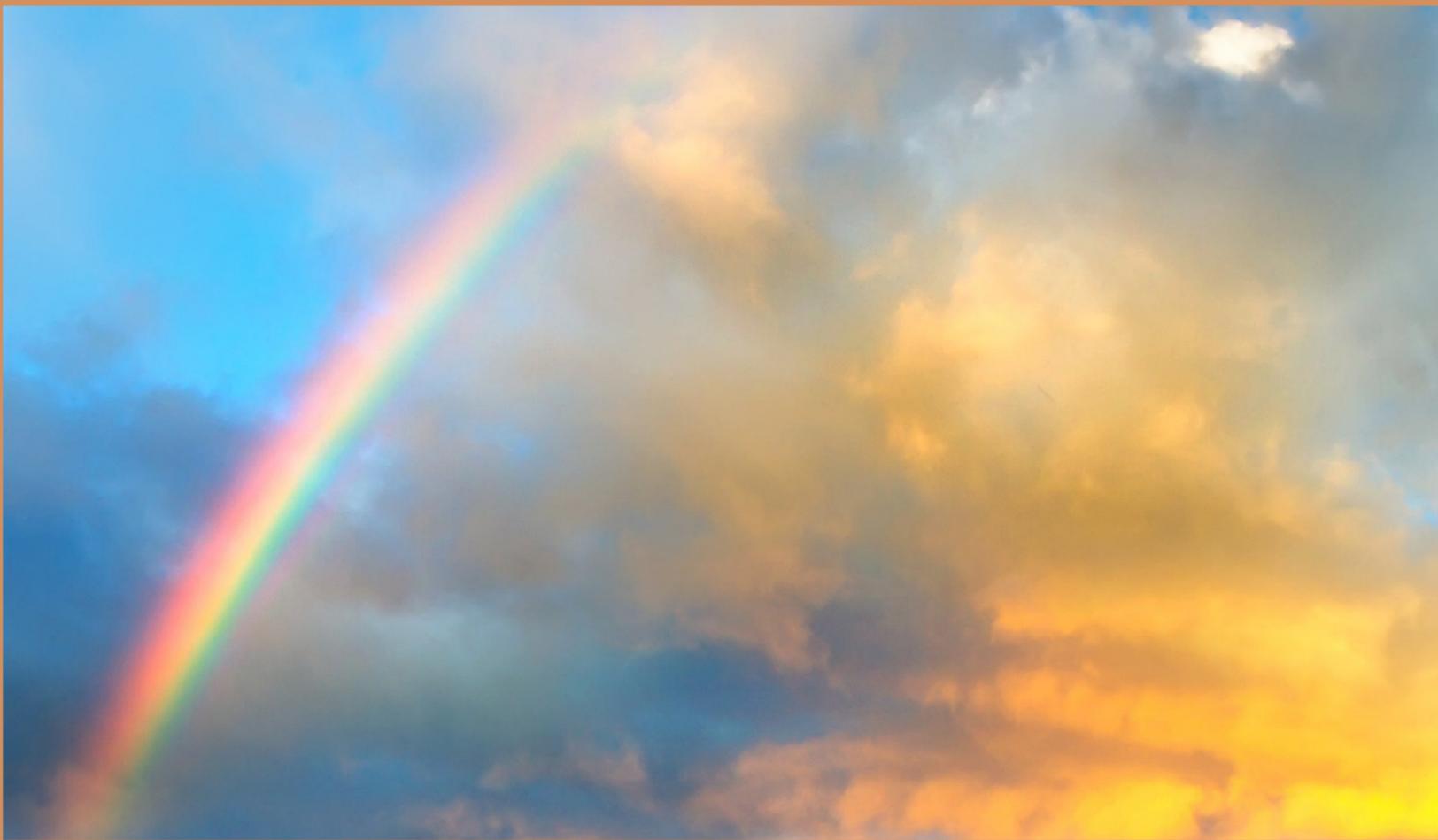


The Promises of God



**Advent and Christmas
Devotionals
by Lillie Ammann**

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Published by:

Lillie's Lovely Little Publishing Company

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A Note from the Author

During Advent and Lent, I generally follow a Bible reading plan. I journal a short meditation and write a brief prayer on each day's reading. I publish the devotionals in a future year.

This booklet is being published in 2021 with my personal devotions from Advent 2013. I hope you are blessed by these Scriptures, thoughts, and prayers during this holy season.

Thanks to my friends George and Pam Lampe, fellow parishioners at All Saints Anglican Church in San Antonio, for proofreading.

In the past, I have published the devotionals in a print book and donated the profits to Love for Least, "sharing the compassion of Christ with an unreached world." To make the devotionals available to more people, I am publishing them electronically without charge. I wholeheartedly support everything Love for the Least does, and I encourage you to learn more about the movement at <https://lovefortheleast.org>. I pray that what you learn will encourage you to support their work.

May His blessings abound in your time alone with the Lord.

Lillie Ammann

November 2021

The First Sunday in Advent

I was glad when they said to me,
 “Let us go to the house of the Lord!”
Our feet have been standing
 within your gates, O Jerusalem!
Jerusalem—built as a city
 that is bound firmly together,
to which the tribes go up,
 the tribes of the Lord,
as was decreed for Israel,
 to give thanks to the name of the Lord.
There thrones for judgment were set,
 the thrones of the house of David.
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
 “May they be secure who love you!
Peace be within your walls
 and security within your towers!”
For my brothers and companions' sake
 I will say, “Peace be within you!”
For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,
 I will seek your good. ~ Psalm 122



First Sunday of Advent

When Jesus comes again, we will join the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of God. There will be the judgment seat. Jesus will judge the living and dead. During Advent, we prepare ourselves through prayer, Scripture, and meditation for that great day, the day He will come in glory.

Lord, we thank You and bless You that You invite us to go into Your house. During Advent, we prepare for the day when we will dwell in the heavenly Jerusalem with You and Your Blessed Son. We eagerly await the Second Advent of Jesus, knowing that while His First Advent was as a helpless and humble baby, his Second Advent will be filled with power and strength and majesty and glory. Cleanse our hearts as we make preparation for that great day. In Jesus's name. Amen.

Monday in the First Week in Advent

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
 for he has visited and redeemed his people
and has raised up a horn of salvation for us
 in the house of his servant David,
as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old.” ~ Luke 1:68-70

Zacharias spoke these words at the circumcision of his son John, who grew up to be John the Baptist who called people to repentance and baptized them in preparation of Jesus's ministry. The Jewish people had waited centuries for the Messiah, and Zacharias recognized that the time was near for the Messiah to appear. Century after century, generation after generation, the people waited in faith, trusting that God would fulfill His promise. Now we wait—century after century, generation after generation—for the Second Coming of the Messiah, when Jesus will return. We can trust God's promise for He always fulfills His promises on His timetable, not ours. We simply wait and watch in faith.

Lord, You promised the Messiah for centuries, and Your people believed, even though they waited generation after generation for the fulfillment of Your promise. The Messiah has come—as the babe in the manger whose advent (coming) we are preparing to celebrate at Christmas. You have promised that He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. In this time of preparation, we ask You to cleanse our hearts to prepare us for His coming. Let us trust Your promise that when He comes again, we will be with You, the glorious Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—throughout eternity. We trust Your promise. We believe Your Word. We thank You that the Messiah has come, and we look for the day of his Second Coming. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Ghost, now and forever, world without end. Amen.

Tuesday in the First Week in Advent

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

It shall come to pass in the latter days

that the mountain of the house of the Lord
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be lifted up above the hills;

and all the nations shall flow to it,

and many peoples shall come, and say:

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,

to the house of the God of Jacob,

that he may teach us his ways

and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,

and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations,

and shall decide disputes for many peoples;

and they shall beat their swords into,

and their spears into pruning hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation,

neither shall they learn war anymore.
O house of Jacob,
come, let us walk
in the light of the Lord. ~ Isaiah 2:1-5

Isaiah's prophecy may seem hard to believe as we look around us at a world filled with hate and violence and war. Yet we know, if the words are in God's Word, they came from Him, and His words are truth. We can look for this promise to be fulfilled in God's timing, as His promises are always fulfilled. As we wait in faith, we can do our part to bring about the promise. We can't stop war, but we can stop hating our neighbors. We can't bring about peace in the world, but we can make peace with estranged family members and friends. We can't make everyone know the Word of the Lord, but we can share the Gospel with those who don't know it. We can walk in the light of the Lord, and we can pray and watch and ask God to cleanse our hearts as we wait for Jesus's glorious Second Coming when we will be together with Him forever.

Heavenly Father, in a world filled with strife and war within and among nations, we long for the day when there will be war no more. In a time when people have to learn the ways of the Lord to walk in Your paths, we long for the day when every knee will bow to the name of Jesus. Lord, we trust Your promise that the day is coming when nation will not lift up sword against nation, the day when the nations shall stream to the house of the Lord. As we wait for the fulfillment of Your promise that Jesus is coming again, let us walk in the light of the Lord. As we await the return of Jesus, let us live as if we were already in His house. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Ghost, now and forever, world without end. Amen.

Wednesday in the First Week in Advent

"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." ~ Matthew 24:36-44

We guard against the thief coming in the night. Perhaps we have burglar bars or an alarm system; maybe we have a big dog or even a weapon. We protect ourselves against a thief in the night, but are we preparing ourselves for the Coming of Jesus, which will be as a thief in the night. He will come at a time we don't know or expect, so we must be ready all the time—just as we are ready for a thief. A thief may steal our worldly goods, but Jesus will take us to Heaven for eternity IF we are ready for Him. If we aren't ready for him—if we haven't repented of our sins and given our lives to Him—we will lose something far more valuable than any material things. We will lose our lives. Instead of being in Heaven with the Lord, we will be cast into the lake of fire with the devil. With those possible consequences, we must be ready for Jesus's return.

Lord, we know that Jesus will come as a thief in the night, but, oh, with what joy we will greet Him! Help us to always be on the alert, ready to join Him in Your Kingdom forever and ever. Keep our eyes open and our hearts ready for that joyous day. In His holy Name we pray. Amen.

Thursday in the First Week in Advent

Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. ~ Romans 13:11-14

Darkness covers all kinds of evil deeds. Many people who behave properly in public act very differently behind closed doors. But as Jesus's return is nearer than ever before, we must come out from behind closed doors, come out of the darkness, into the light. We must examine ourselves and ask God to point out hidden sins, to show where we are putting something ahead of Him in our lives. Our flesh lusts, tempting us to seek after earthly pleasures and values. During Advent, let's ask God to shine His light on our hearts and minds, to show us whatever in our lives pulls us away from serving God as the Lord of our lives. Then ask Him to cleanse us of these sins and purify us so we are ready at any moment for the Second Coming of Jesus.

Lord God, Holy Father, wake us from our sleep. Take us out of the darkness and into the light of Jesus Christ, whose Second Coming we prepare for. In His name. Amen.

Friday in the First Week in Advent

"Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." ~ Luke 6:38

Often at Christmas, gift-giving becomes a chore rather than a choice. We fight crowds and frustration and spend more than we can afford to give gifts from a sense of obligation. Perhaps we buy an expensive boxed set of body lotions and powders for our elderly relative to add to the collection she has of those she's never used in previous years. Maybe we give our children the latest electronic gadget or toy so they have everything their friends have. The elderly relative would be so much happier with a handwritten note promising a weekly or monthly visit. The children would learn to value material things less and spiritual things more if we give them gifts from our hearts rather than to impress friends and neighbors. And in today's Scripture, Jesus promises that if we give generously, we will be rewarded even more bounteously. Visits to a loved one in the nursing home will reward us with the joy of making someone else happy as well as precious time and memories that will be treasured for a lifetime. The gift of a family activity—whether it's a trip to an amusement park or a game party at home—will bring the family closer together and demonstrate to us and the children the importance of godly values. Giving a small tool to a loved one who is passionate about a hobby will show them that you pay attention to their interests and notice even small things. That makes your loved one happy and creates a deeper bond between you. This year when choosing gifts, give from your heart and not from obligation. You will be rewarded bounteously for your generosity.

Lord God, Who gave us the perfect gift—His Son to forgive our sins and give us eternal life—fill us with the joy of giving. You want us to give from our hearts—and when we give joyously and generously, You reward us. Show us how to give good gifts to those we love. In Jesus's name. Amen.

Saturday in the First Week in Advent

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old,
from ancient days. ~ Micah 5:2

We tend to think bigger is better. A little village so obscure that it was too small to be considered among the Israelite clans isn't very impressive in our modern value system. Yet God chose that little obscure village as the birthplace of the Savior, just as He chose a young virgin from a humble background to give birth to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. God measures differently than we do—He humbles the mighty and exalts the poor and weak. In this holy season, let us look at others from God's perspective instead of our own.

Lord God, thank You for seeing Bethlehem, Mary, and us from a different perspective. Thank You for seeing value where others see little or none. Help us to be the person You created us to be and to look at others the way You do. In the name of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Ghost, now and evermore. Amen.

The Second Sunday in Advent



Second Sunday of Advent

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

"Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles,
and sing to your name."

And again it is said,

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people."

And again,

"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
and let all the peoples extol him."

And again Isaiah says,

"The root of Jesse will come,
even he who arises to rule the Gentiles;
in him will the Gentiles hope."

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. ~ Romans 15:4-13

Paul reminds us that the Scripture has been written for our instruction. He was talking about the Jewish Law and the Prophets—the Old Testament—as the New Testament had not been written. Yet in the Old Testament, God told His people that He is the Lord of the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Jesus was sent to the whole world, not just God's Chosen People. We Gentiles (non-Jews) have hope because God's promises apply to us

as well as to the Jews. When Jesus comes again in glory, He will judge all the nations and all the peoples. We have that great hope because of His promises to us. We don't have to question our place in God's Kingdom. If we have accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are part of His Kingdom.

Thank You, Lord, for including us in Your Kingdom. You didn't send Jesus just for the Jews, and when He comes again, He won't be just for Jews. Everyone who makes Jesus Lord of their life will spend eternity in Heaven with You, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. As we wait for Jesus's return, help us prepare our hearts and minds to be ready. In His name we pray. Amen.

Monday in the Second Week in Advent

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. ~ Luke 1:26-38

It's hard for us to realize how devastating it would be for Mary to become pregnant out of wedlock. Today nearly half of births are to unmarried women, and there are many more who become pregnant and abort the baby, as well as those who marry during their pregnancy. But in Biblical times, a young woman who became pregnant before marriage was condemned and shunned. Mary risked being abandoned by her fiancé Joseph, who would have thought she had been unfaithful. But Mary was not only faithful to Joseph, she was also faithful to God. She told the angel that she was the Lord's bondservant, willing to go through whatever He planned for her. So often, we look at the circumstances in our lives and, instead of surrendering to God's will and trusting Him, we see only the negatives, the difficulties, the hardships. During this time

of Advent, let us prepare ourselves to accept whatever challenges God gives or allows in our lives and to trust Him in His perfect will.

Lord, let us say as Mary did, we are your bondservants; let Your will be done. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who lives with You and the Holy Ghost forever and forever. Amen.

Tuesday in the Second Week in Advent

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.
And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;
and a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.
They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious. ~ Isaiah 11:1-10

What a beautiful picture these words create! Can you just see in your mind's eye the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the goat, even a child and a snake lying peacefully or playing companionably? All led by a righteous Ruler belted with faithfulness? That is the day after the Second Coming of our Lord. That is the day we wait and prepare for during Advent.

Lord, we love the vision of Your Kingdom, ruled with righteousness and faithfulness by One Who judges not by what He sees or hears but by what is in the heart. In Jesus's name we pray. Amen.

Wednesday in the Second Week in Advent

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.'"

Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

"I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." ~ Matthew 3:1-12

John the Baptist came before Jesus to prepare the way for Him. He called on the people to repent of their sins, and he baptized those who confessed their sins. He warned the Pharisees and Sadducees that trees that didn't bear fruit would be cut down. During this Advent as we prepare for Christmas, let us confess our sins and repent. Let us ask God to guide us by the Holy Spirit so that we produce good fruit so we will remain standing until the day of Christ's return.

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge and regret our many sins. Forgive us and cleanse us from unrighteousness. Use us to produce good fruit for the coming Kingdom of God. In Jesus's name. Amen.

Thursday in the Second Week in Advent

Wail, for the day of the Lord is near;
as destruction from the Almighty it will come!
Therefore all hands will be feeble,
and every human heart will melt.
They will be dismayed:
pangs and agony will seize them;
they will be in anguish like a woman in labor.
They will look aghast at one another;
their faces will be aflame.

Behold, the day of the Lord comes,
cruel, with wrath and fierce anger,
to make the land a desolation
and to destroy its sinners from it. ~ Isaiah 13:6-9

As Christians, we look for the Coming of the Lord with joy and anticipation. However, Isaiah has warned us that the day of the Lord will not be welcomed by those who reject the Lord, for the Coming of the Lord will be a time of pain, anguish, fury, burning anger, and desolation for those who have chosen their sins and the lusts of the flesh over God. In this time of preparation, we must examine our own hearts and ask the Lord to cleanse and purify them so that we will be among those who greet the Second Coming of Jesus with joy.

Lord, we know Your judgment is devastating for those who reject You, but Your mercy is great for those who love You. Examine our hearts and cleanse away all unrighteousness; fill our hearts with Your love and prepare us to welcome the coming day of the Lord. In the name of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. Amen.

Friday in the Second Week in Advent

Sow for yourselves righteousness;
reap steadfast love;
break up your fallow ground,
for it is the time to seek the Lord,
that he may come and rain righteousness upon you. ~ Hosea 10:12

These words were directed by the Old Testament prophet Hosea to God's people who had strayed far from His ways, yet they express so well what we should be doing during Advent. It is time for us to seek the Lord—whether for the first time or for a renewed relationship with Him. We must break up the untilled ground of our heart; unless the ground of a field is tilled, it cannot grow a crop, and unless the ground of our hearts is tilled, it cannot grow a crop of righteousness planted by the Master Gardener, Jesus Christ, who Himself paid for our sin on the cross and who alone can make us righteous by imparting His righteousness to us.

Lord, plow the ground of my heart. Root out all evil—hatred, selfishness, idolatry, the lusts of the flesh—and plant the righteousness of Jesus in the tilled soil. We ask this in the name of He who will come again with glory. Amen.

Saturday in the Second Week in Advent

“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord. ~ Malachi 3:1-3

Refining precious metals requires an extremely hot fire. The refiner sits beside the fire and watches the process very closely. When he sees the reflection of his face, he knows the silver or gold is purified. That is what the Lord does to us. He refines us in the heat of the trials and problems we encounter in our lives and watches for His face—the beautiful face of Jesus—in us. On the day of His coming, He will purify us so we can offer our righteousness and worship to Him throughout eternity.

Lord, sometimes it's hard to go through the trials You send us, but we thank You that through those very trials You are refining us. You are purifying us and making us more like You. We want You to see Yourself in us. Continue to refine and purify us. In Jesus's name. Amen.

The Third Sunday in Advent

Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who have an anxious heart,
"Be strong; fear not!
Behold, your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.
He will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.
For waters break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

And a highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;
the unclean shall not pass over it.
It shall belong to those who walk on the way;
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
And the ransomed of the Lord shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. ~ Isaiah 35:3-10

Sometimes we look around us at the state of our nation and of our world and we become discouraged. The world calls evil good and good evil. Sin abounds, and we know it has for centuries. Maybe we wonder when Jesus is finally coming. This Scripture exhorts us to encourage one another. Jesus is coming again. We will be redeemed to walk the Highway of Holiness. Let us lift up the weak and discouraged and remind them that our Savior is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. His Word is



Third Sunday of Advent

sacred. He said He is coming again, and He is. It may be tomorrow; it may be next year; it may be centuries from now. But He will come on His timetable for those who love Him and accept Him as their Lord to dwell in an eternity of everlasting joy.

Lord, help us see when our sisters and brothers are discouraged and weak. Give us the faith and strength to lift them up so in Your perfect timing we come to the Highway of Holiness with our fellow believers. In the name of Jesus, our Lord, who will come again. Amen.

Monday in the Third Week of Advent

A voice cries:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

A voice says, “Cry!”

And I said, “What shall I cry?”
All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades
when the breath of the Lord blows on it;
surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever. ~ Isaiah 40:3-8

We may not like to think of ourselves as withering grass and fading flowers, but in God’s timing, our earthly existence is just as brief. However, God’s Word is eternal. His promises are always fulfilled; His mercies are new every morning. He has promised Jesus will come again, and if He says it will happen, it will happen. We need to be ready, with His way cleared in the wilderness of our hearts, ready for His return.

Lord, Your Word is eternal and eternally and absolutely true. You have promised that Jesus will come in glory, and we await that glorious day. Cleanse our hearts and make a smooth way for Him. In His Name we pray. Amen.

Tuesday in the Third Week in Advent

Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ~ James 5:7-10

We get impatient, especially in our fast-paced society that offers instant gratification with constant communication with cell phones and text messaging, drive-through windows for fast food, and immediate access to books and games and movies on electronic devices. But farmers learn to wait patiently—they don't expect to harvest a crop the day after they plant the seed. Scripture tells us to be patient as we wait for the coming of the Lord. But in addition to being patient, James tells us to strengthen our hearts and to quit complaining. While we patiently wait, we must also be preparing ourselves so that we are ready to face His judgment when Jesus comes again.

Almighty God, we know Jesus is coming again even though we don't know when. Purify us, strengthen us, forgive our sins as we repent, and prepare us for the return of Jesus. In His name. Amen.

Wednesday in the Third Week in Advent

Therefore thus says the Lord God,
"Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion,
a stone, a tested stone,
a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation:
'Whoever believes will not be in haste.'
And I will make justice the line,
and righteousness the plumb line;
and hail will sweep away the refuge of lies,
and waters will overwhelm the shelter."
Then your covenant with death will be annulled,
and your agreement with Sheol will not stand;
when the overwhelming scourge passes through,
you will be beaten down by it.
As often as it passes through it will take you;
for morning by morning it will pass through,
by day and by night;
and it will be sheer terror to understand the message. ~ Isaiah 28:16-19

God sent His prophet Isaiah to tell God's people that He was going to lay a cornerstone to make justice the measuring line and righteousness the level. Those who believe in the cornerstone (God's own Son, Jesus Christ) will be saved. Those who do not believe, however, will be washed away, scourged, trampled. We don't have to be righteous in our own strength; we will be saved by the righteousness of the firmly placed, foundational cornerstone.

Thank You, Lord, for saving us by grace and mercy—not with our own righteousness but the righteousness of Your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. We believe, Lord, and ask You to wash away our sins and save us from the terror that comes from unbelief. In Jesus's name. Amen.

Thursday in the Third Week in Advent

Hear, you who are far off, what I have done;
and you who are near, acknowledge my might.

The sinners in Zion are afraid;

trembling has seized the godless:

“Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire?

Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?”

He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly,

who despises the gain of oppressions,

who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe,

who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed

and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,

he will dwell on the heights;

his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks;

his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.

Your eyes will behold the king in his beauty;

they will see a land that stretches afar.

Your heart will muse on the terror:

“Where is he who counted, where is he who weighed the tribute?

Where is he who counted the towers?”

You will see no more the insolent people,

the people of an obscure speech that you cannot comprehend,

stammering in a tongue that you cannot understand.

Behold Zion, the city of our appointed feasts!

Your eyes will see Jerusalem,

an untroubled habitation, an immovable tent,

whose stakes will never be plucked up,

nor will any of its cords be broken.

But there the Lord in majesty will be for us

a place of broad rivers and streams,
where no galley with oars can go,
nor majestic ship can pass.
For the Lord is our judge; the Lord is our lawgiver;
the Lord is our king; he will save us. ~ Isaiah 33:13-22

God's judgment is a consuming fire; it strikes terror in the hearts of sinners. But those who love the Lord and are redeemed by His Son Jesus will be saved. Jesus has taken the judgment for us. All we have to do is to accept Him as our Lord, accept His gift of grace and forgiveness, and He will save us.

Lord, thank You for Your salvation. Let us live our lives in thanksgiving to You. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Ghost, now and forever. Amen.

Friday in the Third Week in Advent

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." ~ Matthew 25:1-13

In this parable of the ten virgins, Jesus reminds us that we do not know the day or the hour of His coming. Like the wise virgins, we need to be ready so we aren't left behind when Jesus comes again. To get ready, we need to examine our hearts and ask Jesus to cleanse us and wash away our sins. We must not live as the world lives, but live as holy people—set aside for God's purposes.

Holy God, cleanse our hearts, wash away our sins, and guide us by the Holy Spirit to live for You and not the world. Help us to be ready when Jesus returns, whether it is tonight or far into the future. In Jesus's name. Amen.

Saturday in the Third Week in Advent

Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name. "They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him. ~ Malachi 3:16-18

God has written in His book of remembrance the names of those who serve him and honor His name. When Jesus comes again, He will save those whose names are in the book. Are our names written there? Let us examine our hearts and ensure we will be among the saved on that great day of Jesus's return.

Lord, if our names are not written in Your book of remembrance, show us what we must do. We love You and worship You and want to be with You in eternity. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Fourth Sunday in Advent



Fourth Sunday of Advent

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the boy knows

how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. ~ Isaiah 7:10-16

God told His people that Jesus would be born to a virgin—the prophesy was made hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus. God knew His children would take advantage of the free will He gave them to sin and become separated from Him. He had a plan for salvation before He even made Adam and Eve.

Lord, You are almighty and all powerful, but You are also merciful. So merciful, in fact, that You sent Your own Son to be born as a babe, live as a man, and die for our sins. Thank You, Lord. Help me to realize the length and width and depth of Your love. In Jesus's name. Amen.

Monday in the Fourth Week in Advent

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!

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! ~ Psalm 80:1-7

Many generations before the birth of Christ, the psalmist was calling on God to shine His face upon His people to restore and save them. God's people were crying out, contending with their neighbors, made a laughingstock by their enemies. They saw they could not save themselves; only God could rescue them from the results of their own actions. Even then God already had the plan in place; He was waiting for His perfect timing to put it into effect. When the time arrived, Jesus arrived as a tiny, helpless baby.

Thank You, Lord, that You planned for the salvation of Your people generations before the birth of Jesus. We don't understand Your timing, but we understand that it is perfect. Jesus was born at just the right time, and He will come again at just the right time. Make us ready, Lord. In Jesus's name. Amen.

Tuesday in the Fourth Week in Advent

Send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me;
let them bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling!

Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy,
and I will praise you with the lyre,
O God, my God.

Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God. ~ Psalm 43:3-5

It's so easy to become discouraged listening to the news and watching what is going on in the world around us. There are so many problems and so much hate and division. When we are "cast down ... and ... in turmoil," like the Psalmist, we should turn to God. Follow His light and His truth to go to the altar of God to praise Him again. He is our salvation and our God, and in Him, we have hope.

Lord, send Your light and Your truth to guide me to joy and delight and praise for You. I put my hope in God and will praise the Lord. In Jesus's name. Amen.

Wednesday in the Fourth Week in Advent

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation
that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel."

And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. ~ Luke 2:25-33

Simeon was apparently an old man, but he was waiting to see the Messiah as he had been promised. Under the revelation of the Holy Spirit, Simeon immediately recognized baby Jesus as the salvation of God, the light of revelation for the Gentiles, and the glory of God's Chosen People. Are we as quick to recognize the Lord? Or do we get lost in the things of the world and overlook the Lord Himself?

Lord, open our eyes and ears and hearts to recognize Jesus Christ, the baby in the manger who became the sacrifice on the cross, as our Lord and Savior. In His name. Amen.

Thursday in the Fourth Week in Advent

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?
When evildoers assail me
to eat up my flesh,
my adversaries and foes,
it is they who stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war arise against me,
yet I will be confident.

One thing have I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord
and to inquire in his temple. ~ Psalm 27:1-4

Often we fear people we perceive as our enemies. We don't trust them and try to defend ourselves against them. However, we know that God is with us. We are never alone. The Holy Spirit is within us. Then why are we afraid? The safest place we can be is in the house of God, in the arms of the Lord.

Lord, thank You for giving us Your Light and redeeming us from sin. Though we may face danger and enemies, we know You are on our side, and if You are with us, no one can be against us. Remind us in our moments of weakness that we are strong and courageous in You. In Jesus's name. Amen.

Christmas Eve

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called



Christmas Eve

Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. ~ Luke 2:1-7

We see pretty Nativity sets with animals clustered around the manger, which is filled with clean, fresh hay where baby Jesus lies wrapped in white cloths. We think what a lovely, sweet scene, but that's not the way it really was. The animals were dirty and noisy. The hay was likely filled with animal droppings that smelled worse than they looked. Those swaddling cloths weren't soft, pure white, fluffy blankets, but rough and scratchy and ugly in color. God didn't send Jesus to a luxury hotel with maids and room service. The almighty God sent His almighty Son to the lowliest conditions in a poor and lowly society. The King of the Universe was born with the farm animals in conditions that would be considered inhumane conditions for animals in today's society. He would experience the worst that the poor of that primitive society could possibly experience, all for our sake.

Lord, it's hard for us to imagine the conditions that Jesus was born into. He came into the world on the lowest rung of the ladder of success so that He could lift us to the highest rung of the ladder to Heaven. We can never be worthy; we can never thank You enough. All we can do is to say, Lord, we love You with all our hearts and all our souls and all our minds. Show us how to live for You. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Christmas Day



Christmas Day

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. ~ Luke 2:8-20

Not only was Jesus born in a shabby stable filled with stinky animals, but His glorious birth was not announced to kings in palaces or priests in temples but to dirty, smelly shepherds out in the fields watching over their sheep. No one would expect to see angels appear in the heavens, praising God and announcing the birth of the Savior of the World. But these shepherds immediately believed and went to see the newborn king. They didn't question; they didn't hesitate. They simply opened their hearts and followed the angels. May we open our hearts as easily and follow that newborn baby to the cross and the tomb and onward to eternal life.

Thank You, Lord, for sending Jesus to save us from our sins. Open our hearts, Lord, to follow Jesus, even to the cross. Then we will follow Him to open tomb and eternal life with You in Heaven. We thank You and praise You and sing with the angels, "Glory to God in the Highest." In the name of Jesus. Amen.

The Second Day of Christmas

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. ~ 2 Timothy 3:16-17

On day two of Christmas, we are reminded of the two testaments of the Holy Bible. The entire Bible is about God's covenants with His people. The Old Testament (old covenant) describes God's promises to protect and prosper His Chosen People, the Jews; their part of the covenant was to follow God's laws. But on their own, people cannot follow the law perfectly. The New Testament describes God's new covenant with His people—He sent His Only Son to be born as a baby, live as a man who was fully man and fully God, die on the cross to pay the price for the sins of the whole world, and rise from the dead to give us eternal life with God. All we have to do is accept Jesus as our Savior and surrender our will to His. What an amazing gift! A treasure beyond words!

Thank You, Lord, for the Old and the New Covenants, and for the unsurpassable gift of eternal life. In Jesus's name. Amen.

The Third Day of Christmas

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. ~ 1 Corinthians 13:13

On day three of Christmas, we are reminded of three great virtues: faith, hope, and love. Faith is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1) Hope is the expectation of the return of Jesus Christ. Love is putting the other person ahead of ourselves—1 Corinthians 13 describes love better than anything ever written, and the love that God has for us is the perfect example of true love.

Thank You, Lord, for loving us more than we can imagine. Let us follow Your example in showing faith, hope, and love to the world. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

The Fourth Day of Christmas

These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. ~ John 20:31

On day four of Christmas, we are reminded of the four Gospels. The first four books of the New Testament—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—all tell the story of Jesus’s life, but each is told from a different perspective. The word “Gospel” means good news, and the Gospels all share the good news that Jesus is the Son of God, the Christ, and by believing in Him we may have eternal life. Jesus described Himself as “the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” the only way to God. We can know Him through reading His story in the four Gospels.

Thank You, Lord, for letting us know about Jesus’s life by hearing His own words in the Gospels. Let us come not only to know about Him but to know Him personally and intimately. We ask this in His holy name. Amen.

The Fifth Day of Christmas

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” ~ Deuteronomy 6:4-5

On day five of Christmas, we are reminded of the first five books of the Bible, known as the Pentateuch or the Torah. These five books—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—written by Moses, tell the story of God’s creation of the universe as well as the creation of the nation of Israel, the people of God. These books describe the love God has for His people and the miracles He did on their behalf; they also describe

God's commandments for His people and the many times God punished His people for straying from His ways and the many times He gave them another chance.

Thank You, Lord, for the Torah, where we learn of Your creation and of Your love for Your people. Thank You that even though no one can live up to Your commandments, You are merciful and forgiving. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

The Sixth Day of Christmas

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ... And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. ~ Genesis 1:1, 31

On day six of Christmas, we are reminded of the six days of creation. In the beginning, there was nothing, just a dark void. God spoke into the void and created everything in existence over a period of six days. And God saw that everything He created was very good.

Thank You, Lord, for Your creation of the world, everything from the Heavens above to the earth below and the bodies of water throughout the earth. Thank You that everything You created, man included, was very good. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

The Seventh Day of Christmas

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. ~ Romans 12:6-8

On day seven of Christmas, we are reminded of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. We cannot boast of any gifts that God has given us—they are all gifts from Him, and we have nothing to do with what gifts we have. However, whatever gift or gifts we have been given, we do need to exercise them. The gifts are of value only when we put them to use. Prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leading, and mercy are all important in the Kingdom of God. Each of us needs to exercise our gift(s) so that working together as one body, we accomplish God's purpose.

Thank You, Lord, for the gift(s) of the Spirit You have given each of us. Help us to exercise our individual gifts as individual members of Your body so that the entire body works together to accomplish Your will. In Jesus's name. Amen.

The Eighth Day of Christmas

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” ~ Matthew 5:3-10

On day eight of Christmas, we are reminded of the eight Beatitudes that Jesus gave in His Sermon on the Mount. Jesus tells us that people with these specific attributes are blessed and will receive a future promise; i.e., those who are merciful for they shall receive mercy. Unlike the gifts of the Spirit, which we have no control over, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can develop these personal attributes and thus receive the blessing.

Thank You, Lord, that we will be blessed when we develop character traits that You want Your children to have. Empower us with the help of the Holy Spirit to exhibit these traits in our lives so we can show ourselves as Your blessed children. In the name of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. Amen.

The Ninth Day of Christmas

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ~ Galatians 5:22-23

On day nine of Christmas, we are reminded of the nine fruits of the Spirit. The fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—are products of walking in the Spirit. If we allow the Holy Spirit in us to control our thoughts and actions, these fruits will be a natural outcome.

Thank You, Lord, for the fruits of the Spirit. Help us to stay close to You and walk in the Spirit so that the fruits of the Spirit may be produced in our lives and lead others to You. In Jesus's name. Amen.

The Tenth Day of Christmas

And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today. The Lord spoke

with you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire, while I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord. For you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up into the mountain. He said:

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

“You shall have no other gods before me.”

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.”

“Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.”

“Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”

“You shall not murder.”

“And you shall not commit adultery.”

“And you shall not steal.”

“And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

“And you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.” ~ Deuteronomy 5:1-21

On day ten of Christmas, we are reminded of the Ten Commandments. God laid out His rules for His people to follow. The commandments describe man's relationship with God and with his fellow man. The rules regarding our relationships with others are common to most religions and most philosophies. Jesus summed up all the commandments in two sentences: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and

with all your soul, and with all your mind." And "love your neighbor as yourself." If we love God and our fellow man, we will naturally follow the rest of the laws.

Thank You, Lord, for the Ten Commandments to put us in a right relationship with You and with our fellow man. Thank You that Jesus came to free us from rules by taking the punishment for our transgressions. Yet because we love You (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), we love our fellow man. And because we love both God and man, we want to be in that right relationship with You and we want to follow Your laws, not for fear of punishment but for love and gratitude. In Jesus's name. Amen.

The Eleventh Day of Christmas

And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons. He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. ~ Mark 3:13-19

On day eleven of Christmas, we are reminded of the eleven faithful apostles and of the one apostle who was unfaithful. Jesus called each of these men in the midst of their daily lives, and each followed immediately without question. Apostle means one who is sent, and each of the eleven faithful apostles heard Jesus's words firsthand and were sent out to tell the world about Him. Today, each Christian is "sent out" to share the Good News of Jesus.

Thank You, Lord, for the eleven faithful Apostles and other faithful followers who knew You personally for sharing the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ. Thank You that more than two thousand years later, we can individually be saved because these faithful followers spread Your Word throughout the world. In Jesus's name. Amen.

The Twelfth Day of Christmas

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." ~ John 14:6

On day twelve of Christmas, we are reminded of the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed. While the creed is not in the Bible, it is based on Scripture. Although it was not written by the Apostles, it was written in the second century to combat heresy. Most people couldn't read or write, and the creed was a simple way for them to memorize a

summary of the most important beliefs of the faith. In today's Scripture, Jesus tells us what we need to know — He is the only Way to God, the only Truth, the only Life eternal.

Thank You, Lord, that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. May we follow His way in truth that we may have eternal life with You. In the name of Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Amen.

Epiphany

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

"And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. ~ Matthew 2:1-12

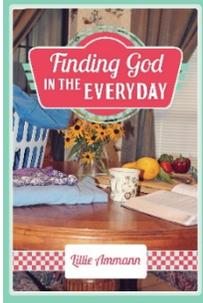
The Epiphany, celebrating the visit to Jesus by the Wise Men, is also known as the Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. The Wise Men, or magi, were not Jews, yet God revealed the birth of Jesus to them, demonstrating that Jesus is the Savior of the world, not just the Messiah of the Jews.

Thank You, Lord, that Jesus came to save all of us who love and follow Him. Thank You that people of every nation and tongue can be among Your Chosen People by choosing to follow Jesus. In His name we pray. Amen.



Other Devotionals by Lillie Ammann

Finding God in the Everyday



We expect to find God in church and in our private devotions. But do you wonder where He is the rest of the time—especially when things go wrong? With humor and poignancy, Lillie shares in ninety devotionals how she finds God in everyday experiences. “Welcome to the life of knowing God in the miraculous, other-worldly, plain ol’ everyday.” ~ Fr. Jerry Sherbourne

A list of the titles of other published devotionals are listed below along with the year in which they were published.

My books are listed on my website at <https://lillieammann.com/books>. Some of the books are in paperback through Amazon; others can be downloaded in PDF from my website. Email me at lillie@lillieammann.com if you need help finding what you want.

| Year | Advent | Lent |
|------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 2021 | The Promises of God | The Light of Christ |
| 2020 | The Judgment of God | The Grace of God |
| 2019 | The Glory of the Lord | Suffering and Salvation |
| 2018 | Light of the World | Jesus Paid the Price |
| 2017 | Coming of Jesus | --- |