



Advent 2022 Devotional

A worship study guide for individuals, groups, & families

West End Presbyterian Church



The celebration of the season of Advent, beginning on the fourth Sunday before Christmas day, dates back to the 4th century AD. It's a time that focuses our attention on Christ's first coming as well as His second coming when He will return to redeem His creation and rule with all power and authority. We are to be reminded that we do not know the day or the hour of Christ's return, and we are filled with both a sense of joyful expectation and humble reverence, with our spiritual focus being on lives of prayer and preparation. The church has used the season of Advent (which means "coming" or "arrival") to focus and reflect on the particular themes of the final judgment of the world, John the Baptist's preparation for the ministry of Christ, and the annunciation to Mary that she would be the mother of the Savior of the world.

This booklet is intended as a guide for devotional reading for individuals and groups or family worship during the Advent season. For each week of Advent, there are Scripture readings, prayers of confession, hymns, and reflections on God made Man.

For this year, the reflections focus on the call to "wake up" and look to Jesus, waiting eagerly for His return. May you be amazed at the grace of God in the truth that God is with us.

Compiled by Becca Wethered

*West End Presbyterian Church
9008 Quioccasin Road
Richmond, VA 23229
804.741.6562
www.wepc.org*



Week of November 27th Stay Awake

READ: Mark 13:32-37

³²“But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. ³⁵Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning— ³⁶lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

REFLECT

“The Christian’s calling is to watch and to endure.” – Donald English

- Have you ever fallen asleep when you were supposed to be preparing for something (studying for a test, cleaning the house, working on a project)? What did it feel like when you woke up?
- In vv. 34-37, Jesus calls His disciples to stay awake like servants waiting for their master’s return. He seems to know that they might get distracted while they wait. **What in your life can distract you from fixing your eyes on Jesus?**

(Remember, these distractions usually come in the form of both good & bad things)

- During the season of Advent, we celebrate the birth of Jesus our Savior and **we wait expectantly for His second coming**, which Jesus is preparing His disciples for in this passage. He is teaching His disciples (and us!) throughout [Mark 13](#) that faith in Christ will bring hardship, but there is hope. This hope is through the Word, who will not pass away, even amidst grief or suffering. So our hope and expectation must rest in Jesus. **What does it look like to wait expectantly?**

PRACTICE

This coming week...

- Notice the moments when you are distracted and Jesus seems far away this week. What drew you to that distraction? **Is it something that has become more important to you (i.e., a heart-idol) than Jesus?** Ask the Holy Spirit to help you repent and believe.
- As you encounter pain or difficulty this week, what is it like to consider that **Christ is at work in your present suffering**, strengthening you and bringing glory to Himself through you? Share with a family member or friend.

PRAY

Lord, we have not kept watch for you.
We have occupied ourselves with our own concerns.
We have not waited to find your will for us.
We have not noticed the needs of the people around us.
We have not acknowledged the love that has been shown to us.
Forgive us for our lack of watchfulness.
Help us to wait to know your will.
Help us to look out for the needs of others.
Help us to work and watch for your coming. Amen.

SING: Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

1. Come, thou long - ex - pec - ted Je - sus, born to set thy
2. Born thy peo - ple to de - li - ver, born a child and

peo - ple free; from our fears and sins re - lease us,
yet a King, born to reign in us for - e - ver,

let us find our rest in thee. Is - rael's strength and con - so -
now thy gra - cious king - dom bring. By thine own e - ter - nal

la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art; dear de - sire of
spi - rit rule in all our hearts a - lone; by thine all suf -

ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
fi - cient me - rit, raise us to thy glo - rious throne.



Week of December 4th The Hour is at Hand

READ: Romans 13:11-14

¹¹Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”

REFLECT

“O God, make us feel the solemn weight of those eternal things in which we believe. You have saved us, make us awake to feel from what You have saved us, and by Whom You have saved us, and to what you have saved us, and what the privileges are which belong to us now that we are saved...it is high time that we awake out of sleep.”

—Charles Spurgeon

- Have you ever talked or walked in your sleep? How did you feel when you were told you did these things while sleeping? Did you feel in control of your actions?
- The apostle Paul says in v. 12 that because the day of salvation is at hand, the early Christians are called to **“cast off works of darkness and put on the armor of light”**.

What might it look like to put on the armor of light? (see [Ephesians 6:10-18](#))

- Jesus is the Light of the world, and He promises life to everyone who follows Him ([John 8:12](#)). Following Him means that **we walk as people who live in the light, and not the darkness; people who are awake, and not sleeping**. When are you tempted to cling to works of darkness, to stay asleep (when you’re feeling weak, discouraged, holding onto idols in your heart)? Jesus loves you, forgives you, and invites you cry out to Him for help to put on His armor of light.

PRACTICE

This coming week...

- Notice moments you feel like you’re “going through the motions” this week. In these moments, do you feel you are “awake” (aware, noticing) to the Holy Spirit working in you or in others around you? Or **are there other things dimming your view?** Ask Jesus for His grace to see clearly.
- Consider a ‘work of darkness’ that you are tempted to hold onto this week (fear, shame, anger, unbelief, etc.) Why is it more appealing than the light? **What is it like to ask Jesus to cast off the darkness and shine His light on your heart?** Share with a family member or friend.

PRAY

Almighty God,
 you who shaped out of nothing all that is,
 forgive us for returning empty-handed.
 You who called forth light,
 forgive our preference for the dark!
 You who sent John to be a voice crying,
 forgive our unwillingness to say anything at all!
 Create in us clean hearts, O God,
 and renew a right spirit within us.
 Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

SING: Come Light Our Hearts

E A

For You, O Lord, our souls in still - ness wait. For

5 E A E

You, O Lord, our souls in still - ness wait. Tru - ly our hope is in You,

3rd time to Coda \oplus VERSE

10 B E

tru - ly our hope is in You. 1. O Lord of life, our on - ly hope, Your ra - diance
 2. O joy a - bove all oth - er loves, in You we

15 A B

shines on all who look to You in the dark. Em - man - u - el
 find more than e - nough. We come as we are; O heal and re -

18 E D.C. al Coda

come, come light our hearts. come light our hearts. For



Week of December 11th Prepare the Way of the Lord

READ: Mark 1:1-3

¹The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, ³the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

REFLECT

"How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives." –Annie Dillard

- Think of a time when you had an important message to deliver. Why was it important (was it the message, the audience, the timing)?
- The gospel writer Mark demonstrates that **God has been preparing the way of the Messiah from the Old Testament prophecies until now.**
- In this prophecy, Mark is referring to John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin, who is called to prepare the people for Jesus as the anointed One. **What does it say about God that He has patiently been preparing His people for the coming Savior all this time?**
- Why do you think God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of the Lord? What does God know about His people?
- As we look to the second coming of Jesus to restore all things, how are we called as His people to prepare?

- What does it look like to proclaim who He is and what He has done to the world in your life?

PRACTICE

This coming week...

- Consider ways your heart might need preparing to the good news of Jesus too (*are you feeling hardened by pride or anger towards another? despairing because of suffering? discouraged seeing your weakness exposed?*) Ask Jesus for His bountiful grace.
- Take a risk to **share the good news of who Jesus is and what He has done with someone this week.** What did it feel like to share this message?

PRAY

Merciful God,
always with us, always coming;
We confess that we do not know
how to prepare for your Advent.
We have forgotten how to hope in miracles; we have
ignored the promise of your kingdom; we get
distracted by all the busyness of this season.
Forgive us, God.
Grant us the wonder of the shepherds,
the courage of the Magi, and the patient faith of
Mary and Joseph, that we may find the good news of
a child born for us.
Now, in the quiet of our hearts,
we ask you to make us ready for his coming. Amen.

SING: O Come, O Come Emmanuel

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el,
2. O come, Thou Wis - dom from on high, Who or - derest all things might - i - ly;
3. O come, Thou Rod of Jes - se, free Thine own from Sa - tan's ty - ran - ny;
4. O come, Thou Day - spring, come and cheer Our spi - rits by Thine ad - vent here;
5. O come, Thou Key of Da - vid, come, And o - pen wide our hea - v'nly home;

That mourns in lone - ly e - - xile here Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
To us the path of know - ledge show, And teach us in her ways to go.
From depths of hell Thy peo - - ple save, And give them vic - t'ry ov'r the grave.
Dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night, And death's dark sha - dows put to flight.
Make safe the way that leads on high, And close the path to mi - - ser - y.

Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - - u - el shall come to thee, O I - - sra - el.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The lyrics are placed between the staves. The first system contains five verses. The second system contains the main body of the hymn. The third system contains the final line of the hymn. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords that support the vocal melody.

Latin Hymn (12th century), trans. John Mason Neale (1851); Tune: VENI EMMANUEL (13th century)

Listen to our [WEPC Advent Playlist](#) to sing along.



Week of December 18th The Glory of the Lord Shall Be Revealed

READ: Isaiah 40:3-5

³A voice cries: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.’”

REFLECT

“The LORD is a missionary God; what he does for his own, he does not for their sake alone, but that all may come to know him.”

–J.A. Motyer

- Have you ever had to deep clean or fix up a space in preparation for a person or event coming (your house, your garage, etc.)? What was the process like? Were you able to get everything perfectly clean? Were there still lingering things that you could not fix? How did that feel?
- To “prepare” means to remove every obstacle or obstruction (see [Isaiah 57:14](#)). The prophet Isaiah proclaims in v. 4 that “every mountain will be made low and the uneven ground shall become level” as part of this preparation.

What does this passage reveal about who God is? What does it say about His people?

- Who are the “all flesh” that will see God’s glory together? (See [Matthew 2:1-11](#) & [Acts 28:28](#)).
- God’s glory is shown through His acts of salvation and judgment in Jesus Christ and the restoration of this broken world. Because of His love for us, Jesus died and rose again, taking our sins to the cross and counting us as innocent before God. **His work on the cross not only restores our broken relationship with the Father, but promises final restoration of all that is broken in this world.** What is it like to consider God’s great love for you today?

PRACTICE

This coming week...

- **What obstacles might be in the way of you following Jesus’ path to life?** Repent and ask Jesus to prepare your heart, tearing down any idols and strengthening your trust in Him.
- **Is there a way you see God at work in restoring brokenness in your life?** In those around you? Is there something you are still waiting for God to fix or restore? How does the waiting feel? Share with a family member or friend.

PRAY

from the Book of Common Prayer

Merciful God, who sent Your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

SING: Creator of the Stars of Night

Chords: D^b A^b/C B^bm A^b G^b D^b/F

Cre a tor of the stars of night Thy peo ple's e ver
When this old world drew on toward night You came but not in

7 B^bm A^b D^b A^b/C B^bm A^b G^b

las ting light O Christ re deem er of us all we pray You
splen dor bright not as a mon arch but a child of Ma ry

14 D^b/F B^bm A^b G^b B^bm A^b E^bm D^b
First time only

hear us when we call
blame less mo ther mild

23 A^b E^bm D^b A^b E^bm D^b A^b

Come oh come come oh come

32 E^bm D^b A^b G^b B^bm A^b/C

come oh come to us

Advent & Christmas

at West End Presbyterian Church

Advent Worship Service:
Every Longing Heart
11.27.2022 7PM

Neighborhood Caroling
12.15.2022 6PM

Worship on Christmas Eve
12.24.2022
4PM Family Service
7PM Lessons & Carols

Worship on Christmas Day
12.25.2022 10:30AM ONLY

