

DECEMBER 22, 2019
FOURTH SUNDAY
OF ADVENT



Advent is the season of love.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 1:18-25	God is with us
Monday	Isaiah 7:10-16	A son named Immanuel
Tuesday	Luke 2:1-20	The birth of Jesus
Wednesday	John 1:1-14	The Word became flesh
Thursday	Isaiah 9:2-7	A child is born
Friday	Romans 1:1-17	A salutation
Saturday	Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19	Israel's restoration
Sunday	Matthew 2:13-23	The escape to Egypt

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” **Matthew 1:23 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty and everlasting God, may the birth of Jesus remind us of your promise of salvation and lead us to trust in you and to serve and love others with thankful hearts. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, may this food give strength to our bodies and faith, hope, and love to our souls. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ fill you with grace and peace. (Romans 1:7)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

Light One Candle



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- How would you describe love?
- How has someone shown love to you?
- How does the birth of Jesus show the love of God for all the world?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Romans 1:1-7.

The birth of Jesus is not about the sweet presence of a smiling baby. It is about the work of God to save the world by entering our experience and being with us (Matthew 1:23). Ours is the God who promised this beforehand through the prophets (Romans 1:2), who has come in the flesh in the line of King David (v. 3), who rose from the dead and is recognized as the Son of God (v. 4). We are the beloved of God and named holy (v. 7). With the birth of Jesus comes the fulfillment of God's activity to change the world from darkness and despair to a heralding of good news for all the world. It includes a divine assignment to reach all people with the love of God. That is what Advent, Christmas, and the Christian faith is all about. How is this kind of love more of an action than a feeling?

Pray: **Dear God, we thank you for entering our world and our lives with hope and love. Help us to love the world you love in the name of Jesus, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

“God with us” (Matthew 1:23b) became a reality when a baby, Jesus, was born. The prophet Isaiah told of the Lord sending a sign, a child (Isaiah 7:14). God's saving work came to us through the birth of a child. Around the world there are many organizations and hospitals who help children in need of healthcare and food. Think of ways you can help children in need to know that God is with them through your support and donations.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

This week we light four candles on the Advent wreath. They are the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Emmanuel means God is with us. God showed love for us by sending Jesus to be with us. During this Advent season we pray for the hope, peace, joy, and love of God through Jesus Christ. *Say:* This is the fourth week of Advent. Advent means “coming.” We are waiting and watching for the coming of Christ. Let us light the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. [Light four candles] *Read:* “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us” (Matthew 1:13).

Respond: Let us walk in the light of Christ that gives us love.

Pray: **Lord Jesus Christ, we await your coming with hope, peace, joy, and love. May we see with the eyes of faith the work of your kingdom in our lives and world. Amen**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org