
ADVENT
2026
MOUNTAIN BROOK COMMUNITY CHURCH

What is Advent?

Advent is a season of waiting, remembering, and anticipating. We remember that God kept His promises by sending His Son into the world, and we look forward to the day when Christ will return to make all things new. Between those two horizons, Advent teaches us how to live faithfully in the present: trusting God when we cannot see the outcome, pursuing peace in a fractured world, rejoicing amid sorrow, loving as we have been loved, and fixing our eyes on Jesus Himself.

This devotional is designed for personal and/or corporate reflection. Each of the five writings includes a central devotional reading, discussion questions, and a Scripture reading plan for the days that follow. The readings move beyond the familiar Christmas story to explore the biblical depth of each theme, while remaining focused on the glory of the incarnation—God becoming flesh.

The five themes build toward a single truth: hope, peace, joy, and love are not ultimately things we must manufacture for ourselves. They are grounded in the character of God and made known to us in Jesus Christ.

– MBCC Pastors

How Do I Use this Devotional?

ON SUNDAY: Read the devotional and slowly reflect upon the questions.

DURING THE WEEK: Read the assigned Scripture passage each day. Take a few minutes to consider what it reveals about God, how it points to Christ, and how it speaks to your life.

Resist the temptation to rush through the questions. ***Make room*** for honest reflection. ***Pray.***



ADVENT CONSPIRACY

What is Advent Conspiracy?

As we anticipate and prepare to enter this Advent Season, we join in with a movement of churches, families, friends, and organizations who have made the declaration to celebrate Christmas in a radical, God honoring way. The four tenets of Advent Conspiracy are simple but life changing: Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, Love All.

This year our Advent Conspiracy partner is King's Home. We encourage you to buy fewer gifts this Christmas and give away what you would have spent for the sake of the Gospel. **100% of what we raise together will be given away to support this project.**

What is King's Home?

King's Home seeks to serve and glorify God by providing Christ-centered homes and services in which compassion and competence combine to meet the needs of women, children, and families.

For over 50 years, King's Home has provided refuge, hope, and assistance to thousands of abused youth, women, and children facing domestic violence, neglect, abandonment, homelessness, and other challenging and impoverished circumstances.

One hundred percent of King's Home residents have been rendered homeless due to the devastating effects of abuse and domestic violence.

Along with spiritual development, King's Home teaches life skills and provides tangible services to help their residents heal from their devastating pasts, break the cycle of abuse, build healthy relationships, and become independent, productive members of our community.

King's Home also offers support programs including King's Stables, King's Garden, Prodigal Pottery, King's Home Collections, and King's Home Thrift along with counseling services.



King's Home Stables



King's Home Garden



Prodigal Pottery



King's Home Thrift



King's Home Collections

WHERE HOPE LIVES

KING'S HOME

How Can We Help?

One of the building's on King's Home's campus, the Weatherford Building, was built in 1992. Half of this building houses the Prodigal Pottery program and the other half is a gathering room with a kitchen that is used for meetings for staff, donors & volunteers, youth & women's gatherings, fundraising events, and more. All of the residents and many supporters and volunteers of King's Home touch this building!

Prodigal Pottery, which is housed in this building, is handmade by women fleeing homelessness, domestic abuse, and trafficking. King's Home works to employ, equip, and empower women in need in the name of Jesus. The women they employ are residents of King's Home, and in addition to the employees from King's Home, Prodigal Pottery also employs women from Wellhouse and the Lovelady Center.

Over the years, the Weatherford building has fallen into disrepair and is in need of a renovation to fix structural issues. Repairs needed include a new roof, siding, windows and flooring plus a kitchen renovation.

- The current kitchen is outdated and barely functional, so they hope to do a kitchen update with new working appliances. A working kitchen will allow them to host more events for fundraising purposes as well as host more gatherings for their youth and women residents.
- Repairing the structural issues of the building will ensure that there is a functional building to continue to house the Prodigal Pottery program for years to come.
- King's Home anticipates the overall budget for this project to be approximately $350,000-$400,000.

Our goal is to raise $250,000 to help fund the renovation of the **Weatherford Building on King's Home's campus.**

Please visit **mbcc.us/adventconspiracy** for more info and to make a donation.

Hope

DAILY READING

SUN Romans 15:12–13
MON Isaiah 9:1–7
TUE Psalm 130
WED Romans 8:18–25
THU Lamentations 3:19–26
FRI Micah 5:2–5
SAT Revelation 21:1–5

SONGS

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus
King of Kings | *HILLSONG*
O Little Town of Bethlehem
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
God Made Low | *SOVEREIGN GRACE MUSIC*

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

Waiting is one of the hardest parts of being human. We wait for answers, for healing, for reconciled relationships, for open doors, and for circumstances to change. Sometimes we wait with quiet confidence. More often, though, the longer the silence lasts, the harder it is to believe anything ever will change.

Advent teaches us how to wait with hope.

Biblical hope is not wishful thinking. Wishful thinking is fragile; it hinges on the chance that life might turn out the way we prefer. Biblical hope is anchored in the unchanging character of God. It's a quiet conviction that the One who made the promise will keep it—and that His timing and ways are good, even when they look nothing like our own.

Consider Israel's centuries-long wait for the Messiah. For generations, they clung to the promise of a King who would establish justice, defeat evil, and restore their people. Yet generation after generation endured oppression, exile, heartbreak, and silence. God's fulfillment didn't match their expectations, but it was so much greater.

In the fullness of time, Jesus arrived—not as the ruler they envisioned, but as the Savior they needed. He didn't come wrapped in earthly power or royal spectacle. He came quietly—a vulnerable child born into obscurity—yet bearing the weight of every ancient promise. And on those promises, He delivered. As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 1:20, *"For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our amen to God for His glory."*

The God who remembered Israel has not forgotten you. Even when your prayers hang in the air unanswered and the silence stretches on, Christ's first coming is proof that His silence is not His absence. The Jesus who arrived in humility has promised to return in glory, and when He does, every broken thing will be made right.

This Advent, you may be carrying an unanswered prayer, an ache, or a quiet disappointment. Christian hope does not ask you to numb the pain or pretend the waiting is easy. It invites you to bring your grief honestly before God—resting in the truth of who He is, and trusting that the Savior who came will come through again.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Where do you find waiting on God most difficult right now?

How is biblical hope different from simply believing that things will eventually get better?

How does Jesus' first coming strengthen our confidence in His promised return?

What would it look like to live hopefully this week without knowing how a particular situation will turn out?

Peace

DAILY READING

SUN Ephesians 2:13–18
MON Isaiah 11:1–9
TUE Luke 1:67–79
WED John 14:25–31
THU Romans 5:1–11
FRI Psalm 46
SAT Colossians 3:12–17

SONGS

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
Peace, Peace | *SARA GROVES*
Glory (Let There Be Peace) | *MATT MAHER*
Shalom | *TEN THOUSAND FATHERS*
God With Us | *ALL SONS & DAUGHTERS*

"For He Himself is our peace." — Ephesians 2:14

We often think of peace as the absence of trouble. We imagine that if the conflict were resolved, the pressure lifted, the relationship repaired, or the uncertainty removed, we could finally rest. But our deepest problem is not the difficult circumstances we face or even the difficult people we encounter. It is that our sin has alienated us from God Himself. Sin fractures every part of our existence, disrupting our relationship with our Creator and, as a result, distorting our relationships with others and even with ourselves.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with longing for relief. But the peace Scripture describes is deeper than a life in which everything goes according to plan. The biblical idea of peace, often expressed by the Hebrew word *shalom*, carries the sense of wholeness, well-being—things being made right. It is not merely the absence of conflict; it is the presence of what God intended for His creation from the beginning. That is why the prophets looked forward to a coming King who would bring peace—both by calming troubled hearts and confronting sin and injustice that had fractured the world.

Advent celebrates that the *"Prince of Peace"* (Isaiah 9:6) has arrived. His name is Jesus. And He, according to Paul, does not merely teach peace or show us the way to peace, *"He Himself is our peace"* (Ephesians 2:14). Through His death and resurrection, Jesus reconciles sinners to God and breaks down the hostility that divides people. Peace, therefore, is primarily something Christ has accomplished for us, which then overflows into something that we pursue with others.

That doesn't mean our worries vanish or our conflicts disappear overnight. But it does mean the deepest battle of our lives is already settled. Even when anxiety flares or relationships fray, our standing with God is secure. As the psalmist reminds us, even if the ground beneath our feet gives way, we don't have to fear because God Himself is our refuge, an ever-present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1-2).

As we move through Advent, consider where you are longing for peace. Perhaps you need to receive the peace Christ has secured with God. Perhaps you need the courage to pursue peace with someone else. The Prince of Peace does not promise a trouble-free life. He does, however, invite us into a restored relationship with God and teaches us to become people who help make what is broken whole.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

When you think about peace, do you tend to think of comfort, control, reconciliation, or something else?

What does it mean that Jesus Himself is our peace?

Why is reconciliation with God foundational to peace with others?

Is there a relationship in which you need to pursue peace, establish a healthy boundary, seek forgiveness, or extend it?



Joy

DAILY READING

SUN Luke 1:39–56
MON James 1:2–4
TUE Psalm 16
WED Habakkuk 3:16–19
THU John 15:1–11
FRI Philippians 4:4–9
SAT 1 Peter 1:3–9

SONGS

Come Light Our Hearts | *SANDRA MCCRACKEN*
Come Thou Fount | *SHANE & SHANE*
Joy to Be | *CITIZENS*
Who Else | *GATEWAY WORSHIP*
Joy Has Dawned | *KINGS KALEIDOSCOPE*

"My spirit rejoices in God my Savior." — Luke 1:47

We're told Christmas is the season of joy, but December brings a mixture of emotions. You may be thankful for your family and the traditions you love while missing someone who isn't at the table this year. You may have good news to celebrate while also holding a burden that still hasn't lifted. And when everyone around you seems cheerful, the pressure to feel the same can make sadness feel lonelier than it already was.

The Bible has a bigger picture of joy than feeling happy when life is going well. Christian joy is anchored in who God is, what He has done, and what He has promised to do. It is an emotion that can sit alongside sorrow because it transcends the circumstances of life.

Think about Mary. She was a young woman chosen to carry the Messiah, which made nothing about her situation easy. Her pregnancy would raise eyebrows and her future was all but certain. Still, when she arrived at Elizabeth's door, she broke into praise: *"My spirit rejoices in God my Savior."* She didn't have all the answers for what was in store for her. She certainly didn't have smooth sailing ahead. She did have, though, the knowledge that God was keeping His promises and had invited her into His work of redemption.

That's the joy Advent holds out to us—God has kept all of His promises and has acted in Jesus Christ. He has written His name into the story of our lives. The Savior has come so that sin can be forgiven and death will be no more. So even though we still feel the ache of a world waiting to be made whole, we have real reason to rejoice. The risen Christ is our living hope, and one day He will make all things new.

You see, joy doesn't ask you to bury your sadness or talk yourself into a good mood. It invites you to interpret the circumstances of your life in light of the bigger story that God has told. It invites you to lament what is broken while also giving thanks for what is true. It invites you to remember how faithful God has been, receive the gifts He has given you, and look ahead to what He has promised. "Joy to the world. The Lord is come."

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Why can the expectation to be joyful at Christmas sometimes make it harder to be honest about our struggles?

What is the difference between happiness that depends on circumstances and joy rooted in God?

What do Mary's circumstances teach us about the relationship between faith and joy?

What role does gratitude play in our ability to rejoice? How can we cultivate a heart of thanksgiving this Advent season?

Love

DAILY READING

SUN 1 John 4:7–12
MON Deuteronomy 7:6–9
TUE Luke 15:11–32
WED John 13:1–17, 34–35
THU John 1:1–28
FRI Luke 2:1–20

SONGS

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go | *ASCEND THE HILL*
How Deep the Father's Love for Us | *STUART TOWNEND*
The Love of God | *THE WORSHIP INITIATIVE*
Jesus, Lover of My Soul | *INDELIBLE GRACE MUSIC*
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him." — I John 4:9

Love is everywhere at Christmas. You can see it in the wrapped gifts, the meals that took all afternoon to prepare, the traditions we keep alive year after year, and the crowded living rooms where families finally end up in the same place. It can be beautiful. But the season also has a way of showing us how complicated love really is. Family relationships carry old wounds. Generosity competes with exhaustion. We might start out with good intentions and strong motivations to love others well during this time, but quickly we find ourselves being short-tempered, guarded, or wrapped up in our own needs.

Thankfully, the Christian understanding of love begins not with what we feel toward God, but with what God has done for us. The apostle John writes, *"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins"* (1 John 4:10). Biblical love, therefore, originates in God. It is the holy, sacrificial, and purposeful action that goes after sinners in order to rescue them and bring them home.

God did not wait for us to climb our way up to Him. The eternal Son stepped into our world and took on our humanity. He entered the very brokenness we could never fix, lived the perfect obedience we failed to achieve, and gave Himself willingly on the cross to embody true love perfectly and to show us just how deep His love goes.

This love also becomes the pattern for those who belong to Christ. John says that because God has loved us this way, we ought to love one another (John 13:34-35). So we don't love to earn God's acceptance; we love because we've already received it in Christ Jesus. We can, therefore, serve without needing anyone to notice. We can give without keeping score. We can radically forgive knowing that we have been radically forgiven. We can die for the sake of God and the other knowing that then, and only then, do we truly begin to live.

We love because He first loved us.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

How does God's love for sinners challenge the way we typically think about love?

How does the cross shape our understanding of love and how we are to love others?

What are some lies or fears that keep you from fully accepting God's unconditional love? How might you soften your heart to receive this love today?

Who might God be inviting you to love through a concrete act of service, generosity, forgiveness, or attention this week?

Christmas Eve – Christ

Advent reminds us that we live between the first coming of Christ and His return. We have tasted the goodness of God's kingdom, but we still long for its fullness. Until that day, we wait—not passively or despairingly, but with faith, worship, and lives shaped by the Savior that is to come.

May this Advent help you slow down enough to remember what is true, recognize where you need God's grace, and encourage the people around you with the good news of Jesus.

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

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
and we have seen His glory." — John 1:14

After weeks of reflecting on hope, peace, joy, and love, tonight we arrive at the heart of it all: **Jesus Christ Himself.**

It is possible to become so occupied with the things surrounding Christmas that we lose sight of the One Christmas celebrates. We can appreciate the beauty of the season, enjoy the traditions, give generously, and spend meaningful time with family while still missing the central wonder of the incarnation. Christmas is not ultimately about the gifts, the family-time, or the virtues we aspire to embody. **It is about the God who came to dwell among us.**

John begins his gospel reflecting upon eternity past: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.....and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us"* (1:1-3; 14). Now think about the wonder of that statement. The Creator God entered into His creation as a child. The One who placed the stars in the sky took His first breath in a feed trough underneath those very stars. The hands that shaped the mountains were suddenly tiny, wrinkled, and gripping His mother's finger.

This is the great and dizzying paradox of the incarnation: the Creator of the universe did not send an emissary, an angel, or a new set of instructions. He came Himself. He wrapped His infinite majesty in human frailty and moved into our neighborhood. Therefore, the themes of Advent aren't just nice sentiments. They are grounded in a living, breathing person. Hope has a pulse. Peace has a face. Joy has a voice. Love has a name. And His name is Jesus Christ—Immanuel, "God with us."

Past the glowing tree and the tasks left undone, look into the manger and behold your King. The light has pierced the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

What most easily distracts you from Christ during the Christmas season?

What does John mean when he says that the Word became flesh? Why does the incarnation matter for our salvation?

How does seeing the manger in light of the cross and resurrection deepen your understanding of Christmas?

Which of the four Advent themes—hope, peace, joy, or love—do you most need to carry into the coming year? How does Jesus meet that need?



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