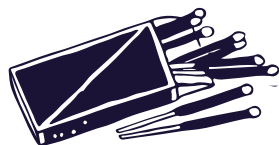




an
advent
journey

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I INTRO

For hundreds of years it was *quiet*. Silence that I'm sure was deafening for those that longed to hear God's voice, and to others the silence may have seemed like permission to think and do whatever they wanted to think and do. Either way, the tension of this silence was getting tighter and the longing and aching of the human heart was becoming louder. Soon, but not soon enough, the Word, God, would become skin, muscle and bone and live amongst us, showing us the glory of the Father and his deep love for the human heart. God, the symphony, full of complexity, movement, beauty and power, and infinite in His being, would become a song that we could all hear and see and sing, a folk song, intimate, close, and our hearts would burn inside us. But those before us would have to stand in an unbearable tension.

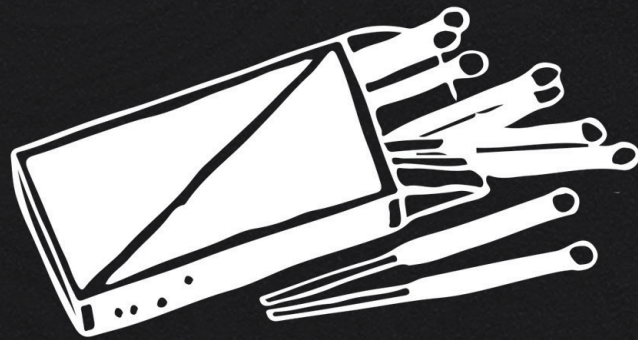
As the human heart cried out for light to break into the dark the fullness of time had come, and God sent His son, born from a woman to buy back the human heart from its varying slaveries, so that we could be named by God alone as sons and daughters adopted and chosen in Christ. God stepped out of heaven and became a vulnerable breakable baby to push back the darkness of the world and call us out of the darkness into an unfathomable light.

This gospel must be recalled over and over. We have short memories and are easily distracted with shine and glitter. So we must spend weekly, monthly and yearly rhythms reminding ourselves and each others of the gospel of Jesus, the power to save. We do this in moments by spending individual time with God, becoming vulnerable to the voice and presence of God in the scriptures. We do this weekly when we gather with the people of God and proclaim again the benefits of feasting on God and forsaking the world's malnutrition. We also do this "gospel recalling" through the Church Calendar. The most simple way to explain this calendar is to see it as a yearly cycle. Advent is the season we recall longing for a Savior. Christmas is the celebration of the arrival of that Savior. Lent is the journey to the cross and death of that Savior. Easter is the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. Pentecost is the moment the Holy Spirit comes and Jesus builds His church in daily massive conversion. The church calendar is one more way to help our scattered minds remember, recall, and renew our love for Gods massive rescue plan.

So here we stand in this Advent season, longing for a Savior we know will come. It's not too difficult for many of us to already sense that longing even though the work of Jesus is complete. We stand in a new tension between the rebel feast and the wedding feast. Jesus' work is done, but the Kingdom of God has not yet fully come. This season I want to invite anyone and everyone to journey with us through four weeks of Advent. Step inside the quiet, the longing, the expectation and finally the great fulfillment. It's a little like holding your breath for a long time, waiting to exhale. If you are a human who is quite as broken as I, it becomes such a fresh and marvelous way to approach Christmas. The wide-eyed, jaw dropping, heart pumping miracle of God coming to us in our tattered state and giving our souls worth makes Christmas a new and unique celebration like no other!

I pray each of us find the depth of meaning in each beautiful or painful moment in this Christmas season. Be present in the journey friends!

Charlie Hall
Frontline Worship and Liturgy Pastor



preparation

I BIBLE READING

Preparation

NT: Luke 1:5-17, 67-80

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years. Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared." And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

Notes/Thoughts/Impressions:

I DEVOTIONAL

Preparation

When my youngest daughter was three, I was holding her hand and we were walking from the house to the car over an ice patch. She slipped and her legs flew up in the air and her whole body went stiff for a moment. I held her hand all the tighter knowing exactly where we had come from and where we were going. I pulled her air suspended body to a dry patch and landed her safely.

Humanity is free-falling, broken and longing, who can make things right? Who's coming for me? Suspended, with breath held, waiting for a Savior. The description of our condition is in Isaiah 9, saying that we're a people walking in the dark, a land of deep darkness, oppressed and burdened. We know we need something that is beyond what we can do for ourselves and we look for it everywhere. The world and religion try to answer, but leave us longing for a light in this darkness.

We have an amazing vantage point at this time in history to see where we are in the story of God. Though we still sense being stretched "in-between", He knows exactly where we came from and right where we are going. He walked His people from slavery through a split sea onto dry land and He gave us Jesus to get to God. We've tried it on our own, but we come up thirsty and hungry. Jesus shed heaven to enter the world that He made, and He came as a breakable, vulnerable, child. Not only has He come for us, but He gave Himself for us and He's coming again to wipe our tears, take death away, and make all things new. C.S. Lewis says, "He goes down to come up again and bring the whole ruined world with Him." Make way for the glad tidings in Jesus; we can't save ourselves, but Jesus came for us.

We are still "in-between". Jesus has come and yet we are still waiting for the final restoration, grateful but longing. The Advent season is to prepare with angsty-longing for the good news in Jesus, make

straight paths for these glad tidings, bring low the things that stand in the way and fill in the places that are waiting for life to move. Advent is to make the crooked paths around us straight and to usher in Jesus, God with us, to this season, our lives, our families, and our neighbors. This Advent, prepare for the kingdom of God to move in the world around us! Anticipate, expect, and move toward His work to stand in places that are in deep darkness. God can do anything at any time. Like the twinkle of Christmas lights against a black sky, the kingdom of God is pressing into our world through us because of Jesus.

My friends, the Christmas blessing is Jesus. Prepare the way for these

glad tidings.

Charlie Hall

Frontline Worship & Liturgy Pastor

Notes/Thoughts/Impressions:

I DAILY READINGS

Preparation

Day 1: Genesis 3:1-15

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

The Lord God said to the serpent,
"Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock

and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.
I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel."

Day 2: 2 Samuel 7:10-16

And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever."

Day 3: Psalm 110

The Lord says to my Lord:
"Sit at my right hand,
until I make your enemies your footstool."
The Lord sends forth from Zion
your mighty scepter.
Rule in the midst of your enemies!
Your people will offer themselves freely
on the day of your power,
in holy garments;
from the womb of the morning,

I HYMNS

Preparation

*O Come Emmanuel (Emmanuel)
O come O come Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear*

*Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel
Shall come to thee O Israel*

*O come Desire of nations bind
In one the hearts of all mankind
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease
And be Thyself our King of peace*

*Emmanuel
Wonderful, Counselor
Lord of life, Lord of all
Prince of Peace, Mighty God, Holy One,
Emmanuel*

*You have come for us
You have come for us
You have come for us
Emmanuel*

*You are God with us
You are God with us
You are God with us
Emmanuel*

O COME, O COME
Emmanuel

The bones of this hymn have come down to us from as far back as 1,000 years. Its place in our Advent season is similar to that of when it was written by 8th and 9th century monks; we sing it in expectation and anticipation of a Rescuer come to save His people from their slavery and ultimately from death. Coupled with Emmanuel, a more contemporary tune, we can inhabit the tension between yearning for Emmanuel to come and beholding the Wonderful Counselor, Lord of Light Himself. Thus we enter Advent, yearning and beholding.

I HYMNS

Preparation

*Come, Thou long expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.*

*Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a king,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.*

*Come Thou long expected Jesus
Come Thou long expected Jesus*

*Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.*

*Come Thou long expected Jesus
(Break forth!)*

*Come Thou long expected Jesus
(Break forth!)
And as we behold and as we yearn, we begin to
look outside ourselves and see not only our need
for a redeemer, but this whole world's desperate
need. This hymn was written in the midst of a
broken city and at it's most broken moments. We
yearn in this season for our own hearts, but also
as a piece of the whole creation crying out for
the "desire of every nation" to come and take His
rightful Kingship.*

*Break Forth O Beauteous Heavenly Light-
Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light,
And usher in the morning;
O shepherds, shrink not with affright,
But hear the angel's warning.
This Child, now weak in infancy,
Our confidence and joy shall be;
The power of Satan breaking,*

Our peace eternal making.

*Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light,
God comes to us as helpless child*

*Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light,
God comes to us as helpless child*

COME THOU LONG *expected Jesus*

Advent is a journey through stages of anticipating, beholding, and responding. Break Forth marries the hope of waiting and the joy of celebrating; our King has come! What is this King like? What can this mean for us? Who are we now? And as we behold and as we yearn, we begin to look outside ourselves and see not only our need for a redeemer, but this whole world's desperate need. This hymn was written in the midst of a broken city and at it's most broken moments. We yearn in this season for our own hearts, but also as a piece of the whole creation crying out for the "desire of every nation" to come and take His rightful Kingship.



annunciation

I DEVOTIONAL

Annunciation

Into the darkness, into the silence
A holy announcement
Piercing the emptiness and longing
And filling it with life

God's people had waited for centuries for a King to come, the one prophesied by Isaiah. There would be no one quite like Him. He would rule with wisdom, might, righteousness, and justice. He wouldn't seek after power, but equity. Because of this King, the earth would be filled with peace and the knowledge of the Lord. He would restore what was broken in the beginning. But for the Jews, it seemed as if God had abandoned His people. The world was lost in darkness and sin. The only "king" they had was the one the Roman Emperor had appointed for them. Power, oppression, and injustice ruled the day. All they saw was a world far from God, far from peace, far from hope.

Then when all seemed lost, good news came breaking onto the scene. This declaration, this royal proclamation became the turning point of all human history. An angel appeared to a young woman named Mary and shared the good news. The time had come. God had not forgotten them. The King they had been waiting for would soon be here. And this King, the one who would rule over all things, would call her "mother." If that wasn't enough, this announcement included something she didn't expect. This King would be the Son of God, God Himself in the flesh. But how could this be? How could the uncreated Creator become a man? Heaven and earth could not contain God, and yet God would come to dwell in Mary's womb. As the poet Levertov writes,

to bear in her womb
Infinite weight and lightness; to carry
in hidden, finite inwardness,
nine months of Eternity; to contain

in slender vase of being,
the sum of power
in narrow flesh,
the sum of light.

This announcement brings hope, joy, life, and light into the world, because it greets us with who Jesus is. And just like Mary, this proclamation has come to us: Jesus is the king, the Son of God, and of His kingdom there will be no end. And just as Mary received Jesus into her womb, we receive Jesus into our very lives. Heaven and earth could not contain God, and yet God comes to dwell inside every believer, giving birth to life and deliverance. What do we do with such good news?

This message is meant to be
proclaimed.

There are people all throughout our city who are longing, waiting for good news. They are waiting for the turning point in their story, for their lives to turn from tragedy to hope. Whether they realize it or not, they need the Son of God to step into the mess of their lives. They need to hear the announcement that Jesus has come.

Where do you need Jesus to step into the mess of your life? What is the "good news" that you are looking for?

Aaron Addison
Frontline Pastor

Notes/Thoughts/Impressions:

I DAILY READINGS

Annunciation

Day 1: Daniel 7:13-14

*"I saw in the night visions,
and behold, with the clouds of heaven
there came one like a son of man,
and he came to the Ancient of Days
and was presented before him.
And to him was given dominion
and glory and a kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him;
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one
that shall not be destroyed.*

Day 2: Psalm 2

*Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,
"Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us."
He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.
Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,
"As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill."
I will tell of the decree:
The Lord said to me, "You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.
Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."
Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.*

*Serve the Lord with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

Day 3: Psalm 24

*The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein,
for he has founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers.
Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false
and does not swear deceitfully.
He will receive blessing from the Lord
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah
Lift up your heads, O gates!
And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord, strong and mighty,
the Lord, mighty in battle!
Lift up your heads, O gates!
And lift them up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
he is the King of glory! Selah*

Day 4: Jeremiah 23:5-6

*"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord,
when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch,
and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and
shall execute justice and righteousness in the
land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel
will dwell securely. And this is the name by which
he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'*

I HYMNS

Annunciation

*God can do the impossible
Jesus came as a baby
God with us forever more
A Savior came to save me*

*God can do the impossible
Bringing heaven to earth
Sent His only begotten Son
Because He loves the whole world*

*Emmanuel (God with us)
God with us (Emmanuel)
Emmanuel (God with us)
God with us (Emmanuel)*

*God can do the impossible
Bringing heaven to earth
Sent His only begotten Son
Because He loves the whole world*

*Lift up your hands to the King
Lift up your hearts to the King of everything
Let all the Christmas bells ring
This is why we sing*

God
WITH US

Throughout the history of Advent the Church has had the distinct pleasure of announcing the King with her worship of Him. This God has done the impossible: He has made himself like His creation because we could not be as He is, not only this, but He is making us like Him in His coming. What we believe can become smooth with the wear of years, but stop for a moment. What we believe and celebrate at Advent is absolutely unthinkable and should have been impossible. And yet, it is true.

I HYMNS

Annunciation

*Away in a manger
No crib for His bed
The little Lord Jesus
Lay down His sweet head*

*The stars in the bright sky
Look down where He lay
The little Lord Jesus
Asleep on the hay*

*The cattle are lowing
The Baby wakes
But little Lord Jesus
No crying He makes*

*I love Thee, Lord Jesus
Look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle
'Til morning is nigh*

*I love Thee,
I love Thee my Jesus
I love Thee,
I love thee my God*

*Be near me, Lord Jesus
I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever
And love me, I pray*

*Bless all the dear children
In Thy tender care
And fit us for Heaven
To live with Thee there*

BE NEAR ME, *Lord Jesus*

And now we come to this King and the way that he came to us. In cavalcade? In shining armor? Was the Son of David to be like David? Yes and more. He comes to us humble. A baby. He enters as our rescuer in the upside-down way of the Kingdom, not with horses and lances, but silently. Like snow falling and like baby's breath, in a whisper under a star, unto us a child is born.

I HYMNS

Annunciation

*O come all ye faithful
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him,
Born the King of Angels;*

*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

*Highest, most Holy
Light of Light Eternal
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given
Word of the Father;
Now in flesh appearing*

*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

*O Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing all ye citizens in heaven above
Glory to God glory in the Highest;*

*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

*Hail! Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning,
O Jesus! to Thee be all glory given.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;*

*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

*We'll give You all the glory
We'll praise Your name forever*

O COME, LET US
adore Him

And who might we be in this picture that's being painted before us? Indeed, we are the shepherds—on the outside, dirty and unclean, but visited by an angel with the promise good will from God toward us. And we too are the wisemen, walking towards this King in faith with all in our possession ready to be laid at His feet. The word and promise of the Father is now in flesh appearing.



magnification

I DEVOTIONAL

Magnification

A song is the sound of a heart overflowing. Freedom fighters sing anthems after toppling a tyrant. The love of enamored newlyweds spill out in ballads. The voices of the brokenhearted resound of loss, grief and regret. Mothers serenade their babies with sweet lullabies.

The season of Advent is saturated with incredible Christmas songs. We sing of our need for a savior in Come Thou Long Expected Jesus. Jesus' glory and goodness are front and center as the church calls the world to worship in O Come Let Us Adore Him! Joy to the World commands all of heaven and earth to receive the King of our hearts. The Church is blessed with countless gospel-centered Christmas songs this season, yet in a real way each one of them is an echo of the first Christmas song. Here in the opening chapter of Luke we hear that first Christmas song in history. For hundreds of years it has been known as Mary's Magnificat, and it is an explosion of joy that rings out of the heart of the mother of the Christ.

Unfortunately, this moment between Mary & Elizabeth is a rather neglected part of the Christmas story. In reality, it is one of the most significant moments in all of scripture. The moment when expectation and arrival collide.

Imagine the scene if you will. On one side stands Elizabeth, an old woman who has been barren all her life. On the other side stands Mary, a young virgin. It is an impossibility for either to be pregnant. But as the angel said, "nothing will be impossible with God." They both stand as a testament that God can do anything. The babies they carry stand as a testament that God will do the amazing. For hundreds of years, prophets had been declaring the coming of a promised Savior. In Elizabeth grows John the Baptist, the last Prophet who will introduce the world to the promised Savior of the

world. In Mary grows that Savior, the first born from among the dead. Jesus who will live, die, and rise again to bring those who believe to new life with Him.

God is on the move to save the world, and these two women are in on the secret. A gift has arrived. The poor will receive a priceless treasure. The broken will be bound up. The captive will be freed. The mourning will be comforted. The down and dirty will be raised up and made beautiful. The devastated will be put back together. The Light is beginning to shine in the darkness. God has come to earth, and hell is in trouble.

In the light of this truth, Mary's heart is overwhelmed in wonder and she sings of the greatness of God. May we all sing like she did this Advent.

Sing because our hearts are overflowing with the wonder of Jesus. Sing because the good news is true. Sing because we have a Savior. He has come. He has saved. He has won. He reigns.

Let your heart overflow.

Question: Examine your heart this week. Are you, like Mary and Elizabeth, standing in awe and wonder of the great gift of grace we have in Christ Jesus? Pray the Holy Spirit helps center your thoughts and affections on the gift of Jesus Christ.

David Adair
Frontline Church Edmond Lead Pastor

Notes/Thoughts/Impressions:

I DAILY READINGS

Magnification

Day 1: Zephaniah 3:14-20

*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 cleared away your enemies.
The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;
you shall never again fear evil.
On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
“Fear not, O Zion;
let not your hands grow weak.
The Lord your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.
I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival,
so that you will no longer suffer reproach.
Behold, at that time I will deal
with all your oppressors.
And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.
At that time I will bring you in,
at the time when I gather you together;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes,” says the Lord.*

Day 2: Isaiah 52:7-10

*How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of
happiness, who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”*

*The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;
together they sing for joy;
for eye to eye they see
the return of the Lord to Zion.
Break forth together into singing,
you waste places of Jerusalem,
for the Lord has comforted his people;
he has redeemed Jerusalem.
The Lord has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.*

Day 3: Isaiah 35

*The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the
crocus;
it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.
Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who have an anxious heart,
“Be strong; fear not!
Behold, your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.
He will come and save you.”
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.
For waters break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.
And a highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;
the unclean shall not pass over it.*

*It shall belong to those who walk on the way;
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
And the ransomed of the Lord shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

Day 4: Psalm 98

*Oh sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvelous things!
His right hand and his holy arm
have worked salvation for him.
The Lord has made known his salvation;
he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of
the nations.
He has remembered his steadfast love and faith-
fulness
to the house of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.
Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!
Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody!
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord!
Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who dwell in it!
Let the rivers clap their hands;
let the hills sing for joy together
before the Lord, for he comes
to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity.*

Day 5: Psalm 146

*Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord, O my soul!
I will praise the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God while I have my
being.
Put not your trust in princes,
in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.
When his breath departs, he returns to the earth;
on that very day his plans perish.
Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord his God,
who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them,
who keeps faith forever;
who executes justice for the oppressed,
who gives food to the hungry.
The Lord sets the prisoners free;
the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.
The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous.
The Lord watches over the sojourners;
he upholds the widow and the fatherless,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.
The Lord will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, to all generations.
Praise the Lord!*

Notes/Thoughts/Impressions:

I APPLICATION

Magnification

Each week of Advent we want to invite you, your friends and family to move outside of yourselves and serve the world around you. **This week we want to invite you to pursue opportunities to serve the poor and come against injustices in your city.** Consider doing this as a community group or a group of friends. There are a variety of ways you can step toward this around you, but we offer two specific ways. First, there are many opportunities through partner organizations. Check our website for connections. Second, consider giving to the Compassion Offering. This is a yearly offering that serves the poor and works against injustices in Oklahoma City and beyond throughout the year. Check out this website to connect.

GLOBAL
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OFFERING

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I MEDITATION / MUSING

Annunciation

I HYMNS

Magnification

*Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,
Opening to the sun above.*

*Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day!*

*All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise.*

*Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Singing bird and flowing fountain
Call us to rejoice in Thee.*

*Joyful joyful! We adore Thee!
Joyful joyful! We adore Thee!*

joyful, joyful

WE ADORE THEE

Magnification is the only response when we look on Jesus. When we sing this hymn, whether in our car, around the dinner table at Christmas time, or standing next to our brothers and sisters on a Sunday morning, we are joining our voices together to sing a song that is ancient and beautiful. It has been sung since the dawn of creation, when the Creator first breathed life into the world; sung by the mountains, forests, and meadows. It is a carol sung by every bird, blooming flower, and rustling leaf. All of creation lifts its voice to sing the praise of the One that made them! “The mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” (Isaiah 55:12)

I HYMNS

Annunciation

*Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains
Gloria in excelsis Deo*

*Shepherds why this jubilee
Why your joyous strains prolong
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song*

*Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing
Come adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord the newborn King*

Gloria

IN EXCELSIS DEO

“Glory to God in the Highest.” Here too, we find a rich heritage of praise. This common Latin phrase has been in use by the Church since her inception, even to the humble shepherds it was heralded. As the angels proclaimed the splendor and wonder of a Messiah come to earth to rescue mankind and to establish peace between God and man, so, too, the creation itself is reverberating with the good news: “And the mountains in the reply, echoing their joyous strains!” What is happening here? Something more than the physical birth of a child, something mysterious and indescribable...

I HYMNS

Magnification

*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 nature sing*

*Joy to the world, the Savior reigns
Let men his songs employ
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy*

*No more let sin, nor sorrow grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found
Far as, 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,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love*

REPEAT THE SOUNDING

Joy

While our words may fall short to describe and understand the puzzle of God becoming man, we can see, inhabit, and proclaim the benefits of His Advent. “No more let sin and sorrow grow, Nor thorns infest the ground: He comes to make His blessings flow, far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found.” He has come to reign, He has come to wipe every tear away, He has come to set things as they are supposed to be.



incarnation

I DEVOTIONAL

Incarnation

Isaiah 9:6

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given... and his name shall be called... Mighty God.”

Luke 2:10-11

“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all people. For unto you is born... a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

The news of God sending His Son to join us and be born among us is the breathtaking celebration of Christmas. Throughout church history, the word we’ve used to talk about this great truth is the word “incarnation.” It’s a word that literally means in-fleshing. In the incarnation, God the Son was born among us and joined us in everything it means to be human, “putting on flesh and blood”, without ceasing to be God. The incarnation is proof that God is committed to being close to His people.

By joining us in Jesus, God has closed the gap. This is the wonder and wildness of Christmas. He is not a distant God, He is Emmanuel... God with us. It would have been enough for God to have announced His love for us from on high, yet He came to ground zero to make Himself known to us as one of us.

As a father of four kids under six years old, it is very easy for me to come home in the evening after a long day at work and just want to sit in my chair. The kids are there running and playing all around me. I am in their midst and they are with me. There from my chair I can talk with them and they with me, I can even tell them I love them in ways that will be meaningful to them. However, I’ll tell you there is a massive difference on their face and in their voice when I make the move to stand up from my chair and get down on the floor with them. Their countenance lifts and their smiles broaden when I start building a block tower with

them, or when I join them in the doll house. There is a big difference in the way that my kids hear me and feel my love for them when all of the sudden I close the gap from the chair to the floor. There’s a shift that takes place in the room when daddy lays down his rights to fathering from the chair, and willingly joins his kids on the floor.

This is exactly what God has done for us in Jesus. He has joined us on the floor to draw us to His side.

In the incarnation, God unflinchingly joins us in our pains, sorrows, sin, and brokenness. The incarnation is God’s great declaration that He isn’t ashamed of us (Hebrews 2:11), and nothing will stop Him from coming near to us... nothing.

**This Advent season rejoice that God has
come near to us in**

Jesus.

God sees you, knows you, hasn’t forgotten you, and receives you in Jesus. For unto us a child has been born and a Son has been given... a Savior, Christ the Lord.

Take a moment to praise God for His faithfulness to keep His promise to come for His people. Give thanks to God for seeing our sin and committing to remove it even at great cost to Himself. Finally, pray for your soul to rest in Jesus whose perfect life, death for sin and resurrection make it so that we never have to fear being far from God ever again .

Chad Kincer
Frontline Church Pastor

Notes/Thoughts/Impressions:

I DAILY READINGS

Incarnation

Day 1: Isaiah 42:1-4

*Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my Spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;
a bruised reed he will not break,
and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.
He will not grow faint or be discouraged
till he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his law.*

Day 2: Isaiah 2:1-5

*The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concern-
ing 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 lifted up 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 disputes 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 anymore.
O house of Jacob,
come, let us walk
in the light of the Lord.*

Day 3: Deuteronomy 18:15-19

*“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet
like me from among you, from your brothers—it
is to him you shall listen— just as you desired of
the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the as-
sembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the
voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any
more, lest I die.’ And the Lord said to me, ‘They are
right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for
them a prophet like you from among their broth-
ers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he
shall speak to them all that I command him. And
whoever will not listen to my words that he shall
speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.*

Day 4: Micah 5:2-5

*But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Ju-
dah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old,
from ancient days.
Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has given birth;
then the rest of his brothers shall return
to the people of Israel.
And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the
strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be
great
to the ends of the earth.
And he shall be their peace.
When the Assyrian comes into our land
and treads in our palaces,
then we will raise against him seven shepherds
and eight princes of men;*

I APPLICATION

Incarnation

Each week of Advent we want to invite you, your friends and family to move outside of yourselves and serve the world around you. **This week we want to invite you to pursue opportunities to serve the poor and come against injustices in your city.** Consider doing this as a community group or a group of friends. There are a variety of ways you can step toward this around you, but we offer two specific ways. First, there are many opportunities through partner organizations. Check our website for connections. Second, consider giving to the Compassion Offering. This is a yearly offering that serves the poor and works against injustices in Oklahoma City and beyond throughout the year. Check out this website to connect.

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I MEDITATION / MUSING

Incarnation

I HYMNS

Incarnation

*This is war
Like you ain't seen
This winter's long,
It's cold and mean
With hangdog hearts
We stood condemned,
But the tide turns now
At Bethlehem*

*This is war
And born tonight,
The Word as flesh,
The Lord of Light,
The Son of God,
The low-born king;
Who demons fear,
Of whom angels sing*

*This is war
On sin and death;
The dark will take
It's final breath
It shakes the earth,
Confounds all plans;
The mystery
Of God as man*

THE WORD AS FLESH

the Lord of light

Magnification of God always leads to a transformed and obedient heart. And how have we been transformed? We are now a liberated people. We remember the slavery and we stand with our liberator who came to do battle against our captors: sin, Satan, and death. And even more, we see those still held captive. The transformed heart is becoming like it's liberator: proclaiming good news to the captive and rescuing the one who is enslaved.

I HYMNS

Incarnation

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
Dwelt among us*

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
Dwelt among us*

*And we have seen,
We have seen
We have seen His glory,*

*And we have seen,
We have seen
We have seen His glory,*

*And we have seen,
We have seen
We have seen His glory,*

*Glory as of the only Son
From the Father,*

Full of grace and truth

*And we have seen,
We have seen
We have seen His glory,*

*And we have seen,
We have seen
We have seen His glory,*

*And we have seen,
We have seen
We have seen His glory,*

*And we have seen,
We have seen
We have seen His glory,*

WE HAVE SEEN *His glory*

We love those in darkness because we have seen the light and love of the Father that comes from the Son, full of grace and truth. "From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace" - John 1:16. "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and send His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us we also ought to love one another" - 1 John 4:9-11

I HYMNS

Incarnation

*While shepherds kept their watching
Over silent flocks by night
Behold throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light*

*Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born*

*The shepherds feared and trembled
When lo above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed our Savior's birth*

*Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born*

*Down in a lowly manger
Our humble Christ was born
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn*

*When I was a seeker
I sought both night and day
I asked the Lord to help me and
He showed me the way*

Jesus Christ IS BORN

The centerpiece of Christmas and Advent is this: the immutable author of existence regarded we of lowly estate and by any means necessary, raised us up to be with him. And so we end our journey here—a hymn written in the late 1800's by a man of "lowly birth" to remind all of us that such were we all until Jesus came for us. This is the fruit of the Christian life and the primary function of the church: proclamation of the greatest news in word and deed. It is in this spirit that we are charged: go proclaim the gospel; go demonstrate the Kingdom; go and tell it on the mountain.

Merry Christmas!

 **FRONTLINE**