *The King who heals the land is revealed in Christ—the Sun who rises with saving light.*

**Meditation:**

Isaiah's poetry is wild with hope: the teacher will no longer hide, the wounds will be bound, the light will shine sevenfold. It is the dream of a people who have known too much darkness. Paul speaks of that light fulfilled in Christ, the King who heals not by decree but by presence. The Psalm anticipates this same ruler: one whose justice makes the land bloom again. Advent speaks into the winter of the world, announcing a dawn that cannot be stopped. The healing has already begun; it comes with the rising of the true Sun.

**Prayer:**

Light of the world, rise upon us. Chase away the shadows that have lingered too long. Heal the wounds we have made on Your earth and in one another. Let Your justice shine, and let Your peace take root, until creation itself sings with joy at Your appearing. Amen.



**Saturday, December 6, 2025**

**Psalm 72:1–7, 18–19; Isaiah 40:1–11; John 1:19–28**

**Theme:** *The Psalm's promise of peace meets the herald's cry: comfort prepares the way for divine visitation.*

**Meditation:**

"Comfort, comfort my people." Isaiah's words fall like rain on cracked ground. John the Baptist takes up that cry centuries later, rough voice in a dry place, announcing the coming of One greater. The Psalm imagines that coming in royal tones, justice, peace, abundance, but the Gospels reveal it in humility and flesh. Comfort does not come as escape but as presence: God among us, naming our grief, forgiving our rebellion, preparing new paths in old wildernesses. Advent comfort is costly; it asks us to clear the way for God to walk through our own hearts.

**Prayer:**

God of comfort, speak into our deserts again. Make straight the crooked places in us. Let Your peace take flesh where we least expect it and teach us to recognize the footsteps of the One who comes in mercy. For Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, now and always. Amen.





## Second Week of Advent

### In Honor of Stanley Hauerwas

Stanley Hauerwas has long challenged and inspired my theological imagination. His way of bringing Wesley's vision of holiness into conversation with the grit of modern life has marked me deeply. He speaks of discipleship not as moral achievement but as a communal way of being formed by the story of Jesus, a story that shapes how we live, suffer, and hope together. His theology refuses abstraction; it always lands in the texture of daily faithfulness, where truth is embodied rather than argued.

Hauerwas's brilliance lies in his capacity to make ancient truths speak with unsettling clarity to our present moment. He reminds the Church that the world does not need us to be powerful but to be peculiar, to bear witness to the peaceable kingdom through patience, forgiveness, and fidelity. In this second week of Advent, his voice calls us to live as those who believe that the waiting itself is part of our formation, that through worship, community, and obedience, we become signs of the coming Christ in a world still aching for redemption.

**Sunday, December 7, 2025**

**Isaiah 11:1–10; Psalm 72:1–7, 18–19; Romans 15:4–13; Matthew 3:1–12**

**Theme:** *The shoot from Jesse fulfills the Psalm's vision—justice, mercy, and peace converge in the coming Christ.*

#### **Meditation:**

Advent teaches us patience because God's justice doesn't come on our schedule. Isaiah's vision of a shoot from Jesse is not a fantasy of escape but a summons to live as if this peace were already true. The wolf and the lamb dwell together because God's own life has reordered creation. John the Baptist's cry in the wilderness calls for repentance, not as moral housekeeping, but as readiness for a new world where Christ rules. The Church lives between what God has promised and what God is bringing to completion, and our waiting is meant to make us faithful people, not passive spectators.

#### **Prayer:**

God of justice and mercy, train us to live as citizens of Your peaceable kingdom. Let our lives bear the fruit of repentance that announces Your coming. Give us patience to live toward Your promise and courage to make room for it now. Amen.

**Monday, December 8, 2025**

**Psalm 21; Isaiah 24:1–16a; 1 Thessalonians 4:1–12**

**Theme:** *The Lord's strength sustains the faithful when the earth reels; holiness steadies life amid decay.*

**Meditation:**

The world is never as stable as we pretend. Isaiah's vision of the earth reeling and worn thin is not only about catastrophe, but also about exposure. Advent unmasks our false securities. Holiness, Paul reminds us, is the discipline of staying awake to God's presence in ordinary work, in love of neighbor, in the quiet dignity of honest labor. To live holy lives when the world trembles is to testify that our hope does not depend on the illusion of control but on the God who holds everything together.

**Prayer:**

Strengthen us, Lord, when the ground shifts beneath our feet. Keep us steadfast in love, faithful in work, and humble in hope. Let holiness become our stability, that we may endure with joy when all else is shaken. Amen.



**Tuesday, December 9, 2025**

**Psalm 21; Isaiah 41:14–20; Romans 15:14–21**

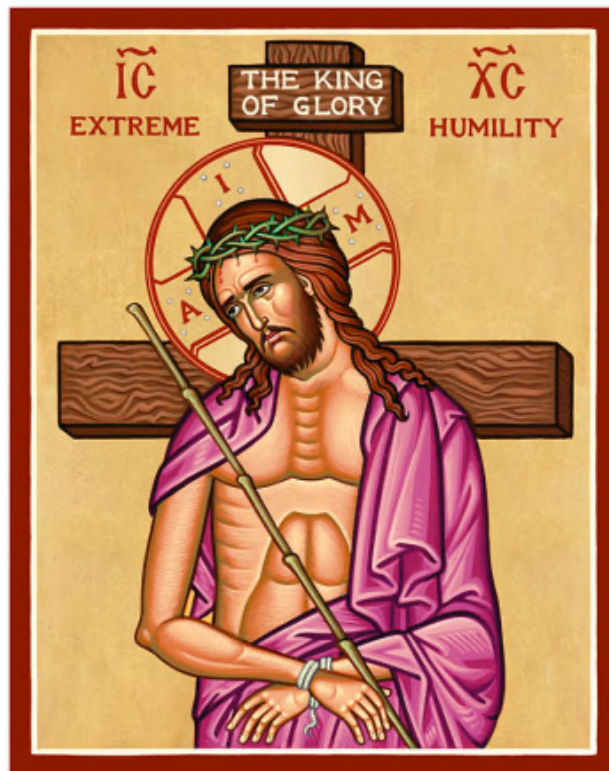
**Theme:** *The Psalm's victorious joy joins Isaiah's promise to the weak and Paul's zeal to proclaim God's power to all peoples.*

**Meditation:**

The weak are not abandoned. God's strength is made visible in their restoration. Isaiah's word to Israel, "Fear not, you worm Jacob", is not insult but mercy; it names weakness honestly so that grace can be received honestly. Paul's tireless mission carries that same conviction: that God's power reaches where human confidence collapses. The joy of Psalm 21 belongs not to the triumphant, but to those who know who truly reigns. Advent reorients our victory songs around the strange triumph of divine humility.

**Prayer:**

God of the lowly, give us the courage to name our weakness and the faith to trust Your strength. Let our joy be rooted not in achievement but in Your mercy that reaches all peoples in Christ. Amen.



**Wednesday, December 10, 2025**

**Psalm 21; Genesis 15:1–18; Matthew 12:33–37**

**Theme:** *Trust and covenant bind heart and speech; Abraham's faith and Jesus' warning reveal that integrity flows from belief.*

**Meditation:**

Faith is not sentiment; it is covenant fidelity that speaks truth because it lives in truth. Abraham's belief was reckoned as righteousness because it changed the way he lived. Jesus tells us that the mouth reveals the heart, exposing whether our words serve God's promise or our own pride. Advent demands integrity, a coherence between what we say we hope for and how we live while we wait. The speech of faith must sound like the trust it claims.

**Prayer:**

God of the covenant, make our hearts true so our words may be trustworthy. Keep us from the hypocrisy of hollow hope. Form in us the kind of faith that speaks truth and lives by it. Amen.





**Thursday, December 11, 2025**

**Psalm 146:5–10; Ruth 1:6–18; 2 Peter 3:1–10**

**Theme:** *The God who defends the helpless works through Ruth's devotion; patience is faith's endurance until the day dawns.*

**Meditation:**

Ruth's decision to stay with Naomi is not idealistic loyalty, it is covenant in action. Her devotion reveals a God who keeps promises through human faithfulness. Peter reminds us that delay does not mean neglect; divine patience is grace giving time for repentance. Advent's waiting is not idleness; it is the endurance of love that refuses to walk away. Faith is not proved in outcomes but in the staying power of trust.

**Prayer:**

Faithful God, teach us to wait without losing heart. Let our patience bear the weight of hope, and our hope take the shape of love that stays. Through our small faithfulness, make Your mercy known. Amen.





**Friday, December 12, 2025**

**Psalm 146:5–10; Ruth 4:13–17; 2 Peter 3:11–18**

**Theme:** *Redemption blossoms in ordinary faithfulness; divine promises mature through human obedience.*

**Meditation:**

Boaz and Ruth's story ends without extravaganza, just a child, a family, a promise kept. Yet through that ordinary obedience, the lineage of redemption unfolds. God does not bypass human lives; He sanctifies them. Advent faith is lived in kitchens, in workplaces, in the quiet persistence of doing what love requires. Holiness looks small until the promise ripens. The kingdom grows through the unnoticed fidelity of those who keep showing up.

**Prayer:**

Redeeming Lord, remind us that Your glory is revealed in our ordinary obedience. Let our daily tasks become the soil where Your promises take root. Make our lives places where Your future is quietly being born. Amen.



**Saturday, December 13, 2025**

**Psalm 146:5–10; 1 Samuel 2:1–8; Luke 3:1–18**

**Theme:** *The reversal of fortunes in Hannah's and John's words enacts the Psalm's assurance: God lifts the humble.*

**Meditation:**

Hannah sings before she holds the outcome in her arms. John preaches before the Messiah is seen. Both trust a God who overturns the world's arrangements. The mighty are brought low; the poor are lifted; the barren sing. Advent worship always sounds like this, defiant praise in a still-unredeemed world. To believe that the lowly matter most is to live as if the kingdom has already begun.

**Prayer:**

God who casts down and raises up, teach us the song of Hannah and the courage of John. Let our praise disrupt the patterns of pride and power, that through humility Your reign may be revealed. Amen.



## **Third Week of Advent**

### **In Honor of Sarah Coakley**

Sarah Coakley's theological vision has helped me see the life of the Trinity not as an abstract doctrine but as the living pattern of divine intimacy. She has shown me that prayer is participation in the eternal life of God, the Spirit drawing us into the mutual self-giving of Father and Son. Her work on the *spiritual senses*, as understood by the ancient mothers and fathers, has opened for me a way of perceiving God that is not limited to intellect but awakened through transformation.

Though she stands in the Anglican tradition, she has carried a quiet affection for those of us in Pentecostal and Charismatic life, recognizing in our experience the longing to see and feel the nearness of God. Her depth, tenderness, and theological courage have marked me profoundly. This third week of Advent, *Gaudete*, the week of joy, echoes the radiant balance she embodies: rigorous thought married to contemplative encounter, intellect transfigured by love. These reflections are shaped by her witness that joy is not escape from the wilderness, but the flowering of divine life within it.

### **Sunday, December 14, 2025 —Gaudete Sunday**

Gaudete Sunday is the Third Sunday of Advent, and its name comes from the Latin word *gaudete*, meaning “rejoice.” The title is taken from the opening words of the traditional Introit for the day: “*Gaudete in Domino semper*”, “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Philippians 4:4).

It marks a turning point in Advent's rhythm. After two weeks of penitence, longing, and sober expectation, the Church pauses to rejoice, not because the waiting is over, but because the promise is near. The liturgical color shifts from purple to rose, signaling joy in the midst of anticipation. It's the Church's way of saying that even in waiting, there is light; even before fulfillment, there is grace.

Spiritually, Gaudete Sunday reminds us that joy is not the denial of sorrow but its transfiguration. It is the assurance that God's coming is certain, and that His presence already begins to renew the wilderness within and around us.

**Isaiah 35:1–10; Psalm 146:4–10; James 5:7–10; Matthew 11:2–11**

**Theme:** *Joy breaks into wilderness waiting; the blind see, the lame walk, and the faithful endure until glory blooms.*

**Meditation:**

Joy is not a mood but a movement of grace within us. Isaiah's desert rejoices not because its barrenness has vanished, but because God has chosen to dwell there. The blind see, the lame walk, signs that divine life interrupts decay. John's question from prison, "Are you the one?" still lingers in every heart that waits for deliverance. Advent joy answers with quiet confidence: yes, God has come and comes still. This joy is contemplative; it perceives through the Spirit's inner senses that Christ is near even when outwardly nothing has changed.

**Prayer:**

Triune God, awaken our hearts to the joy that is Your very life. Teach us to perceive Your nearness in the wilderness and to trust the signs of Your hidden glory. Let joy take root in patience, and patience flower in praise. Amen.





**Monday, December 15, 2025**

**Psalm 42; Isaiah 29:17–24; Acts 5:12–16**

**Theme:** *The soul's thirst meets healing waters; restoration proves that God is still present among His people.*

**Meditation:**

"My soul thirsts for God, for the living God." Advent begins in thirst, the recognition that only the Spirit can satisfy the deep places within us. Isaiah promises transformation: the deaf shall hear, the meek shall obtain joy in the Lord. The Acts story shows this promise fulfilled through the Church's life, where the Spirit still heals and restores. This is no sentimental comfort. It is the breaking in of divine presence, teaching us that holiness and healing are inseparable movements of love.

**Prayer:**

Living God, quench our thirst with the waters of Your Spirit. Let Your healing renew not only our bodies but our vision, that we may discern Your presence moving among us still. Make our lives vessels of restoration for others. Amen.





**Tuesday, December 16, 2025**

**Psalm 42; Ezekiel 47:1–12; Jude 1:17–25**

**Theme:** *Streams from the temple and mercy from heaven renew life; God keeps those who remain in His love.*

**Meditation:**

The river that flows from the temple in Ezekiel's vision is not just geography, it is grace made visible. Wherever it goes, life follows. The Spirit is that river, flowing from the heart of God through the Church into the world's desolation. Jude's exhortation to remain in divine love is a call to dwell where those waters move. To pray is to be drawn into their current, carried beyond self-preoccupation into renewal. Advent waiting becomes communion, the soul learning to rest in the flow of mercy that makes all things new.

**Prayer:**

Spirit of life, let Your river flow through the deserts of our hearts. Keep us rooted in love, protected from despair, and nourished by the waters that make all creation bloom again. Amen.



**Wednesday, December 17, 2025**

**Psalm 42; Zechariah 8:1–17; Matthew 8:14–17, 28–34**

**Theme:** *The longing for God's presence is answered by His nearness in healing and restoration.*

**Meditation:**

The prophets speak of return, of God dwelling again among His people. Jesus embodies that return in touch and compassion, restoring the sick, confronting the demonic, lifting those who thought themselves beyond reach. Advent invites us to attend to His nearness not only in word but in sensation, to feel His presence as the fathers and mothers once did, through the spiritual senses awakened by grace. To be healed is not merely to be made whole but to be rejoined to the presence that gives meaning to wholeness.

**Prayer:**

Lord Christ, draw near to the places we hide in fear and pain. Awaken our hearts and our senses to Your healing presence. Let our restoration become the sign of Your indwelling love. Amen.



**Thursday, December 18, 2025**

**Psalm 80:1–7, 17–19; 2 Samuel 7:1–17; Galatians 3:23–29**

**Theme:** *The shepherd who restores Israel fulfills covenant promises; faith gathers all into one household.*

**Meditation:**

Advent draws our attention to the Shepherd who gathers what has been scattered. God's promise to David matures in Christ, whose household transcends bloodlines and borders. Paul names this belonging as faith's new kinship, sons and daughters adopted into divine communion. To live by faith is to live in the Triune life, the life of the Threeness and Oneness, bound into the relationship of Father, Son, and Spirit. In that communion we discover that restoration is not only individual but communal, the healing of our divisions through the life we share in Christ.

**Prayer:**

O Shepherd of Israel, gather us again into the unity of Your love. Heal what separates us and bind us into Your household of faith. Let our belonging bear witness to the covenant fulfilled in Christ. Amen.





**Friday, December 19, 2025**

**Psalm 80:1–7, 17–19; 2 Samuel 7:18–22; Galatians 4:1–7**

**Theme:** *From gratitude to adoption—the heart's cry “restore us” becomes the Spirit's “Abba, Father.”*

**Meditation:**

David's prayer of gratitude matures into the Church's prayer of adoption. What begins as “restore us” becomes the Spirit's deeper cry within us, “Abba, Father.” Advent grace draws us from petition into communion. In that movement, the distance between Creator and creature becomes the nearness of child to parent. Prayer is no longer performance but participation; no longer striving but resting in the mutual love of the Triune God.

**Prayer:**

Abba, Father, teach us to rest in Your love. Turn our longing into trust, our petitions into praise. Let Your Spirit bear witness within us that we belong to You, now and forever. Amen.





**Saturday, December 20, 2025**

**Psalm 80:1–7, 17–19; 2 Samuel 7:23–29; John 3:31–36**

**Theme:** *The covenant's fulfillment is the Son who brings eternal life; restoration finds its answer in revelation.*

**Meditation:**

All covenant roads lead to this: the revelation of the Son. What was promised in fragments is fulfilled in the One who descends from above and speaks the words of God. Advent faith listens not only for what He says but for who He is, the Word made flesh, the voice of divine intimacy calling us home. Eternal life is not an afterthought; it is communion with the Triune God here and now, life transfigured by knowing the Son.

**Prayer:**

Word made flesh, open our hearts to receive Your life. Let the light of Your revelation restore our vision and renew our trust. Draw us into the fellowship of Your eternal love, now and always. Amen.



## Fourth Week of Advent

### In Honor of J. Louis Martyn

J. Louis Martyn's reading of Paul has profoundly shaped my understanding of the gospel as revelation, not merely instruction, but divine invasion. He taught me to see the "Christ event" not as a new phase in human striving but as God's decisive interruption of history. For Martyn, Paul's message is not about gradual moral improvement or religious ascent; it is about *apocalypse*, the unveiling of a new world that breaks in from beyond. Grace, in this vision, is not a helping hand to the old creation but the birth of something entirely new.

This is why Martyn's theology speaks so powerfully into Advent. The Incarnation is not emotionalism; it is disruption. God does not wait for the world to be ready. He descends into it, into its darkness, its confusion, and its hostility, to announce that the old age is passing away and the new has begun. Advent, then, becomes our rehearsal for that same divine interruption. It calls us to live as people already invaded by grace, whose hope is not rooted in progress but in the God who still tears open the heavens and comes down.

**Sunday, December 21, 2025**

**Isaiah 7:10–16; Psalm 80:1–7, 16–18; Romans 1:1–7; Matthew 1:18–25**

**Theme:** *Emmanuel—God with us—is the promised sign; divine nearness transforms waiting into worship.*

#### **Meditation:**

The gospel does not tell of human ascent to heaven, but of heaven's descent to us. Isaiah's sign, *a child shall be born*, is not the triumph of human progress, but the invasion of divine presence into frail flesh. Paul's letter opens not with advice but with announcement: God has acted. The Incarnation is the end of religion as negotiation; it is the declaration that God has crossed the boundary no human effort could bridge. "Emmanuel" means the world is no longer godless space. In the coming of this child, grace has entered history uninvited, overturning despair into doxology.

#### **Prayer:**

God who comes without our permission, interrupt us again. Break through our managed expectations and reveal Yourself as the One who refuses distance. Let the nearness of Christ reorder our waiting into worship and our fear into faith. Amen.

**Monday, December 22, 2025**

**Luke 1:46b–55; Isaiah 33:17–22; Revelation 22:6–7, 18–20**

**Theme:** *The Magnificat magnifies the righteous King whose reign restores vision and hope.*

**Meditation:**

Mary's song is not gentle piety; it is apocalypse in melody. The lowly are lifted, the proud scattered, the hungry filled. This is not moral sentiment but divine reversal. Isaiah's promise of the King whose beauty restores sight is answered in her womb. Revelation's "Behold, I am coming soon" is the echo of that same joy: the new order has already begun. The Magnificat names what the world cannot see yet, the inbreaking reign of God that exposes every counterfeit kingdom.

**Prayer:**

God of the Magnificat, teach us to sing the song of reversal with courage. Let Your reign undo our blindness and give us sight to see Your coming among the poor and humble. Magnify Your mercy in us until our praise becomes prophecy. Amen.



**Tuesday, December 23, 2025**

**Luke 1:46b–55; 2 Samuel 7:18, 23–29; Galatians 3:6–14**

**Theme:** *God's faithfulness to David and Abraham meets Mary's praise, the promise is fulfilled in mercy.*

**Meditation:**

The promise made to Abraham and renewed to David finds its fulfillment not in empire or bloodline but in a young woman's "yes." Paul insists that God's faithfulness has outrun the law, bursting through history's limits in the Christ event. The gospel is not continuity; it is invasion. Mercy arrives where human possibility has expired. Mary sings of that disruption, the faithfulness that keeps covenant by transforming its very terms: blessing not earned but given, righteousness not achieved but revealed.

**Prayer:**

Faithful God, who keeps promise through disruption, awaken our gratitude for Your mercy that breaks every boundary. Let our praise join Mary's, proclaiming that the old has passed and Your new creation has begun. Amen.





## Wednesday, December 24, 2025 – Nativity of the Lord (Proper 1)

**Isaiah 9:2–7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11–14; Luke 2:1–14 (15–20)**

**Theme:** *Light pierces the darkness; the grace of salvation appears bringing joy to all creation.*

### **Meditation:**

The night sky over Bethlehem becomes the stage of divine invasion. “The grace of God has appeared,” Paul writes, not an idea, not a system, but a person. Isaiah’s people who walked in darkness have not improved their situation; the light has sought them out. This is the scandal of the gospel: grace appears where it is least expected, shining not on the powerful but on shepherds. The world’s midnight becomes the hour of revelation. The Word does not reform the old order; it ends it by birthing the new.

### **Prayer:**

Incarnate Light, appear again in our darkness. Let the radiance of Your grace expose the shadows we cling to. Make our worship the echo of heaven’s song: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.” Amen.



For Christmas Day the lectionary provides two sets of readings, *Proper II* and *Proper III*, and I chose to include both in this Advent Devotional. Each offers a different dimension of the mystery, and each invited a particular theological voice to help draw out its depth. *Proper II* carries the quiet tenderness of divine nearness, so I rendered it in the contemplative voice of *Maggie Ross*, whose insights into silence and Incarnation illuminate its gentle revelation. *Proper III*, with its cosmic sweep and apocalyptic announcement, is presented once again in the voice of *J. Louis Martyn*, whose reading of the Christ event as divine interruption speaks powerfully into its themes. Together they frame Christmas Day as both tenderness and invasion, silence and glory, God with us in humility and God for us in decisive revelation.

### **Thursday, December 25, 2025 – Nativity of the Lord (Proper II)**

#### **Interlude: Christmas Day – In Honor of Maggie Ross**

There are few voices in our time who have spoken of silence with such authority, reverence, and clarity as Maggie Ross. Her writings have taught me that silence is not the absence of sound but the presence of God. She reminds us that the mystery of the Incarnation unfolds not in spectacle, but in stillness, “the still point,” as she might say, where divine self-giving and human vulnerability meet without noise or defense.

In that Bethlehem night, everything essential happened beneath the register of human notice. Heaven emptied itself into an infant’s breath, and the cosmos turned in quiet awe. The Word, before whom angels veil their faces, entered history without announcement. Ross teaches us that such silence is not void but fullness, not retreat but revelation. It is the space where the knowledge of God ceases to be concept and becomes communion.

Christmas, in her light, becomes less about explanation and more about beholding. The hypostatic union, the mystery of God made flesh, is not an equation to solve but an encounter to surrender to. Here, divine mystery and human fragility lie side by side, and the world is redeemed in their meeting. If we dare to follow her invitation, we discover that the truest celebration of Christmas is not in what we say about it, but in the silence where love alone speaks.

**Isaiah 62:6–12; Psalm 97; Titus 3:4–7; Luke 2:(1–7) 8–20**

**Theme:** *The watchmen's song becomes the angels' proclamation—God's mercy is born among us.*

### **Meditation in the Voice of Maggie Ross**

Salvation arrives in a way that only silence can teach. What the watchmen strained to see through long nights comes without spectacle, carried on the breath of angels to those whose hearts can still listen. Mercy does not descend with force. It appears. Titus speaks of this with quiet clarity: the goodness and lovingkindness of God simply *appeared*. The Incarnation is God's quiet assent to share our condition without hesitation. In the stillness of that moment, every shadow is touched by light. The Holy chooses to inhabit our poverty, and the world becomes the place where God is willing to dwell.

### **Prayer**

God of mercy, born into the hush of the night, draw us into the stillness where Your presence is known. Let the wonder of Your appearing loosen our defenses and awaken our praise. Teach us to recognize You in the quiet places of our lives and let our hearts echo the song of the angels: salvation is here. Amen.



## **Thursday, December 25, 2025 – Nativity of the Lord (Proper III)**

Here again we enter the text with *J. Louis Martyn's* unmistakable lens, where the gospel is not gradual evolution but divine eruption. His reading presses us to hear these Christmas Day passages apocalyptically, as revelation that breaks into the world from outside its exhausted possibilities. For Martyn, John 1 is not poetry, it is the earthquake of God's self-disclosure. The Word, the One through whom all things came to be, has stepped into the old age, and nothing remains untouched by this descent. Isaiah's herald, Psalm 98's joy, and Hebrews' cosmic Christ all converge in this explosive announcement: God has acted, decisively and without permission. The Incarnation is not sentiment; it is invasion, the dawn of a new creation breaking into the world's night.

**Isaiah 52:7–10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1–4 (5–12); John 1:1–14**

**Theme:** *The Word through whom all was made dwells with us; creation rejoices at redemption's dawn.*

### **Meditation:**

John's gospel begins with cosmic rupture: the Word that spoke creation into being now steps inside it. God has not sent another prophet but has spoken Himself. This is revelation as invasion, the Creator entering creation to reclaim it from within. The old world cannot contain such a Word; it must be remade. Advent culminates in this astonishment: that the eternal has become temporal, that glory has pitched its tent in flesh. The only fitting response is wonder.

### **A Prayer for Christmas Day**

Eternal Word, born in the stillness of the night, draw us into the hush where Your life first entered ours. Before speech, before comprehension, You came, Light uttered from silence, Love enfleshed in the fragile cry of a child. Let us not rush to explain what can only be adored. Teach us that true knowledge unfolds in wonder, not in mastery. In the mystery of the Incarnation, where divinity and humanity meet without confusion, hold us in that sacred silence where love alone speaks. May our hearts become the manger of Your indwelling presence, where every thought bows low before the Word made flesh, and every breath whispers, holy, holy, holy. Amen.



## Friday, December 26, 2025 – Feast of St. Stephen

**Psalm 148; Wisdom 4:7–15; Acts 7:59–8:8**

**Theme:** *The heavens praise God as the first martyr bears witness, glory revealed through mercy and forgiveness.*

### **Meditation:**

Stephen's death is not the defeat of witness but its triumph. Grace has so invaded his life that even his dying words echo Christ's: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." The apocalypse of God's love has turned retribution into mercy. The heavens open, not to remove him from suffering, but to reveal who truly reigns. In the world's violence, the new creation already speaks, a kingdom built not on vengeance but on forgiveness.

### **Prayer:**

Lord Christ, who reigns from the cross, teach us Stephen's courage. Let Your mercy rule our hearts even toward those who wound us. Through the witness of forgiveness, make Your kingdom visible in this age of wrath. Amen.



**Saturday, December 27, 2025 – Feast of St. John**

**Psalm 148; Proverbs 8:22–31; 1 John 5:1–12**

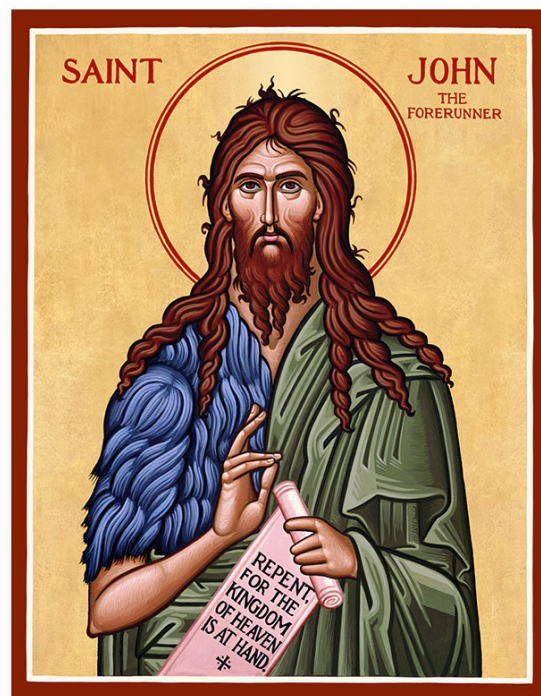
**Theme:** *The Word of life that shaped creation is confessed by love that overcomes the world.*

**Meditation:**

John's testimony is not reflection but encounter, "that which we have seen, which we have touched." The eternal Word has become tangible, knowable, near. For Martyn, this is the logic of apocalypse: revelation that creates new existence. To believe is to be caught up in that life, to live from the future God has already begun. Love becomes the mark of those seized by this revelation, love that refuses the old age's fear, love that bears witness that the world is already being remade.

**Prayer:**

Word of life, let us dwell in the reality You have unveiled. Fill us with the love that conquers fear and teaches the world a new way of being. Keep us faithful to the revelation that You are life itself. Amen.



## **Christmas Season Continued**

### **In Honor of Martin Shaw**

Martin Shaw has changed the way I hear the gospel, not as a system of beliefs to be defended, but as a living story to be inhabited. His gift is the retrieval of myth not as fantasy, but as the deep grammar of faith, the way truth clothes itself in symbol and breath. He stands in that rare lineage where myth and orthodoxy are not adversaries but companions, where the imagination becomes a vessel for revelation. Through his voice I have learned that the Scriptures are not flat records of the past, but wild and living stories still unfolding in us, still demanding our participation.

In Shaw's telling, story is not entertainment but initiation. It requires listening with the whole being, heart, body, memory, and longing. He reminds us that Advent itself is a threshold story: the long night before dawn, the ache before arrival, the human heart stretched wide enough to receive a mystery too great for words. The Incarnation, like every true myth, refuses to be contained by explanation. It must be entered, walked, and lived until we recognize that this story is, in truth, our own.

As we move from Advent to Epiphany, this is the invitation: to recover the sacred art of hearing, to let the old stories breathe again, not as relics, but as doorways. For the God who spoke through prophets and poets still speaks through story, summoning us not to understand more, but to *become* more. This is where myth meets revelation: in the life that listens, receives, and lives as if heaven has, once again, opened over Bethlehem, and never quite closed.

**Sunday, December 28, 2025 – First Sunday after Christmas Day**

**Isaiah 61:10–62:3; Psalm 147; Galatians 3:23–25; 4:4–7; John 1:1–18**

**Theme:** *Creation and redemption unite in praise; in the fullness of time, the Word makes us children of God.*

**Meditation:**

The world begins again whenever the Word speaks. The same voice that called galaxies into being now cries from a manger. Heaven bends low, and creation catches its breath. In that cry is our adoption, the Word made flesh, gathering the dust of Adam and breathing divinity into it once more. The story of redemption is the story of creation retold; everything beginning again under a new light. The cosmos hums with recognition; its Maker has stepped inside the frame.

**Prayer:**

Word of Life, let creation find its song again through us. Teach us to live as Your children, radiant with the light that once hovered over the deep. May every breath we take echo Your first “Let there be.” Amen.





**Monday, December 29, 2025**

**Psalm 20; Jeremiah 31:15–22; Luke 19:41–44**

**Theme:** *Lament for loss turns to hope; God's compassion gathers those once scattered.*

**Meditation:**

Rachel's tears are the sound of love that refuses to forget. Her lament becomes the riverbed where new life will flow. Even Christ weeps over the city, His sorrow turning the soil for compassion to take root. This is the divine pattern: loss and gathering, scattering and homecoming. The heart of God knows grief, yet His tears water the ground of our return.

**Prayer:**

God who weeps, hold our losses within Your mercy. Gather what has been scattered by time, by sin, by sorrow. Teach us that lament is not the end of the story, but the soil where hope grows. Amen.



**Tuesday, December 30, 2025**

**Psalm 20; Isaiah 26:1–9; 2 Corinthians 4:16–18**

**Theme:** *Trust becomes vision; the steadfast heart sees beyond decay to eternal glory.*

**Meditation:**

The world fades, but the story endures. Isaiah's city of trust rises not on walls of stone, but on the steadfast heart. Paul names this as seeing "what is unseen"; the paradox that what truly lasts is invisible, eternal, unmeasured. Faith sharpens the inner sight. The decay of things only makes their hidden glory more vivid. In Christ, even time's unraveling becomes revelation.

**Prayer:**

Keeper of eternity, fix our gaze beyond the temporary. Let trust become our vision and hope our dwelling place. Teach us to see through decay into the radiance that never ends. Amen.



**Wednesday, December 31, 2025**

**Psalm 20; 1 Kings 3:5–14; John 8:12–19**

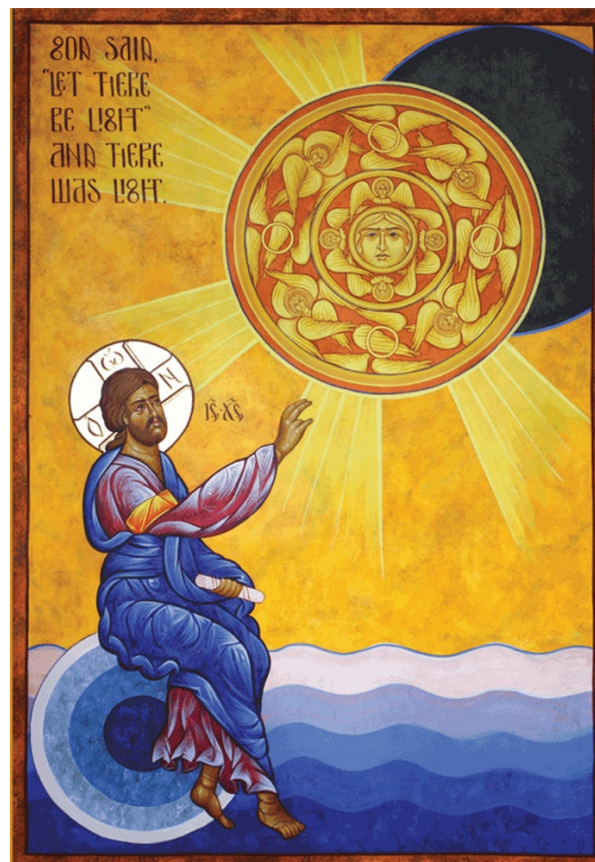
**Theme:** *Wisdom and light mark a new beginning; to walk in Christ is to see truly.*

**Meditation:**

At the year's turning, Solomon dreams of wisdom, and Christ declares, "I am the light of the world." The story circles back to its origin: light and wisdom, God's twin gifts to those who seek rightly. True seeing is not cleverness but illumination; it is to walk in the light that reveals both truth and self. The old year passes into the new like night into dawn, and wisdom whispers: begin again, in light.

**Prayer:**

Light of wisdom, illumine our path. Let the year that dawns find us walking in Your truth, seeing with Your eyes, and loving with Your heart. In Your light, we see light. Amen.





**Thursday, January 1, 2026 – Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus (New Year's Day)**

**Numbers 6:22–27; Psalm 8; Galatians 4:4–7; Luke 2:15–21**

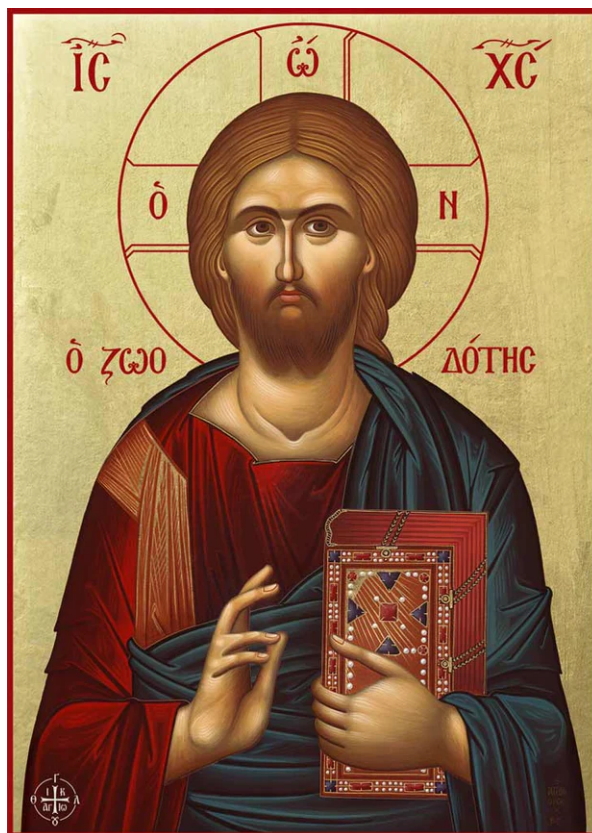
**Theme:** *The Name that blesses the world reveals divine humility; salvation written on flesh.*

**Meditation:**

When the Name is spoken, the world trembles and is healed. The blessing of Aaron finds its fulfillment in the fragile syllables given to a child. God's self-disclosure is not thunder on Sinai but breath upon human lips. To name Jesus is to confess that holiness has taken on skin and story. The Infinite now bears a name that can be whispered in prayer and love.

**Prayer:**

Holy Name, spoken in the dark, bless the year that lies ahead. Write Your mercy upon our flesh, that we may carry Your presence into every shadow. Let Your humility be our strength, and Your love our beginning. Amen.





**Friday, January 2, 2026**

**Psalm 20; Genesis 12:1–7; Hebrews 11:1–12**

**Theme:** *Abraham's obedience renews faith's journey; blessing flows from trust in unseen promise.*

**Meditation:**

Faith begins with leaving, stepping into story before the ending is told. Abraham walks into the unmarked land, guided by promise alone. The pilgrim heart understands that blessing is not found but unfolded. Each act of trust writes another line in the ongoing epic of God's faithfulness. The map of the kingdom is drawn by those who dare to walk it.

**Prayer:**

God of the long road, call us into the unknown with confidence in Your promise. Let our obedience write stories of blessing for generations to come. Keep our hearts awake to the adventure of Your grace. Amen.



**Saturday, January 3, 2026**

**Psalm 72; Genesis 28:10–22; Hebrews 11:13–22**

**Theme:** *The Psalm's vision of a just King meets Jacob's dream; God's ladder joins heaven and earth.*

**Meditation:**

Jacob sleeps beneath the weight of exile, yet heaven opens above him. A ladder bridges the worlds: angels ascending and descending through the night air. This is Advent's culmination and Epiphany's threshold: the dream of union fulfilled in Christ. The King of Psalm 72 reigns not from afar but from within creation's heart. Justice and mercy kiss upon the rungs of that ladder where God and humanity meet.

**Prayer:**

God of the ladder and the promise, awaken us to Your nearness in every place we lie down to rest. Join heaven and earth within us, that our lives may become bridges of Your peace. Amen.



## Epiphany

### In Honor of Daniela Augustine

Daniela Augustine's work has opened for me a way of seeing the Spirit that is both strikingly Pentecostal and deeply Eastern Orthodox, a convergence of fire and tenderness, transcendence and welcome. Her theology of hospitality reframes the Spirit not as a force that overwhelms but as the divine presence who makes room, who gathers strangers into communion, who turns scarcity into shared abundance. Through her eyes, the Spirit becomes the pulse of God's self-giving love, forming us into people who embody that love through generosity, compassion, and openness to the "other."

She has helped me recognize that the Incarnation and the coming of the Spirit cannot be separated: God-with-us leads to God-in-us, and God-in-us leads to the world being welcomed through us. Epiphany, in her vision, becomes the season when divine hospitality breaks open for all nations, the unveiling of a Christ who draws every longing heart into His light. Her wisdom invites us to live as those whose very lives become invitations: a witness that grace does not exclude but gathers, heals, and transforms.

### Sunday, January 4, 2026 – Second Sunday after Christmas Day

**Jeremiah 31:7–14; Psalm 84; Ephesians 1:3–6, 15–19a; Matthew 2:13–15, 19–23**

**Theme:** *The dwelling place of God is among the redeemed; joy and wisdom accompany those who seek the Christ.*

### **Meditation (in her voice):**

Epiphany begins in movement, the holy family fleeing, returning, seeking shelter, finding home. In every step, God reveals Himself as the One who accompanies. Jeremiah's promise of restoration and Ephesians' vision of adoption converge here: God's dwelling place is not a temple of stone, but a people gathered by love. Christ, the Light of the nations, becomes our refuge and our wisdom. The journey of those who seek Him is sustained by a joy that springs from being welcomed by God and by learning to extend that welcome outward, making space for others to find their place in His presence.

### **Prayer:**

Spirit of hospitality, make our hearts Your dwelling. Let joy rise in us as we walk the paths You illumine. Teach us to welcome others as we have been welcomed, that our lives may mirror the home You create among the redeemed. Amen.



**Monday, January 5, 2026**

**Psalm 72; Joshua 1:1–9; Hebrews 11:32–12:2**

**Theme:** *Strength and courage arise from divine promise; the Psalm's royal justice finds echo in the faith that presses on.*

**Meditation (in her voice):**

True courage is born when we know we do not walk alone. Joshua's commission is grounded in presence, "I will be with you", and the heroes of faith press forward because they are upheld by the Spirit who gathers and empowers. Psalm 72 envisions a kingdom where justice flows and the poor are defended, a kingdom reflected in every act of Spirit-filled hospitality. The strength we receive is not for conquest but for compassion, not for domination but for participation in God's healing of the world.

**Prayer:**

Spirit who strengthens the weary, fill us with courage rooted in Your nearness. Let our steps echo the justice of Your kingdom and our faith run with endurance toward the joy set before us. Amen.





## Tuesday, January 6, 2026 – The Epiphany of the Lord

**Isaiah 60:1–6; Psalm 72:1–2, 7–8, 10–11, 12–13; Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6; Matthew 2:1–12**

**Theme:** *The nations come to the Light; the glory of Christ reveals God's inclusive promise and unending reign.*

### **Meditation (in her voice):**

Epiphany is the feast of divine welcome. Isaiah's vision of nations streaming toward the Light is fulfilled in the Magi, strangers guided by a star toward a child who receives them without condition. The mystery Paul reveals is this: all are included in Christ, drawn into the household of God through the Spirit's embrace. The Light does not simply shine; it gathers. Christ's glory is not the glory of power but of openness, a radiance that heals divisions and forms a people who live as signs of God's unending hospitality.

### **Prayer:**

Light of the world, shine upon every nation, every heart, every longing exile. Draw us into Your embrace and teach us to shine with Your welcome. Let our lives become beacons that guide others into Your peace. Amen.



## **Bishop's Closing Prayer Of Threshold And Revelation**

Holy and gracious Lord, as we stand at the threshold between what has been revealed and what now awaits us, we open our hearts to Your nearness once again. You have led us through Advent's long ache of longing, through Christmas' hidden glory, and through Epiphany's radiant unveiling. You have spoken through prophets and poets, saints and scholars, silence and fire. You have moved in ways we recognized and in ways we only sensed, drawing us into the slow, steady rhythm of Your redeeming work. And now, before we step forward, we pause to yield ourselves to the future You are shaping.

Breathe into us a deeper readiness for Your coming movements. Clear out the inner chambers where fear has taken up residence. Dismantle the illusions that keep us playing small. Dislodge every assumption that resists transformation. Awaken in us the kind of expectancy that marks those who have seen Your light break in and refuse to return to the shadows. Let the story we have journeyed through become a living word within us, guiding our discernment, sharpening our vision, and strengthening our courage.

As the Light that called the Magi still shines, direct our steps toward what You are unveiling. As the Word that entered the world in stillness still speaks, anchor our hearts in places where Your whisper can be heard. As the Spirit who overshadowed Mary still broods over creation, stir the waters of our souls with holy unrest. Form in us a prophetic awareness that recognizes Your signals, hears Your summons, and responds without delay.

Lord, make our lives open spaces for Your kingdom to take root. Give us eyes to see the signs of Your nearness, ears to hear the stirrings of Your Spirit, and hearts bold enough to say yes before we see the whole road. Let the year ahead be marked by obedience that flows from encounter, hope that rises from revelation, and faith that grows from attentiveness to Your presence.

Make us ready; ready for what You will do next, ready for where You will lead, ready for the ways You will stretch and surprise us. And may our lives bear witness that the same God who came in weakness still comes in glory, and the same Christ who was revealed to the nations is still breaking open the world with grace. Amen.