

Advent 2013, Week One!

Each year we see many opportunities online to engage Advent with guided prayer and creativity, and this is an offering in the same vein. This material will present a biblical passage for each day of Advent that highlights or presents a topic (being a person, theme or aspect of the incarnation), and a word or short phrase that can be a springboard for an exercise in photography, painting, writing, or any creative endeavor.



Each day will be yours to use as a starting place for prayer, meditation or creative exercises, whichever and however best fits into your life. May you be blessed in all your Advent exploration and practice. ***Christ is coming!***
Christ is among us! Christ awaits us!

Dec. 1, Mark 1:1-3, The Story of Good News.

Creative Focus: **Joy.**

Mark's gospel doesn't talk about the familiar angels and babies and things we associate with Christmas, but he does give us a nice framing for the story. He says, "Look! The good stuff promised is starting to happen! This is good news for everyone needing some good stuff right about now." Of course that was my paraphrasing.

Dec. 2, Matthew 1:1-17, The Genealogy of Christ.

Creative Focus: **Family.**

Though reading a genealogy may not be the most exciting thing in the world, give this one a skim at least. There are some amazing men and women of the biblical narrative in that list of ancestry. Jesus "comes from good stock" as we might say today. How has your family shaped you? How far back can you name your ancestors?

Dec. 3, Luke 1:5-20, Zechariah Sees an Angel.

Creative Focus: **Hearing God.**

Zechariah might have gotten more than he bargained for when he became a priest and offered himself to God. Now in his old age he will finally have a son, and the son will be a prophet. Are we ready for every message from God? Are we prepared to hear what challenges God may have for us as well as the blessings?

Dec. 4, Luke 1:21-25 & 39-45, Elizabeth's Joy!

Creative Focus: **Answered Prayer.**

Elizabeth is one blessed lady! She has waited for a child, feeling the social pressure to bear a child and a social shame at not having done so. Now in her old age she feels the answered prayer move within her. She is the first person after the angel Gabriel's announcement to testify about Christ in Luke's gospel! How are prayers being answered in your life? What are you still waiting on?

Dec. 5, Luke 1:26-37 Gabriel Visits Mary.

Creative Focus: **Angel.**

Gabriel has such a cool job, bringing God's messages to people. He shows up to make announcements in Luke's gospel to both Zechariah and Mary. I wonder if he was the angel who appeared to Joseph in Matthew's gospel? How do you hear God? Would you welcome an angel with a life-changing message?

Dec. 6, Luke 1:38 Mary's Amazing Words!

Creative Focus: **Mother.**

We have seen and heard Mary in our previous readings, but intentionally left this one verse for her, today. Her proclamation has encouraged and inspired us for thousands of years, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said." We often pray something similar, pledging ourselves to God's kingdom in the Lord's Prayer with the words "thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." How will we live that pledge, today?

Dec. 7, Matthew 1:18-25, Joseph: A Good Guy.

Creative Focus: **Gentleness.**

You have to hand it to Joseph, that even before the angel appeared to him he wasn't acting vengeful or punitive over an apparent infidelity on Mary's part. He was thinking of her. The text says he didn't want to humiliate her, and so he was planning to quietly call off their engagement. How different are we when others make mistakes? It seems we too often enjoy humiliating someone when we think they messed up. Joseph is such a timeless lesson for us.

