



Advent I December 22
Weekly Devotionals

If available, light your HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE candles on your Advent wreath. Take a moment to be still in the presence of God, inviting him to renew your love.

Opening Prayer:

*O Almighty God, you visited your servants, Elizabeth and Mary,
with news of the world's redemption in the coming of the Savior.
Make our hearts leap with joy,
and fill our mouths with songs of praise,
that we may announce glad tidings of peace,
and welcome Christ the Savior in our midst. Amen.*

Read Micah 5:2-5a

*"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times."*

³Therefore Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,
and the rest of his brothers return
to join the Israelites.

⁴He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they will live securely, for then his greatness
will reach to the ends of the earth.

⁵And he will be our peace

Read Psalm 80:1-7

Hear us, Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock.
You who sit enthroned between the cherubim,
shine forth ²before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.

Awaken your might;
come and save us.

³Restore us, O God;
make your face shine on us,
that we may be saved.

⁴How long, Lord God Almighty,
will your anger smolder
against the prayers of your people?

⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have made them drink tears by the bowlful.

⁶You have made us an object of derision to our neighbors,
and our enemies mock us.

⁷Restore us, God Almighty;
make your face shine on us,
that we may be saved.

Pause and Reflect:

Where do you need the love of God to restore you?

What phrase in the previous Scriptures stands out to you? Take a moment to pray through that phrase, inviting the Lord to remind you of his saving grace toward you.

Take a moment to pray for the Lord to shepherd you with his love.

Read Luke 1:39-56

³⁹At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!" ⁴⁶And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed,
⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me—
holy is his name.
⁵⁰His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.
⁵¹He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
⁵²He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
⁵³He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
⁵⁵to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors."

Intercessory Prayer:

*Brothers and sisters,
as we joyfully await the glorious coming of the Christ,
let us pray for the needs of the church, our community, and the world.*

Prayers of the People—take some time to pray to Jesus about the needs of the church and the world.

*God of promise,
you have given us a sign of your love
through the gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior,
who was promised from ages past.
We believe as Joseph did
the message of your presence
whispered by an angel,
and offer our prayers for your world,
confident of your care and mercy for all creation. Amen.*

Concluding Scripture: Read Hebrews 10:5-10

⁵Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; ⁶with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. ⁷Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, my God.’” ⁸First he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”—though they were offered in accordance with the law. ⁹Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second. ¹⁰And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Concluding Prayer:

*Shepherd of Israel,
you gently support the one who is with child
and call forth the Lamb who dances in the womb,
Stir our hearts to recognize Christ’s coming,
as Elizabeth recognized his presence
in Mary’s radiant obedience to your desire,
an open our souls to receive the one
who came to love your flock. Amen*