THE PURPLE
OF
ADVENT

ADVENT 2025

The season of Advent is upon us. It is celebrated during the four weeks, including the four Sundays, before Christmas Day.

The word “advent” literally means “to come,” and so we wait and we prepare for the One who is to come...Jesus Christ, our Lord. In this season, we prepare to celebrate his first coming on Christmas Day, and we also look forward to the time when Christ will come again in glory. This coming is at the heart of the Christian faith. Advent is a time for being reminded again how the presence of Christ can make a difference in our lives and in the world.

The color purple, the color of Advent, is seen throughout the sanctuary. This year’s Advent devotional booklet invites you to consider what purple means for disciples of Jesus Christ:
Week 1 – The purple of preparation for the birth of Jesus and the return of Christ.
Week 2 – The purple of praise for the one true God who creates and sustains us all.
Week 3 – The purple of penitence for all the ways we fall short of the glory of God.
Week 4 – The purple of divine power for the graciousness of God who becomes incarnate for the sake of the world.

This Advent devotional is based on the 2019 Presbyterian Outlook devotional booklet, written by editor Jill Duffield and prepared by Tom Tickner.

The Purple of Preparation

First Sunday in Advent

Romans 13:11-14

Paul practically comes through the
pages of this ancient text, begging his hearers to recognize what time it is. The time is at hand, he seems to shout, for those of us who follow Jesus to get it together and reflect the One on the cusp of coming to meet us. Salvation is near, nearer than when we first believed, so
we best wake up, stand up, look up, and get ourselves ready for this transcendent, transformative, life-upending encounter with God. Imagine if we thought of the season of Advent in these texts. When the purple paraments adorn the pulpit, we ought to know the time is at hand to prepare to meet the Son of God. The purple dotting the sanctuary or resting on the pastor's shoulders should signal to us a sense of urgency, a feeling of nervous anticipation, because salvation is drawing near and time is running out to make ready for Jesus' arrival.

Paul instructs us, purple Presbyterians that we are, to lay aside works
of darkness — that's what urgent preparation requires, first and foremost. Whatever sin clings closely, shake it off. Take stock and be honest and then lay aside whatever it is that obscures the light of Christ in you. Let the purple of preparation prompt you to step away
from the darkness and bask in the light. Put on the whole armor of it: the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shield of faith and the like. Advent is the season to prepare to meet Jesus by stepping away from and out of the dark and into the light of faith, hope and love.

God of all that is seen and unseen, you know what works of darkness we commit. Nothing is hidden from you. Despite our propensity to do what we know we ought not to do, you send
your Son to save us. During this Advent season we seek you, your wisdom, your strength and your will in order to be prepared to meet our Savior, the light no darkness can overcome — not ours, not the world's. Amen.

*Ask God to open your eyes to the wonder of the coming Advent season

ACT

Consider a way you might enrich your Advent journey this Advent season

MUSIC – "Watchman, Tell Us of the Night" – GTG #97

Monday – December 1

READ Matthew 1:18-24

REFLECT
Today, imagine responding as Joseph did to God's instructions. Being prepared to meet God entails being not only awake to God's presence but also willing to follow God's commands. What do you learn from heeding God's will?

PRAY
Lord, we are humbled by Joseph's courage. His obedience makes us wonder if we would be so bold. Prepare us to act on your will. Grant us both careful discernment and the faith to take major risks for your sake. We pray for the wisdom to follow your plans, no matter how different they are from our own. Amen.

*Pray for cleansing of home and heart that nothing would hinder the coming of Christ.

ACT
What might be an act of mercy God is asking of you? Make time to offer that act to someone.

MUSIC – "Listen to the Word That God Has Spoken" – GTG #455

Tuesday – December 2

READ Ephesians 5:8-14

REFLECT
We are in a season where lights are prominent….lights in our community, lights in our churches, lights in our homes. These lights are inviting. These lights warm the darkness. What is your favorite memory of light?

PRAY

Gracious God, we expend extraordinary energy attempting to hide that which we find shameful, painful, and unlovely. We compare ourselves to others when your opinion of us is the only one that matters. We offer you all our shame, guilt, and fears, knowing that Jesus comes to save sinners, trusting that his light will reveal all that is hidden, not to expose or humiliate, but to illumine and heal. Amen.

*Pray for your family.

ACT

Take time to find some lights you can enjoy. What in your life are you hiding from the loving, healing light of Christ, trusting that nothing is beyond his power to redeem? Offer this in prayer.

MUSIC "O Morning Star, how Fair and Bright" -GTG #827

Wednesday – December 3

READ Ephesians 4:17-24

REFLECT

Time can be our enemy, especially in this season of the year. Time can take our emotional, physical, and spiritual energy. How can you spend time this Advent season to prepare not just your home for Advent, but also prepare your spirit to receive Christ?

PRAY

Too often, Lord God, we go about our days on autopilot, mostly unaware of where we focus, how we speak, and what consumes our time and resources. Knowing that you call us to be ready for your arrival, we ask for discernment and discipline to put away anything that distracts us from you, your will, and your ways. Amen.

*Pray that the sounds of the music of Advent and Christmas will enlighten your soul.

ACT

How would you like to invest your time to make this Advent season more meaningful and rich? What is one thing you might choose to change this Advent season?

MUSIC – "While We are Waiting, Come" GTG #92

Thursday – December 4

READ Hebrews 12:1-2

REFLECT

We all have people who have left their fingerprints on our lives. Today, remember the people (present or past) who love you, support you, inspire you, and guide you. How does their witness challenge you to do better and be better?

PRAY

Gracious God, our culture lauds the supposed self-made person, but we know that we cannot run the race of faith alone. We give you thanks for all of the people, past and present, who surround us and spur us on as we seek to emulate Jesus Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Amen.

*Pray for fellowship times in our congregations.

ACT

If there is someone in your life today who has made an imprint on your life, take time to write a note or call that person.

MUSIC – "For All the Saints" – GTG #326

Friday – December 5

READ James 1:19-21

REFLECT

The implanted word is God's word to us, a message of mercy, power, and renewal in Jesus Christ. How might we engage this word in our lives? Today, take just a few minutes in silence as you reflect on where you might be anxious or worried about something. Do particular people or words come to mind? A looming change or pressing decision? Offer all of these to God in prayer, knowing God will do more than you hope or imagine possible.

PRAY

Loving God, you made us in your image and implanted your word within us, giving us all we need to rest in your grace, follow your instructions, and lead a life worthy of our calling. Forgive us when lesser things consume us, and yet again aid us in

our desire to welcome your word. Amen.

*Pray for all who lead and participate in the Advent activities at your church.

ACT
Consider an act of kindness that you might offer to someone today.

MUSIC – "As Dew Falls Gently at Dawn" – GTG #461

Saturday – December 6

READ Ephesians 6:10-20

REFLECT
Imagine, as you get dressed, that you are also putting on the whole armor of God. What does that armor entail? What does it protect you from, and what does it prepare you for? Keep in mind that Jesus' power was made known in sacrificial love. How does that color your image of God's armor?

PRAY
Prince of Peace, Lord of all, you come to us as a helpless infant and will submit to a painful death. We forget that you made your power manifest through sacrificial, vulnerable love. May the armor of God we wear reveal not aloof invincibility, but instead help us to stand up for those yearning for compassion, justice, and care. Amen.

*Pray that you will receive a new experience of God's love.

ACT
Take time to pick up trash you might find in and around your neighborhood.

MUSIC – "Fight the Good Fight" GTG #846

The Purple of Praise

Second Sunday of Advent

Romans 15:4-13

The book of Romans soars with a litany of words this week: steadfastness and encouragement, hope and harmony, glory and truth, mercy and rejoice, praise and joy. The combination of verbs and adjectives describes the Christian life. We who know the grace and goodness of God through Jesus Christ respond with lives of hope and harmony, praise and joy. As Paul admonishes earlier in Romans: Do not be conformed to this age, instead be transformed. In other words, be different than the culture that often does not relish or reveal all of these beautiful characteristics: steadfastness and encouragement, glory and truth.

The purple of Advent reminds those
of us in Christian pews to rejoice, give thanks, and sing. Good News, not disaster, looms. Good News of great joy for all people will soon resound through the cosmos, and we are to share it, shout it, show it right along with the heavenly host. The color purple this Advent season, in the midst of painful headlines and personal challenges, invites us to remember the story, the salvation history of which we are a player, that redeems all creation and leaves nothing and no one God forsaken. Romans 15 lifts up the barrier-breaking, breach-bridging love of God made known in Jesus Christ, the Incarnation that reconciles all estrangement, Emmanuel who is with us all, the Messiah who comes not to condemn the world but to save it. How can we not see purple and praise God with hearts and hands and voices?

God of Good News, when the world around us overflows with bad news, we struggle to rejoice. We become mired in the script of inevitable suffering when we ought to be steadfast and encouraged by Scripture, which tells us that nothing is impossible through you. We rejoice that you do not give up on us, and we praise you for your truth and glory made known to us in Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Pray for God's guidance and presence in the tasks of the season.

ACT
Take some food or supplies to a local animal shelter.

MUSIC – “Savior of the Nations, Come” – GTG #102

Monday – December 8

READ Romans 8:24-30

REFLECT
Today, read these verses aloud several times. What do you hope for that you do not currently see? Can you rest in the truth that as you wait with patience, the Spirit is interceding on your behalf? In this liminal space of waiting, for what can you praise God right now?

PRAY
Loving God, we want our hopes fulfilled immediately. We grumble rather than give you glory. We doubt rather than remain steadfast. We do not trust your providence. We do not pray as we ought, and yet your Spirit advocates for us, and you never leave us alone. Grant us the ability to wait patiently in hope and praise you for the gifts of this day. Amen.

*Pray for your church staff

ACT
Write down some blessings you have received. If you have your Christmas tree put up, place these as a gift under the tree, to be read on Christmas Day.

MUSIC – “Hope of the World” GTG #734

Tuesday – December 9

READ Colossians 1:11-14

REFLECT
Today give joyful thanks to God. Begin and end your day with gratitude. Are there situations or circumstances that do not immediately spark gratitude but, after reflection, may contain within them gifts in unexpected packages?

PRAY
Generous God, each moment of every day, you pour out your grace upon us. You give us the beauty of the earth, the companionship of others, talents, and skills to use in ways that glorify you. And, in this season of Advent, we remember the

greatest gift of all, your Son, Jesus Christ, the one through whom we are forgiven, freed, and redeemed. Amen.

*Pray you might share the warmth of your home with others around you.

ACT
Make a list of 5 things for which you are thankful. Place under your tree as a gift for this Advent season.

MUSIC – "Let All Things Now Living" GTG #37

Wednesday – December 10

READ I Timothy 4:10-15

REFLECT
Today, ask yourself: What is the gift that God has put within me? What talents, passions, and skills do I possess, and how am I being called to share them to demonstrate the love of God? Praise God for the gift of God's Word put within you and share it ways that uniquely you are able.

PRAY
Lord, you write your Word on our hearts and send the Spirit to remind us of all that Jesus taught. We are not left to our own devices in our calling to share the Good News and show forth your love to
a hurting world. Help us to embrace the gift you have put within us that we might proclaim the gospel boldly in word and deed. Amen.

*Pray for the people who have sent you Christmas cards.

ACT
If you have a Little Library near you, consider placing a book in it or purchasing one for your church library.

MUSIC – "Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples" – GTG 757

Thursday – December 11

READ Romans 5:1-5

REFLECT
Today, prayerfully review pivotal life experiences: painful ones and happy ones, unexpected twists and planned transitions. In looking back, where do you see God at work in all of those seasons? What questions do you have for God? For what do you praise God in your life, past and present?

PRAY
Almighty God, your providence imbues every aspect of our lives, but often we do not see it. While suffering may well produce endurance, sometimes we long for relief, for resolution, for an end to those circumstances that test our strength and our faith. Pour your love into our hearts and send the Holy Spirit to assure us of your presence in all and through all. Amen.

*Pray that the beauty and joy of the season will be seen in you.

ACT
Do an anonymous act of kindness for someone.

MUSIC – "My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less" – GTG #353

Friday – December 12

READ Luke 15:25-32

REFLECT
Today, do an honest assessment of yourself and note the grudges you keep and the mercy you withhold. Are there people you cannot celebrate, perhaps even people you wish would get what's coming to them? Make an effort to pray for them and, if you are able, and a way to celebrate with and for them.

PRAY
God, your grace defies any logical limits, and yet we protest when you show your mercy to others. We enjoy your forgiveness, but fail to be forgiving. We begrudge your kindness to those we deem unworthy, even as we want you to ignore our sin. You call us to celebrate the restoration of our siblings. Give us the maturity in

Christ to join the party. Amen.

*Ask God to reveal how you can be a more faithful servant.

ACT
Write a personal note of appreciation to mail or to give to someone at church.

MUSIC – "Come Down, O Love Divine" – GTG #282

Saturday – December 13

READ Acts 2:22-28

REFLECT
Today, picture Jesus with you, beside you, strengthening you, guiding you. What difference does it make when you are conscious of Jesus' presence? Does the awareness of Jesus shape your interactions with others? How do you feel knowing that Jesus is before you and beside you?

PRAY
Lord of all, we know the promise that when two or three are gathered, you are in the midst of us. We call you Emmanuel, God with us, but often we go about life unaware of your constant presence, power, and love. We praise you that you never neglect us, even though we forget you. We pledge to be mindful of you this day. Amen.

*Pray for each person as you prepare their gift.

ACT
Is there a senior or another member of your congregation who could use your assistance in their shopping?

MUSIC – "I Bind unto Myself Today" – GTG #6

THE PURPLE OF PENITENCE

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

James 5:7-12

Be patient. Wait with expectation, but
not anxiousness. Strengthen your hearts because the Lord is near. Do not grumble against each other, as not complaining about our siblings in Christ reflects our patience and strengthens our hearts. Be patient. Strengthen your heart. Do not grumble against one another. In so doing, we will be ready to meet the Lord, our judge, who is very near. Advent provides us a season to reflect on our readiness to meet Jesus Christ. James gives plumb lines for us to evaluate that readiness.

In a culture enamored with instant gratification and an age where answers to every question are in our pockets, the virtue of patience feels antiquated, perhaps unnecessary. James reminds us, however, that relationships – strong, good, faithful relationships – depend on patience. Inevitably, we hurt each other. We let one another down. We take important people in our lives for granted. We complain about more than we praise the communities God gives us. Like the Israelites before us, we gripe about God, too. We neglect gratitude. We point out the speck in the eye of those with whom we disagree and neglect the log in our own. Imagine if instead we took James' advice and practiced patience: a patience that begins with penitence, a recognition of our impatience and grumbling, an honest asking for forgiveness from God and those we have hurt, and a daily commitment to listen before we speak, pause before we press send, and pray before we act. Be patient. Strengthen your heart. Do not grumble against one another. Remember, the Lord, our Judge, is near.

Alpha and Omega, you created all that is seen and unseen, and tend to that which you have made. You refuse to give up on us, even when we turn away from you, neglect your commandments, and seek our own way. Your patience with us cannot be quantified, and we rejoice in such grace. Strengthen our hearts and increase our patience so that we more resemble you, our good and loving Creator. Amen.

*Pray for an opportunity you might have to assist someone who has a need.

MUSIC – "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" – GTG #82

Monday – December 15

READ I Corinthians 13

REFLECT

Love makes all the difference. Today, take stock of all the acts of service you do, all you give in time, talent, and treasure. Now, review your attitude toward all those good deeds. Notice, too, your interactions with everyone you encounter, those you know and those you don't. In all your giving and serving, speaking and actions, do you demonstrate love?

PRAY

God, the litmus test of our faithfulness to you is love. Your commandment is clear, concise, and repeated, but not easy. Sometimes we begrudge the good we do and look for accolades and admiration, rather than seek to glorify you and demonstrate our gratitude for your grace. May our every deed and thought be imbued with your love that first loved us. Amen.

*Pray that your words will bring joy and a greeting of the season.

ACT

Take some time this week to offer an intentional act of kindness….to someone you know or possibly someone you don't know whom you encounter.

MUSIC – "Where Charity and Love Prevail" – GTG #316

Tuesday – December 16

READ I Thessalonians 5:12-18

REFLECT

Today, pay attention to when you judge others or yourself. How often do you jump to conclusions about another's motives, attitude, or circumstances? How frequently are your thoughts distorted about yourself or your own experiences? Instead, try to admonish those in need of motivation, encourage the discouraged, help as you are able, and practice patience.

PRAY

God, your patience defies any logical limit. No matter how many times we fail and

fall short, you forgive and strengthen, encourage and help. When we judge people harshly, we dishonor the divine image in ourselves and others. Forgive us yet again and remind us to do likewise, be patient, help, and encourage. Amen.

*Pray for your pastor or pastors and their ministry and work.

ACT
Write a note to someone who might need a word of encouragement during the holidays.

MUSIC – "Golden Breaks the Dawn" – GTG #668

Wednesday – December 17

READ Romans 8:18-23

REFLECT
Today, pray for those places of pain in yourself, your circles, and the world. Look at the headlines and remember those who are groaning under the weight of their longings, the burden of suffering, the hope for relief. How can you be a midwife of new birth in some of these places?

PRAY
Holy One of resurrection and rebirth, show us how to enter places of pain and become agents of your new life. When we hear
the groans of suffering, empower us to go toward them and bring your good news of salvation, your promised redemption, your loving presence, your abundant mercy, and your certain justice. Amen.

*Pray for those who might be separated from family this Christmas.

ACT
Take cookies to a local fire station or police station with a note of appreciation.

MUSIC – "Everyone Who Longs for the Boundless Love of God" – GTG #849

Thursday – December 18

READ John 8:1-11

REFLECT
Today, Jesus encounters the woman accused of adultery. Imagine yourself face-to-face with Jesus. He tells you that you are forgiven of whatever sin burdens you the most. Rest in that forgiveness and resolve to go and sin no more.

PRAY
Lord, we know you came to save sinners, and yet we quickly condemn others. We reluctantly recognize our own sin. We try to control others' opinions of us when we ought to care only about your judgment. Hone our hearing to your word of mercy, so that we might be a forgiven, freed, and grace-filled people. Amen.

*Pray for ways that your celebration of the season will honor Christ.

ACT
Is there a family member or friend who needs a word of encouragement or a Christmas greeting? Take time to give that person a call.

MUSIC – "God, How Can We Forgive" – GTG #445

Friday – December 19

READ Luke 6:32-36

REFLECT
Today, write down all that mercy means to you. When have you seen it, experienced it, or extended it? Alternatively, when has mercy been withheld? If God's goodness and mercy have followed you all the days of your life, how are you chasing others down with that goodness and mercy in return?

PRAY
Merciful God, you hold nothing back from us, not even your Son. You relentlessly pursue us with kindness. You refuse
to give up on us. You want to be in a relationship with us. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us; we cannot attain it, but we can attempt to emulate it and give thanks for it. Amen.

*Pray for your neighbors and your neighborhood.

ACT
Decide on a place in your community or in your circle of influence where you can offer a gift…a gift of money, time, or support.

MUSIC – "You are the Lord, Giver of Mercy!" – GTG #437

Saturday – December 20

READ I Thessalonians 3:11-13

REFLECT
Today, consider the meaning of holiness.
If holiness entails being set apart for God's purposes, what are those purposes in your life and context? Right where you are, how can you increase and abound in love in tangible, visible, demonstrable ways? Review your interactions and actions. How did they abound in love, or how did they not?

PRAY
Lord, how can we serve you? If we are not sure of your answer, we can always show forth your love wherever we are, however we can, with whomever we encounter. We know we are to be a holy people, set apart for your purposes, a people whose loyalty to you is evident in our love of others. Amen.

*Pray for your city.

ACT
Surprise someone this week with a random act of kindness.

MUSIC – "Breathe on Me, Breath of God" – GTG #286

THE PURPLE OF DIVINE POWER

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

ROMANS 1:1-7

Paul connects all the dots in these first seven verses of Romans. He defines himself, his identity, and his purpose in relation to God: a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle. Paul knows who and whose he is, as well as his ultimate "why." He has been
set apart to bear witness to the grace of God made known through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Then he details the "what" of the gospel. Paul knows the message he
is to proclaim, and it is not his own.
As he says often, he preaches Christ and him crucified. This gospel of God transforms and shapes, creates and reveals. As Karl Barth notes in his commentary on Romans, "It demands participation, comprehension, co- operation; for it is a communication which presumes faith in the living God, and which creates that which
it presumes." This message is all consuming and stunningly impacting. As it convicted and converted Paul, is still does today.

This gospel of God resounds
from the beginning and becomes incarnate in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit testifies to this Word and
the resurrection of Jesus Christ beckons us to belief, faithfulness
and obedience. The gospel of God is good news of great joy for all people, all nations. There is no end to its scope. No one, nothing is outside
of the purview of God's power and God's concern and God's love. We all belong to God. God still speaks to us and through us. The gospel of God, revealed in Jesus Christ, does not return to God empty. Do you feel its power this Advent?

God of good news, infant Savior, still-speaking Spirit, come over us again with your living, light- filled Word that humbles our certainty, quiets our opinions, chastens our self-righteousness and makes of us servants of Jesus Christ, apostles who bear witness to your love. As the birth of Jesus draws close, we yield to your power, made flesh, full of grace and truth, the glory of the one and only Son who comes to save. Amen.

*Pray for all the preparations for your Christmas Eve service."

ACT
Is there someone who could use assistance in preparing Christmas gifts? If you need assistance, consider reaching out to someone and asking for help.

MUSIC – "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing/Jesus, the Light of the World" – GTG #127

Monday – December 22

READ Matthew 10:24-25

REFLECT
We read that the disciple must imitate his master. This time it is about suffering. We know how Jesus faced persecution and hatred in his ministry. Jesus' disciples recognized the harsh treatment that Jesus received. Jesus offers his disciples a warning: whatever awaits me awaits you. Be ready, but have no fear. We are living in a time when divisions are rampant, so living faithfully becomes a daily challenge. The struggle is not easy, but Jesus calls us to look to him and not to live in fear.

PRAY
Holy God, strengthen us when we are weak, build us up when we are torn down, and prop us up on every leaning side. You, O God, are our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

*Ask God to remove fears that plague your heart.

ACT
Recall someone who has helped shape you into the person that you are today. Give thanks for their care, their support, and their teaching.

MUSIC – "Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love" – GTG#203

Tuesday – December 23

READ II Corinthians 13:1-4

REFLECT
Today, be gentle with yourself and others, knowing that everyone is struggling with something. Remember that we worship one whose power was made perfect

in weakness; therefore, we are confident that God can use and work through our weaknesses, too. What weaknesses or struggles of yours is God using?

PRAY
Lord, when we struggle and feel vulnerable, we do not want others to see and know, for fear of being hurt, exploited, or ridiculed. But God you know a word before we speak it. You know all our days and every thought. We need not hide from you, but can rest in your power and love and be renewed. Amen.

*Pray for those who live on the margins of society.

ACT:
Consider a donation to a local food pantry.

MUSIC – "Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy" – GTG #415

Wednesday – Christmas Eve

READ Philippians 2:4-11

REFLECT
Today, remember that Jesus, Lord of all, Son of Man, who came to live among us and is able to calm the sea, heal the sick, defeat evil, and even death, looked to the interests of others and poured himself out for our sake. How can you use your power, talents, and resources to look to the interests of others in Jesus' name?

PRAY
Dear God, on this Christmas Eve, we wait with hope and eager longing for the birth of Jesus. Today, we cease our busyness and rest with the holy family in the stable, knowing that the pain, present and yet to come, culminates in life, birth, and redemption. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

*Pray that the Christmas Eve service will open you to a fresh experience of God's love.

ACT
Take time to attend a Christmas Eve service. Following the service, stop at a hospital, fire station, nursing home, or another community agency, give a gift of cookies or some treat, along with a note.

MUSIC – “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence” – GTG #347

Thursday – Christmas Day

READ Hebrews 1:1-12

REFLECT
Today, celebrate that Jesus Christ is born. Give thanks for your unique faith journey. What is your first memory of knowing Jesus? Where in your life have you felt Jesus incarnate, present, and close with you? Mentally review your Christian story and make note of those times of birth, change, and new chapters.

PRAY
Lord Jesus, heralded by angels, visited by shepherds, held in the arms of your mother, we praise you like
the heavenly host, seek you like those interrupted while tending their flocks, and delight in your birth like Mary and Joseph. Today, we celebrate and rejoice in your arrival, knowing that soon we will leave and proclaim your name. Amen.

*Pray that all who gather with you today will experience the hope, peace, joy, and love of Jesus Christ.

ACT
Take time to write a blessing and/or scripture on a card for each person who will be at your dinner table today.

MUSIC – “Angels, from the Realms of Glory” – GTG #143

Friday – December 26

READ I Corinthians 15:24

REFLECT
Today, as any anxieties or fears arise, return to this verse from 1 Corinthians. Practice a breath prayer. As you breathe in, remember: Jesus is Lord of all. As you breathe out, trust that: Nothing now separates us from God. Repeat this prayer throughout the day and notice how doing so makes you feel.

PRAY

Gracious God, when we see the opened presents and the remnants of yesterday's festivities, we trust that you are with us not only on high holy days, but in the mundane and the messy. We know the babe born in a manger is Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord of all. Help us to live without fear in the certain promise of Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.

*Pray for the birth of Christ in someone you know this next year. (Name that person.)

ACT
Take time for quiet following the busyness of the past Advent. Reflect on the gifts you received. Offer a prayer for the people who gave you these gifts.

MUSIC – "Of the Father's Love Begotten" – GTG #108

Saturday – December 27

READ Colossians 1:24-29

REFLECT
Today, reflect on your Advent journey. Write down what you discovered and make note of those places in your discipleship where you want to dig deeper, reflect further, and do better. Choose one area on which to focus for the rest of the Christmas season, or maybe for the following year.

PRAY
Emmanuel, you are with us. You know our human frailty, our finitude, and our failings, and yet, you love us, meet us where we are, and invite us to follow you. We praise you for your compassionate power, your overflowing mercy, your amazing grace. We ask to be the light of the world, you call us to be in this season and every day. AMEN.

*Pray that God might use you in unexpected ways in the coming year.

ACT

Write a personal note to your church staff thanking them for all they did during the Advent/Christmas season.

MUSIC – “Will You Let Me Be Your Servant” – GTG #727