

DECEMBER 3, 2023
FIRST SUNDAY
OF ADVENT



Advent is a season of hope.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

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| Sunday | Mark 13:24-37 | When the Son of Man appears |
| Monday | Isaiah 64:1-9 | A communal prayer for help |
| Tuesday | 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 | God is faithful |
| Wednesday | 1 Peter 1:13-16 | A call to holy living |
| Thursday | Psalms 147:7-11 | Praise for God's care |
| Friday | 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 | The Thessalonians' faith |
| Saturday | Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19 | Prayer for Israel's restoration |
| Sunday | Mark 1:1-8 | The beginning of the good news |

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Restore us. O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved. Psalm 80:19 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

God of awesome power, give us hearts filled with hope and gladness as we prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of Man. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for food and drink that gives us strength for the day and hope for the future through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord's face shine on you with hope through Christ Jesus.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

Come Now, O Prince of Peace



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:

- As you look to the future, what are some of your hopes?
- God came to us in the form of baby Jesus. How did this bring us hope?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Isaiah 64:1-9.

Advent is a season of hope, that is, waiting and longing for what is not yet present. It is more than a season; it is a way of life for God's people. This is dramatically seen in Isaiah 64. We want the sense of awe to witness the presence of God that descends from the heavens above. It is as grand as mountains quaking and nations trembling. The divide is vast that separates us from the righteousness and power of God because of our brokenness, our sin. Our hope is not in our goodness but in the everlasting love of God who remembers us like a parent caring for a child. In Jesus we see our hope in God realized. As our God descends in the form of a babe, we hope and believe God has not forgotten us or left us to our own self-destructive ways. We are left in awe at the love and goodness of God that we not only see in Bethlehem, but also at the end of time when we witness "the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory" (Mark 13:26). Hope with a sense of awe is healthy for daily life and for our faith in God in Christ.

Discuss: What do you hope for during this Advent season as we await Christ's coming?

Pray: **Almighty God, your glory is seen in all that you do; give us eyes to see the hope we are given through the coming of Jesus as a baby and as the Son of Man at the end of time. Amen.**

SERVICE



Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how can you encourage someone to live with hope in the future?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



Make an Advent wreath and decorate it with evergreens. Place four candles on the wreath. Place the wreath on a counter or table where you can gather each week during Advent to light the candles. The scripture readings during Advent point to Jesus. This week, we light one candle, the candle of hope. Think or talk about what hope you imagine when you read Psalm 80:3: "Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved." Light the first candle of hope and say: "**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.**" (John 1:5)



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