

# ABIDE

An Advent Guide  
to Life, the Universe,  
and Everything

Reflections for everyday in  
December using the four  
readings for each of the  
Sundays of Advent 2024

**HOPEFUL CONFUSION**  
**PEACEFUL DISRUPTION**  
**JOYFUL WARNINGS**  
**FAITHFUL UNCERTAINTY**  
**FRAGILE GLORY**

---

# HOPEFUL CONFUSION

SUN 1<sup>ST</sup> DEC - SAT 7<sup>TH</sup> DEC

THIS WEEK PROMISES THAT WHILE THINGS MAY SEEM CHAOTIC AND  
CONFUSING, THERE IS HOPE IN THE PROMISES OF GOD'S JUSTICE

---

Take five deep breaths. Check-in with how you are feeling in body, mind and spirit.  
Take five more deep breaths and ask God to abide with you in this moment.

Review your thoughts on these two questions:

- What is causing me confusion at the moment?
- Where can I see hope today?

Choose one of the four readings to linger with today

## JEREMIAH 33

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."



Hope in the midst  
of confusion

When have you found hope even in the middle of something confusing?



A prayer for God's  
showing trust even in  
confusing times

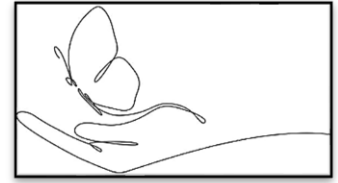
## PSALM 25

Of David. To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me. Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long. Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O Lord! Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.

What small steps can you take to move something forward today?

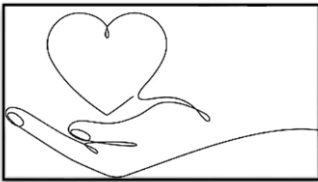
## 1 THESSALONIANS 3

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.



*Paul's encouragement to abound in love and be strengthened in holiness*

*Does looking back at past challenges help you trust for what lies ahead?*



*Jesus speaks of signs and confusion but calls His followers to stand firm in hope*

## LUKE 21

‘There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in a cloud” with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.’

Then he told them a parable: ‘Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ‘Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.’

*Lord Jesus, light of the world,  
born in David's city of Bethlehem, born like him to be a king:  
be born in our hearts at Christmas, be King of our lives today.*

---

# PEACEFUL SUN 8<sup>TH</sup> DEC - SAT 14<sup>TH</sup> DEC

## DISRUPTION

THIS WEEK CENTRES ON HOW GOD'S PEACE COMES  
THROUGH THE DISRUPTION OF THE WORLD'S EXPECTATIONS

---

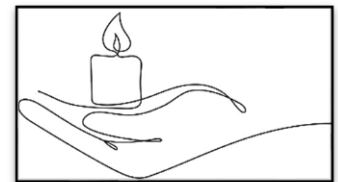
Take five deep breaths. Check-in with how you are feeling in body, mind and spirit. Take five more deep breaths and ask God to abide with you in this moment. Review your thoughts on these two questions:

- What disruptions am I facing at the moment?
- How can I grow a deeper peace this Advent?

Choose one of the four readings to linger with today

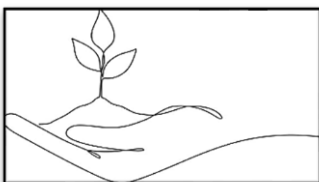
### MALACHI 3

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.



Purification is  
disruptive but  
necessary  
for true peace

When has disruption in your life led to unexpected growth?



Zechariah celebrates  
the disruptive  
intervention and the  
birth of his son

### THE BENEDICTUS

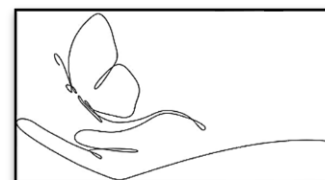
Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, who has come to his people and set them free. He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, born of the house of his servant David. Through his holy prophets God promised of old to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us, to show mercy to our ancestors, and to remember his holy covenant. This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: to set us free from the hands of our enemies, free to worship him without fear, holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way, to give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of all their sins. In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

**Does praise help you find peace in the midst of life's disruptions?**

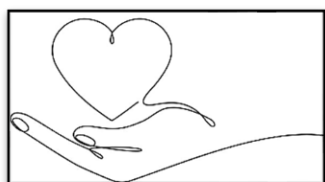
### **PHILIPPIANS 1**

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.



**Paul reflects on the nature of transformation**

**How can you be more prepared to embrace changes that come your way?**



**John the Baptist's messages that God's coming disrupts everything**

### **LUKE 3**

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out 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 made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

Lord Jesus, light of the world,  
the prophets said you would bring peace  
and save your people in trouble.  
Give peace in our hearts at Christmas  
and show all the world God's love.

---

**JOYFUL** SUN 15<sup>TH</sup> DEC - SAT 21<sup>ST</sup> DEC

**WARNINGS**

THIS WEEK HIGHLIGHTS THE TENSIONS BETWEEN THE JOY THAT CHRIST IS COMING AND THE SERIOUS WARNING TO PREPARE OURSELVES WELL

---

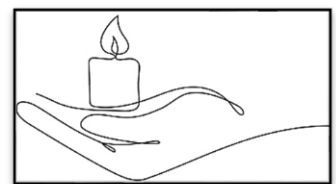
Take five deep breaths. Check-in with how you are feeling in body, mind and spirit. Take five more deep breaths and ask God to abide with you in this moment. Review your thoughts on these two questions:

- What dangers in today's world am I concerned about?
- Who can I give and receive joy with this Advent?

Choose one of the four readings to linger with today

### **ZEPHANIAH 3**

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let 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 as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time.



A call to rejoice, even as the warning of judgment looms

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 home, at the time when I gather you; 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.

### What is your experience of receiving or giving difficult news?



Turning warnings into reasons to trust in God's deliverance

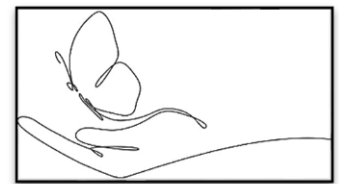
#### **ISAIAH 12**

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say on that day: Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth. Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

### Do you think of yourself as a joyful person?

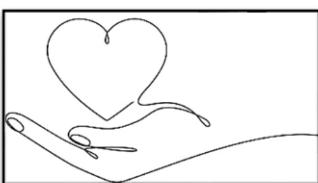
#### **PHILIPPIANS 4**

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.



What peace does in our lives and how to access it

### What have you not been praying about that you could have been?



John's urgent call to change that makes space for joy

#### **LUKE 3**

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Lord Jesus, light of the world,  
John told the people to prepare, for you were very near.  
As Christmas grows closer day by day,  
help us to be ready to welcome you now.

---

**FAITHFUL SUN 22<sup>ND</sup> DEC – MON 23<sup>RD</sup> DEC**

**UNCERTAINTY**

LIKE ALL OF US, MARY & ELIZABETH LIVE BETWEEN JOY AND UNCERTAINTY,  
RELYING ON FAITH TO NAVIGATE WHAT WE DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND

---

Take five deep breaths. Check-in with how you are feeling in body, mind and spirit.  
Take five more deep breaths and ask God to abide with you in this moment.

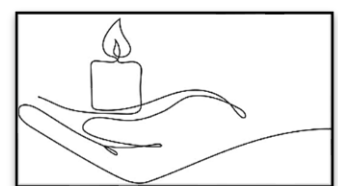
Review your thoughts on these two questions:

- Do I think of myself as an anxious person?
- Has my faith been more precious to me than it is today?

Choose one of the four readings to linger with today

**MICAH 5**

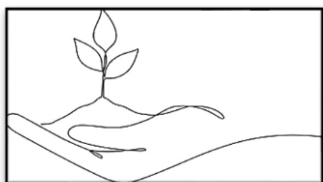
But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.



Hints of the future

Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

**When have you taken risks to trust without knowing the outcome?**



**A plea for God's restoration in the midst of uncertainty**

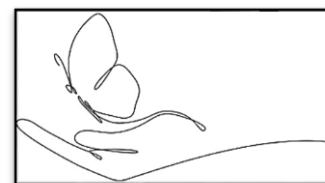
### **PSALM 80**

To the leader: on Lilies, a Covenant. Of Asaph. A Psalm. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us! Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved. O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers? You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink in full measure. You make us the scorn of our neighbours; our enemies laugh among themselves. Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

**What ways can you find to be involved in restoration this Christmas?**

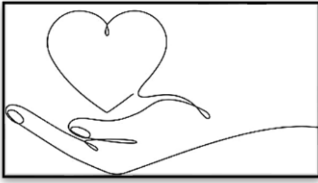
### **HEBREWS 10**

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, "See, God, I have come to do your will, O God" (in the scroll of the book it is written of me).' When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sin-offerings' (these are offered according to the law), then he added, 'See, I have come to do your will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.



**The nature of sacrifice**

**In the past year, how far are you able to say "See I have come to do your will"?**



Mary and Elizabeth  
rejoice in God's  
promises, even as they  
navigate the  
uncertainty of what  
the future holds

## LUKE 1

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked with favour  
on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on  
all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,

according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

Lord Jesus, light of the world,  
blessed is Gabriel, who brought good news;  
blessed is Mary, your mother and ours.  
Bless your Church preparing for Christmas;  
and bless us your children, who long for your coming.

---

# FRAGILE TUE 24<sup>TH</sup> DEC - TUE 31<sup>ST</sup> DEC

## GLORY

IN THIS CHRISTMAS WEEK, WE ARE INVITED TO REFLECT ON HOW GLORY IS PRESENT IN THE SMALL AND FRAGILE MOMENTS OF OUR LIVES

---

Take five deep breaths. Check-in with how you are feeling in body, mind and spirit. Take five more deep breaths and ask God to abide with you in this moment.

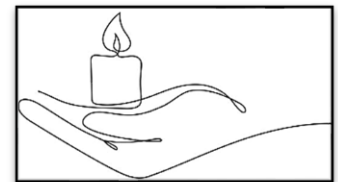
Review your thoughts on these two questions:

- What feels fragile for me this Christmas?
- How is glory showing itself in my life right now?

Choose one of the four readings to linger with today

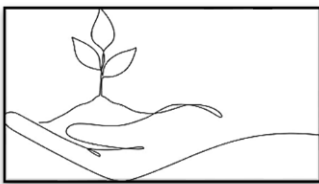
### ISAIAH 52

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.' Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you ruins 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.



The prophet reveals glory in unexpected places

When has something delicate turned out to be powerful?



A Christmas Song of praise

### PSALM 98

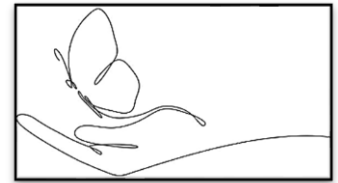
O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things. His right hand and his holy arm have gained him victory. The Lord has made known his victory; he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations. He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the victory 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 live in it. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the Lord, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.

**Which Christmas song is bringing most meaning to you this year?**

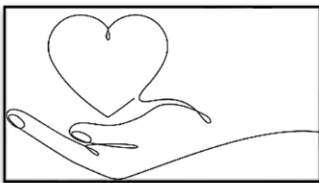
### **HEBREWS 1**

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.



**Christ as the radiance of God's being, who, though human, upholds all things**

**What small actions could lead to transformation for you in 2025?**



**the Word made flesh,**

### **JOHN 1**

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 came into being through him, and without him, not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

**Lord Jesus Christ, your birth at Bethlehem  
draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth:  
accept our heartfelt praise as we worship you,  
our Saviour and our eternal God.**