



First Christian Reformed Church of Lynden
From Generation to Generation for the Glory of God

Advent Devotional 2020

Galatians 4:4-5 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

The word advent encompasses several meanings, such as anticipation, expectation, coming, longing, desire, waiting, hope of promises fulfilled. We will explore some of these themes in these advent devotionals. Today's devotional looks at the Advent promises made about Bethlehem.

Scripture

Micah 5:2-5

² But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, 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.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ And he shall be their peace.

John 7:42

Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"

Luke 2:3-5

³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

I Corinthians 1:26-31

²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Song

Psalms 59:16 But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.

[You can Google the hymn to hear it if you would like to sing along.]

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing—let “Glory!” ring with peace to all on earth!

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heav'ns.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray,
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today!
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell.
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

(“O Little Town of Bethlehem: words by Margaret Clarkson, tune by Lewis H. Redner, Public Domain, CCLI# 358926 Streaming License #20317932)

Prayer

II Chronicles 7:14 *If my people, who are called by my Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

Holy Father, you are the Lord of the universe, creator of all that is, you own the cattle on a thousand hills and all gold and silver is yours. You lack for nothing, all power and authority are yours.

Yet when you decided to choose a nation to be your own you passed over mighty Assyria or Babylon, and choose a nation of slaves to be your people. When you wanted a king you passed over the older seven sons of Jesse and chose a shepherd boy, David. When you want a birth place for your Son, you skipped Rome and Jerusalem and chose lowly Bethlehem that never amounted to much. You sent your Son to a poor virgin and had his first visitors be despised shepherds. When Jesus choose His disciples He passed by the scribes and Pharisees and choose uneducated fishermen.

You are the God who cares about widows and orphans, the weak, lowly, lonely and lost. You are the God who delights in what is small and insignificant. You humble the exalted and exalt the humble. You condescend to choose what is ordinary and despised. What is man that you should even consider him, and who are we that we have received your saving grace? You remind us that we are never too small or unimportant to be blessed by you and used of you in your service.

You say your kingdom belongs to those who are like little children, who are unpretentious, who delight in you, who love to sing, who naturally trust you and have faith in you. Teach us to be like little children, who are free from the world's ways, who are unimpressed by worldly wealth or power or position.

You are the God of the unexpected, the unpredictable and the impossible. You draw straight with crooked lines, you turn sinners into saints, you raise the dead, you bring heaven down to earth. Teach us your will and ways and how to walk in them, teach us humility and faith. Teach us to be as free to give grace as you have been in giving it to us.

Holy Father, thank you that your ways are not our ways and your thoughts are not our thoughts, that your ways and thoughts are so much higher and better than ours, that you are the God who does more than we could ask or imagine. Advent and Christmas are certainly that, so much more than we could have ever hoped or imagined. Thank you for choosing Bethlehem. Thank you for choosing me. To you belongs all the glory, in Jesus name, Amen.