

Advent Prayer, 2016



What is Advent?

Waiting is hard, isn't it?

When I (Sam) was younger, I would get so excited for Christmas that I could barely wait for the morning. More than once, I woke up my parents yelling "it's Christmas!" hoping we could start opening gifts at 2am. It feels good to admit that to you.

Have you ever binge-watched a show on Netflix, only to despair when you realize the next season won't be available for another year? Me neither, but I'm definitely thankful that if the DVD or Blu-ray is available, Amazon will deliver it in two days. They'll even get it to me tomorrow if I pay a small fee of \$3.99.

Here's what I'm saying: we live in a world of instant gratification. Almost anything we want is just a click or two away. But reading the Bible leads to the uneasy sense that God is very much ok with making us wait for things. Its pages are full of sinners asking for mercy, slaves longing for freedom, men and women hoping for children, suffering people who need relief, and fearful, anxious saints wondering if everything will turn out ok. In other words, the Bible is full of people like you and me, learning to walk by faith even as we ask God "*where are you?*" and "*what are you doing?*"

The word Advent literally means "coming" or "arrival," and it's a season that teaches us how to wait well. It's about a God who makes promises and always keeps them, but rarely on our timeline. It's about remembering God's work in the past as we wait for Christ's promised future. Ultimately, Advent is a time for us to rehearse the story of Scripture and find our place as the people of God, that we might proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

The tomb is empty. Jesus is alive, and God will do what he says. But we still have to wait. This Advent, let's learn to wait *together* with great hope and expectation. Come, Lord Jesus.

How should this thing work?

Common worship and prayer has always played a significant role in the life of God's people. In the Scriptures, the Psalms are the most obvious representation of this reality because they function as the hymnbook, daily prayer guide, and liturgical calendar of Israel (i.e. certain Psalms for certain times and occasions throughout the Jewish calendar). For us, the best example is Sunday morning, as we gather to sing common songs, pray common prayers, eat the same Lord's Supper, and hear the same word preached. Yet, for most of history, the church has seen other times of weekly or daily worship and prayer to be vital and necessary for a life of discipleship in the local (and global) body.

This prayer guide is an entrance into that shared experience of common prayer and worship. Apart from Sundays, you'll find a basic "liturgy" for each day of Advent to use with family, friends, or on your own. Just like Sunday worship, these guides begin with a call to worship ("Invitation") and end with a benediction ("Blessing"). In between, you'll find Scripture readings, a pause for quiet reflection, Psalms, and suggested prayer topics for the life of our church, city, and world. Find a time in the day (most likely morning, but perhaps lunch or evening for some) where you can give yourselves to this time and not have to rush through it. You will also find activities for children and families at the start of each new week.

If you're using this as a group, words will alternate between **bold** and regular text so that someone can lead and others can respond (just like Sunday morning). It may seem a bit awkward at first (most things do the first few times you try), but keep at it! More than anything, feel free to adapt and use this guide in whatever way works best for you. It should not function as a straightjacket that limits your prayers, but a tutor that shapes our prayer life in the light of God's Word.

Common prayer can be an amazingly unifying experience, knowing that sisters and brothers in our uncommon family are worshipping together each day of Advent. It is our prayer that this season will be an enriching and sanctifying time for our entire community.

Bibliography and Resources

- *introductory materials and family activities are adapted from an Advent prayer guide written by Joel Littlepage for Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Winston-Salem, NC.*
- *The layout and format of the daily liturgies are inspired by Seeking God's Face (Baker/CICW/Faith Alive, ©2013), compiled and edited by Phillip Reinders.*
- *All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version (©2001, Crossway).*
- *Cover art: "Virgin Mary Consoles Eve" by Sr. Grace Remington, OCSO.*

Family Activities - Week 1

November 27th - December 3rd

- **Light First Advent Candle.**
- **Waiting for Marshmallows Activity** (*could be cookies or something else that is a favorite for your child's*):
 - *Put out one marshmallow.*
 - *Tell your child/children they can eat the marshmallow, but if they wait they will get two marshmallows.*
 - *Start the timer*
 - *Wait 1 minute to 5 minutes according to child's age.*

- **Read to your Children**

“Advent is about Jesus coming. He has come and we celebrate that with our manger scenes, right? He has really come! He was really here! He lived among us and brought salvation (Big word= He saved us from our sins). Now, we are in a season of waiting for Jesus’ second coming. It’s kind of like the two marshmallows. We are waiting for something greater. Not just one marshmallow but two! Actually a million marshmallows- more than we could count. When he returns He will make everything right- every hurt, every bad dream- there will be no sadness, hurt, pain, or sickness. We can’t wait for Him to come and therefore every year we celebrate Advent. We light candles, sing songs, give presents, eat cookies, and say, “Come, Jesus, Come.” Let’s say it everyday when we sit down at our meal this week. “Thank you for coming Jesus. Come again Jesus Come!”

- **Other Activities**
 - *Watch the movie Annie and talk about what it was like for Annie to wait for adoption.*
 - *As a family, find a way to tangibly serve the poor in our midst.*

Monday, November 28

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 130

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I put my hope.*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Genesis 1:1-5
New Testament: Revelation 21:1-4
Or, for families with young children: "The Story and the Song," Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 25:4-7

*Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all the day long.*

*Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.
Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For thankful hearts to the God who, in love, created all things from nothing for his glory and our good*
- *For the poor and hungry, who suffer acutely from the fall of creation*
- *For "a holy impatience," anxiously awaiting the Lord's return and longing to see his Kingdom come*

Blessing: from Revelation 22

Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.

Tuesday, November 29

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 130

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I put my hope.*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Genesis 1:26-31
New Testament: 2 Corinthians 3:17-18
Or, for families with young children: "The Beginning: A Perfect Home," Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 72:1-4

*Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the royal son!
May he judge your people with righteousness,
and your poor with justice!
Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness!
May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the children of the needy,
and crush the oppressor!*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For spiritual growth: that we might be conformed to the image of Christ "from one degree of glory to another"*
- *For an increased realization of the dignity of all image-bearers in our city, country, and world*
- *For those who do not yet believe in Jesus*

Blessing: from Revelation 22

Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.

Wednesday, November 30

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 130

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I put my hope.*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Genesis 3:1-8
New Testament: Revelation 12:9-11
Or, for families with young children: "The Terrible Lie," Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 80:1-3

*Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock.
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.
Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,
stir up your might
and come to save us!*

*Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For your family and your city, bruised and broken by the fall of creation*
- *For a renewed understanding of God's love that is fueled by the gospel*
- *For those hiding from the presence of God*

Blessing: from Revelation 22

Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.

Thursday, December 1

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 130

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I put my hope.*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Genesis 3:9-15
New Testament: John 10:10-16
Or, for families with young children: "A New Beginning," Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 85:8-13

*Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;
but let them not turn back to folly.
Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land.*

*Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.
Faithfulness springs up from the ground,
and righteousness looks down from the sky.
Yes, the LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness will go before him
and make his footsteps a way.*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For nations and government officials throughout the world*
- *For a vibrant, expectant prayer life*

Blessing: from Revelation 22

Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.

Friday, December 2

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 130

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I put my hope.*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Genesis 4:8-10
New Testament: Matthew 23:34-39
Or, for families with young children: "A Giant Staircase to Heaven," Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 89:1-4

*I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever;
with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.
For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever;
in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness."
You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn to David my servant:
'I will establish your offspring forever,
and build your throne for all generations.'"*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For the gospel of Jesus to spread throughout all nations*
- *For stressed-out retail employees*
- *For those suffering violence (abuse, terrorism, etc)*

Blessing: from Revelation 22

Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.

Saturday, December 3

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 130

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I put my hope.*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Genesis 12:1-3
New Testament: Galatians 3:8-14
Or, for families with young children: "Son of Laughter," Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 126:1-5

*When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then they said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."
The LORD has done great things for us;
we are glad.*

*Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like streams in the Negeb!
Those who sow in tears
shall reap with shouts of joy!*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *That we might be a blessing to others and servants to all*
- *For bold faith in the forgiving grace of Jesus*
- *For immigrants and refugees*

Blessing: from Revelation 22

Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.

Family Activities - Week 2

December 4th - December 10th

- Light Second Advent Candle
- Read to Your Children:

Waiting is tough! It's even harder when hard things are happening. (Share something from your week that has been tough.)

Ask your children:

What has been hard this week for you? (If this is difficult for them to answer remind them of time when they were sick or were hurt).

Read:

We talked last week about how when Jesus comes again He will make all things right. But how do we live now. Things are still rough sometimes. We still get sick. We hurt.

God has said to come to Him and talk about these hurts! This will comfort us until Jesus returns.

How do we do this?

Let's try to fill out this prayer to God together:

Father, You are _____. But I feel _____ today. _____ is really hard. I am really sad/angry/hurt about it. (Circle one). You promise to comfort me. I need you.

Your child, _____

- **Other Activities**
 - *Pick something from the news to use the above prayer for with your kids.*
 - *Tell your kids God's people have been saying these prayers for thousands of years. Read a Psalm with them that was written two thousand years ago! God has always wanted His people to come to Him and talk to Him about their fears and hurts.*

Monday, December 5

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 27

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Genesis 22:15-18
New Testament: Galatians 3:16-22
Or, for families with young children: "The Present," Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 25:8-11

*Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.
All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.*

*For your name's sake, O LORD,
pardon my guilt, for it is great.*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For renewed faith in the trustworthiness of God*
- *For the peace and flourishing of our city and neighborhoods*

Blessing: from Psalm 27

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

Tuesday, December 6

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 27

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Habakkuk 1:1-4
New Testament: Romans 8:18-25
Or, for families with young children: "The Girl No One Wanted," Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 72:1-2, 8-11

*Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the royal son!
May he judge your people with righteousness,
and your poor with justice!*

*May he have dominion from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth!
May desert tribes bow down before him,
and his enemies lick the dust!*

*May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute;
may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts!
May all kings fall down before him,
all nations serve him!*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For renewed faith in the goodness of God*
- *For those suffering injustice and oppression*
- *For those suffering from illness or death*

Blessing: from Psalm 27

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

Wednesday, December 7

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 27

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Genesis 49:8-10
New Testament: Revelation 5:5-10
Or, for families with young children: "The Forgiving Prince," Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 80:4-7

*O LORD God of hosts,
how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?
You have fed them with the bread of tears
and given them tears to drink in full measure.
You make us an object of contention for our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh among themselves.*

*Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For those suffering from depression*
- *For joy as we share the love of Jesus with others*
- *For a deep awareness of the Holy Spirit*

Blessing: from Psalm 27

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

Thursday, December 8

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 27

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Exodus 1:8-2:25
New Testament: Luke 4:16-21
Or, for families with young children: "God to the Rescue!," Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 85:1-7

*LORD, you were favorable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you covered all their sin. Selah
You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from your hot anger.*

*Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation toward us!
Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?
Will you not revive us again,
that your people may rejoice in you?
Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation.*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For good works to accompany our faith in this life*
- *For those trapped in human trafficking and slavery*

Blessing: from Psalm 27

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

Friday, December 9

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 27

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Exodus 12:1-13
New Testament: Luke 22:13-20
Or, for families with young children: "God Makes A Way," Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 146:3-7

*Put not your trust in princes,
in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.
When his breath departs, he returns to the earth;
on that very day his plans perish.*

*Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD his God,
who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them,
who keeps faith forever;
who executes justice for the oppressed,
who gives food to the hungry.*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For deeper communion with the living God*
- *For those battling mental illness*

Blessing: from Psalm 27

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

Saturday, December 10

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 27

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Exodus 14:10-14
New Testament: 2 Corinthians 1:7-10
Or, for families with young children: "Ten Ways to be Perfect," Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 126:1-5

*When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then they said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."
The LORD has done great things for us;
we are glad.*

*Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like streams in the Negeb!
Those who sow in tears
shall reap with shouts of joy!*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For reliance upon God in times of despair and for those despairing today*
- *For those who work in healthcare and social services*

Blessing: from Psalm 27

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

Family Activities - Week 3

December 11th - December 17th

- **Light Third Advent Candle**
- **Read to Your Children:**

The last two weeks when we have lit our candles we have talked about waiting and hurts. There is a lot of that in our life.

There is also a lot of goodness. Laughter. Fun. Hope. Do you know why?

It goes back to the manger scene. Jesus came. When he came, what did he do? Answers could be: Healed people, taught disciples, etc. died on cross....

Yes! He did all those things and in the end He died on the cross for you and me, and the world. He conquered sin and death. Because that is where all of our hurts come from- sin.

When sin entered the world- when Adam and Eve disobeyed God- the consequence for all mankind was also death. So sickness, sadness, shame, guilt...all got brought into the world with sin.

So now that Jesus came and died, and conquered death and sin, we can have hope, and laughter, and fun! We can celebrate.

This week as a family pick a few ways you can celebrate: As you begin- Say. "Thank you Jesus for coming and bringing hope!"

- **Other Activities**

- *Play games!*
- *Read fun books together.*
- *Watch movies...*
- *Invite others over for cookies or a meal. Play football outside.*
- *Go for a walk.*

Monday, December 12

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Isaiah 52

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who say to Zion, "Your God reigns."*

Scripture Reading

Old Testament: Exodus 20:1-17

New Testament: Romans 8:2-10

Or, for families with young children: "The Warrior Leader," Jesus Storybook Bible

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 25:16-21

*Turn to me and be gracious to me,
for I am lonely and afflicted.
The troubles of my heart are enlarged;
bring me out of my distresses.
Consider my affliction and my trouble,
and forgive all my sins.*

*Consider how many are my foes,
and with what violent hatred they hate me.
Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me!
Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.
May integrity and uprightness preserve me,
for I wait for you.*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For a love of God's Law*
- *For orphans, foster children, and foster parents*

Blessing: from Luke 1

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people.

Tuesday, December 13

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Isaiah 52

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of those who brings good news,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."*

Scripture Reading

Old Testament: Exodus 40:33-38

New Testament: John 1:14-18

Or, for families with young children: "The Teeny, Weeny: True King," Jesus Storybook Bible

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 72:1-2,12-14

*Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the royal son!
May he judge your people with righteousness,
and your poor with justice!*

*For he delivers the needy when he calls,
the poor and him who has no helper.
He has pity on the weak and the needy,
and saves the lives of the needy.
From oppression and violence he redeems their life,
and precious is their blood in his sight.*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- For an awareness of God's presence in our lives*
- For those who are in prison*

Blessing: from Luke 1

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people.

Wednesday, December 14

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Isaiah 52

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of those who brings good news,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Isaiah 35:3-10
New Testament: Philippians 4:4-7
Or, for families with young children: "The Young Hero and the Horrible Giant," Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 80:14-19

*Turn again, O God of hosts!
Look down from heaven, and see;
have regard for this vine,
the stock that your right hand planted,
and for the son whom you made strong for yourself.
They have burned it with fire; they have cut it down;
may they perish at the rebuke of your face!
But let your hand be on the man of your right hand,
the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself!
Then we shall not turn back from you;
give us life, and we will call upon your name!*

***Restore us, O LORD God of hosts!
Let your face shine, that we may be saved!***

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For the peace of God to reign in our lives, homes, vocations, and world*
- *For racial reconciliation in the church and world*

Blessing: from Luke 1

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people.

Thursday, December 15

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Isaiah 52

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who say to Zion, "Your God reigns."*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Deuteronomy 18:15
New Testament: Hebrews 1:1-3
Or, for families with young children: "The Good Shepherd" Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 85:8-13

*Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;
but let them not turn back to folly.
Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land.*

*Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.
Faithfulness springs up from the ground,
and righteousness looks down from the sky.
Yes, the LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness will go before him
and make his footsteps a way.*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For vibrant lives of worship*
- *For those who work in education*

Blessing: from Luke 1

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people.

Friday, December 16

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Isaiah 52

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who say to Zion, "Your God reigns."*

Scripture Reading

Old Testament: Joshua 23:2-8

New Testament: Matthew 5:2-6; John 4:31-34

Or, for families with young children: "The Little Servant Girl & the Proud General" Jesus Storybook Bible

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 89:49-52

*Lord, where is your steadfast love of old,
which by your faithfulness you swore to David?
Remember, O Lord, how your servants are mocked,
and how I bear in my heart the insults of all the many nations,
with which your enemies mock, O LORD,
with which they mock the footsteps of your anointed.*

Blessed be the LORD forever!

Amen and Amen.

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For mutual submission and love in our relationships*
- *For those struggling with loneliness*
- *For those persecuted for their faith*

Blessing: from Luke 1

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people.

Saturday, December 17

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Isaiah 52

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of those who brings good news,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Judges 2:8-15; Isaiah 11:1-5
New Testament: Matthew 3:13-17
Or, for families with young children: "Operation 'No More Tears!'" Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 146:1-5

*Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD, O my soul!
I will praise the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.*

*Put not your trust in princes,
in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.
When his breath departs, he returns to the earth;
on that very day his plans perish.*

*Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD his God.*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- For an ability to see our own selfishness and repent of it*
- For justice and equity in our society*
- For spiritual renewal in our hearts and in the church*

Blessing: from Luke 1

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people.

Family Activities - Week 4

December 18th - December 24th

- **Light the Fourth Advent Candle**

- **Read to Your Children:**

We are so close to Christmas day! This is last candle we will light before Christmas day.

Why do you think we light these candles each week?

We are reminded through lighting the candles that God brings hope. Darkness can bring fear right? Have you ever felt afraid in the night? Well we light candles to remember that Jesus has conquered the darkness- he has conquered the fears. He has brought light into the darkness and has given us hope.

He has loved us SOOOOOOOOOO much because we are His children. In fact everything he did including His suffering on the cross was because He loved us. He will return again because He loves us.

You could say God's Word or Bible is one big love song to us. Helping us remember who He is, who we are, and how much he loves us.

- **Other Activities**

- *Have your children write their own love songs from God. They can use any drum or instrument around the house.*
- *Sing a song together as a family or go caroling to a few house to remind them of His love song to them.*

Monday, December 19

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 80

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!*

Scripture Reading

Old Testament: 2 Samuel 7:1-13

New Testament: Matthew 1:1-17

Or, for families with young children: "Daniel and the Scary Sleepover" Jesus Storybook Bible

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 25:1-5

*To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
O my God, in you I trust;
let me not be put to shame;
let not my enemies exult over me.
Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;
they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.*

*Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths.*

*Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all the day long.*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For God's Kingdom to come and his will to be done*
- *For rulers and authorities*
- *For pastors, teachers, and leaders in the church*

Blessing: from Luke 1

*May the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven, shine on those living in darkness
and guide our feet into the way of peace.*

Tuesday, December 20

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 80

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: 1 Kings 11:6-13
New Testament: Hebrews 4:14-15
Or, for families with young children: "God's Messenger" Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 80:1-3

*Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock.
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.
Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,
stir up your might
and come to save us!*

*Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For gospel-warmed hearts of compassion and charity*
- *For holiness in the midst of temptation and those trapped in sin*
- *For widows and orphans*

Blessing: from Luke 1

*May the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven, shine on those living in darkness
and guide our feet into the way of peace.*

Wednesday, December 21

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 80

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Isaiah 7:14
New Testament: Luke 1:25-38; Matthew 1:22-23
Or, for families with young children: "Get Ready!" Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 85:9-13

*Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land.*

*Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.
Faithfulness springs up from the ground,
and righteousness looks down from the sky.
Yes, the LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness will go before him
and make his footsteps a way.*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For keen awareness of the Lord's presence with us, his people*
- *For quiet, peace, and Sabbath rest in the midst of this hectic season*
- *For the poor and the hungry*

Blessing: from Luke 1

*May the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven, shine on those living in darkness
and guide our feet into the way of peace.*

Thursday, December 22

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 80

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Isaiah 42:5-7
New Testament: Luke 1:38-45
Or, for families with young children: "He's Here!" Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 89:1-4, 27

*I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever;
with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.
For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever;
in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness."
You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn to David my servant:
'I will establish your offspring forever,
and build your throne for all generations.'*

*And I will make him the firstborn,
the highest of the kings of the earth.*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For unwavering trust in the God who fulfills his promises*
- *For those grieving over a loved one's death, miscarriage, or infertility*
- *For vibrant worship that permeates every day of the week*

Blessing: from Luke 1

*May the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven, shine on those living in darkness
and guide our feet into the way of peace.*

Friday, December 23

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 80

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!*

Scripture Reading

Old Testament: Isaiah 42:8-16

New Testament: Luke 1:46-55

Or, for families with young children: "The Light of the Whole World!" Jesus Storybook Bible

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 126:1-5

*When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then they said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."
The LORD has done great things for us;
we are glad.*

*Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like streams in the Negeb!
Those who sow in tears
shall reap with shouts of joy!*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For those trapped in financial debt and those who are unemployed*
- *For the unity of Christ's body, the church*
- *For the sin of pride and the blessing of humility*

Blessing: from Luke 1

*May the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven, shine on those living in darkness
and guide our feet into the way of peace.*

Saturday, December 24

Invitation: from Psalm 124, Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 80

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!*

Scripture Reading

*Old Testament: Micah 5:2-5
New Testament: Luke 2:1-6
Or, for families with young children: "The King of All Kings" Jesus Storybook Bible*

Quiet

Praying God's Word: Psalm 96:1-2, 11-13

*Oh sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth!
Sing to the LORD, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.*

*Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
let the field exult, and everything in it!
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy
before the LORD, for he comes,
for he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness,
and the peoples in his faithfulness.*

Free Prayer

Pray for specific needs:

- *For the neglected, weak, or downtrodden*
- *For joyful anticipation of the coming of Christ into our world*
- *For those who do not believe in Christ*

Blessing: from Luke 1

*May the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven, shine on those living in darkness
and guide our feet into the way of peace.*