



Advent

at First Pres

Advent Devotional

First Pres 2022



**“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!”**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
Henry Sloane Coffin, Thomas Helmore



Dear Families,

O Come!

Advent is the season when we hope, long, and prepare for Christ's coming. In this season when our days grow shorter and darkness comes sooner, we long for Christ's light. In a time of busy-ness and anxiety, we long for Christ's peace. In a time of division and animosity, we long for Christ's love and justice. Our souls cry out, "O Come, Emmanuel!"

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Advent is also the season of anticipation and great rejoicing because we know our hope is secure. Jesus has come to be God with us, to take on the burden of our humanity and our mortality, and to triumph over every danger and fear. We can rest secure in the knowledge that Jesus has come to rescue us, transform us completely, and give purpose to our lives.

Emmanuel shall come to thee!

The season of Advent is a gift of time and new perspective. It's the season to choose hope and love and prepare our hearts to welcome Christ into our lives in new and fresh ways. It's the season to share warmth and care with others from a spirit of deep, joyful generosity. It's the season to take time to reflect on what truly matters in our lives and to follow God's call of reconciling purpose.

In order to help you and your families get ready for Christ's birth and turn toward God with renewed focus this Advent season, we at First Pres Berkeley have many wonderful opportunities for worship, service, and preparation. This devotional is also a gift of Sabbath space to help guide you through the season and, we hope, set a rhythm of worship you can maintain throughout the year.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, God with us, be with you this Advent season and always.

Rosemarie

Rosemarie Eichner-Raja

Director of Children's and Family Ministry

First Week of Advent

O Come, Bring Us Hope! The Candle of the Prophets

WORSHIP

Light the first Advent candle and sing or meditate on the following carols:

Lo! How a Rose E'er Blooming

Lo! How a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung,
Of Jesse's lineage coming as saints of old have sung.
It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it, the Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior,
When half spent was the night.

O come, O come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear,

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. Refrain

O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all humankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace. Refrain

One person says:

We light the first candle, the **Prophet Candle**, to remind us of the hope of the prophets' words. The prophets are the ones who said that the Messiah, God's Promised One, was coming to save us.

SCRIPTURE

Read the following scripture aloud. Hear the word of the Lord!

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. Isaiah 9:6-7 (NRSV)

PRAYER

Dear God, as we hear these words of hope from the Bible, may we remember the gift of light you bring to us as we worship. May we listen with joyful expectation as we keep our hearts open to your voice and your promises. Amen.

PROPHECY

Read aloud the following verses:

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Emmanuel. (This name in Hebrew means "God with us.") Isaiah 7:14 (NRSV)

PROPHECY FULFILLED

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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 ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ... Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Luke 1:28-33; 38 (NRSV)

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband, Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus. Matthew 1:18-25 (NRSV)

Family members and friends may ask each other: I wonder what your favorite part of these Scriptures is...?

REFLECTION AND SHARING

Discuss the following questions.

1. I wonder what you notice about these passages...?
2. I wonder why an angel told both Mary and Joseph that Jesus would be born...?
3. I wonder why the angel came to Mary when she was awake and Joseph in a dream...?
4. I wonder what you hope for this Advent season...?
5. I wonder how we can bring hope to others this week...?

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy God, you sent your son Jesus to be God with us at a very scary time in human history. We know you love us more than we can ever imagine and you care for us even when things are scary or hard. Show us how to have hope in your plans for us and how to share your love with everyone. Please give us comfort and courage. Amen.

Second Week of Advent

O Come, Bring Us Peace! The Candle of Bethlehem and the Holy Family

WORSHIP

Light the first two candles and sing or meditate on the following carol:

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie.
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth, the everlasting Light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary and gathered all above.
While mortals sleep the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King and peace to all on earth!

Take turns reading as you are able:

We light the first candle, the **Prophet Candle**, to remind us of the hope of the prophets' words. The prophets are the ones who said that the Messiah, God's Promised One, was coming to save us.

We light the second candle, the **Candle of Bethlehem and the Holy Family**, to remind us of the journey Mary and Joseph took to Bethlehem, and of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, who was born in a stable in that little town.

SCRIPTURE

Read the following scripture aloud. Hear the word of the Lord!

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. Isaiah 9:6-7 (NRSV)

PRAYER

Dear God, we have heard the joyful words of your promises coming true in the Scripture. May we be mindful of the promises you have for all the world. Open our hearts, God, that we may share your love and gifts with everyone around us.

PROPHECY

Read aloud the following verses:

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Micah 5:2 (NRSV)

PROPHECY FULFILLED

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered.

Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. Luke 2:1-7 (NRSV)

REFLECTION AND SHARING

Discuss the following:

Mary said "yes" to the Angel Gabriel—that she would be willing to give birth to Jesus, the Prince of Peace. She was full of joy as she spoke these words, found in Luke 1 (NRSV):

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name."

Mary opened her heart and her very self to God's promises. She had great faith and trust in God. I wonder how we might open our hearts and trust God with our lives this week...?

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for Mary's words of joyful expectation and for her willingness to trust you. Help us to trust you too, even when we don't understand all of what you are doing. Fill us with wonder and peace. Amen..

Third Week of Advent

O Come, Bring Us Joy! The Candle of the Shepherds and Angels

WORSHIP

Light the first two candles, and then the pink "JOY candle" and sing or meditate on the following carols:

Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echo back their joyous strains.

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say, what may the tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song? Refrain

The First Noel

The first Noel, the angel did say,
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the East, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night. Refrain

Take turns reading as you are able:

We light the first candle, the **Prophet Candle**, to remind us of the hope of the prophets' words. The prophets are the ones who said that the Messiah, God's Promised One, was coming to save us.

We light the second candle, the **Candle of Bethlehem and the Holy Family**, to remind us of the journey Mary and Joseph took to Bethlehem, and of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, who was born in a stable in that little town.

We light the third candle, the **Candle of the Shepherds and Angels**, to remind us of the great joy and light that surrounded the shepherds when the angels announced the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURE

Read the following scripture aloud. Hear the word of the Lord!

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. Isaiah 9:6-7 (NRSV)

PRAYER

Dear God, the words of the carols remind us of that wondrous night when the shepherds saw light in the dark sky and heard the angels sing. Thank you for giving us the gift of this good news. Fill us with joy too as we worship you. Amen.

PROPHECY

Read aloud the following verses:

Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. Isaiah 40:5 (NRSV)

PROPHECY FULFILLED

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. from Luke 2 (NRSV)

Family members and friends may ask each other: I wonder what your favorite part of these Scriptures is...?

REFLECTION AND SHARING

Close your eyes and imagine for a moment that you are one of the shepherds.

I wonder what they saw...?

I wonder what they heard...?

I wonder how they felt...?

I wonder if they thought they were dreaming...?

Allow the joy of the Savior's birth to fill you. Celebrate together by playing games, making a craft, baking cookies, sharing favorite Christmas stories, or listening to your favorite Christmas songs!

CLOSING PRAYER

End your time with a prayer.

Fourth Week of Advent

O Come, Bring Us Love! The Candle of the Magi

WORSHIP

Light all four candles and then sing or meditate on the following carol:

We Three Kings of Orient Are

We three kings of Orient are,
bearing gifts we traverse afar
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.

Take turns reading as you are able:

We light the first candle, the **Prophet Candle**, to remind us of the hope of the prophets' words. The prophets are the ones who said that the Messiah, God's Promised One, was coming to save us.

We light the second candle, the **Candle of Bethlehem and the Holy Family**, to remind us of the journey Mary and Joseph took to Bethlehem, and of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, who was born in a stable in that little town.

We light the third candle, the **Candle of the Shepherds and Angels**, to remind us of the great joy and light that surrounded the shepherds when the angels announced the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

We light the fourth candle, the **Candle of the Magi**, to remind us of the great light that appeared in the sky when Jesus was born, and that guided the Magi to the place where Jesus was so they could worship him. This candle also reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world and wants everyone everywhere to come to know him. This candle also reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world and that God's love is for everyone, everywhere.

SCRIPTURE

Read the following scripture aloud.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be

endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. Isaiah 9:6-7 (NRSV)

PRAYER

Holy God, come to us as we hear your words from Scripture. Forgive us for thinking about things we only want for ourselves. Replace our selfish ways with your selfless love. May we find a way to show even one person your love this week. Please lead us, God. Amen.

PROPHECY

Read aloud the following verses:

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them a light has shined. Isaiah 9:2 (NRSV)

PROPHECY FULFILLED

[The Magi] went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. Matthew 2:9b-12 (NIV)

Family members or friends may ask each other: I wonder what your favorite part of these Scriptures is...?

REFLECTION AND SHARING

Discuss the following

1. I wonder what you notice about these scriptures...?
2. I wonder if you have ever been on a journey when you were expecting something really good at the end of it...? I wonder what that felt like...?
3. I wonder why God showed the great light in the sky to people like the Magi who were so far away from where Jesus was born...?
4. I wonder why the Magi felt they had to leave their homes and follow the star...?

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for your son, Jesus, who was born out of a deep love that later led him to die for us on a cross. This mystery is beyond us. We need your gift of love, and we pray that you will show us how to love others. Amen.

Christmas Eve or Day

O Come, Bring Us Light! The Christ Candle

WORSHIP

Light ALL the candles, including a special white candle placed in the middle of the wreath for the Christ candle. Sing or meditate on the following carol:

What Child Is This?

What Child is this, who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping,
whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
while shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste, to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,
come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him.

Raise, raise the song on high,
the virgin sings her lullaby;
joy, joy, for Christ is born,
the babe, the son of Mary.

Take turns reading as you are able:

We light the first candle, the **Prophet Candle**, to remind us of the hope of the prophets' words. The prophets are the ones who said that the Messiah, God's Promised One, was coming to save us.

We light the second candle, the **Candle of Bethlehem and the Holy Family**, to remind us of the journey Mary and Joseph took to Bethlehem, and of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, who was born in a stable in that little town.

We light the third candle, the **Candle of the Shepherds and Angels**, to remind us of the great joy and light that surrounded the shepherds when the angels announced the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

We light the fourth candle, the **Candle of the Magi**, to remind us of the great light that appeared in the sky when Jesus was born, and that guided the Magi to the place where Jesus was so they could worship him. This candle also reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world and wants everyone everywhere to come to know him. This candle also reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world and that God's love is for everyone, everywhere.

We light the center candle, the **Christ Candle**, to remind us that Jesus has come to be God with us, and he is the Light of the world, the center of our lives!

PRAYER

God of all, the whole world waits in joyful expectation to celebrate your birth. Thank you for coming to live with us, love us, and save us. Your presence is the greatest gift of all. Fill our hearts with your light and love so we may share them with others. Amen.

PROPHECY

Read and proclaim the good news!

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. Isaiah 9:6-7 (NRSV)

PROPHECY FULFILLED

Read this text aloud. Allow the candlelight to envelop the room by turning off all other lights. May the joy and mystery of this time center you in the true meaning of Christmas: that Christ has come for us, and God is with us!

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is

the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, & on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. Luke 2:1-20, (NRSV)

WORSHIP

Sing or meditate on the following carol.

Silent Night

Silent night! holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
'round yon virgin mother and Child,
holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born; Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light,
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth;
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for giving us the gift of Jesus, our Savior and the light of the world, as a baby. We love you and worship you. Help us to share your love and light with the world on Christmas Day and every day. Amen.

Joy to the world!
The Lord is come
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart
Prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven, and heaven
And nature sing.

Joy to the World
Isaac Watts



