

Advent Devotional

✦ 2017 ✦

by Lynne Baab



Christmas AT BETHANY PRES

Introduction



Dear friends,

I remember in Mrs. Downs' third grade class at South Oceanside Elementary School, the mason jar with small air holes punched through the thin metal lid where a caterpillar had spun its cocoon. There was something about this waiting for the butterfly to emerge that was pleasing to us. And I think it was that we had full view of the culminating event. We didn't see what was going on inside the cocoon, but we knew something was coming and our attention had a clear focal point. I'm wondering if there is something in my eight year old experience to teach us about Advent.

I pray that this Advent devotional booklet will assist you in waiting. Can we keep what we're waiting for in full view? These weekly devotionals are geared to help us do exactly that.

If you are using this booklet for your own individual personal devotion - perhaps you live alone - allow it to point your eyes to what's going on in the mason jar and not the other distractions your life has in this season. Make space for God to bring you to the Book, to your knees, to the Christ child so that come Christmas dawn you'll have more to show for your waiting than regrets for cards not sent and the song Jolly Old Saint Nick ringing in your head.

If you live with family or friends, build a tradition of waiting with loved ones. Children in particular can grab onto ritual during this season. This booklet used weekly or daily can connect children and parents with our Sunday morning Advent Candle Lighting in worship each Sunday. You can connect with each other and build an

annual tradition of candles, scripture and carol singing. This creates space for that focused waiting on the real reason for the season.

What I'm saying is, "make Christmas special this year." Ritualize and regularize your space for waiting. Isaiah tells us "the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." Whatever the darkness of this Advent, let us wait in such a way so we can see this light too. Give the waiting focus in your house. And together let us all give our waiting a focus in our congregational worship this Advent.

Prepare the way of the Lord. Christ is coming. Wait with me, will you?

In the peace of Christ,

Pastor Doug Kelly
Bethany Presbyterian Church

Note: The liturgies in this devotional are based on having an advent wreath with five candles: four purple, one pink, and one white.

WEEK ONE

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Hope

— WEEK ONE —

Scripture readings and songs can be found in the back of the book

Say: Let us join together in our Advent liturgy.

Pray: Through our lives and by our prayers, may your kingdom come!

Read: Psalm 90

(Scripture readings can be found at the back of this booklet. If you are doing these devotions with others, consider reading the psalm responsively by having different people read different verses.)

Say: We light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ. This week, we light the first purple candle of Advent to remind us that Advent is a time of waiting.

Light First Candle

Sing: Light One Candle (verse 1)
Songs can be found at the end of this booklet.

Read: Week One Reflection. Ponder/discuss some or all of the questions.

Pray: Gracious God, send us your grace this Advent Season so that we can prepare for your coming. Touch our hearts with longing so that we can better love and serve you and each other. Fill us with the hope that we can be transformed by your Spirit and so help transform the world. Give us the peace of knowing that you came to share our human life and redeem us for the sake of love. We ask these things in the name of Jesus whose kingdom we seek.

(Space for prayers, silent or aloud)

Amen.

WEEK ONE REFLECTION

Advent is a time of waiting, and hope plays a significant role when we are waiting for something. The theme of the first week of Advent is hope, and Psalm 90 presents some lovely ideas that can help us wait on God with an attitude of hope and trust.

Psalm 90 is attributed to Moses. Spend some time pondering the pattern of Moses' life: born in Egypt to a Jewish family, sent down the river in a basket for safety, raised in a royal Egyptian household, driven into exile in the wilderness for many years because of a violent act he committed, sent by God back to Egypt, driven into the wilderness again to wander for 40 years with the people of God.

Psalm 90:1 says, "Lord, you have been our dwelling-place in all generations." If you had a tumultuous life like Moses did, living and wandering in so many places, what would it mean for you to know that God was your dwelling-place? What does it mean to you today that God is your dwelling-place?

In the various aspects of your life, in what ways would a sense of dwelling in God give you hope?

When and where do you find it easiest to know that God is your dwelling-place?
When and where do you find it easiest to receive hope from God?

When and where do you find it hardest and easiest to wait for God to act?

Additional reflection and discussion questions about Psalm 90:

Verses 3 to 6, and then later verse 12, focus on time from God’s perspective, noting that his time is not the same as ours. In what ways might God’s perspective on time change your focus when you are waiting and hoping for something?

Verse 14 is powerful and vivid, the kind of verse that someone might put on a poster or meme: “Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.” What helps you remember God’s steadfast love each morning? What helps you experience God’s steadfast love in such a way that you rejoice and feel glad?

The psalm closes with a verse about work (verse 17): “Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and prosper for us the work of our hands — O prosper the work of our hands!” If you prayed this verse for yourself, focusing on both paid and unpaid work, what would you be asking for? What would it look like for God to “prosper” the work of your hands?

WEEK TWO

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Peace

— WEEK TWO —

Say: Let us join together in our Advent liturgy.

Pray: Through our lives and by our prayers, may your kingdom come!

Read: Psalm 85

(If you are doing these devotions with others, consider reading the psalm responsively by having different people read different verses.)

Say: We light these candles as a sign of the coming light of Christ.
We re-light the purple first candle, the Waiting candle.
We light the purple second candle of Advent to remind us that Jesus will bring Peace to all the world.

Light Candles

Sing: Light One Candle (verses 1-2)

Read: Week Two Reflection. Ponder/discuss some or all of the questions.

Try: Sing “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

Pray: Lord God, today make me an instrument of your peace. Let my words and actions nourish those around me. Give me grace to love without limit. God, I pray for an end to war. Be with all of your children throughout the earth who live in places where there is war and violence. May your kingdom come.
(Space for prayers, silent or aloud)
Amen.

WEEK TWO REFLECTION

In God's economy, important characteristics or ideals often come in pairs or groups. On a Sunday in October, Ben Newton sang one of his amazing songs during the offertory. The song focused on freedom, and it declared in numerous vivid ways that freedom without God is another form of bondage. One of the verses went like this:

A tree without its roots isn't really free;
a fish without the sea, Lord, isn't really free.
An eagle without the sky to fly;
a seed without a place to die;
a soul without your hand to guide, Lord, isn't really free.

Freedom, Ben was arguing in his song, is coupled with relationship with God. Peace (the theme of the second week of Advent) is partnered with something else in Psalm 85.

In Psalm 85:8, the psalmist says that God will speak peace to his people. How does he speak it? "Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other" (verse 10).

The word "righteousness" has a range of meanings related to walking on the straight path, following God's commands, and being justified or acting justly. Spend some time pondering the connection between righteousness and peace. Do you think it would be accurate to say that peace without righteousness isn't really peace? If so, why? If not, why not?

Do you think steadfast love and faithfulness are also connected to peace? In what ways do you think peace is undergirded by steadfast love, faithfulness, and righteousness? If you could paraphrase the words to Ben's song to focus on peace, righteousness, love and faithfulness, what would you say?

Additional reflection and discussion questions about Psalm 85:

Verses 1, 4 and 6 use the words “restore” and “revive.” If you used those words in a prayer, what would you ask for?

Verses 7 and 10 talk about “steadfast love.” The psalm is full of actions of God that could be described as loving. List some of God’s actions mentioned in Psalm 85. Which actions seem closely connected to God’s steadfast love? To peace? Which of God’s actions described in the psalm means the most to you today? Why?

Verses 1, 9, 11 and 12 mention the land or the ground. In what ways is the land or the ground relevant when thinking about God’s love or God’s peace?

WEEK THREE

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Joy

— WEEK THREE —

Say: Let us join together in our Advent liturgy.

Pray: Through our lives and by our prayers, may your kingdom come!

Read: Psalm 126

(If you are doing these devotions with others, consider reading the psalm responsively by having different people read different verses.)

Say: We light these candles as a sign of the coming light of Christ.
We re-light the purple first candle, the Waiting candle.
We re-light the purple second candle, the Peace candle.
We light the pink third candle of Advent to remind us that Jesus will bring Joy to all the world.

Light Candles

Sing: Light One Candle (verses 1-3)

Read: Week Three Reflection. Ponder/discuss some or all of the questions.

Try: Sing “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”

Pray: Holy God, take our fear, blindness, and deafness and give us the opposite – strength, sight, and hearing. Help us to see your hand at work in our lives, and help us to rejoice when we see you. Enable us to hear your words of love, and nudge us to speak words of love to others. Fill our hearts with your song and help us to share that joy with the people in our lives in this holy season.

(Space for prayers, silent or aloud)

Amen.

WEEK THREE REFLECTION

For full understanding, many psalms require some knowledge of the history of Israel or the physical land of Israel. Psalm 126 requires a bit of both. Verse 1 refers to a time when “the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,” which most likely looks back to the time of Ezra, when the Jews were released from seventy years of captivity in Babylon and were able to return to Israel under the leadership of Ezra. This happened around 538 B.C.E.

Verse 4 refers to the Negeb, or Negev, the southern part of Israel which gets very little rain. The Negeb has many ravines which are dry almost all year. They become watercourses during those very rare times when it rains. The imagery of verse 4 – asking God to restore our fortunes like those watercourses – is particularly vivid if you understand how rare it is for ravines in the Negeb to become watercourses.

Joy is the theme of the third week of Advent, and Psalm 126 is full of joy. The joy expressed in the psalm draws on God’s miraculous actions in history – the return from exile – and God’s provision of something rare and refreshing – water in the desert.

Look back at your own life, the life of your family, and the lives of people you are close to. Where have you seen God’s miracles?

Where have you seen God provide something rare and refreshing?

Read Psalm 126 again, remembering those events.

Additional reflection and discussion questions about Psalm 126:

One way to read Psalm 126 is to view it as addressing the past (verses 1 to 3), present (verse 4) and future (verses five and six). Paraphrase the psalm to reflect the actions of God in your life and the lives of your loved ones, using specific events and prayer requests related to the past, present and future.

Psalm 126 is one of the “Psalms of Ascent”(Psalms 120-134). Jerusalem is at a high altitude compared to the rest of Israel, and when Jews went to Jerusalem for the various Jewish festivals, they went “up to Jerusalem” and sang the Psalms of Ascent as they climbed the hills. Imagine yourself as a Jewish pilgrim coming to Jerusalem for Passover, Yom Kippur or another Jewish festival. Imagine you are singing Psalm 126. Which parts of the psalm would mean the most to you as a pilgrim travelling to Jerusalem? Why?

Spend some time pondering verse four and the metaphor of an empty ravine becoming a watercourse, full of streams of water. Where are the empty ravines in your own life and the lives of people you love? What would a stream of water in that ravine look like? Write or say a prayer for water in empty ravines in your life or the lives of those you love.

WEEK FOUR

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Love

— WEEK FOUR —

Say: Let us join together in our Advent liturgy.

Pray: Through our lives and by our prayers, may your kingdom come!

Read: Psalm 89:1-4 and 19-26

(If you are doing these devotions with others, consider reading the psalm responsively by having different people read different verses.)

Say: We light these candles as a sign of the coming light of Christ.
We re-light the purple first candle, the Waiting candle.
We re-light the purple second candle, the Peace candle.
We re-light the pink third candle, the Joy candle.
We light the purple fourth candle of Advent to remind us that Jesus will bring Love to all the world.

Light Candles

Sing: Light One Candle (verse 4)

Read: Week Four Reflection. Ponder/discuss some or all of the questions.

Try: Sing a favorite Christmas carol or a song from the end of this booklet

Pray: Shepherd of Israel, may Jesus, Emmanuel and son of Mary,
be more than just a dream in our hearts.
With the apostles, prophets, and saints, save us, restore us,
and lead us in the way of grace and peace,
that we may bear your promise into the world.
(Space for prayers, silent or aloud)
Amen.

WEEK FOUR REFLECTION

King David was extremely important to the people of Israel. God chose David to be king through the beloved prophet Samuel. He was an unexpected king as a younger son and a shepherd, but he had shown great bravery in defeating Goliath. Later as king he showed more courage by conquering a great deal of land and expanding the kingdom of Israel.

He sinned with Bathsheba and Uriah but repented when confronted by the prophet Nathan. God calls him “a man after my own heart” (Acts 13:22 quoting 1 Samuel 13:14).

Psalm 89 describes God’s presence with David and with David’s descendants, and one aspect of God’s presence is God’s steadfast love. Why is this a bit unexpected when David is a warrior king?

List all the actions promised to David in Psalm 89 as a sign of God’s presence.

In what ways are those actions signs of God’s steadfast love?

Love is the theme for the fourth week of Advent, so take some time to list God’s loving actions in your life and the lives of those you love.

Imagine you are writing a psalm starting with the words from Psalm 89:1: “I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, for ever.” What would you put in the psalm?

Additional reflection and discussion questions about Psalm 89:1-4 and 19-26:

Verses 1, 2, and 24 use the term “steadfast love.” This is one way to translate the Hebrew word *hesed* (or *chesed*), which is used frequently in the Old Testament to refer to God. The word can also be translated loving kindness, kindness or love. Verses 2 and 24 link faithfulness and steadfast love. What do you think are the connections between these two characteristics of God? Can one exist without the other?

Psalm 89:26 says that David will cry to out to God with these words: “You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation!” In what ways are these words an appropriate response to the list of things God has promised to do for David? If you cried out to God with an exclamation like that, what three attributes of God would you choose? “You are my . . .”

Because of the genealogy at the beginning of Matthew we know Jesus was descended from David through his earthly father, Joseph. Read the words from Psalm 89 again, imagining that they apply to Jesus. Do all the words of the psalm work when applied to Jesus? Why or why not?

*Christmas
Day*

— CHRISTMAS DAY —

Say: Let us join together in our Christmas liturgy.

Pray: Through our lives and by our prayers, may your kingdom come!

Read: Psalm 96

(If you are doing these devotions with others, consider reading the psalm responsively by having different people read different verses.)

Say: We light these candles as a sign of the coming light of Christ.
We re-light the purple first candle, the Waiting candle.
We re-light the purple second candle, the Peace candle.
We re-light the pink third candle, the Joy candle.
We re-light the purple fourth candle, the Love candle.
We light the white Christ candle to remind us that Jesus is the Light of the world and today we celebrate his birth.

Light Candles

Sing: Light One Candle

Read: Christmas Day Reflection. Ponder/discuss some or all of the questions.

Try: Sing a favorite Christmas carol

Pray: God, we thank you that you sent Jesus to earth to bring salvation to all people. Thank you for allowing us to share in the Light with people from all around the globe. Give us grateful hearts for all you have done. Give us generous hearts to share your love with others.

(Space for prayers, silent or aloud)

Amen.

CHRISTMAS DAY REFLECTION

God's concern for all the nations and peoples of the earth is visible throughout the Bible. In Isaiah 49:6, the Lord speaks to his servant, the Messiah: "I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."

Throughout the New Testament, we see a picture of Jesus bringing redemption to all peoples on earth. The Gospel of John describes Jesus like this: "God so loved the world that he gave his only son" (John 3:16). Jesus is the "Light of the World" (John 8:12), not just the light of the nation of Israel or of Christians who will follow the teachings of the apostles.

In Psalm 96, how many references to the nations and the peoples of the earth can you find? What is the psalmist calling those nations and peoples to do? List as many actions as you can from the psalm.

What is the connection between Jesus' birth and the nations/earth? In what ways will Jesus' birth have an impact beyond Israel?

Additional reflection and discussion questions about Psalm 96:

Verse 1 mentions singing a new song. When you think of the whole earth singing a new song on Christmas Day, what do you think might be the words to that song? Imagine the trees singing on Christmas Day (verse 12). What would their song sound like? What words would they sing?

If you could write a new song for 2018 for your own life and the life of your family, what would be the main themes?

In the midst of this psalm of joy and praise, verse 10 talks about God's judgment:

"Say among the nations, 'The Lord is king!

The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.

He will judge the peoples with equity.'"

Then also at the end of the psalm, the theme of God's judgment reappears. Do you view God's judgment as good news in any way?

Why or why not?

What verse in Psalm 96 do you think is most appropriate for Christmas Day?

ADVENT SCRIPTURES

FROM THE NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION



WEEK 1 — PSALM 90

A Prayer of Moses, the man of God.

1 Lord, you have been our dwelling-place
in all generations.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

3 You turn us back to dust,
and say, 'Turn back, you mortals.'

4 For a thousand years in your sight
are like yesterday when it is past,
or like a watch in the night.

5 You sweep them away; they are like a dream,
like grass that is renewed in the morning;

6 in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;
in the evening it fades and withers.

7 For we are consumed by your anger;
by your wrath we are overwhelmed.

8 You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

9 For all our days pass away under your wrath;
our years come to an end like a sigh.

10 The days of our life are seventy years,
or perhaps eighty, if we are strong;
even then their span is only toil and trouble;
they are soon gone, and we fly away.

11 Who considers the power of your anger?
Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due to you.

12 So teach us to count our days
that we may gain a wise heart.
13 Turn, O Lord! How long?
Have compassion on your servants!
14 Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,
so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
15 Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,
and for as many years as we have seen evil.
16 Let your work be manifest to your servants,
and your glorious power to their children.
17 Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us,
and prosper for us the work of our hands—
O prosper the work of our hands!

WEEK 2 — PSALM 85

To the leader. Of the Korahites. A Psalm.

1 Lord, you were favourable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
2 You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you pardoned all their sin.
Selah
3 You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from your hot anger.
4 Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation towards us.
5 Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?
6 Will you not revive us again,
so that your people may rejoice in you?
7 Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.
8 Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,

for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.
9 Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.
10 Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
11 Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
12 The Lord will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
13 Righteousness will go before him,
and will make a path for his steps.

WEEK 3 — ISAIAH 126

A Song of Ascents.

1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.
2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
'The Lord has done great things for them.'
3 The Lord has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.
4 Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.
5 May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.
6 Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.

WEEK 4 — PSALM 89:1-4 AND 19-26

A Maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite.

1 I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, for ever;
with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

2 I declare that your steadfast love is established for ever;
your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

3 You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to my servant David:

4 'I will establish your descendants for ever,
and build your throne for all generations.'"

Selah

19 Then you spoke in a vision to your faithful one, and said:

"I have set the crown on one who is mighty,
I have exalted one chosen from the people.

20 I have found my servant David;
with my holy oil I have anointed him;

21 my hand shall always remain with him;
my arm also shall strengthen him.

22 The enemy shall not outwit him,
the wicked shall not humble him.

23 I will crush his foes before him
and strike down those who hate him.

24 My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him;
and in my name his horn shall be exalted.

25 I will set his hand on the sea
and his right hand on the rivers.

26 He shall cry to me, 'You are my Father,
my God, and the Rock of my salvation!'"

CHRISTMAS DAY – PSALM 96

- 1 O sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
- 2 Sing to the Lord, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.
- 3 Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvellous works among all the peoples.
- 4 For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be revered above all gods.
- 5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.
- 6 Honour and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.
- 7 Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
- 8 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts.
- 9 Worship the Lord in holy splendour;
tremble before him, all the earth.
- 10 Say among the nations, "The Lord is king!
The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.
He will judge the peoples with equity."
- 11 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
- 12 let the field exult, and everything in it.
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy
- 13 before the Lord; for he is coming,
for he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with his truth.

SONGS

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Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

85



1 Light one can - dle to watch for Mes - si - ah: let the
 2 Light two can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah: let the
 3 Light three can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah: let the
 4 Light four can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah: let the



light ban - ish dark - ness. He shall bring sal -
 light ban - ish dark - ness. He shall feed the
 light ban - ish dark - ness. Lift your heads and
 light ban - ish dark - ness. He is com - ing;



va - tion to Is - rael, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
 flock like a shep - herd, gent - ly lead them home - ward.
 lift high the gate - way for the King of glo - ry.
 tell the glad ti - dings. Let your lights be shin - ing.

This text works best when used incrementally during the four weeks of Advent. It underscores the "waiting" theme of the season and concludes appropriately with reference to Matthew 25:1-13. The tune name meaning "deep in the forest" comes from the opening of a Yiddish love song.

Wait for the Lord

(Psalm 27)

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

The first system of music consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 2/2. It contains a melody of chords and single notes. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, providing a harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics "Wait for the Lord, whose day is near." are written below the staves.

Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

The second system of music also consists of two staves in the same key signature and time signature. The top staff continues the melody, and the bottom staff provides the accompaniment. The lyrics "Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!" are written below the staves.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som
 2 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, who or - derest
 3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy
 4 O come, thou Root of Jes - se, free thine own from



cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile
 all things might - i - ly: to us the path of knowl - edge
 tribes on Si - nai's height in an - cient times didst give the
 Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple



here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 show; and teach us in her ways to go. Re-joice! Re-joice!
 law in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.
 save and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

- 5 O come, thou Key of David, come,
 and open wide our heavenly home;
 make safe the way that leads on high,
 and close the path to misery.
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
 shall come to thee, O Israel.
- 6 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.
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
 shall come to thee, O Israel.
- 7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
 all peoples in one heart and mind;
 bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
 fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
 shall come to thee, O Israel.

One stanza of this paraphrase of the great O Antiphons may be sung on each of the last days of Advent as follows:

Dec. 17: O Wisdom (2)

Dec. 20: O Key of David (5)

Dec. 23: O Emmanuel (1)

Dec. 18: O Lord of might (3)

Dec. 21: O Dayspring (6)

Dec. 19: O Root of Jesse (4)

Dec. 22: O Desire of Nations (7)

These titles of the coming Christ appeared in daily Vesper antiphons sung during the week before Christmas; their roots date at least to the reign of Charlemagne. Both text and tune are the fruit of 19th-century efforts to reclaim Christian treasures from pre-Reformation sources.

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

1 Come, thou long - ex - spect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and yet a king,

from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.

Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art;
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;

dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

— About the Author —



This year's devotional was written by Lynne Baab, who edited the liturgies and wrote the reflections.

Lynne Baab was associate pastor at Bethany Presbyterian Church from 1997 to 2004. She and her husband, Dave, recently returned to Seattle after ten years in New Zealand, where Lynne taught pastoral theology. Lynne is the author of many books and Bible study guides. Learn about her books and read her weekly blog posts at lynnebaab.com.



Bethany Presbyterian Church

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