

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL - WEEK FOUR



Picture by ALC Online Contributor, Andrew Gulliksen

WEEK FOUR: In Luke 1:30, we read, “The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.’” The fourth candle is the “Angels’ Candle”. The angels are messengers for God announcing what God will do – often very soon. For the shepherds outside of Bethlehem, the heaven’s opened to reveal a host of angels gave glory to God and announced that a child, Christ the Lord, would be born. The angel announced to Sarah and Abraham that they would have a child. For the shepherds outside of Bethlehem, the heaven’s opened to reveal a host of angel’s giving glory to God and announcing that a child would be born. We celebrate that God speaks to us, not through an angelic being but through a Word who would become flesh full of grace and truth.



Advent Day TWENTY - Sunday December 20, 2020

Advent Wreath Candle Lighting

As you light the fourth candle today, spend some time in reflection, reading the following passage. What images represent Christ's presence or love in your life and in this world?

We praise you, O God, for this circle of light that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, give us the joy of the angels. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may sing of your advent among us in the Word made flesh. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. Amen.



Advent Day TWENTY-ONE - Monday December 21, 2020

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus."
Luke 1:30

My favorite national park is the Grand Canyon. I have hiked it, and I have rafted it, and I think a part of my heart lives there year-round, because I always want to go back again. When you are in the bottom of the Grand Canyon, time ceases to matter, and you can focus on the truly important things in life - including a relationship with God. When I have had the privilege and honor to lie on the sand in the bottom of the Canyon and look up at the sky, I have felt that God is right there, next to me, showing me His wonders. When I sit on the tube of a raft, facing downstream into a rapid, I hear Him telling of his power. And, most importantly, in the evening, sitting around a campfire with strangers who have become friends, I see His love and grace shining in the faces looking back at me.

Lord, please, continue to show us your wonders, your power, your grace and your love. Help us look and truly see these marvels in our lives every day. Amen

~Ingrid Daniel

Advent Day TWENTY-TWO - Tuesday December 22, 2020

A woman's pregnancy was part of the common rhythm of life. The unusual part of Mary's pregnancy was God's action. God was acting through Mary to come into the world.

As much as there is a lot about God's coming that is incomprehensible, it is precisely what we want. The prophet Isaiah (64:1) said it well, "O that you would tear open the heavens and come down." The prophet went on to lament humanity's waywardness and short life span. Asking God to come down is usually followed by what we want God to fix. There are some things that we just can't seem to fix. We easily mistrust others and are quick to fight. We are slow to listen and live wounded.

From our flawed and pained lives we have cried out, "O God, please come down and help us!" And this Scripture witnesses to its happening. It seems the wise thing to do is watch to find what God is up to in answering our prayer.

Prayer: Give us faith to welcome your coming. And help us attend to what you are going to do through Jesus. Amen.

~Pastor Dan Holt

Advent Day TWENTY-THREE - Wednesday December 23, 2020

Prayer of the Day: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Advent Day TWENTY-FOUR - Thursday December 24, 2020

The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid Mary, you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus.” When I read this text the thing I think about is how scary this experience must have been for Mary. She was still a girl and now and was going to have a baby.

I am the mother of five and I can think of no other time or event in my life—amazing sunsets, Christmas time with my family, the sacred music of Bach, when I felt Christ’s nearness to me than when I held each of my precious babies for the first time. As I stroked their dark hair, felt their tiny fingers and hands, heard them cry for the first time—I knew there was no greater miracle in the world...and that I would never feel Christ’s presence as closely.

I know it must have been that way for Mary. The Bible tells us that Mary kept this first Christmas Eve in her heart and like me she probably took the memories of these moments out again and again, to relive the miracle of his birth and feel again the love of God in her life. Whether you are a parent, or simply a member of God’s family, may you feel Christ’s closeness in your life this Christmas.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. Isaiah 9:6 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. Luke 2:19

~Jan McMillan



Advent Day TWENTY-FIVE - Friday December 25, 2020

Many years ago I spent time in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It was in December, and in the evenings looking up at the sky, I pictured myself as a traveler 2000 years earlier. In this very region travelers from Persia came en route to Jerusalem. It was very quiet and peaceful while I was there. There were no city lights or noises to distract from ones thoughts. Just wind and the sound of footsteps in the sand. What thoughts must have been going through their minds two thousand years ago as they journeyed to a distant land? Travelers on a long and dangerous voyage through the desert. Not unlike us and our journey through life.

But we have an advantage. We know that into this world a Savior came to earth for our salvation many years ago. He made his presence known; not with throngs of dignitaries, but with everyday people. The feeling of being in that place during Advent was one that I will never forget. It was where it all began. Lord please keep our hearts open to your presence not just in a manger, but in our fellow man every day of the year.

~Jim Deloughry

~MERRY CHRISTMAS~