



*A gift of daily devotions written by members and friends
of Ocean View Presbyterian Church.*



Introducing our 2025 Advent Devotional

Grace to you, friends, and peace, in the name of our God, who is our Creator, who is our Redeemer, who is our Sustainer: welcome to the considered, the joyful, the carefree and the heartfelt devotions the members and friends of OVPC wish, from the heart, to share with you. Share for the lifting of burdens, for the blessing of companionship on the road of life, for the grace of comfort and the joy of living. Even as we share, know that it is with hearts gentled by the love of God, which passes understanding. Know that we do not seek to tell you how to believe; only that we do. We do not seek to make of you a Presbyterian, but do welcome you to be with us, share with us, know both joy and comfort with us, to be human and to be loved.

A thanks, and warm well-done, to our contributors, to our editors, to our printers, to our artists, to all so gracious and spirit-filled as to share, here, the content of their hearts and spirits. Thanks to you, each day, for hearing the call Augustine heard: *“Tolle! Lege!”* That is, take up and read! May the words of our minds, and the meditations of our hearts, be a blessing, and may you know the joy of Christmas and a blessed New Year.

Pastor Terry

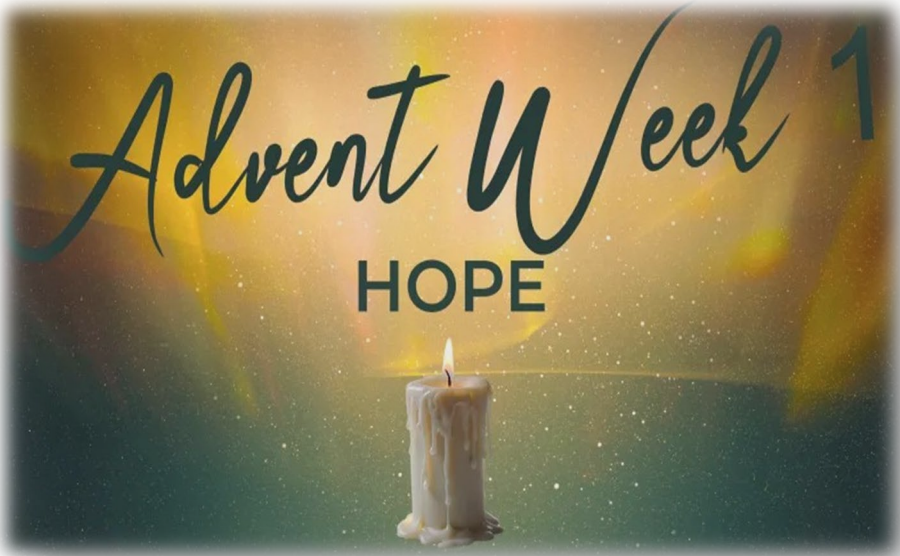
*Advent
begins*

Advent Services for December 2025

9:30am in our Sanctuary

Join us each Sunday as we share an Advent monologue from the book 'Telling the Story', authored by Jody Seymour.

<u>November 30th</u>	1 st Sunday of Advent <i>Celebrating HOPE</i> 'Lost in Bethlehem'
Telling the Story	
<u>December 7th</u>	2 nd Sunday of Advent <i>Celebrating PEACE</i> 'The Potter'
Telling the Story	
<u>December 14th</u>	3 rd Sunday of Advent <i>Celebrating JOY</i> 'The Innkeeper'
Telling the Story	
<u>December 21nd</u>	4 th Sunday of Advent <i>Celebrating LOVE</i> 'The Shepherd'
Telling the Story	
<u>December 24th</u>	Christmas Eve <i>Candlelight Service</i> 7:00pm
<u>December 28th</u>	1 st Sunday after Christmas <i>Lessons & Carols Service</i> Hymn Sing



"Hope is like the sun, which as we journey toward it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us."

— Samuel Smiles

Sunday, November 30, 2025

Morning Psalms 24; 150

Amos 1:1–5, 13–2:8

1 Thess. 5:1–11

Luke 21:5–19

Evening Psalms 25; 110

Worship Readings

Isa. 2:1–5

Psalms 122

Rom. 13:11–14

Matt. 24:36–44

Today is the first Sunday of the Advent Season. Advent is a time of preparation — 4 weeks before Christmas Day. As the hymn text by Eleanor Farjeon says,

“People, look East, the time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able;
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today;
Love, the Guest, is on the way.
 ...Love, the Rose, is on the way.
 ...Love, the Bird, is on the way.
 ...Love, the Star, is on the way.
 ...Love, the Lord, is on the way.”

Everything is new. The old ways are gone.
Christ is coming! Christ is coming soon!!
We must prepare. ... Love, the Guest, is on the way!!
Come Lord Jesus, Come!! We are waiting!! Amen.

Beverly Bailey

Monday, December 1, 2025

Morning: Psalms 122; 145

Amos 2:6–16

2 Peter 1:1–11

Matt. 21:1–11

Evening: Psalms 40; 67

Matthew 21:1-11 is the Palm Sunday passage we're all familiar with and read a version of every year to lead into Holy Week. ⁶ "The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷ they brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!" (NRSV)

I was surprised to see this scripture in an Advent devotional list of lectionary readings. But after reading and re-reading it, it dawned on me that when we celebrate Palm Sunday, the people of Jerusalem are hoping for their king to deliver them. This passage connects the immediate **hope** for a Messiah, who would save them now (the crowds shouted Hosanna, which is the Hebrew cry for help and salvation – Save us now!) with Jesus's ultimate, long-term **hope** to bring peace, forgiveness, and redemption to all through his death and resurrection; a hope that was not immediately grasped by the crowds.

Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free
From our sins and fears release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Heavenly Father, thank You that Jesus came humbly, riding on a donkey, giving **hope** and salvation. We pray for the excitement of that **hope** in our daily lives. May those who do not yet know You find **hope**, peace, love and joy in You as we have. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Al and Alicia Tamilio



Tuesday, December 2, 2025

Morning: Psalms 33; 146

Amos 3:1-11

2 Peter 1:1-11

Matt. 21:12-22

Evening: Psalms 85; 94

In the riveting Scripture passage from Matthew 21, Jesus is overturning tables and driving out the money changers from the Temple, chastising them for turning his Father's House into a den of robbers.

Jesus had the courage to cry foul to unjust forces of the day who were oppressing people seeking to be faithful to God. Roman society heavily taxed the population. People of Israel were obligated to come to Jerusalem annually for the Passover to maintain their position with Temple leadership. Roman money could not be used in the Temple, so it was converted to Temple money at unfavorable exchange rates and with an additional Temple tax. Temple leadership also had a monopoly over the animals that could be purchased for sacrifice at the Temple. It was quite a racket and created double oppression of the people -- Jesus took issue with that.

God offers us a much more favorable exchange rate. Through the example of his perfect Son Jesus, who was sacrificed on our behalf for our sins, and through His Grace and Love, we have the blessing of fellowship with God through Jesus by our faith in Him, as well as seeking His Wisdom and Will to guide our lives by honoring Him. That is a very good deal! Thank You Lord!!!

Jim Dugan

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

Morning: Psalms 50; 147:1–11

Amos 3:12–4:5

2 Peter 3:1–10

Matt. 21:23–32

Evening: Psalms 53; 17

Psalm 147 begins by praising God for His power as creator and sustainer. He cares for all humanity, He heals the broken hearted, protects the marginalized and provides for the needs of both people and nature. God provides comfort for those who grieve and shows deep compassion for human suffering. Our faith is anchored in the **hope** and certainty of these promises that God has made to us. There are many hurting in our world, yet we have the expectation that God will restore all.

We are God's hands and feet on earth. As Christians, we are responsible for responding to others as Jesus taught us. What can we do this Advent season and in the coming year to serve the least of our brothers and sisters among us?

***"The best way to find yourself
is to lose yourself
in the service of others."***

— Mahatma Gandhi

Eric and Ellen Nuemann

Thursday, December 4, 2025

Morning: Psalms 18:1–20; 147:12–20

Amos 4:6–13

2 Peter 3:11–18

Matt. 21:33–46

Evening: Psalms 126; 62

My Star Word: ‘Delight’

About fifteen minutes after the last dish has been removed from the Thanksgiving table, we start to hear the loveliest music of the year – Christmas music. All the hundred-year-old carols, and new ones that won’t be part of the lineup for another five years, I love too.

I love the smiles. I love the displays in the department store windows. I love getting and sending holiday cards. I love the first winter snowfall – always gone within twenty-four hours.

It is a time of magic. The stars seem brighter in the nights leading up to Christmas. Neighbors are friendlier. Everyone seems to be looking forward to that most wonderful day.

I am a whiny, selfish, frightened Christian. But I’m working on it.

June Goldman

Friday, December 5, 2025

Morning: Psalms 102; 148

Amos 5:1–17

Jude 1–16

Matt. 22:1–14

Evening: Psalms 130; 16

Morning has broken, like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken, like the first bird.
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning
Praise for them springing fresh from the world.

Sweet the rains new fall, sunlit from Heaven
Like the first dew fall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden
Sprung in completeness where His feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight, mine is the morning
Born of the one light, Eden saw play.
Praise with elation, praise every morning
God's recreation of the new day.

Morning has broken, like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken, like the first bird.
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning
Praise for them springing fresh from the world.

Source: Musixmatch

Songwriters: Cat Stevens / Eleanor Farjeon / Trad

Morning Has Broken lyrics © Oxford University Press, Cat Music Ltd., Mole End Music, Cat Music Limited, Word Music, Llc, Curb Word Music, Doerksen Music Inc, George Martin Music Limited

Jim and Lorie Hartsig

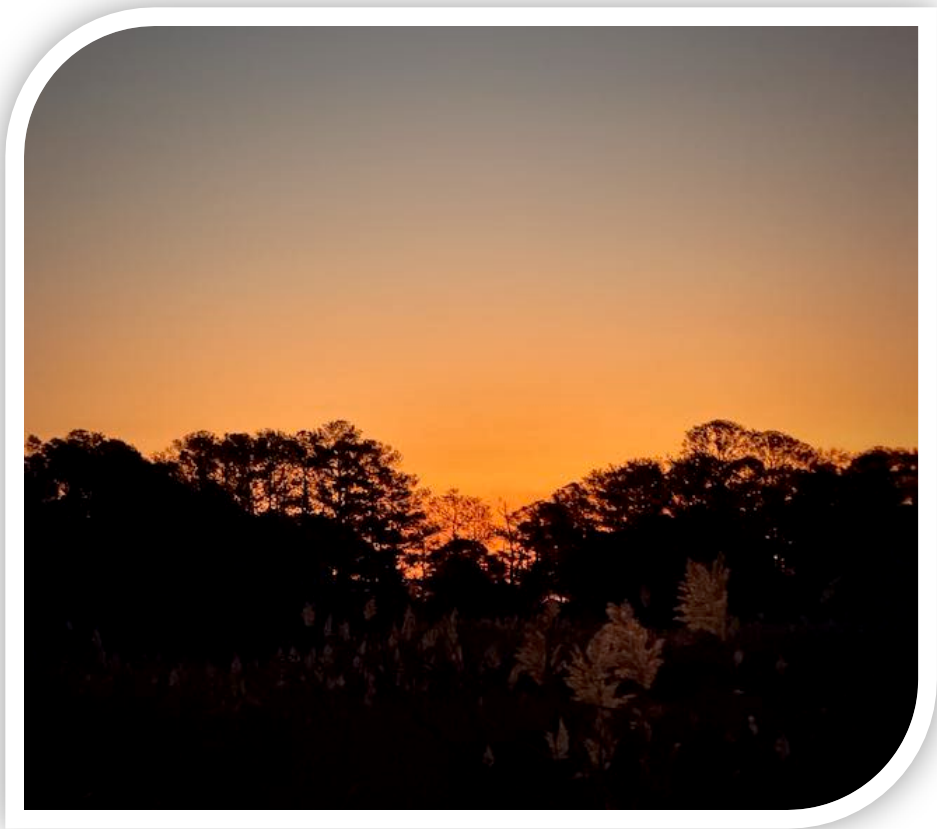


Photo Credit: Jim and Lorie Hartsig

Saturday, December 6, 2025

Morning: Psalms 90; 149

Amos 5:18–27

Jude 17–25

Matt. 22:15–22

Evening: Psalms 80; 72

Mother's Love and Mercy

“But you dear friends, carefully build yourselves up in this most holy faith by praying in the Holy Spirit, staying right at the center of God’s love, keeping your arms open and outstretched, ready for the mercy of our master Jesus Christ. This is the unending life, the real life”

Jude 20-21

In this reading for today, Jude compels us Christians to have faith and know that God loves us. That Christ is merciful and that we should be merciful towards others. The reason for picking this day to write about is twofold. On December 6, 1988, my mother lost her battle with cancer and my Star Word this year is ‘mercy’.

My mother’s last words to her family and best friends were, “I see the light! God loves us! It’s beautiful!” She was a believer who taught her two children to be believers by reading bible stories to us every night and saying prayers. Showing us a good example of God’s love.

“Teach us to live well. Teach us to live wisely and well.”

“And let the loveliness of our Lord our od, rest on us, confirming the work that we do.

Psalms 90:12

During this year with my Star Word, ‘Mercy’, I came across ‘the works of mercy’. Showing us what we can do to practice mercy. In these works are included care for the sick and visiting the imprisoned. My mother was a good example of someone who

showed mercy. My mother returned to college when I was young to become a nurse. She became a mental health nurse, who cared for the ill and imprisoned not only by her nursing, but by advocating in our Pennsylvania Congress for the rights of these fellow human beings.



Sue Rizer



"Peace begins with a smile."

— Mother Teresa

Sunday, December 7, 2025

Morning Psalms 24; 150

Amos 6:1–14

2 Thess. 1:5–12

Luke 1:57–68

Evening Psalms 25; 110

Worship Readings

Isa. 11:1–10

Psalms 72:1–7, 18–19

Rom. 15:4–13

Matt. 3:1–12

When I read scripture, I like to look for the subtle messages that somehow spark an idea that then spirals into a torrent of ‘what abouts...’ and ‘what ifs...’. I know that scripture always holds a lesson for today – a lesson for *my* today. Sometimes as I travel down my rabbit hole of questions and answers I think I have hit a ‘eureka’ moment; other times I think I have just hit bottom... so please bear with me as I think about our story from the first chapter of Luke.

Like so many, the world today scares me. The hatred, the bitterness, the disregard for our brothers and sisters, and yes, of all creation. I see people taking sides, raising their voices only to repeat the same rhetoric of those they oppose only with opposite spin, claiming that it is their voice that is correct; theirs is the side that should be in control.

I see myself as a pragmatist, while at the same time an optimist, a pacifist and assured in God’s promise of the total restoration of all creation. I admit that I avoid conflict at all costs; it really scares me. My outward voice is often silent while my inner voice is screaming in turmoil. That scares me too – I am reminded of those famous questions attributed to the Jewish sage Hillel; ‘If not now, when?’ and ‘If not me, then who’. But that is my burden, my path is to find those answers for myself. You see, I want my voice to be honest, fair and wise; not an impulsive reaction to current situations that surround me. But I am convinced that without renewed faith in God’s promise, my voice will remain silenced, much like Zachariah’s was when he didn’t believe God’s promise to bless he and his wife a child. Yes, Zacharia’s sentence of muteness was

finite; to end on the day of his child's birth. But what if he didn't pick up that tablet to proclaim his son would be called John? Would his gift of speech return and would he have been filled with the Holy Spirit? I think maybe not. I believe that Zachariah's journey to find his voice started when he witnessed first the fulfillment of the promise of conception. Elizabeth's nine-month pregnancy became a period of silent reflection and preparation for the birth of his son. When John was born, Zacariah picked up that tablet with newfound conviction and he found his voice – filled with the Holy Spirit, he found his true voice!

Advent is our time of reflection and preparation. With God's help, I hope to use it wisely; to enter quiet conversations with God and feel the subtle messages whispered by the Spirit. Maybe, just maybe, I will find my voice. Have you thought about your voice lately? I invite you to join me this season of Advent to enter your own time with God and think about your voice. Is it authentic? Are your words and actions in accordance with the teachings of Christ? Might it need a little tuning?

Bob Wolf



Monday, December 8, 2025

Morning Psalms 122; 145

Amos 7:1–9

Rev. 1:1–8

Matt. 22:23–33

Evening Psalms 40; 67

My Joy Discovered in Walkers & Waggers

My Star Word is “Joy”. I was stuck on “a feeling of great happiness or delight”. Well, we’ve all felt that at a wedding, the birth of a child, a graduation, etc.

A new understanding has come to me through Walkers and Waggers! I became interested, started pitching in from a sideline, and then found myself more and more involved.

I have come to feel a deep, spiritual joy in my involvement with this group of very special people, and their beloved pets. Eloise and Lexi remind me not to forget their treats, Lola searches for Bobber (our turtle) every Sunday. Pretzel watches intently and, though she is small, guards her treat like a big dog! Lucy is getting used to her new environment, watching from Charlie’s lap.

That being said, let me move forward to the pearl that has grown in my heart. I have watched a very blessed camaraderie develop among these people, who have grown to know and trust one another through their animals. Conversation grows with every meeting together. In a word, my “Joy” has become a spiritual experience through these wonderful people and their pets – I join them each Sunday with Cori, my stuffie!

So, coffee and cookies served, we settle together to explore the beautiful world God has generously gifted us. We take a moment, each Sunday, to comment on Terry’s presentation. We speak openly, and from our hearts. We wonder...

I have learned “Joy” is not simply feeling “happy” or “delighted” – it is so much more!

Pam Dougherty

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Morning Psalms 33; 146

Amos 7:10–17

Rev. 1:9–16

Matt. 22:34–46

Evening Psalms 85; 94

Simple Instructions

Let there be **Peace** on Earth.

Let it begin with You.

Love your God with all your heart, soul and mind.

Love your neighbors in much the same way.

Peace will be your reward if you do these things.

Christ is the First and the Last (Amos).

Prayer for the Day

May **peace** be in your soul and mind, knowing God has your back and loves you.

Sue Sigvardson

Wednesday, December 10, 2025

Morning Psalms 50; 147:1-11

Amos 8:1-14

Rev. 1:17-2:7

Matt. 23:1-12

Evening Psalms 53; 17

Not Yet

“Soon outcasts whose
only companions
are sheep
will be summoned to
a not-so-royal
court but
not yet.

Soon star gazers will
follow their hearts
and a light only
to be surprised
to find a child
cradled in poverty but
not yet.

Soon a frightened king
will seek answers
from sacred texts
but will not find them
and will be surrounded by more questions but
not yet.

We, like Mary, must wait
upon the good news for all
because waiting is required
by a Father who knows
the impatience of a people
who need the child
but who also need the time of
not yet.

The waiting is a pregnant
space filled with
longing and hope
'Tis a laboring time
of listening and preparing
Advent
the season of
not yet."

An Advent poem by Jody Seymour

Submitted by
Ellen and Eric Neumann

Thursday, December 11, 2025

Morning Psalms 18:1-20; 147:12-20

Amos 9:1-10

Rev. 2:8-17

Matt. 23:13-26

Evening Psalms 126; 62

My Star Word was “Purpose” and it presented me with many uses of the word.

When I engage with someone, I find myself asking “what is my purpose in this discussion” and it helps keep me on track.

When I listen to someone explaining something or discussing a topic, I ask myself “what is their purpose”. This helps me to be sure I understand their message or position.

When I take an action on something, before doing it, I ask myself “what is my purpose here” and this helps me deliver a clearer message.

When someone takes an action that affects me, I ask myself “what is their purpose in doing this”. This helps me to ask clarifying questions to better understand the situation.

When I read something, I ask myself “what was the author’s purpose in writing this”. This brings me to my reading of Revelation. As I read through the many passages, I asked myself, “what was John’s purpose in writing this book”? I am sure that there are many scholars who have their answer to this question. What I concluded the purpose to be was to assure all people that in the END, GOD will reign over everything, and evil will exist no more.

Ollie Robling

Friday, December 12, 2025

Morning Psalms 102; 148

Hag. 1:1–15

Rev. 2:18–29

Matt. 23:27–39

Evening Psalms 130; 16

“I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.”

Psalm 16:8

He is almost here. In less than two weeks we celebrate the gift of Jesus Christ. The promise of salvation through faith alone.

It has been a tough year both personally and world-wide. We have seen many dear friends go through health crises. Some with what seem miraculous recoveries and others as salvationists say, “were promoted to glory”. World-wide we still have wars, brown people and our Jewish brethren are in fear and people are without food.

Do I feel inadequate? I sure do. But I can affect the community in which I live (small as it is). I can bring water on a hot day or coffee on a cold day to the Hispanic workers at my neighbor’s house. I can round up my grocery bill at the supermarket and pick up something for the Food Pantry whenever I go. I can write the government expressing my opinion. I can and will treat people with the respect I expect to receive from them.

Why? Because as a gift, God has given me the role model of Jesus Christ and I have faith. My eyes are always on the Lord, through him the promise of hope, peace, joy and love will break through. We all have to work at it each and every day.

May each morning we awake be Christmas Day and may we spread the love God has given us through Jesus.

Marti Sommer

Saturday, December 13, 2025

Morning Psalms 90; 149

Hag. 2:1–9

Rev. 3:1–6

Matt. 24:1–14

Evening Psalms 80; 72

Referring to King Solomon:

May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy and crush the oppressor.

May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that
water the earth.

In his days may righteousness flourish and **peace** abound, until the
moon is no more.

It seems I think about little else, at this time, than world **peace** ... so
very grateful for the unrelenting work that has been done on behalf
of those in captivity. The heart-breaking deaths resulting from
public expression of truth, faith and the courage to speak it, and
those innocents lost for no reason at all. There's a faith-based
revitalization that refreshes and renews me, especially by youth and
young adults.

I can't get enough. I am filled up and waiting for more.

Christmas brings what I wait for.

It all began with the birth of Jesus and that has made all the
difference.

Marjie Poffel



"Joy is the true gift of Christmas, not the expensive gifts that call for time and money. We can communicate this joy simply: with a smile, a kind gesture, a little help, forgiveness. And the joy we give will certainly come back to us."

— Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

Sunday, December 14, 2025

Morning Psalms 24; 150

Amos 9:11–15

2 Thess. 2:1–3, 13–17

John 5:30–47

Evening Psalms 25; 110

Worship Readings

Isa. 35:1–10

Ps. 146:5–10 *or* Luke 1:46b–

55 Jas. 5:7–10

Matt. 11:2–11

Isa. 35:1–10

Father's Love

“May our Lord, Jesus Christ himself, God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.”

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

I think my father took this scripture to heart. My father lost his twenty-year battle with cancer on this day in 2009. He lived each day with hope and was encouraged by reading his Bible. Once I had one of his doctors ask me if I realized how sick he really was because he didn't act ill.

He lived each day to the fullest. Helping his children and grandchildren was the love of his life. He left behind a **joy** for living that he became a caregiver for his grandchildren along with still staying in his beloved woods. This meant traveling between Pennsylvania, Missouri, Florida and yes, even Delaware. Maybe this is where I get the traveling bug!

Even on the day he died he had been having a full, blessed day. His doctor called me later in the evening of his death to talk with me. He told me he wished all of his patients were like my father. He continued by saying my father lived every day with **joy** and hope no matter how much his health was deteriorating.

My father could be found working in his yard, my yard across the state or my brother's yard across the country. He was raised on a farm and even though he chose other work as an adult he still loved being outside. His children and grandchildren think of him when we are out working in our yards, especially the yard I share with my brother and sister-in-law in Pennsylvania because it was our father's yard. We all share the joy of remembering our father and grandfather.

*"O my soul praise God! All my life long I'll praise God –
God made sky and soil, sea and all the fish in it –
God loves good people"*

Psalm 146: 1-10



Sue Rizer

Monday, December 15, 2025

Morning Psalms 122; 145

Zech. 1:7–17

Rev. 3:7–13

Matt. 24:15–31

Evening Psalms 40; 67

*May God be gracious to us and bless us
And make his face to shine upon us,
Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth.
Let the peoples praise you, O God;
Let all the peoples praise you.*

Psalm 67 is a song of thanksgiving. It is a prayer asking that the blessings that God has bestowed upon the people will continue as they live and work together. And in return the people will praise their God and honor God forever. They also ask that other nations may know that Israel's God is Lord of all people.

Prayer: Gracious and most loving God, may we your People continue to tell the joyous story of the coming of your Son. Help us to spread this Good News to a world in crisis, who are searching for justice, peace, and joy....Amen

Beverly Bailey

Tuesday, December 16, 2025

Morning Psalms 33; 146

Zech. 2:1–13

Rev. 3:14–22

Matt. 24:32–44

Evening Psalms 85; 94

“With our whole being, we look to Grandfather, our help and our medicine shield.

Because of him, our hearts dance for joy, for we have put our trust in all his holy name represents.

Grandfather, because we have looked to you, may your faithful and true love, like the wings of an eagle, hover over us.”

Psalm 33: 20-22

Frist Nations Version

“How shall the mighty river reach the tiny seed?

See it rise silently to the sun’s yearning,

sail from a winter’s cloud flake after silent flake

piling up layer upon layer until the thaw of spring

to meet the seedling’s need.

Make tender, Lord, my heart:

Release through gentleness thine own tremendous power

hid in the snowflake’s art.”

Antoinette Adam

Life does not come to us as something whole, certainly not as something finished. Rather, it’s a perplexing web of desires and fears, of known and unknown, of darkness and light. We make our own way – we like to say! But the truth, very often, is that we see our way being made for us, that we see obstacles big enough to impede us, and we endure heartbreaks hard enough to stop us in our tracks. It’s possible to lose our way, or to lose our desire, or even to lose ourselves. Then, we need to turn it over to our higher power, whomever or whatever that might be, with trust in the guidance we will receive; whether from institutions and professionals, from

mentors or guardians, from intuition, or from God as we know God. Love, and loss, are two of the great waystations. Both offer wisdom in their own way, as we navigate them, or as we look back at them, searching out the gifts, the pearls, they have left to us. In this time of year, one we call a liminal space, we have the chance to heal, or to celebrate, each one, because this is the time not only of waiting, but of hope.

Whether your own hope is dim, or familiar, be blessed in the moment; and may that moment stretch out its embrace through all your days.

Pastor Terry Dougherty



Prayer for the Life of the World
— John Philip Newell

“Whichever way we turn, O God, there is your face
in the light of the moon and the patterns of stars
in scarred mountain rifts and ancient groves
in mighty seas and creatures of the deep.

Whichever way we turn, O God, there is your face
in the light of eyes we love
in the salt of tears we have tasted
in weathered countenances east and west
in the soft skin glow of the child everywhere.

Whichever way we turn, O God, there is your face
there is your face
among us.”

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

Morning Psalms 50; 147:1-11

Zech. 3:1-10

Rev. 4:1-8

Matt. 24:45-51

Evening Psalms 53; 17

*“Offer Grandfather a song of thanksgiving. Honor our Creator with joyful flute songs.
He covers the sky with a blanket of clouds, sends rain down on Mother Earth, and makes the green grass grow on the hillsides.
He feeds the buffalo on the plains and the young ravens crying in their nests.”*

Psalm 147: 7-9
First Nations Version

“Step out onto the planet.
Draw a circle a hundred feet round.
Inside the circle are
300 things nobody understands, and, maybe,
nobody’s ever really seen.
How many can you find?”

— Lew Welch

I take so much **joy**, and feel so blessed, in the context of our Walkers and Waggers service! At least in part that is true because we converse in real and deep ways, sharing both our own humanity, and the personal and particular ways we celebrate and reverence our places in the creation, in our society, and in the company of our fellow creatures. I think because no emotion, and no thought, is off the table, a real bond has formed among us. Such bonds, wherever and however you, or I, or anyone enjoy them, are vital to our becoming, which is in God and in God’s beloved world. We are her tenders, lovers, gardeners, caregivers, partners; we work and we run just for pleasure in it, we listen to bark and song and cry and respond

to them with all our open hearts. Growing out and in, up and in a place, we know better than ever that we belong; that our satisfaction is here, and not in some dreamed-of other place.

A blessing on your home and hearth, your yard or park, your friends and neighbors. Savor it all; there is nothing and nowhere like it!

Pastor Terry Dougherty



Prayer for the Life of the World

— John Philip Newell

“For everything that emerges from the earth
thanks be to you, O God,
Holy Root of being
Sacred Sap that rises

Full-bodied Fragrance of earth’s unfolding form.
May we know that we are of You
may we are in You
may we know that we are one with You
together one.

Guide us as nations to what is deepest
open us as peoples to what is first
lead us as a world to what is dearest
that we may know the holiness of wholeness
that we may learn the strength of humility
that together we may live close to the earth
and grow in grounded glory.”

Thursday, December 18, 2025

Morning Psalms 18:1-20; 147:12; 20

Gen. 3:8-15

Rev. 12:1-10

John 3:16-21

Evening Psalms 126; 62

John 3:16 tells us, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” (NRSV) This is the very first Bible verse I ever memorized as a child. There was an evangelical tent at our annual summer carnival, and my brother and I always went in to see what we were missing. It was the first verse they always taught us every time.

John 3:16-21 relates to **JOY** because of God’s unconditional love, the sacrifice of His son and the promise of eternal life for those who believe. This passage connects the act of "new birth" in faith with a transformed life that can experience **joy**. This **joy** is given by God's purpose - to save us from condemnation. The **joy** is not just a feeling, but a new way of life that comes from having being reconciled with God and walking in His truth, which is a deep and lasting **joy** for believers.

“Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;

let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs
employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.”

Dear God, thank you for sending your son, Jesus. Help me to trust in the promise of everlasting life and to live in the light of your love. Remind me daily that nothing compares to the **Joy** of knowing Christ. Help me live in a way that others see Him through me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Al and Alicia Tamilio



Friday, December 19, 2025

Morning Psalms 102; 148

Zeph. 3:14–20

Titus 1:1–16

Luke 1:1–25

Evening Psalms 130; 16

Our Gospel lesson today continues to set the stage for Jesus' birth and put the historical elements surrounding it in place. So many details pop out to me as I read this passage (Luke 1:1-25), even though I have read it each year for most of my adult life. I am reminded of Zechariah and Elizabeth's lineage, tracing back to Aaron. I read that they both are "very old" and later, in verse 25, that Elizabeth had been "disgraced" among her people, which I interpret is because of her childlessness until the birth of John.

I consider the surprised reaction of Zechariah upon his encounter with Gabriel while performing his priestly duties, that this unusual messenger of the Lord was sent to inform him and his wife that, despite their advanced age, a baby would be on the way. His mere question: "How can I be sure?" earned him months of being unable to speak.

We know how the story will unfold, and that Elizabeth and Zechariah's boy John will have a very important part in the story of the life of his cousin, Jesus. The details in these stories matter, as do the details in OUR stories. God is working in our lives, even when we don't understand what is happening. This Christmas, let's take some quiet moments to think about the details in our life stories. Have you witnessed a miracle? Seen an angel? Received unexpected blessings? These are your Spirit Stories! Write them down so you won't forget. Tell someone what God has done for you! Leave a legacy of faith, hope, and trust in the Lord, just as Zechariah and Elizabeth did. It's all in the details.

Shannon Flynn

Saturday, December 20, 2025

Morning Psalms 90; 149

1 Sam. 2:1b–10

Titus 2:1–10

Luke 1:26–36

Evening Psalms 80; 72

Luke 1:26-36 and my Star Word Path

I've already been on many different paths in my life – sometimes meandering, some dead-ended, some lifesaving, some guided, as well as on some deliberately going against guidance. I've found a few elements of who I am and who I was meant to be. My guardian angel must have given up, 'cause I figure only the Lord pushing me along got me this far. And, I've *not* had a tough life.

When I think about Mary and the angel Gabriel visit, I'm amazed at the turn her path took! I'm guessing here, but imagine Mary's life was well-planned out for her. She probably hoped to marry soon, move in with Joseph's family, have children, and end up serving her mother-in-law. She might have been betrothed to Joseph for a while, 'cause I bet her family was poor and she'd not have much of a dowry to bring to the marriage. Then I imagine Mary (still in her father's house) is well, perhaps, "doing the dishes" when Gabriel shows up. He says, "Greetings favored one! The Lord is with you."

The Bible says she was perplexed (must be putting it mildly) since she'd be surrounded by all that bright angel glory. Gabriel goes on to tell her all about the baby she is to have and his life's path. Of course, Mary asked how this can be since she's a virgin. His only answer is that nothing is impossible for God. There's no record of her wanting a time out to think about this, or worrying about what her parents, let alone Joseph, will do once they hear. Shocking change of plans I'd say!

We don't know if the Lord was pushing her all life-long onto this path. Gabriel's telling of the miracle of her relative Elizabeth's own conception, perhaps helped convince her this was real. Later Mary confirms this by visiting Elizabeth. This time the Holy Spirit visits her and her life-path is filled with knowing a little about who she really was and what she was meant to be. You just never know when God will detour your path...

Gloria Bartholomew





This year we encourage you and your family to *talk with and listen to* CHILDREN about the true meaning of Christmas.

For that we used the scriptures for this week to create an opportunity for this exchange. There are things for our children (of different ages) to do and words from the Bible to read (perhaps by you) to get started.

You could mail this to a child, if you won't be able to be with them this time. You could use Face Time, Zoom, or just call them when they receive it.

We hope you will enjoy this new section of our Advent devotional. And we hope you will multiply God's message of **Love** for us, just as Jesus was sent to spread his word for us to **Love** one another.

Sunday, December 21, 2025

Morning Psalms 24; 150

2 Sam. 7:1–17

Titus 2:11–3:8a

Luke 1:39–48a (48b–56)

Evening Psalms 25; 110

Worship Readings

Isa. 7:10–16

Ps. 80:1–7, 17–19

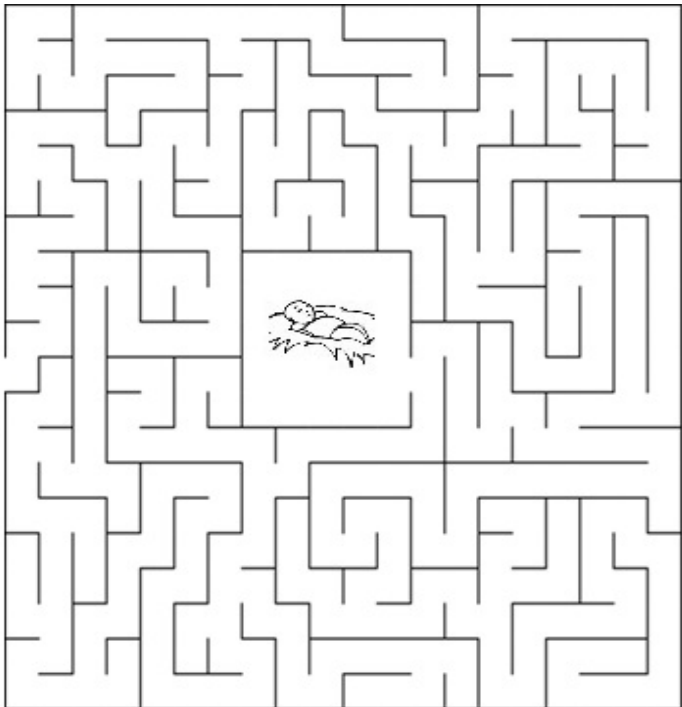
Rom. 1:1–7

Matt. 1:18–25

A Love Message from God's Angel

God sent an Angel, Gabriel, to talk to Joseph when he was dreaming. The Angel told him, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to make Mary your wife. The baby she is carrying is from the Holy Spirit. She will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus. He will save the people.”

Trace Joseph's dream thru the maze to find the coming baby Jesus.



Monday, December 22, 2025

Morning Psalms 122; 145

2 Sam. 7:18–29

Gal. 3:1–14

Luke 1:57–66

Evening Psalms 40; 67

Gabriel tells News of Another Baby Coming

Also, we hear that God’s Angel, Gabriel, has visited the Priest Zechariah. Gabriel told him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will have a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness. Many people will rejoice at his birth. He will be great in the sight of the Lord.”

The Angel was telling Zechariah and Elizabeth, just like Mary, nothing was impossible with God. Circle the words below: < > ^ v

Luke 1:57-66

G R E A T Y P V N A
B L Q Z H V O E P N
H O I T L I H L R G
N R G M Y S J I A E
S D A B L I O Z Y L
B A B Y M T H A E S
N X R I Y Z N B R C
C T I O Z J N E J D
F V E Z J O G T L G
N X L F E Y V H J O

ANGEL
GREAT

BABY
JOHN
PRAYER

ELIZABETH GABRIEL
JOY LORD
VISIT

Tuesday, December 23, 2025

Morning Psalms 33; 146

Gal. 3:15–22

Luke 1:67–80

or Matt.1:1–17

Evening Psalms 85; 94

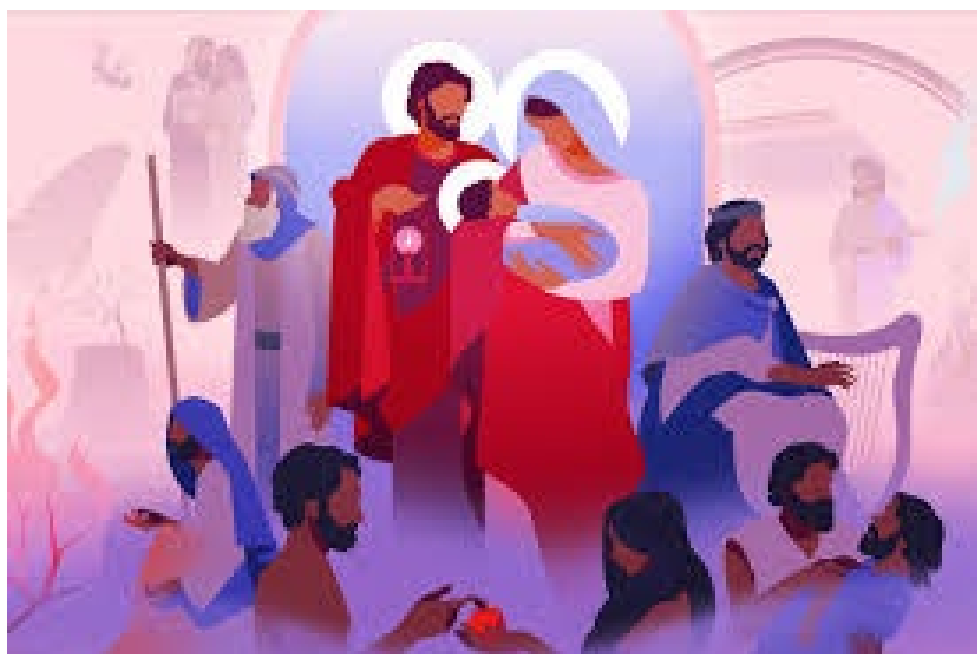
Use this code to fill in the blanks and hear about ***John's Future***:

 = A	^ = B	~ = C	☆ = D	∞ = E
☺ = F	⊗ = G	★ = H	⌘ = I	☪ = J
⦶ = K	↕ = L	⏮ = M	♥ = N	☪ = O
🍏 = P	☯ = Q	⬤ = R	🍋 = S	🍬 = T
	💡 = U	⚙ = V	🕒 = W	

+ ☪ 💡 🕒 ⌘ ↕ ↕ ⊗ ☪
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You will go prepare a road for the Lord and the people will be saved.

The Nativity of the Lord



CHRISTMAS EVE

Morning Psalms 50; 147: 1-11

Isa. 60:1-6

Gal. 3:23-4:7

Matt. 1:18-25

Evening Psalms 53; 17

About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. Everyone had to travel to their hometown to be counted. So, Joseph took Mary (who was expecting a child) to Bethlehem.

They had no place to stay when Mary gave birth to a son. So, she wrapped the baby in cloth and put him nearby in the container that held food for the animals. She and his father, Joseph, would call him Jesus.



CHRISTMAS DAY

Morning Psalms 2; 147: 12-20

Micah 4:1-5; 5:2-4

1 John 4:7-16

John 3:31-36

Evening Psalms 98; 96

Connect the dots to make an Angel with a Trumpet



The Angel said, “Don’t be afraid. I’m here to announce a great and joyful event. Look for a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger.”

ADDITIONAL READINGS

NATIVITY OF THE LORD I

First Reading	Isaiah 9:2–7
Psalm	Psalms 96
Second Reading	Titus 2: 11–14
Gospel	Luke 2: 1–14 [15–20]

NATIVITY OF THE LORD II

First Reading	Isaiah 62:6–12
Psalm	Psalms 97
Second Reading	Titus 3:4–7
Gospel	Luke 2: [1–7] 8–20

NATIVITY OF THE LORD III

First Reading	Isaiah 52:7–10
Psalm	Psalms 98
Second Reading	Hebrews 1:1–4 [5–12]
Gospel	John 1:1–14

To all of those who participated in the production of this Devotional Booklet – Thank You!. The result is a sharing of special talents, gifts from God, whether they are authoring daily meditations, providing artwork, organizing the writings, generating the computer version, or printing and assembling the finished product.*

“We are strengthened by these experiences to continue to live as God’s people”.

** cover artwork for this devotional has been provided by Elaine Wolf*

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