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# Kingdom Come

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*A guide to welcoming + following Jesus in Advent*

By: the QuadW Missional Internship



[quadwmi.org](http://quadwmi.org)

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*Advent 2017*

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# Introduction

## The Questions Advent Asks Us

There are different seasons Christians keep that help us to learn the story of Scripture in deeper ways and that also help to teach us to pay better attention to the ongoing work and action of God (the God who's actions we discover in Scripture) in our time and in our lives, in our churches and our communities.

One of the ways this happens is through the questions the different seasons ask of us. The season of Advent is the season which marks the beginning of the Christian community's way of telling time. It's a season that lasts for four weeks worth of Sundays, leading us to Christmas Day. The word "Advent" literally means, "coming". It invites us into the Scriptures that tell us of God's coming to us, among us. And it invites us to ask questions like:

*Are you ready for God to come among us?*

*Are you awake and alert for the ways that God is at work, even now in this moment?*

*Are you ready to (re)order your life so that you're able to welcome, receive and follow Jesus?*

*What do you need to do to prepare for God's coming?*

*Where do you see God's coming among us already beginning to take hold in + around you?*

*How can you be a part of helping others to see, notice + wake up to God's actions and presence?*

You see, for as much as the season of Advent wants to help us to enter into and rehearse the Bible story of how God came among us in Jesus, long ago, it is at least as much about helping us... helping you to be ready *TODAY* to welcome and follow Jesus *right here, right now!*

May this season and it's questions help us to prepare the way of the Lord and his coming Kingdom!

## How does this guide work?

For each day of the season of Advent - beginning with Sunday, December 3rd you'll find a Scripture or two or three to read. This will be accompanied by a brief reflection on those Scriptures. Each reflection was created by people who are a part of the QuadW Missional Internship family in some way - staff, site directors, board members, former interns, etc.

Some days there will be a question or two to consider or a practice to take into your day. Some have links to a song or video to go along with it. Each entry will end with a prayer, not meant to be the only thing you pray, but a starting point for your own prayers in this season of God's coming among us!

We think this is a great way to begin your day during the season of Advent. Spend 10-15 minutes with it.

Or maybe you're a night person... in that case, we recommend doing the next days entry before you go to bed - for example on the night of Dec. 2 you'd begin by working through Sunday, Dec. 3rd. We suggest this as a way of living into the season, that is about looking forward and anticipating God's coming Kingdom.

## What is the QuadW Missional Internship?

QuadW mi (missional internship) is an 8-week, paid, summer internship for college students that places them in Christian community w/ other interns - living and serving those in need in their neighborhood. In summer 2018 we will have 12 teams of interns serving across the US!

For more information you can check out our website and blog...

<http://quadwmi.org>

<http://quadwmi.org/blog/>

Here's a couple of videos...

<https://vimeo.com/181975760>

<https://vimeo.com/210790388>

You can keep up w/ us on Facebook

[https://www.facebook.com/quadwmi/?ref=aymt\\_homepage\\_panel](https://www.facebook.com/quadwmi/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel)

Follow up on Instagram @quadwmi

And if you'd like to apply you can find the application on our website, here...

<http://quadwmi.org/application/>

We do hope this guide helps you to enter more deeply into the story of Jesus and that it can be a part of the way the Spirit gives you eyes to see and ears to hear the dawning of God's presence and life in the midst of your life! May God's Kingdom come and God's will be done...

Tony Jeck | Assistant Director, QuadW Missional Internship

Day 1

# Sunday, December 3

## *First Sunday of Advent*

By: Rev. Don Woolley | Founder + National Director, QuadW  
Missional Internship

### **Read: Isaiah 64:1-9**

The prophet Isaiah speaks of a deep longing for God. It is the kind of longing that can only come from knowing our own sin and helplessness, coupled with the knowledge of God's holiness and power.

So much has gone wrong. Our country is torn apart, angry and ready to believe the worst of the "other." We seem to live perpetually on edge. We are easily provoked and easily offended, ready to argue, eager to fight. In our better moments, we recognize our own fallenness. We lament our failure to live up to our highest ideals. We confront the reality that the line between good and evil runs not so much between an imagined "us" and "them," but through every human heart—even ours...maybe, especially ours.

As much as we don't understand others, we are a mystery to ourselves. There is so much wrong in the world, but also in us.

And yet... we dare to hope.

We hope because there is a God who can bind both the wounds of our world and our hearts. Advent is a season of longing for this God, anticipating God's gift of the One who can change everything. Everything!

Spend a few moments acknowledging the sin and brokenness around you and within you. Then, in prayer, turn your attention to the God who loves you as no one else can.

***Pray:*** *Father, by your power, free me from the sins and burdens that hinder me. Rekindle my hope. Turn my attention to you and increase my faith. Help me to completely give myself to you in this season of Advent. Enable me to know and love you as never before. Amen.*

Day 2

# Monday, December 4

By: Rev. Rhett Bulter, former intern

## **Read: Micah 4:1-5**

Advent arrives just as we begin reflecting on the past year; our mistakes, our successes, but also the shared events of our lives together. Our memory of this year is marred with the pain of mass shootings: churches, concerts, and others that have already faded away riddle our hearts with a miserable shared aching.

Being reminded of the hope of Advent seems especially needed today. The Book of Micah has a prophecy for the broken world we live in, that one day:

“They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.”

This is an inevitable promise of what God is going to do, and what we wait for in hopeful expectation this Advent Season. One day, God will melt our guns and instruments of war down to make tractors and farming supplies to be used to feed the poor. There will be no guns in God’s coming Kingdom. One day, there will be no more mass shootings, and this Advent God is calling us to join in making it happen.

## **Reflect:**

- 1) How can you work towards creating the world God envisions?
- 2) Read Micah 4:1-5; what does God promise to do in our world?

**Pray:** *Lord, beat the swords I carry in my heart into plowshares. Make me an instrument of peace, not of war. Give me the strength to follow you into your peaceable Kingdom. Lord, have mercy on us, and bring your Kingdom quickly. Amen.*



Day 3

# Tuesday, December 5

By: Tony Jeck, Assistant Director, QuadW mi

## **Read: Psalm 79**

Did you read this? Whoever said the Bible was boring, hasn't really read it. This psalm is lots of things... but not boring!

Psalm 79 is a cry from the extremity of human circumstance... out of deep pain, disillusionment, and anger. As they look around and see all they have known and loved laid to waste, a loud and bitter cry rises to God.

The ones who do evil and violence seem to win. The thing that we thought God would never let happen, happens. We find ourselves alone, betrayed, alienated, disoriented, full of doubt and pain and fear.

What kind of prayer can we pray when this is our experience? Can we pray?

Psalm 79 responds with a resounding, "YES!"

We can pray, we can cry out to God.

These are important things to hear... to hear Scripture speak to God in our all too human voice, crying out to God.

It teaches us, gives us permission to pray prayers like this when our world is turned upside down, when the whole thing unravels before our eyes...

To cry out, "How long, O, Lord?!"

## **Reflect:**

- **Where in your life do you or those around you need to be given permission to pray prayers like, "How long, O Lord?!"**
- **Is it ever difficult for you to pray really honest prayers to God out of difficulty or grief or pain?**
- **What would it take, in this season for you to speak, write honestly to God?**

**Pray:** *God help us to know and trust your love and presence with us... especially in those seasons when everything seems to crash down around us. Give us the courage to cry out to you, to be those who always look to you as the source of our hope and life. Hear us when we cry out to you! Amen.*

Day 4

# Wednesday, December 6

By: Johnny Peters, QuadW mi Board Member and mentor

**Read: Luke 21:34-38**

I'm not an early morning person. Something must be truly special for me to be motivated enough to get out of bed earlier than usual. Even if something is worthy of an early wake up time, I still struggle to find the motivation to make it happen. I spend a lot of time wishing I was more motivated.

There is nothing wrong with sleeping every now and then or even enjoying the occasional lazy day. However, relaxation and retreat shouldn't be the governing motivations of our lives. I'm sure there were those who struggled to "get up early in the morning to listen to him (Jesus) in the temple." But they did it anyway because spending time with and in service to Jesus is of the utmost importance. Sometimes we must trade the "easy life" for "abundant life"!

John Wesley writes in his explanatory notes on Luke 21:38, "How much happier were his disciples in these early lectures, than the slumbers of the morning could have made them on their beds! Let us not scruple to deny ourselves the indulgence of unnecessary sleep, that we may morning after morning place ourselves at his feet, receiving the instructions of his word, and seeking those of his Spirit."

***Pray:*** *God, help us to be alert, awake, responsive to your voice, your work, your grace. Today, may a sense of gratitude lead us to put our feet on the floor, get out of bed and follow you into our day. Give us a clear sense of the work you have for us to do. Amen.*

Day 5

# Thursday, December 7

By: Charsy Martratt Anderson, former intern

## **Read: Hosea 6:1-6**

This year in our home, we are starting something new with our almost two-year-old daughter. It's this Christmas nativity scene called "A Star from Afar" that she received last year as a Christmas present.

Every day in December we hide this little wooden star somewhere in the house and let her find it. When she finds it, we move the wise men to where the star is. There is also scripture and a short story of the wise men's' continued journey to follow the star. Everyday the wise men move closer and closer to Jesus.

And it makes me wonder if there isn't a deeper message in this children's activity than simply just searching for a wooden star.

In Hosea 6:1-6, Israel has turned away from God. They stopped searching for their star, and in turn, stopped searching for Jesus. Hosea reminds the people of who God is to them. Although they have strayed, God is still with them and He is longing to heal and restore them.

As we near the advent season, we can find hope in the same God who still sought out Israel after all their misdoings. Let us return to the God who is on a mission to bring His people back to Him today, just as He was with Israel. Let us return to our first love. Let us not be silent, but instead rise and respond to the unfailing love found in the manger.

As we sing songs of Jesus' birth let it not be impersonal to us, because as surely as God came for Israel, He comes for you and me. He comes to bring us hope, to bring us peace, to bring us life.

***Pray:*** *Faithful God, thank you for your persistent love, for making a way to us, for stirring in us and making us restless with a hope and longing for you. May we let this season awaken in us, as if for the first time, that desire to seek you always. Amen.*

Day 6

# Friday, December 8

By: Rev. Jean Tippit, Board President, QuadW mi

**Read: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; Jeremiah 1:4-10; Acts 11:19-26**

You may never know what your words or actions may mean to someone personally, to the gospel or to the world. On December 8, every year I do something to celebrate the birth of my sister. It is her earthly birthday and on that day the world was changed forever because she effected the world in a marvelous way. She was a woman of great love and encouraged so many in her life. She influenced how I live my life not just on her birthday each year but every day.

Barnabas of the early church was an encourager and I wonder if he could have imagined what his trip (described in Acts 11) to Tarsus would do for the early church and for the world. Imagine if he had never gone looking for Saul now known as Saint Paul, imagine if he had never brought Saul into the fold of leaders in Antioch, imagine if we the church had never been called, Christian.

Today, how will your smallest of actions make a difference in the world? How will you influence others for the kingdom? The God who knit you together in your mother's womb has a calling for you today.

***Pray:*** *God we thank you for the people you have placed in our lives who in their words and actions show us the way of your Son, Jesus. Thank you! May we be so inspired by them and by the gift of your Holy Spirit, that our lives may also encourage faith, hope and love in you. Amen.*

Day 7

# Saturday, December 9

By: Josh Shepherd, Site Director, Kansas City, KS

**Read: Ezekiel 36:24-28**

Anyone who has ever restored a house will know that the restoration is not the end goal. The end goal is to live inside the house. Likewise, God wants to inhabit what God restores.

This is the message of the Prophet Ezekiel to the people of God, who have been disgraced, deserted, and despised on account of their own sin. Make no mistake, Ezekiel says, God *will* restore you, but his restoration is not for you alone.

It is for God, so that God may dwell in you, and may make God known through your restored life.

What God's people did not know then, but we know now, is that this restoration has come through God's son, Jesus, whose advent we celebrate this season. But true Advent worship goes beyond simply receiving the restoration of God in the midst of our own brokenness.

Through God's restoration, we are to become God's restorers, doing for others what God is doing in and for us. The right and beautiful response to Ezekiel's message that God is absolutely for us is that our lives will also be for others.

Jesus has come to make us restored restorers.

**Reflect:**

1. Is it possible to receive the promised restoration of God in our lives without participating as a restorer in the lives of our neighbors?
2. What do you need God to restore in your own life?
3. How is God sending you to participate in the restoration of other lives

**Pray:** *God - you are the one who is making ALL things new! We thank you for beginning that work in us. Today and in this season of Advent, we marvel that you draw us into this same work. May we receive the joyful gift and calling to be restored restorers. Amen.*

Day 8

# Sunday, December 10

## *Second Sunday of Advent*

By: Rev. Dr. Brian Miller, former worksite coordinator

**Read: Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8**

*“All people are grass. Their constancy is like the flower of the field.”*

*“[T]he day of our Lord will come like a thief in the night.”*

*“Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.”*

Stark words and strange images are how Scripture chooses to describe the Advent of our Lord. Sure, there are sweeter, gentler words used as well. However, at its core, the incarnation is a foundation-shaking proposition. It marked a regime change of sorts. We don't use sweet and gentle words to describe regime changes and takeovers. They are difficult and alarming, changing life even for those who will benefit from the change.

That, of course, isn't how Christmas is portrayed in 2017. It sometimes feels like Christmas was a Norman Rockwell painting or a very special Hallmark Channel movie event, in which it is always snowing but always warm. We talk about the magic of the season and attend Christmas performances at schools (and maybe even churches) where happiness seems to be the most important outcome of Christmas.

However, in the first century, the people of God didn't need visions of sugar-plums dancing in their heads. They needed to know that the God of Moses was still there and would once again rescue his people. They needed regime change, even if it meant that they, too, would be judged. This shake up was Good News!

Today, there are people in every community who seek something more earth-shattering than a sweet holiday season. Their lives are difficult, and they feel the weight of everyday problems (abuse, oppression, poverty, addiction, etc.). How will the church announce that

the incarnation has shaken the foundations of the earth? How will you point to the everlasting Word of God as a source of hope? How will you partner with them to experience justice and healing in tangible ways?

**Watch/Listen:** “The Rebel Jesus” written by Jackson Browne, performed by Bebo Norman  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTxt1j-pqoQ>

**Pray:** *Everlasting God, who reigned before the kingdoms of the world and will reign as they all pass away, give us such longsighted vision that we might have full faith in your justice and practice your justice in ways that shake up the world so that we may be bearers of Good News to those who need it the most; through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

Day 9

# Monday, December 11

By: Jakaela Davis, former intern + current Site Director

**Read:** Psalm 27, Isaiah 26:7-15, Acts 2:37-42

“The path of the righteous is level; you, the Upright One, make the way of the righteous smooth.” (Isaiah 26:7)

Wow I can't believe that my first semester of Seminary is almost over, it seems like just yesterday I was asking God, “Are you sure this is the path you are calling me to be on?”

Oh wait that **WAS** yesterday!!!

It is funny how throughout life our paths may not line up seem like it lines up with the path in which God is calling us to walk, we don't take the quickest, straightest route; we always have questions about it - “Is this the way?”

But it is so sweet to see the outcome, the finished product. It gives me hope that God “smooths” out our path because sometimes our path tends to become a little crooked, but I have been thinking lately that there is nothing wrong with a little crookedness...

I believe that it is in those crooked places we find out how graceful, loving, and merciful God is to us.

What a joy that is! If you would have told me that I will be going to Duke Divinity School, three years ago I would have laughed because that was not my plan nor my path, but oh how grateful I am that my plans were not God's plans!

It has not been easy, but it has not been hard either; Isaiah reminds me that we are called to trust God and believe that His word will come to pass for our lives to give Him Glory!

I challenge you to seek out God's love, mercy, and grace within those rough moments because when you do, you will never want to let go of the God who meets you there!

**Reflect:** spend a little more time with the passage from Isaiah 26:7-15 and journal about how do you see God in your day-to-day life!

**Pray:** *Almighty God, we marvel at how you are able to take our wanderings and make them into paths that lead us to you; to take our mess and make something beautiful out of it; to meet us in the places we least expect it and to change our lives to be more like your Son, Jesus. Give us eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts that long for you. Amen.*



Day 10

# Tuesday, December 12

By: Neil Moseley, Dallas Site Director

**Read: Acts 11:1-18**

When we anticipate Christ's birth during Advent, we remember the coming of a new revelation from God, a revelation that would extend God's covenant of love and grace to all people.

Peter's response to the Lord's command to kill & eat is a response that many of us give in our lives: we are challenged to enter spaces that we believe unclean, doing things that we think are beneath us or contrary to what we should do, maybe even with people that we think we shouldn't engage. There's a lot of risk in being & acting contrary to what we've believed or been taught. Throughout the Gospels we see Jesus engaging, touching, healing, showing love and kindness to Samaritans, Roman soldiers, lepers, prostitutes, tax collectors and others that were not good company to keep for any faithful Jew.

Jesus met, worked with and healed many Jews as well, but the Gospel writers highlighted Jesus' contact with these folks who were perceived "unclean" because even after new Christ followers had been baptized and began their lifelong journey with Jesus, it remained difficult for them to accept that those who were once unclean by the letter of the Law were made clean by Jesus.

***Pray:*** *God, help us in this season of Advent to be willing to follow your move... to be willing to let our hearts and minds be stretched by the vision of your love that we see in Jesus. May we embrace your move. Amen.*

Day 11

# Wednesday, December 13

By: Wes Anderson, former intern

**Read: Luke 1:5-17**

Zechariah was a priest. He was one of God's people. He and his wife Elizabeth were "righteous before the Lord". He was a *good* dude. This should have been a banner day for him. Out of a thousand priests in his section, he had been chosen to give an offering to the Lord. Yet, his heart was heavy. Even in the midst of a professional success and what should have been a moving and intimate experience with God, Zechariah was dealing with personal tragedy. He and Elizabeth were unable to have children, and were getting on in years. This was the baggage with which Zechariah approached the altar of God, and the hardship that threatened to steal his joy and quench the fire for the things of God that burned within him.

*God intervened.*

While in the presence of God, an angel appeared to Zechariah. The angel told him that he would have a son, John, who would bring joy and help people turn toward God once again. When his hope was dead, a son would be born, and things would be set right.

This is the good news for us this advent season, that even:

When our joy is sapped by pain,

When our successes are dwarfed by our failures,

When we've become numb to the presence of God around us

When we approach the altar of God with baggage

And when our hope is dead

*God Intervened.*

A son was born.

He has brought joy, and he will set things right.

God continues to intervene today. The Son that was born in a manger so long ago continues to bring joy, to set things right, to offer healing, and to speak order into chaos for those who will allow him.

**Reflect:** Will you rest in the promise of this good news? Will you trust the God who intervenes with your hurts, pains, and baggage? In those moments when your hope has died, will you continue to approach the altar of God and to enter into his presence? Will you commit, this Advent season, to sharing this good news of our missionary God and of the Son who was born with those most in need of hope?

**Pray:** *God in Action, thank you for not staying far off, for not keeping us at arm's length, but for moving toward us in love, in your Son Jesus. Help us to trust you with our deepest hurts and places of longing. May we mirror your goodness to those around us, that they may know and trust you, too. Amen.*

Day 12

## Thursday, December 14

By: Rev. Carrie Cesar, Site Director, Riverside, CA

**Read: Habakkuk 2:1-5**

These lines in Habakkuk played out in my life just recently. I prayed for days over a situation that worried me; something unjust was happening. It did not seem right, and I could not figure it out. I asked for help and God seemed to answer me saying “send an email”.

As I wrote, I had an inner feeling that told me to change it and write it different.

Was God telling me this? I felt strange and, yet it was as if God was saying “trust in me and wait and see”. I remembered the words of Habakkuk, and it was clear how God works when we are seeking God’s justice.

I know that when I am ready and waiting on God, even in the simplest ways, I can be guided by God. I love how it works out, and have experienced it before, when I put my full trust in and waited and saw how God moves in a situation.

I was puzzled as to what could be gained from the email I sent. And yet, it was clear in the response it got. Because of how the message was worded, the other person reacted with open destruction, full of pride and selfishness. God showed me who we really needed to be careful of.

We fight battles every day, not so obvious as the Avengers do, though ours seem small we must always have the silent conviction to be true and wait on God. It is good to wait on God's actions, to trust and be so close to God that you can feel God's breath in and out of your soul- giving you direction, showing you truth-  
"That's my secret, I'm always angry."

**Watch:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-m6UKS1LoYQ>

**Pray:** *Holy God, so stir in our hearts that we may hear and know your still and small voice, that in ALL things we may do your will and be a part of your ongoing work in the world... in ways both big and small. Amen.*

Day 13

# Friday, December 15

By: Tony Jeck, Assistant Director, QuadW mi

## **Read: Philippians 3:12-16**

Jesus goes first. He makes the initial move in coming to us.

And in doing so two things are meant to become clear:

1. That this is what God is like toward us.
2. (and this is the one that Paul wants to really get at here) This shows us our move, we are meant to follow Jesus' move.

He says it this way, "I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own."

Because of God's move toward him in Jesus, Paul sees the path that is before him. And he speaks with such clarity and passion about it. And he understands how that may come off - as if it's something he's already achieved or accomplished... and everyone else is lagging behind. So he does some work here to spell out what he really means. He wants to make it clear that what *IS* accomplished and definitive is what God has already done in Jesus... that move has been made.

NOW the call is to move forward in light of that move of Jesus. Jesus has moved to lay hold of you. NOW you should, with all of your energy and life seek to lay hold of a way of living in this world that is so fully marked by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Paul means this SO completely. It's has such a draw and power for him. He wants to take no account of life before this love and call of Jesus has laid hold of him in terms of who he is, what is life's work is to be about, where things are headed for him. All this is recast through the lens of God's move toward him in Jesus.

There is a drive and call and an urgency that flows from seeing God's move to us in Jesus, when Jesus lays hold of us. And Paul longs to have his life totally consumed by that... and to see this Philippian community of Jesus followers be marked by the same drive and call.

Forgetting what lies behind, straining on and pressing forward to what lies ahead. This is the call of Advent to each of us. To wake up to God's move to us in Jesus and to let it be THE THING that moves us.

You are called.  
You are sent.

***Pray:*** Lord Jesus, lay hold of my heart, as if for the first time! Stir me to live in response to you. Give me courage to let go of, walk away from, leave behind the other things that drive me and call me. Let me be driven to pursue you and your coming Kingdom! Amen.

Day 14

# Saturday, December 16

By: Rev. Dr. Adlene Kufarimai, Anniston, AL Site Director

## **Read: Psalm 126**

*Let those who go out, crying and carrying their seed, come home with joyful shouts, carrying bales of grain! Psalm 126:6 (CEB)*

## **Weeping Endures for a Night, But Joy Comes in the Morning!**

Have you ever felt like your situation will never change no matter how much you pray? Or you are trying so much to make a difference in other people's lives and it seems like all your work is in vein. The road may be filled with rough patches, keep on sowing the good seeds. God is able to change your circumstance for the better.

Five years after high school with no means of going to college, I thought my dreams of becoming a teacher were shattered. I gave all I could to raise money and stayed a faithful part of the United Methodist Youth Fellowship, sharing the Good News of Jesus with others. Along the way there were days I questioned my purpose.

The Lord has done great things for me. From the villages of Africa, to be called Rev. Dr. Adlene in the great Americas.

In the challenges of the missional work God is calling you to, keep sowing, God will bring joyful harvest. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

***Pray:*** *Thank you Lord for changing our circumstances for better. Give us the energy to keep going on even in the storms of our lives for the sake of your kingdom. Amen*

Day 15

# Sunday, December 17

## *Third Sunday of Advent*

By: Rev. Dr. Steve Lewis, Portland Site Director

**Read: Isaiah 61:1-4; 8-11**

**Listen:**

“The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me”

<https://youtu.be/ggm5TvPMFao>

The Isaiah reading is familiar to most Christians. It was the text Jesus selected to read in the synagogue in Nazareth. I must admit that it is one of my favorite text.

The prophet proclaimed that the Spirit of the Lord is upon us. The very Spirit that moved over the waters of creation, that reached into the tomb where Jesus lie dead after the cross and transformed death into life, is upon us.

We are empowered and enabled by the very Spirit of God to live out the divine mission: to proclaim liberty, to bring good news to all, to be the anointed ones of God, to bring hope, peace, love and joy to the world.

In this Advent season, be mindful of God’s mission for us. Be open to opportunities to share the love of God and the joy of the Christ child. Be willing to allow the Holy Spirit to inspire your imagination to dream dreams, and see visions. Be reflective on all the ways God is present in the world.

The Spirit of the Lord is on us!

***Pray:*** *Holy Spirit, even as you filled and moved Jesus, may you also fill and move us! In this season may we be awakened to your Spirit all around us. May we see new ways to join you in the work you are doing in the world around us. Amen.*

Day 16

# Monday, December 18

By: Tanaka Pfupajena, former intern

## **Read: 1 Kings 18:1-18**

In this story, we are met with the Lord's servant Elijah in a time when the land had not received rain in 7 years. The Lord instructs Elijah to go and present himself to the King, and then the Lord would send rain. The people had gone a long time with no rain (a source of life in this time).

I would imagine people had given up on all hope of it raining. However, the Lord intervenes at an unexpected time. In the same way, the Lord intervened in the world at an unexpected time by sending His Son so that the world might experience life through Him. And today the Lord continues that work by intercepting in each individual's life in unexpected ways through the gospel.

In Elijah's story, God asks Elijah to go and announce that rain would come, but Elijah was not in charge of bringing the rain, the Lord would do that. In the same way, God invites every one of us to go and announce the good news that He has sent His son to be the propitiation of our sins and reunite us to the Father, and in Him Life is restored.

**Reflect:** In this season of advent, how is God inviting you to announce the good news of his Son. Could it be that God has placed you in this neighborhood, on this campus, with these roommates - wherever you find yourself to announce in variable ways that the King is here and Hope is alive?

**Pray:** *God, here we are. Send us! Help us to hear your call and to respond. Give us everything we need today to live as your servant, announcing and demonstrating the Good News of your Son, Jesus. Amen.*



Day 17

# Tuesday, December 19

By: Katy Wrona, Mobile, AL Site Director

## **Read: Psalm 125**

**Listen:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMNy1bg2UWs>  
“Mountain” by Hillsong United

*Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people, from this time on and forevermore.*

As described in Psalm 125, the Lord surrounds his people with strength, comfort and peace. He becomes the “fortress in the raging storm”. How amazing is it to be loved by a God whose wonder and power abides forever?

Mount Zion, the highest point in Jerusalem, stands as a symbol of God’s love. Today, we as Christians need to be that same symbol to those who have yet to feel God’s presence in their lives. We must stand tall.



The first verse of the song “Mountain” says, “*See a light in the darkness, a city shining without a veil, this hill becoming a mountain, a solid rock that will never fail.*”

As we walk this path with God, we continue to grow a solid foundation in our faith. By being a light in the darkness, we are able to guide others to the mountain.

## **Reflect:**

1. How is God a fortress during the raging storms?
2. How are you a mountain in someone’s life?

**Pray:** *Dear God, thank you for being the strength I need every day. Thank you for being my light when the darkness becomes overwhelming. Thank you for being my comfort in the storm. I ask for guidance and strength to stand tall and show the world your love, grace, and mercy. Amen.*

Day 18

# Wednesday, December 20

By: Tony Jeck, Assistant Director of QuadW Missional Internship

**Read: Psalm 125 + Malachi 3:16 – 4:6**

The word Advent means “coming.” And though in this season we hear the story of how God came among us in Jesus, long ago, the season is important for us not just in the way it invites us to recall Jesus’ coming 2000 years ago. That’s good and it’s certainly part of it.

BUT the real drive and power of this season for the community of faith and for you and me (the very reason we celebrate Advent year after year) is the way that it teaches us to live NOW with a hope and vision calibrated NOT on how things seem to work all around us, NOT on our present circumstances... BUT instead to have our hope and vision calibrated by how things will work on that day when Christ comes in final victory and sets all things right.

And it’s a real challenge to live in the light of this hope and vision. And so we need a season like Advent to come around and teach us and invite us to have our lives re-calibrated to this hope!

Can you hear how these Scriptures are trying to do this very same work for the people who would have first heard them? They speak to the people of holding onto hope that though they were oppressed, though they were in exile, though there were countless reasons why it did not look like God was with them and it was increasingly difficult to imagine a day when all would be put right... Never-the-less, “look to the mountains that surround Jerusalem!” the psalmist says - their size and permanence and stability - that’s what God is like compared to the fleeting and temporary circumstances that face us, to those who come against us;

“Look! A new day is dawning,” cries the prophet... and with it comes healing from our God.

**Reflect:** As the season of Advent draws to an end, in what ways is God inviting you to have your hope and vision reoriented, to live in the dawning light of Christ... who in every season, in all that we face is God with us!

**Pray:** *Almighty God, come among us and make us restless with hope. Stir our hearts and minds to join you today to live in light of your coming among us. Let us throw off complacency, despair, and the voice that tells us, “I guess that’s just the way it is.” And with you, let us work for the dawning of that day and for the healing of all the world. Show me the first step. Let’s begin. Amen.*

Day 19

# Thursday, December 21

By: Nick Camacho, Reading, PA Site Director

## **Read: Isaiah 11:1-10**

*“A shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him.” (Isaiah 11:1-2).*

During the Christmas season of 2016, I had an unforgettable experience. I remember when a young student at the school where I work came into my office and within two minutes of standing in front of me, he asked, “From where do Christians get their salvation?”

He saw that I was reading a book, *Advent and Christmas Wisdom* by Henri J. Nouwen. I didn't need to look at any other place, book, or magazine. I had the response right in front of me, in the meditation I was reading. I, respectfully responded, “You don't mind if I read to you from this book what I believe can be the answer to your question?” The young student replied affirmatively, but, with not so much interest.

I didn't know at the time if he was trying to prove something. I didn't know if he was trying to be sarcastic. I didn't know if he was just trying to kill time out of his classroom. What I did know was that I had in front of me a young man asking what, in my understanding, was a critical question, not just for Christians, but for each human being created by my Father and redeemed by my Brother.

This is what I read to him from the book:

*“Our salvation comes from something small, tender, and vulnerable, something hardly noticeable. God, who is the Creator of the Universe, comes to us in smallness, weakness, and hiddenness. I find this a hopeful message. Somehow, I keep expecting loud and impressive events to convince me and others of God's saving power; but over and over again I am reminded that spectacles, power plays, and big events are the ways of the world. Our temptation is to be distracted by them and made blind to the “shoot that shall sprout from the stump.”*

*When I have no eyes for the small signs of God's presence - the smile of a baby, the carefree play of children, the words of encouragement and gestures of love offered by friends - I will always remain tempted to despair.*

*The small child of Bethlehem, the unknown young man of Nazareth, the rejected preacher, the naked man on the cross, he asks for my full attention. The work of our salvation takes place in the midst of a world that continues to shout, scream, and overwhelm us with its claims and promises. But the promise is hidden in the shoot that sprouts from the stump, a shoot that hardly anyone notices.”*

After I finished the reading, I looked at the young man, who was still standing in front of me and across my desk. Looking at him I simply asked, “Did I answer your question?” The young student, seriously looking, said thank you and started walking toward the door. Suddenly, he stopped, turned around, walked back towards me and said, “Mr. Camacho that was a nice story. Do you mind if I have a copy of it?” I immediately responded, “Not just a copy, son, you can have the book with the story. It is my Christmas gift to you.”

***Pray:*** *God when we have no eyes for the small signs of your presence with us, may we see Jesus, who has come to us, small, poor, vulnerable. Amen.*

Day 20

# Friday, December 22

By: Rev. Dr. Tiwirai Kufarimai, Anniston, AL Site Director

**Read: 2 Samuel 6:12-19**

Is there a time that you have felt a deep and uncontainable joy in your life? I have experienced many of such moments. The one that stands out is when I received Jesus for the first time. I felt this amazing chill throughout my body and experienced the presence of God.

David was dancing because he knew what the coming of the ark of the Lord meant for Israel and he could not help but dance, putting aside the decorum of a king.

The coming of the ark signified the coming of the Lord, just as this Advent season signifies and reminds us of the coming of Christ. Come, and dance for the Lord with me. The world needs to know that we love the Lord enough to dance like fools for the King of Kings.

***Pray:*** Lord help us to welcome you into the cities of our lives, our homes, our communities, and our churches praising and dancing because you are worthy of our utmost form of worship.

Day 21

# Saturday, December 23

By: Anne Louise Pass, former intern

**Read: Psalm 89:1-4,19-26**

"...the wonder is still there." -Robert Irwin

I am a very forgetful person. I double book myself. I cannot remember to take online quizzes. I lose my things all the time. I have had missing punches the past three pay periods at my job. I am a very forgetful person.

But the worst thing I forget, and I forget almost every minute of every day, is how astoundingly beautiful, faithfully wonderful, and abundantly loving God is. I let myself get distracted by my anxieties and responsibilities, and I become overwhelmed with the problems in my life and the world around me.

This Psalm is about remembering God in the midst of this kind of disorientation. He is real. He is powerful. He is here, and He has promised to be with us, not just as a friend, but as a champion.

How can we stay disoriented and beaten down when we remember that?

"The wonder is still there."

**Reflect:** Take a few minutes right now and allow the thought of our God to completely overcome you. Think about His miracles, His identity, His faithfulness in your life. Let it wake you from your disorientation so that you can't help but sing of his wonders, loud enough to teach (or to remind) everyone who He is and how He loves us.

**Pray:** *Marvelous and Holy God, awaken in us today wonder and awe, gratitude for the mystery and beauty of this life and for your presence with us... most especially the gift of your presence in sending your Son, Jesus. Amen.*

Day 22

# Sunday, December 24

## *Fourth Sunday of Advent, Christmas Eve*

By: Rev. R. G. Lyons, Site Director, Birmingham, AL

### **Read: Luke 1:46-55**

So this is Christmas -

Advent is a time of waiting and a time of preparation. We remember those who waited for the coming Messiah 2000 years ago and we prepare for Jesus' kingdom to be fully realized on Earth as it is in heaven.

But there's also a different kind of preparation we enter into this time of year. There are parties to attend and presents to buy. The average American spends \$700 each year on Christmas and our nation as a whole spends \$465 billion. Christmas has become the ultimate holiday of American consumption, which is why the words of Mary are so haunting for us.

Over the years, there has been debate as to whether or not Jesus was a revolutionary.

Apparently, his mother was.

In a world that would have considered her an unclean, poor, peasant girl, she boldly declared that all generations would consider her blessed and that the child growing inside her was about to turn the world upside down. The mighty would be thrown down and the lowly lifted up. The hungry poor would be satisfied and the rich sent away empty.

Mary's words challenge us in a time when Christmas has become more and more about materialism. She proclaims that those voices that tell us we need more and more will soon be toppled and that the invisible poor in every part of our country and world will soon be lifted up.

Her words call us to spend less on ourselves and to give of our time and resources to bring justice and mercy to all of God's people. By doing so, we are living into what Mary reminds us that Christmas is all about.

***Pray:*** *God of Mary, mother of Jesus, help us to take her song to heart. Help us to know and love and serve you as the God who hears the cry of the poor, who lifts up the ones who are kept down, who fills with good things those who are empty. Amen.*

Day 23

# Monday, December 25

## *Christmas Day!*

By: Rev. Don Woolley | Founder + National Director, QuadW  
Missional Internship

**Read:** Isaiah 9:2-7 + Luke 2:4-7

Finally! This is the day! After centuries of anguished wait, the light of Christ has pierced our darkness. The kingdom of God is at hand! A holy and perfect God came to live among us.

He came, showing us who we were meant to be as human beings.

Because he gave his life, that vision can become a reality in each and every one of our lives. How great is the Father's love for us that he would give so great a gift, at so great a cost. How gracious is our Savior that he would come.

Enjoy the presence of Jesus Christ and receive the love that overwhelms, over powers sin and death, reconciliation with God and neighbor, peace that passes understanding....and JOY!

Revel in his joy!

This is a day to celebrate! To give thanks for the greatest gift the world has ever received. Nothing will ever be the same. For unto us—unto *you*—a son is given, Jesus Christ, the Lord.

Merry Christmas!

Reflect on the great love of God expressed to you, and the world, through the giving of his Son. Reach out to others this day and in his season in ways that express that love.

***Pray:*** *Gracious and loving God, you are the hope of the world. You are my hope. I praise you for the gift of your Son, Jesus. Thank you for your redeeming love. Lead me into deeper faith, and use my life as an instrument of blessing in the lives of others. May this season of Advent be but the beginning of a closer walk with you. Amen.*