

The Common Rule

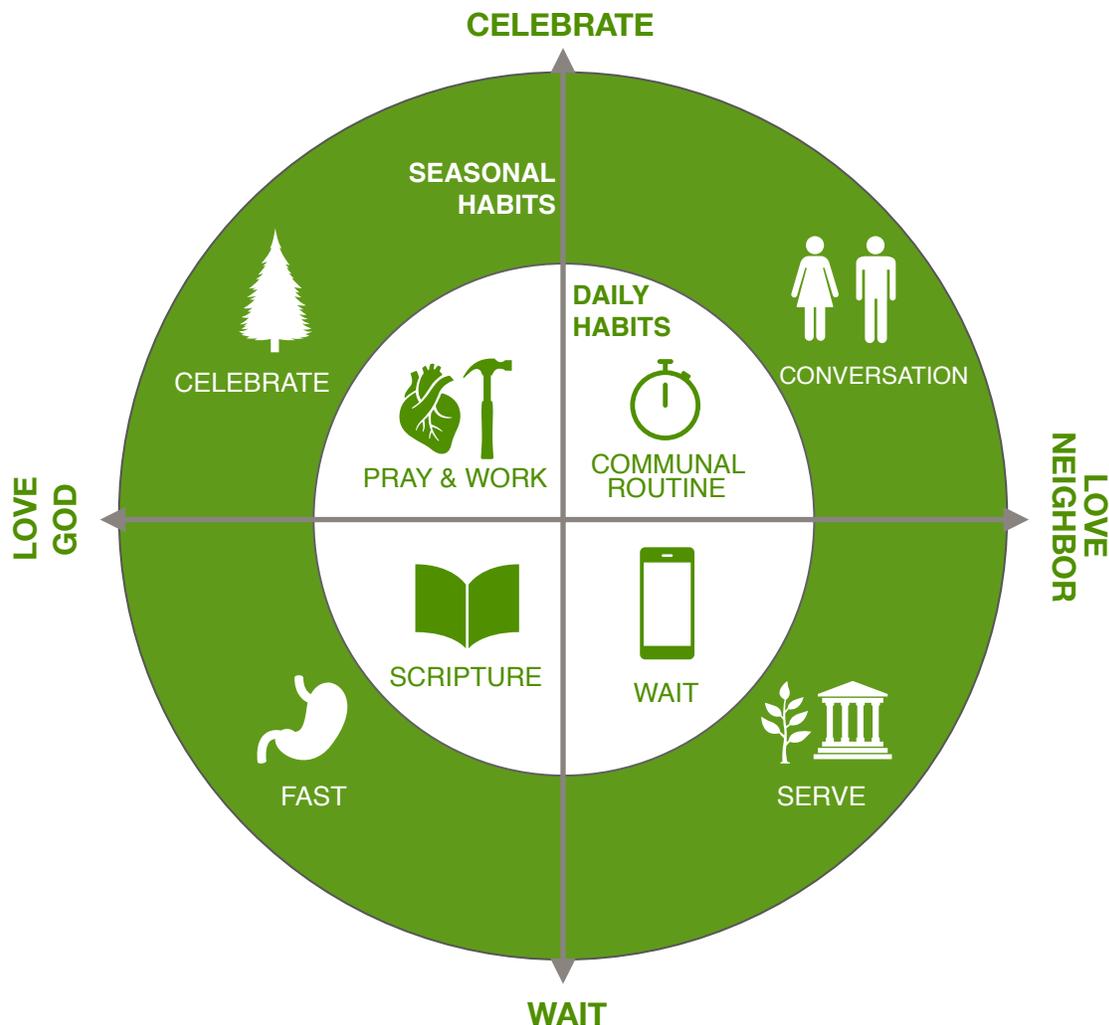
— habits of light for a world of darkness —



www.thecommonrule.org

THE COMMON RULE ADVENT EDITION is a set of daily & seasonal habits designed to help ordinary people live missional lives of love for God and neighbor. The Advent Edition also contains a daily **Prayer & Reading Plan** which you can find below.

Rooted in the idea that our most ordinary of habits are forming our souls in the most extraordinary of ways, The Common Rule invites you to a new set of habits. Practicing the Advent Edition will help us celebrate that the King has come and wait for him to come again.



How to try The Common Rule for Advent:

- 1 ADMIT CHRISTMAS IS CRAZY**
Our rituals are bizarre, we need new ones
- 2 INVITE SOME FRIENDS**
Communal habits are formational habits
- 3 SUBSCRIBE TO THE EMAIL LIST**
Visit www.thecommonrule.org to sign up.
- 4 CELEBRATE & WAIT**
Practice a new kind of Advent

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DAILY HABITS

#1 KNEELING PRAYER 3X A DAY:

Ora et labora, or “work and pray” is the motto of the Benedictine monks. Regular, carefully placed prayer is one of the keystone habits of spiritual formation. Interspersing work with prayer is the reminder that *Laborare est Orare* - *To work is to pray*. Here, we are trying to punctuate our day with prayer so that our day is framed by something besides rush and busyness. Below is the **Prayer and Reading Plan** that includes a daily waking, midday and bedtime prayer.

#3 SCRIPTURE BEFORE PHONE:

Refusing to check our phones until after we read a passage of scripture means that we refuse the question “*What do I need to do today?*” and ask different ones: “*Who am I, and who am I becoming?*” “*What is this world, and what is it becoming?*” The Advent Edition provides a short scripture reading to go through for five minutes - *before* you take out your phone - so you begin your day in celebrating the incarnation of the King and cultivating the longing that He would come again. I suggest printing out the **Prayer and Reading Plan** below and keep it beside your bed.

#1 THROW A HUGE PARTY:

The incarnation is unfathomably magical. That God became man in order to redeem all things deserves a party, a big one. Team up with others doing The Common Rule and pull out all the stops. Celebrate late into the night. Eat and drink with all the joy of the kingdom. If you want to be more liturgical and intentional with you party, download the Carols & Cocktails party template from the [website](#).

#3 ONE FAST FOR 24 HOURS:

Celebration is right, but the holidays are often filled with excess and we become greedy people. Fasting from something not only reminds us that we need Jesus like we need food, it also sets us into a physical and mental state of unique longing. We learn to wait. We remember that there are many who suffer. To fast is to be in solidarity with those who suffer, it is to remember that there is much darkness, it is to long for the King to come again and make all things new. For tips and versions of fasts, go to the [website](#).

#2 COMMUNAL ROUTINE:

The incarnation has made the ordinary extraordinary. It has brought meaning to the meaningless. Living lives that bear witness to the incarnation means to bring the dull to life. Practice that by starting a small new routine that involves someone else - maybe its a morning walk with your spouse, cafeteria meet up with a coworker, an evening advent reading with your children or even just going to the same coffee place every morning and saying hi to the same barista. Whatever it is, make it communal and make it regular. Make it sacred by doing it intentionally, day after day. See the website for ideas on different routines for all phases of life.

#4 NO PHONE WHILE WAITING:

Life often asks us to wait. In traffic and elevators, at stoplights and grocery lines. But we don't know how to wait. We don't like to wait. So we fill the time with useless, distracted glances at our phones. Through the season of Advent, do not touch your phone while waiting. Learn to wait. Look around you, look at all the people with their stories and their lives just as real, as beautiful, as painful as yours. See them. Be present. Talk to them. Learn to wait, learn to long, learn to remember that all of creation yearns for the King to return.

#2 LONG CONVERSATION:

We long to say what we mean. We long to know and be known. Sometime during Advent, schedule one evening with one or two close friends. Ideally, sit around a fire with drinks and food. Talk for a long time, and then talk longer. Say what you've been meaning to say. Use the The Advent Edition questions on the website if you need some good questions to kick things off.

#4 SPEND ONE DAY SERVING:

We devote hours upon hours of our days during the holidays to spending money, to trying to discover what we really “want” this year. We create desires that can't be filled, we march towards the inevitable depression of the last gift being opened and seeing that we still aren't satisfied. See that the world already wants - there is so much need. Along with friends also practicing The Common Rule with you, spend one day in service - cultivating an awareness that the world wants a Savior, it longs for the King.



SEASONAL HABITS

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FAQs:

WHAT ARE THE HABITS? The Common Rule habits for Advent are summarized in visual form on the previous page, but you can find much more detail for each habit on the website at www.thecommonrule.org.

WHY ADVENT? Advent is the season where the church celebrates the King who has come, and waits for the King that is coming again. The holiday season is filled with rituals that seem to sparkle on the outside, but underneath aren't celebrating anything but consumerism. Further, they are often filled with such busyness that we end up spending the season cultivating perpetual rush rather than patient longing. We need a new set of rituals for Advent, and that is exactly what The Common Rule - Advent Edition! has in mind.

WHEN IS ADVENT? Advent starts on December 3, 2017 and lasts for four weeks.

WHY HABITS? Habits - even our most mundane ones - are matters of worship, and thus powerfully formational. This is even more true during holidays. Many of our rituals & customs are rooted in the worship of consumerism and greed while thinly cloaked in Christian words. The Common Rule - Advent Edition! is way to resist the how these customs form us, and embrace the way the incarnation of Christ the King forms us.

ISN'T THIS LEGALISTIC? No! Legalism is the misguided idea that doing the right things will earn us God's love. We reject it. The incarnation is the astounding truth that though we were lost God came to us anyway. Practicing a new set of habits is not going to earn you His love - you already have it! It is a response to that love. It is an expression of thanks, hope, and a desire to practice the love that the incarnation has announced.

Advent Starts

DECEMBER

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Prayer & Reading Plan

SCRIPTURE BEFORE PHONE READINGS

First Week of Advent | Dec. 3-9

Sunday	John 1:1-9
Monday	Matthew 4:14-16
Tuesday	Isaiah 60:1-3
Wednesday	John 3:16-21
Thursday	Ephesians 5:6-14
Friday	Isaiah 60:19-22
Saturday	"Oh Realm of Light"

Third Week of Advent | Dec. 17-23

Sunday	Matthew 1:18-23
Monday	Psalms 27:1-4
Tuesday	Luke 2:25-33
Wednesday	Eph. 2:13 & Lev. 26:13
Thursday	Zephaniah 3:14-17
Friday	Revelation 21:1-5
Saturday	"O Holy Night"

Second Week of Advent | Dec. 10-16

Sunday	Psalms 119:105-106
Monday	Mark 1:1-3
Tuesday	Luke 15:6, 9 & 32
Wednesday	Isaiah 40:1-11
Thursday	Isaiah 55:1-8
Friday	Luke 3:1-6
Saturday	"Joy to the World"

Fourth Week of Advent | Dec. 24 - 31

Sunday	Luke 2:8-20
Monday	Luke 4:16-21
Tuesday	Isaiah 11:1-10
Wednesday	Romans 15:4-13
Thursday	Mark 13:33-37
Friday	Isaiah 2:1- 5
Saturday	Revelation 22:20
Sunday	"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

DAILY KNEELING PRAYERS

MORNING: *Father, I pray that I would enter this day as your Son entered the world, full of love and hope. Amen.*

NOON: *Jesus, I pray that I would be present in my work as you were present in this world, full of humility and service. Amen.*

BEDTIME: *Holy Spirit, I pray that I would be at peace in my rest knowing that you came to bring peace to the world, and will one day bring rest to all things. Amen.*

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SCRIPTURE BEFORE PHONE | ADVENT READING GUIDE

Week 1 | December 3-9

LIGHT & DARK

In the shadow of darkness, a light has dawned.

Sunday | December 3 John 1:1-9 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light. The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world.

There is light. There is dark. It is in the light that we find our life.

Monday | December 4 Matthew 4:14-16 Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: *“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles - the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.”* From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

It is us, and it is our neighbors, who are the people dwelling in darkness. But in this shadow of death, a light has dawned.

Tuesday | December 5 Isaiah 60:1-3 Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

The Lord's glory is light, and light is the Lord's glory. It shines so that the nations will come to Him.

Wednesday | December 6 John 3:16-21 For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

It is the light of Jesus that we finally see what is in us, what it is that we do. But do we want to see? Do we want that darkness exposed?

Thursday | December 7 Ephesians 5:6-14 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for it is because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not associate with them, for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light."

The way of secret lives and inner darkness is death. But that is why Christ came, to shine the light that we might rise again from this darkness.

Friday | December 8 Isaiah 60:19-22 The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended. Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land for ever, the shoot of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified. The least one shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the LORD; in its time I will hasten it.

The whole world longs for its end, where the presence of God is with us in eternal morning.

Saturday | December 9 Oh Realm of Light

Oh realm of light! whose morning star to Bethlehem's manger led the way. Not yet upon our longing eyes shines the full splendor of thy day. Yet still across the centuries fall, both strong and sweet, our Lord's command. And still with steadfast faith we cry, "Behold, the kingdom is at hand!"

Oh realm of Heav'n! whose dawn began with love's divine, incarnate breath, our hearts were slow to understand the lessons of that life and death. Yet though with stammering tongues we tell redemption's story, strange and sweet. The world's Redeemer, lifted up shall draw the nations to His feet.

Oh realm of peace! whose music clear swept through Judea's starlit skies, still the harsh sounds of human strife break on thy heavenly harmonies. Yet shall thy song of triumph ring in full accord, from land to land, and men with angels learn to sing, "Behold, the kingdom is at hand!"

Week 2 | December 10-16

LOST & FOUND

We have a home. We have a way home.

Sunday | December 10 Psalms 119:105-106 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to keep your righteous rules. I am severely afflicted; give me life, O Lord, according to your word! Accept my freewill offerings of praise, O Lord, and teach me your rules. I hold my life in my hand continually, but I do not forget your law. The wicked have laid a snare for me, but I do not stray from your precepts. Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart. I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever, to the end.

The law of Christ's light shines a way, so that we can walk straight - so that we can go somewhere.

Monday | December 11 Mark 1:1-3 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'"

To live in the world is to live in the wilderness, in exile. But there is a way home, there is Someone to lead us home.

Tuesday | December 12 Luke 15:6, 9 & 32 He calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' / 'She calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' / 'It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'

Because Jesus came to us, we have been found. Because Jesus came to us, we become people who go find our neighbors.

Wednesday | December 13 Isaiah 40:1-11 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every 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. And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

The Messiah comes not just to make our way straight, but to cut a highway and invite the world to travel on it.

Thursday | December 14 Isaiah 55:1-8 "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. "Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

The ways of God are not our ways, but He has come so that we might be found. His way costs no money, and it is on His way that our souls finally live.

Friday | December 15 Luke 3:1-6 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiber'i-us Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Iturae'a and Trachoni'tis, and Lysa'ni-as tetrarch of Abile'ne, in the high-priesthood of Annas and Ca'iaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechari'ah in the wilderness; and he went into all the region about the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

Jesus came so that the way - the way that the whole wilderness of this world has been looking for - might be found. And that all might be invited to come along.

Saturday | December 16 Joy to the World Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing. Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns; Let men their songs employ; While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy. No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love.

Week 3 | December 17-23

NEAR & FAR

His name shall be called Emmanuel - "God with us."

Sunday | December 17 Matthew 1:18-23 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us).

Jesus has come. God is with us.

Monday | December 18 Psalms 27:1-4 A Psalm of David. The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers assail me, uttering slanders against me, my adversaries and foes, they shall stumble and fall. Though a host encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.

The one thing we want is what Jesus has brought us - the presence of God. A place to dwell in beauty.

Tuesday | December 19 Luke 2:25-33 Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms and

blessed God and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel." And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him.

Salvation is near. So we can be at peace.

Wednesday | December 20 Ephesians 2:13 & Leviticus 26:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. / I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so you would no longer be their slaves. I broke the yoke of slavery from your neck so you can walk with your heads held high.

We were far off, and we were slaves. But by coming near, God has set us free. In his presence, we become human. And walk with our heads held high.

Thursday | December 21 Zephaniah 3:14-17 Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away the judgments against you, he has cast out your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear evil no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Do not fear, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing

Jesus was born, God is in our midst.

Friday | December 22 Revelation 21:1-5 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

For God to be near is for all to be made new. In the advent of our salvation is the end of crying, the end of death.

Saturday | December 23 O Holy Night O holy night, the stars are brightly shining, It is the night of the dear Savior's birth. Long lay the world in sin and error pining, 'till he appeared and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn. Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices! O night divine! O night when Christ was born. O night, O holy night, O night divine. Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming; with glowing hearts by his cradle we stand. So, led by light of a star sweetly gleaming, here come the wise men from Orient land. The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger, in all our trials born to be our friend. He knows our need, to our weakness no stranger! Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend! Behold your King! Your King! Before him bend! Truly He taught us to love one another; his law is love and His gospel is peace. Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother, and in his name all oppression shall cease. Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we; Let all within us praise his Holy name! Christ is the Lord, then ever! ever praise we! His pow'r and glory, evermore proclaim! His pow'r and glory, evermore proclaim!

Week 4 | December 24-31
HE HAS COME. HE IS COMING.

We celebrate the King who came. We long for the King to come again.

Sunday | December 24 Luke 2:8-20 And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!" When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The King has come, there will be peace on earth.

Monday | December 25 Luke 4:16-21 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

The King on earth means that the low will be made high.

Tuesday | December 26 Isaiah 11:1-10 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples; him shall the nations seek, and his dwellings shall be glorious.

The earth longs for a King who will bring righteousness and justice in the same hand.

Wednesday | December 27 Romans 15:4-13 As it is written, "Therefore I will praise thee among the Gentiles, and sing to thy name"; and again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people"; and again, "Praise the Lord, all Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; and further Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, he who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles hope." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Our King has come. There is hope. Our King will come again. There is hope.

Thursday | December 28 Mark 13:33-37 Take heed, watch; for you do not know when the time will come. It 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 be on the watch. Watch therefore—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning—lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch."

The present is an age of tension. We wait for the King to come again.

Friday | December 29 Isaiah 2:1- 5 The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.]

When the King comes, weapons will be remade into tools for food. Wars will cease. Peace will reign. Come, Lord Jesus, Come.

Saturday | December 30 Revelation 22:20 "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

May we learn to live lives that point his the return of the King.

Sunday | December 31 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appears. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel. O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free thine own from Satan's tyranny. From depths of hell Thy people save, and give them victory o'er the grave. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel. O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high, and cheer us by Thy drawing nigh. Disperse the gloomy clouds of night and death's dark shadows put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel. 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. O come, Adonai, Lord of might, who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height. In ancient times didst give the law in cloud and majesty and awe. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

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