



2024

*tabernacle*

jacob's well  
advent guide



# welcome to advent

*"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." (Luke 2:10-12) These are the words an angel spoke to a group of shepherds in a field more than 2,000 years ago. The angel came announcing the arrival of the birth of Jesus: our Savior, Messiah, and Lord. In fact, the literal meaning of the term 'Advent' is arrival. The arrival of Jesus as an infant demonstrated God's willingness to enter in vulnerability to make a home with us. The gospel of John says it this way, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."*

*Every year the Church worldwide dedicates an entire season, four weeks leading up to Christmas, to remember the arrival of Jesus so long ago and to be reminded that we are still awaiting his coming again. This Jesus who is our Savior, Messiah, and Lord.*

*For Advent this year, our church community is centering on the theme of tabernacle, which means a dwelling place of God. We will spend time in Scripture and contemplate the sometimes surprising ways that God has made a dwelling place with, and even in, us. During Advent, we carve out time in this harried world to open up a space to dwell with God; this God who longs to dwell with us.*

# how to use this guide

*This guide is meant as a gift to help you slow down and create that space to dwell with God. Consider setting aside a specific time each day for this practice. You can do this alone or with your family or friends.*

*Here are the simple steps to using the guide:*

- Traditionally, many Christians light Advent candles in a time of prayer. If you have a candle or an Advent wreath, you can first light your candle.*
- Then take a moment to quiet your heart and your mind. When you find some stillness, move onto one of the scripture texts for the week.*
- Finally, spend time with the reflection questions. You may want to keep a journal nearby.*

*You can use this guide as many times throughout the week as you want. Our hope is to kindle a longing for Immanuel, God who dwells with us.*



# week one



The Hope Vigil ☆

Light the first candle, the Candle of Hope. \*

Take a moment of silence to still your heart and mind before turning to the text.

## week one advent passages ☆

• Luke 2:25-32. Take a moment with this passage to imagine yourself as Simeon, now a very old man, who had spent his life hoping for God's salvation, only to finally recognize it in an infant from remote Galilee. What hopes has God put in your heart? What might it look like to join this hope to Simeon's, and to that of all the saints past and present? What might remain the same about your hope, and in what ways might it be changed?

• Exodus 2:15-25. Reuel of Midian became an unexpected agent of hope and hospitality for Moses in this time of crisis. What people or circumstances are there in your life that might be a source of unexpected hope in this season? What might it look like for you to be a source of hope by giving and/or receiving hospitality in this season?

• Psalm 130. This is likely a prayer of God's people as they are re-settling their devastated land after the exile. How does it feel to wait in hope? How do you find yourself tempted to worry, or to manipulate people and circumstances towards what you assume is best? What is challenging, and/or comforting, about letting God take over and do things his way, and in his time?



## lectionary passages

Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

Praying with the Lectionary Texts: What is the message of hope in this text? What is the message of hope for you and for the world around you today? How are you encouraged, challenged or invited to respond? \*

## closing prayer (from psalm 130)

"I wait for you, Lord, my soul waits, and in your word I put my hope. I wait for you, Lord, more than watchmen wait for the dawn, more than watchmen wait for the dawn."



# week two



## The Peace Vigil

Light the first two candles, the Candle of Hope and the Candle of Peace.  
Wait for a moment in prayerful silence.



## week two advent passages



• Luke 1:67-79. Zechariah spoke these words of praise and recognition after a long period of silence, which had become a time of reflection and transformation for him. Take a moment to do an inventory of your life. Where is more space and silence needed? What good or okay things do you choose to fill your life with at the expense of what might be precious? Consider making a regular time each day this week to pause and to make space for what your soul needs and wants.

• 1 Kings 17:8-16. Elijah was unashamed to ask this stranger for what he needed. What does it feel like when you are in need, and what is it like for you to ask others for assistance? Take some time this week to pray with this text and ask the Lord how you might become more open to asking for what you need from God and others?"



• Psalm 125. This psalm was recited by pilgrims on their way to celebrate a festival in Jerusalem. As they approached the city, the sudden view of their sacred mountain was a welcome sign of peace after a long journey. What does peace, or lack of peace, look like in your life? How much of your perspective is oriented by the way you feel from moment to moment? What might it look like to join your feelings to the words of this psalm, and whom might you become? \*

## lectionary passages

Malachi 3:1-4; Philippians 1:3-11; Psalm 85:8-13; Luke 3:1-6



Praying with the Lectionary Texts: What is the message of peace in this text? What is the message of peace for you and for the world around you today? How are you encouraged, challenged or invited to respond?

## closing prayer (from psalm 125)

"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."



# week three



The Joy Vigil

Light the first three candles, including the third candle of Joy.  
Then still yourself for a moment of prayerful silence.



## week three advent passages

• Luke 2:8-15. Thomas Merton writes, “Do not look for rest in any pleasure, because you were not created for pleasure; you were created for joy.” Sometimes our lives are so full of relatively petty gratifications that we become less available for joy’s often surprising arrival. Reread the gospel passage above, inhabiting the perspective of the field-dwelling nomads to whom this announcement came. When was a moment in your life that led to an experience of profound joy? How is your life arranged to make deep joy more or less welcome? What might it look like this week, or in this season, to make room for the possibility of joy? \*



• Acts 8:26-38. The Holy Spirit is an often unpredictable presence in the book of Acts, frequently directing people in ways they would never have chosen on their own. What is the “desert road” on which you are traveling in this season? What set you on this journey, and who are your companions or unexpected fellow travelers on this road? What might it look like to become more open to risky opportunities under the influence of the Holy Spirit?

• Psalm 126. This is another prayer of God’s people reflecting on their return from exile and longing for the completed restoration of their land. What does joy look like, or not look like, in your life? What is the connection between tears and the kind of joy suggested by this psalm, and where do you make room for tears in your life? What would it be like to more fully “live in response to the abundance of God”?

## lectionary passages

Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

Praying with the Lectionary Texts: What is the message of joy in this text? What is the message of joy for you and for the world around you today? How are you encouraged, challenged or invited to respond? \*

## closing prayer (from psalm 51)

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Keep me not away from your presence, O Lord. Restore unto me the joy of your salvation, and renew a right spirit within me.”

# week four



The Vigil of Love

Light all candles, including the fourth candle, the candle of Love.

Then take a few moments of prayerful silence in the warm glow of the flames.



## week four advent passages

• Luke 1:26-38. Mary was most likely a very young person when she had this life-altering encounter, and this news might very well have felt unwelcome to most people. When has life, or maybe God, sent you a curveball that left you feeling perplexed like Mary in this story? In light of Mary's response at the conclusion of this week's reading, what might a posture of welcoming look like in this season of life? Take a moment to ask God for the grace to discern and welcome his invitations to you in the coming season.



• John 15:9-14. In this passage Jesus calls us to love one another as he loved us. When have you found it comes easier to love others? When has it been difficult? Where might you be invited to lay down your life for a friend? What joys or challenges might this kind of love present for you?



• Psalm 133. This psalm is a call for God's people to be united in their quest to rebuild after a time of crisis. Who are the people that have been placed in your life that you are called to love? What is enjoyable about showing love to these people, and which ones are hard to love? What opportunities do these joys and challenges present, and how might you embrace these opportunities to choose love?

## lectionary passages

Micah 5:2-5a; Psalm 80:1-7; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45(46-55)

Praying with the Lectionary Texts: What is the message of charity or love in this text? What is the message of charity or love for you and for the world around you today? How are you encouraged, challenged or invited to respond?

## closing prayer



"O Lord, send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts your gift of love, the true bond of peace and of all virtue. May this love abound to our friends and families, as well as to those who are hard to love. Grant this for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen."



# Jacob's Well Advent Events

## Argentine Christmas Tree and Store 11/17 - 12/8

Select an ornament from the Christmas tree and bring back the listed item, unwrapped, by December 8th.

**Watch for the Light**  
Tuesdays 12/3 & 12/10, 6:30 - 7:30p  
Join us for worship and guided prayer as we anticipate the coming of the Light of the World.

**Longest Night of the Year**  
Tuesday 12/17, 6:30 - 7:30p  
Come create space for reflection and lament through music, silence, prayer and candle lighting.

**Christmas Eve Services**  
Tuesday 12/24, 3:00p, 4:30p, 6:00p  
Celebrate the coming of Christ at a candlelit gathering.

View the Jacob's Well  
Family Advent Guide  
using this QR code.

