

FAMILY OF CHRIST ADVENT DEVOTION

# KEEPING SILENCE



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ADVENT  
2025

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Welcome to the Advent Devotional for 2025!

Advent is about preparing for Christ's arrival by focusing on His coming in three powerful ways: His birth, His present presence through Word and Sacrament, and His future return. It is a season of repentance and hope, where we, as families prepare for Christmas and the ultimate redemption of Christ.

Here are some key themes you will see this year:

- Dual focus on Christ's comings: Advent is a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and to anticipate His second coming in glory.
- The Lord is at hand: The season is a time of expectation and repentance, recognizing that Christ is now present in the church's worship, especially through His Word and Sacraments.
- Preparation and hope: It is a preparatory season for Christmas, a time to look forward to God's redemption and to find peace and hope in Christ's promises.
- Repentance and return: Advent is an opportune time to return to Christ and His forgiveness, which is delivered through the church's ministry.

We pray that this devotional helps point you to Christ this Advent and we are so thankful for all the authors that contributed to this work. God's peace be with you!

In Christ,  
*Pastor Moreno*

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KEEPING  
SILENCE

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# LET ALL MORTAL FLESH KEEP SILENCE

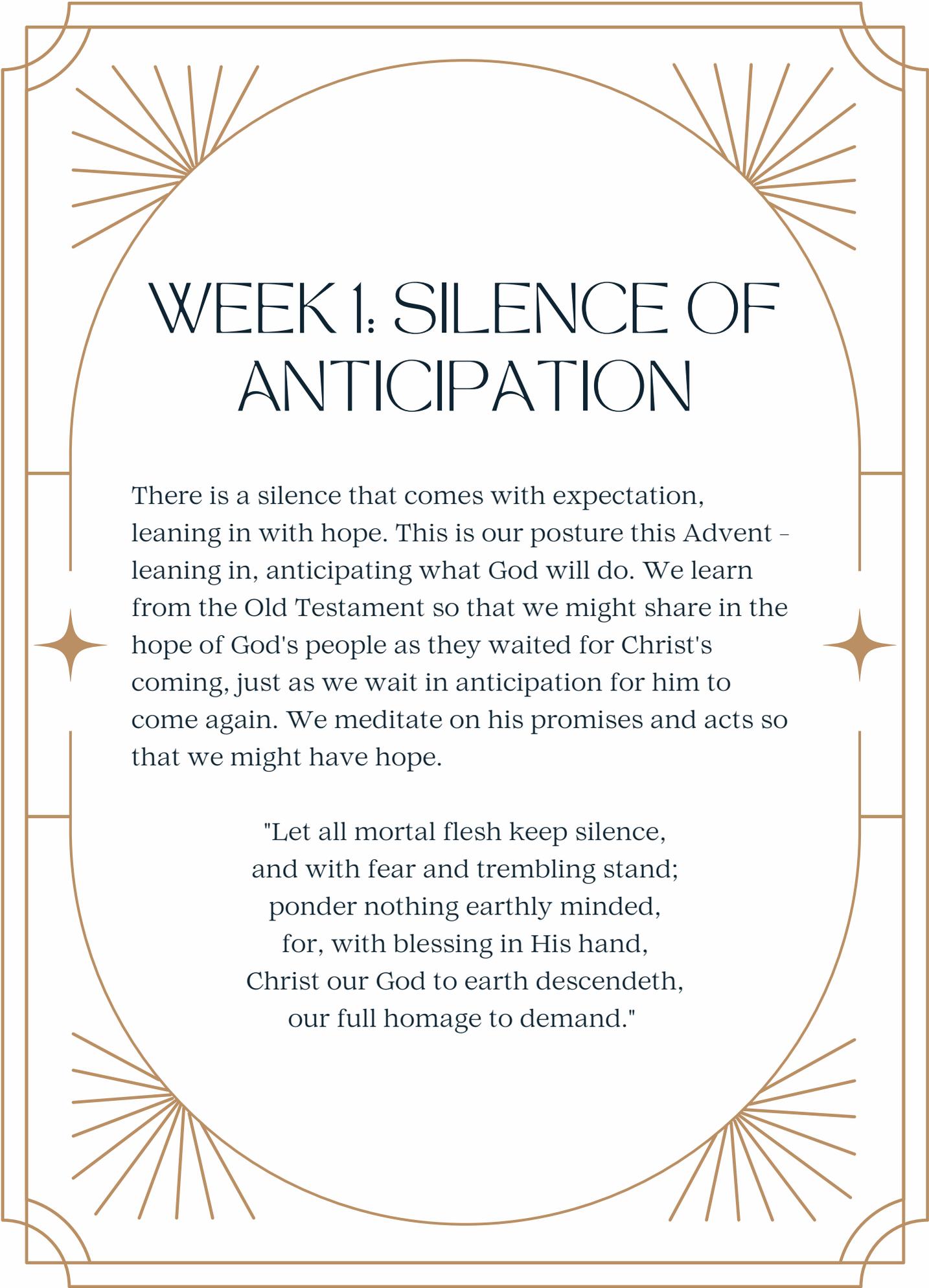
Let all mortal flesh keep silence,  
and with fear and trembling stand;  
ponder nothing earthly minded,  
for, with blessing in His hand,  
Christ our God to earth descendeth,  
our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary,  
as of old on earth He stood,  
Lord of lords, in human vesture,  
in the body and the blood.  
He will give to all the faithful  
His own self for heav'nly food.

Rank on rank, the host of heaven,  
spreads it's vanguard on the way,  
as the Light of light descendeth  
from the realms of endless day,  
that the pow'rs of hell may vanish  
as the darkness clears away.

At His feet the six-winged seraph,  
cherubim with sleepless eye,  
veil their faces to the Presence,  
as with ceaseless voice they cry,  
"Alleluia, alleluia,  
alleluia, Lord Most High!





# WEEK 1: SILENCE OF ANTICIPATION

There is a silence that comes with expectation, leaning in with hope. This is our posture this Advent - leaning in, anticipating what God will do. We learn from the Old Testament so that we might share in the hope of God's people as they waited for Christ's coming, just as we wait in anticipation for him to come again. We meditate on his promises and acts so that we might have hope.

"Let all mortal flesh keep silence,  
and with fear and trembling stand;  
ponder nothing earthly minded,  
for, with blessing in His hand,  
Christ our God to earth descendeth,  
our full homage to demand."

# DECEMBER 1: KEEPING SILENCE

HABAKKUK 2:20; PSALM 46  
WRITTEN BY JEREMI RICHARDSON

When I wrote my master's thesis, I focused on the spiritual discipline of silence. Why silence? Because everywhere we look, noise surrounds us—internal and external, digital, emotional, even spiritual static. But I've come to believe that when the world is right, when we're grounded in health and wholeness, silence is where the deepest work happens, and the truest holiness is found. My hope is that over these next 25 days, as we journey through Advent together, we each might find a quiet space within ourselves, a place where something new and life-giving can take root in our weary hearts.

For a long time, I feared silence. I kept busy, filling every moment with music, words, work—anything to avoid the stillness. But as I've grown, I've realized that silence doesn't mean something is missing. Instead, holy silence is the presence of awe. It's the hush that falls when you stand before someone greater than yourself. It's the stillness of a soul that leans in, waiting, watching, hoping.

Many have experienced the silence of awe before. The hush when a newborn takes their first breath. The breathless awe when you gaze over the vastness of the Grand Canyon. The quiet pride as your child steps up to the plate, or the tear-filled stillness when they take the stage for the first time. The reverence in the room when a loved one takes their last breath and enters Jesus's arms. These are moments too full for words—they demand silence. We keep silent not because there is nothing to say, but because the moment itself says everything. This posture of silence is the heart of Advent.

The prophet Habakkuk knew what waiting felt like. He cried out to God, frustrated and longing, and after receiving a vision and promise, he said, "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him" (Habakkuk 2:20). This isn't silence born of fear but of awe—not because God is distant, but because He is near. Silence becomes an act of trust.

Psalms 46 echoes this: The world shakes, nations rage, the earth gives way—but God speaks. "Be still, and know that I am God." In the middle of chaos, we are called to stillness.

Advent invites us into that stillness—the holy hush of waiting with expectation, listening for the footsteps of the coming King.

Over the next few weeks, we're going to explore this theme together through the Advent hymn Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence. This ancient hymn comes from the Liturgy of St. James, one of the earliest Christian worship services dating back to the 4th century. The version we sing today was translated into English by Gerard Moultrie in the 19th century, helping to bring this timeless call to reverent worship and awe-filled silence into the Western Church and into our hearts today.

As we remember Christ's coming and wait in hope for His return, we keep silence—not because God is silent, but because sometimes the deepest worship begins when we stop speaking.

*Lord, in a world full of noise, draw us into Your quiet. In the waiting, teach us to be still. Help us keep silence before You—not because You are absent, but because You are so present that words fall short. This Advent, may our silence be filled with trust, wonder, and worship. Amen.*

# DECEMBER 2: FEAR AND TREMBLING

## PSALM 2

WRITTEN BY AL MAURER

I cannot read Psalm 2 without hearing the music of Messiah in my head. Much of the text (vv.1-4,9) is used in Part 2 (#40-43)—just preceding the more famous Hallelujah Chorus.

The message of the psalm is clear: all the plotting of the people and their rulers opposing God is in vain. God rules. His will be done.

Instead of plotting, the psalmist advises, they should instead serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.

And yet, “fear” doesn’t quite capture the attitude we should take. A few weeks ago on the sidewalk in front of Planned Parenthood, a young woman approached us with questions. This was the Friday after Charlie Kirk’s murder, and it was quite a busy day.

Her name was Sophia (Greek for wisdom) and true to that name she was seeking answers. She had been raised Christian but—now a college student—had fallen away. She seemed especially put off by the teaching that we should fear God. She thought God was a hard taskmaster and that He would punish us severely for disobedience. Why should I be afraid of Him?” she asked.

English was not her first language. She thought of fear as only to be afraid of something. That’s not what is meant in the psalm. Rather, fear also means to treat something with reverential awe. It is in that sense that we fear God.

That is, of course, unless we plot against God as do the nations in the psalm. Then—as in v. 5—we will have the fear of God put into us. Justly so.

Yet this psalm is not so much about punishment as it is about promise. “I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill” (v6) and “Blessed are all who take refuge in Him” (v. 12).

We are to hold God in reverence and awe because He is all-powerful and in His mercy He has given us Jesus Christ to be our Lord and King.

The text of the Hallelujah Chorus confirms this: “The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15).

# DECEMBER 3: “SET YOUR HEARTS ON THINGS ABOVE”

COLOSSIANS 3: 1-4-  
WRITTEN BY MARITZA HALLER

God tells us to “set our hearts and minds on things above, where Christ is,” but how do we do that? Here are some disciplines developed through my years of reflecting on this question. My prayer is that they are a blessing to you. I don’t always get it right, but praise be to Jesus who is seated at the right hand of God.

- My day starts and ends with God - in His Word and prayer. Sometimes a full hour with Him and sometimes praying while walking my dog.
- My focus has shifted to what God calls me to be and do versus what I believe I should be or do. I used to pray small prayers. It took a long while until my cry to God turned to “God, make me more like Jesus, I surrender my life to You, may Your Will be done”. My controlling nature used to struggle with how He would answer, but time after time, He abundantly exceeds my expectations. Even during trials, He surrounds me with peace beyond understanding.
- The things that separate me from God became evident. If I don’t spend time with Him for days, I start to feel anxious. Then God’s voice softly calls me “child, I am here waiting.”
- Praise God for music and worship!
- Having people who guide me to Christ and hold me accountable is a blessing.
- God is love and He is everywhere. Talking to Him through my day is a joy and keeps me close to Him. From “Wow God! You did it again!” to “Seriously God?” or “Please Father, put me to sleep”, He hears us.

What about you? How do you set your hearts and minds on things above? May we walk this Advent season as Family of Christ supporting and praying for each other in our journey of becoming more like Jesus.



# DECEMBER 4: WITH HIS HAND

ISAIAH 41: 8-10

WRITTEN BY PASTOR MARK MORENO

One of the greatest joys in my life has been being a father. Now my children are grown and being a parent is much different than what it was when they were little. But there are moments that are burned into my memory.

When they were born, they were so tiny. I have photos where I am holding one of my children and they almost fit in one of my hands! I marveled at the gift of life and how God blessed us in that moment, and for years to come.

I fondly remember when they learned how to walk. They would fall onto their diapered rear ends, they would be unsteady on their feet and keep trying. One thing that they always looked for was my hand or mom's hand. We had to figure out when it was the right time to help and the right time to refrain.

When reading Isaiah 41, I cannot help but think of God as a loving father that speaks to His people in the midst of tumult and says, "I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

Our Lord knows when to help in an active manner and He knows when to help by refraining. He allows us to grow and struggle, He allows us to fall and get back up. When our legs are unsteady, when our faith is challenged, He holds us with His hand.

Maybe that is why, even now, when we want to connect with another person, we shake hands. We hold hands with our spouse. We cook, clean, serve and care with our hands. Isn't it a joy to know that God is "hands-on" with us and as He cares for us in His Son Jesus?



# DECEMBER 5: "GOD WITH US"

ISAIAH 9: 6-7, MATTHEW 1: 22-23  
WRITTEN BY GARRY ROHLER

In the first week of Advent, we come quietly to this season, with an expectation of what is to come in the following weeks. The silent anticipation of Christ coming into the world as a newborn child is not necessarily one of solemnity, but more as a desire to listen and learn more about what is to come soon. It is the initial beginning of celebration, which will culminate some time later, with Jesus' death and resurrection on the cross to save us from our sins.

In seeking this silence, I turn to music. as many of us do, because you can enjoy it quietly, while your thoughts focus on the words, tune and meaning of the song that might bring some profound emotion in your heart and strengthen faith.

One of my favorites is "*God with Us*" by MercyMe. The bridge in this song says, "such a tiny offering, compared to Calvary. Nevertheless, we lay it at your feet"... (being the gifts to the newborn child) and then in the refrain we hear "the debt is paid, these chains are gone, Emmanuel, God with Us". Thereby containing the two parts revolving around our devotions scripture passages.

In chapter one of Matthew, we read in verse 22 and 23: "now all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken to the prophet... behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel ". Just before that, we hear scripture speak of Mary and Joseph are to name the child Jesus "for he will save his people from their sins."

Chapter 9 of Isaiah has historically been titled " *Unto Us a child is Born* " , and we read starting in verse 6: "For unto us a child is born to us, a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace...(7) Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom to establish it to uphold it with justice and righteousness from this time forth and forever more. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this."

*Lord, gracious gift-giver, you sent your only begotten son to us, to grow and live among us, in order that we may strengthen our faith, knowing our sins are forgiven, through His death and resurrection. May your Holy Spirit guide my thoughts as I meditate silently, in anticipation this Advent season. Be in my thinking and my understanding this day, as we are all guided by Your gracious love, through Your Son, who is Christ Jesus. Emmanuel. God with us.*

# DECEMBER 6: WE ARE HIS

PSALM 100, JOHN 10: 27-28  
WRITTEN BY JULIE CURTISS

Have you ever had an injury...broken a bone, sustained injuries from a car accident or been burned in a fire? What were your expectations for the foreseeable future? Did you lean into God to help you through that difficult time?

During Game 6 of the 2019-20 NHL playoffs Gabe Landeskog, captain of the Colorado Avalanche, sustained a serious injury by being cut above his knee by a teammate's skate. This caused damage to the cartilage around his kneecap, which is a huge problem for a professional hockey player. It is difficult for cartilage to heal because of its poor regenerative ability. It has a very poor blood supply.

Gabe played the next two seasons and underwent several minor surgeries to repair the cartilage, but was in pain the whole time and was limited in his skating ability. On June 26, 2022 the Avalanche won the Stanley Cup!! After that game Gabe decided to have a surgery that no professional athlete had ever fully recovered from...a cartilage transplant.

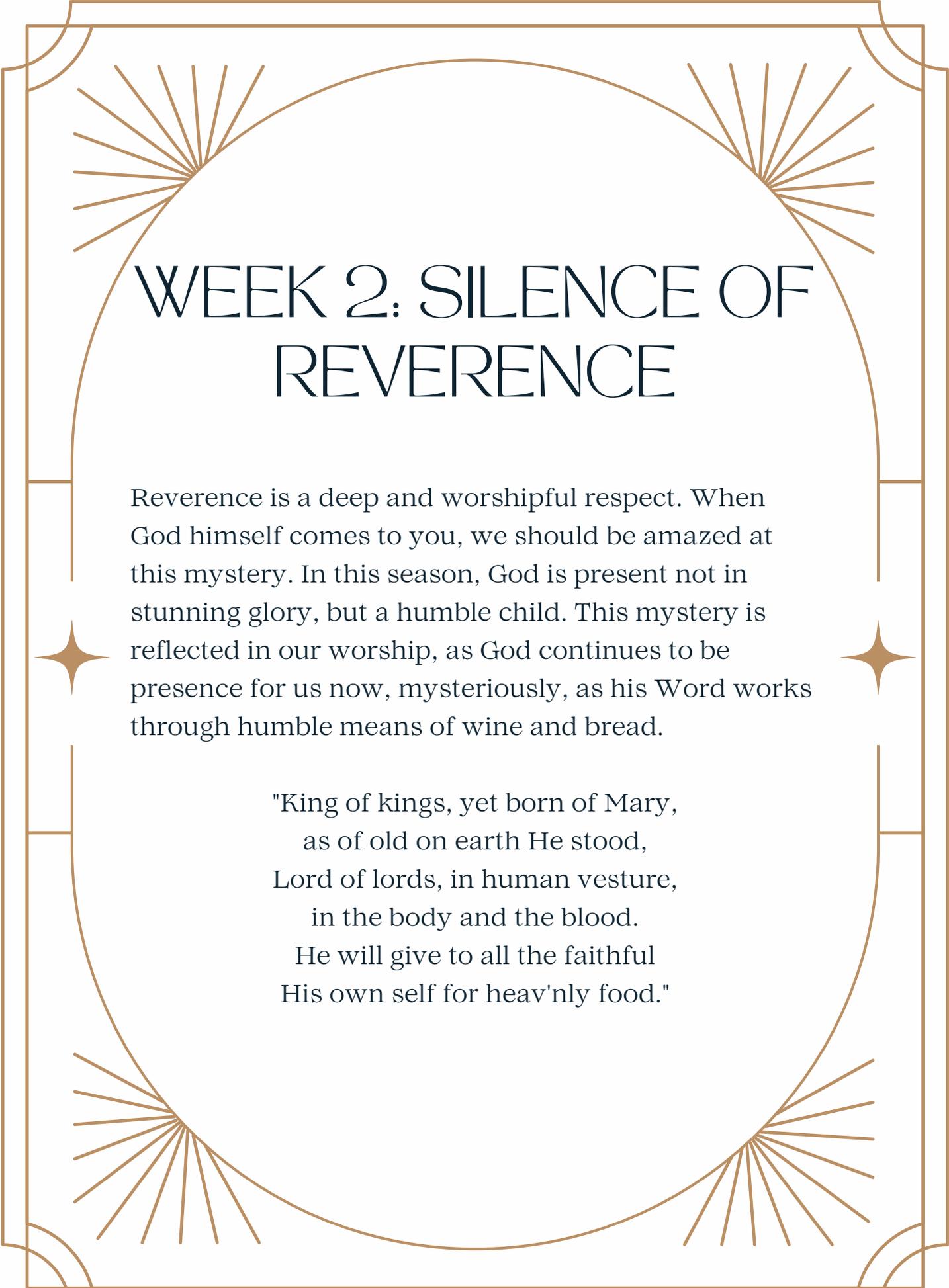
During the journey of recovery, we are truly in a state of silent anticipation. We are always wondering, but never certain, what God is doing and what will be the final outcome. So we lean into God and wait. That is where Gabe found himself.

His recovery timeline was projected to be much shorter than it ended up being as there were several major setbacks along the way. His journey is told by him in a documentary called "*A Clean Sheet*", meaning ice that has been prepared to skate on.

During his recovery Gabe had a saying: "*Today, better than yesterday. Tomorrow, better than today.*" His journey required incredible stamina and strength, both physical and emotional. Then on April 23, 2025, exactly 1,032 days or two months short of three years since his previous start for the Avalanche, Gabe returned to the ice! With a packed stadium of over 18,000 fans on their feet and chanting, "*Landy!, Landy!*" God blessed him by giving him a goal! The perfect ending to a new start.



Just like Gabe, we also wait with silent anticipation to see what the Lord will do in our lives, but because we are His, we are not unsure of the outcome. Because God was faithful to His promise of sending His Son, our Savior, to earth as a baby, we can wait with confidence knowing that He will also be faithful to His promise of sending Him to us again when the time is perfect.



## WEEK 2: SILENCE OF REVERENCE

Reverence is a deep and worshipful respect. When God himself comes to you, we should be amazed at this mystery. In this season, God is present not in stunning glory, but a humble child. This mystery is reflected in our worship, as God continues to be presence for us now, mysteriously, as his Word works through humble means of wine and bread.

"King of kings, yet born of Mary,  
as of old on earth He stood,  
Lord of lords, in human vesture,  
in the body and the blood.  
He will give to all the faithful  
His own self for heav'nly food."

# DECEMBER 8: KING OF KINGS, YET BORN OF MARY

GALATIANS 4:1-7 WRITTEN BY RON MOODY

*“The mystery of the humanity of Christ, that He sunk Himself into our flesh, is beyond all human understanding.” – Martin Luther*

Like many homes this time of year, we put out a nativity of Jesus’ birth to remind us of the humble and miraculous way God stepped into His creation. It is easy to focus only on the observable events of Bethlehem; the manger, the angels, and the shepherds. But looking deeper into the scene, the Incarnation (God becoming flesh) is really quite bewildering. What does it mean that the Maker of the universe “became flesh” (John 1:14) and why did God do it this way?

Great theologians have wrestled with these questions for centuries, ultimately concluding it to be a divine mystery. Based on Scripture, we know that Jesus was both human and God. Not blended. Rather, one person with two distinct natures: a fully divine nature and a fully human nature. As God, Jesus is unchangeable, infinite, ever-supreme in every way. But as to His human nature, He is changeable, subject to weakness, emotions, able to grow, suffer, and die (Luke 2:52).



Although the Incarnation remains a mystery, the Bible still gives us glimpses of God’s purpose. First, it was necessary that Jesus be born “under the law.” In Galatians 4, Paul writes, “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 Greek for “redeem” (*exagorase*) is the same word used to buy a slave out of bondage. That’s why Jesus came: to buy those who believe in Him out of our bondage to sin because we could not keep the law perfectly. We were literally slaves to our own sinfulness with no hope of escape.

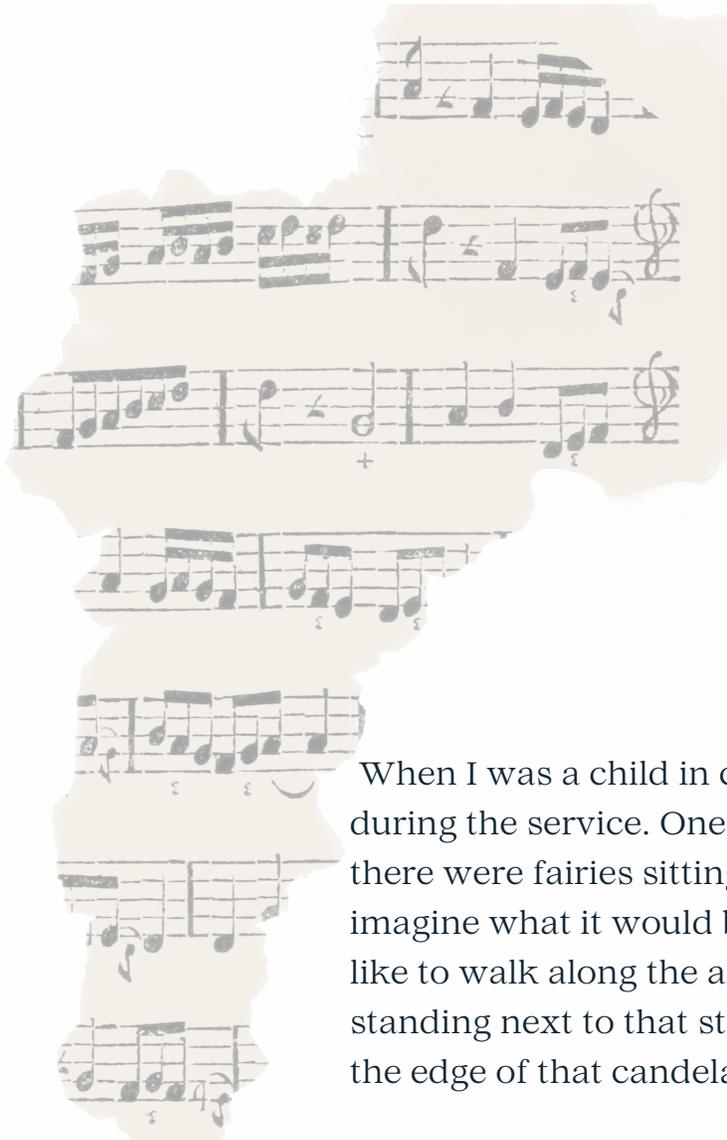
Second, it was necessary for the Savior to shed His blood for the forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22). A blood sacrifice, of course, requires a body of flesh and blood. And this was God’s plan for the Incarnation. Without the Incarnation, Christ could not really die, and the cross is meaningless. Lastly, Christ didn’t redeem us just to set us free to wander on our own. His intention was that we be adopted into God’s family. Through faith in Christ, we escape the need to follow the law endlessly with no hope of ever escaping our sin. We also find a home and family as children of God the Father, adopted heirs of Heaven with all the privileges & responsibilities that heirs of God possess. An adoption that instills in us another great mystery of God’s spirit and the continuing work of Christ in us.

So, when you gaze upon a nativity this Christmas season, look a little deeper and think about the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world to make us heirs of Heaven.

# DECEMBER 9: STANDING ON EARTH

## HEBREWS 1:1-2

WRITTEN BY KATY MARIOTTI



*“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.”*  
*Hebrews 1:1-2*

When I was a child in church, sometimes my mind would wander during the service. One of the things I used to imagine was that there were fairies sitting around and listening to the service, and I’d imagine what it would be like to be one of them: What would it feel like to walk along the altar? What would it feel like to be tiny standing next to that stained-glass window? What if I could sit on the edge of that candelabra?

Sometimes I think God can feel so big that He seems far away, and He seems almost imaginary like the fairies I pictured. My imagining them small can feel the same as imagining God big- what must it be like for Him, looking at us so small down here? But God isn’t imaginary, and He sent His very real Son to ACTUALLY be here with us. He walked on the dirt, He felt the sun on His face, He smelled and tasted just like we do. When we hear the words of Jesus, we hear the words of God. The amount of love that it took to do what Jesus did is unfathomable, and yet it happened.

Let us stand in reverence this season of what is unimaginable and yet also real!

# DECEMBER 10: GOD'S FULLNESS WITH US

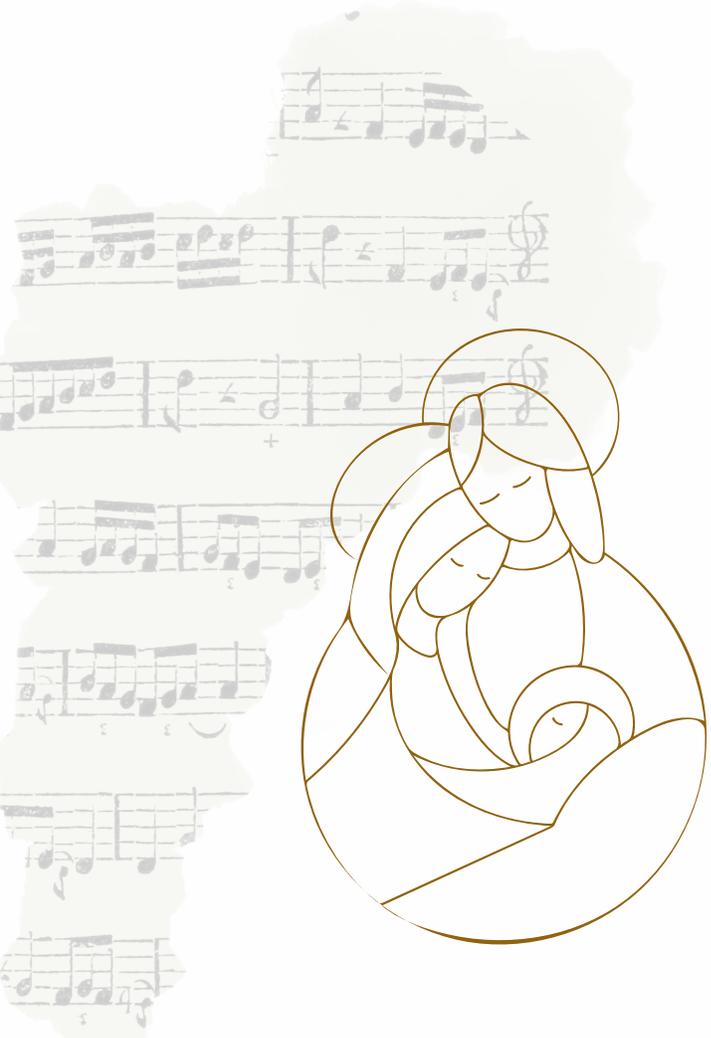
COLOSSIANS 1:19-23

WRITTEN BY SPENCER PEREGOY

Christmas does not bring “comfort and joy” for everyone. A recent survey revealed 61% of Americans dread the holidays due to increased spending. 75% of parents with children under the age of 18 fear disappointing their children during the holidays. Christmas brings the challenges of shopping, gifts, decorating, travel, and gatherings that can distract us from the joy God intends us to have.

The words from Colossians 1 are packed with good news of what God does to “reconcile, bring peace, present us holy and blameless to be stable, steadfast and not shifting from the Gospel.” Words which are intended to create in us hope and deep love for the celebration of what God has done for you at Christmas.

This year, don't just let Christmas “happen.” Reflect on God's action in sending Jesus to love and redeem you as His precious child.



*Dear Jesus,*

*Thank You for restoring us  
through Your blood on the  
cross.*

*Through You, we have peace  
and hope this Christmas  
season.*

*Keep our hearts steadfast in  
faith, rooted and grounded in  
Your truth.*

*Help us live each day holy,  
blameless, and secure in Your  
love.*

*Amen.*

# DECEMBER 11: IN THE BODY AND THE BLOOD

1 CORINTHIANS 11: 23-26  
WRITTEN BY PASTOR AIDAN MOON

*“Yet this is how He comes. Through wine and bread  
Love chooses to be emptied into me.”*

In his poem *Love’s Choice*, Malcolm Guite marvels at the mystery of the Lord’s Supper – that the Word made flesh still comes to us in bread and wine, body and blood.

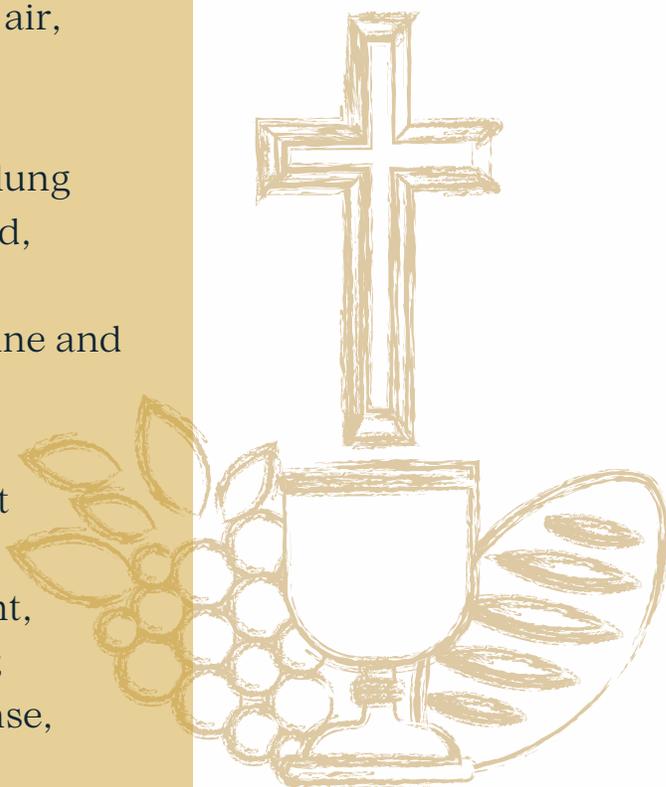
Each time we gather at our Lord’s table, we hear His promise: “This is my body. This is my blood.” And Jesus again comes to feed us with Himself as heavenly food, to grant to us a real, physical connection.

It is the deepest Communion. King of Kings, Lord of Lords, yet, enmeshed with us, giving of Himself to us. He gives us something to cling to in faith. He gives us Himself. We belong to Him, for He has chosen, in love, to “*seep into each sense*” and “*dye himself into experience.*”

## Love’s Choice

This bread is light, dissolving, almost air,  
A little visitation on my tongue,  
A wafer-thin sensation, hardly there.  
This taste of wine is brief in flavour, flung  
A moment to the palate’s roof and fled,  
Even its aftertaste a memory.  
Yet this is how He comes. Through wine and  
bread  
Love chooses to be emptied into me.  
He does not come in unimagined light  
Too bright to be denied, too absolute  
For consciousness, too strong for sight,  
Leaving the seer blind, the poet mute;  
Chooses instead to seep into each sense,  
To dye himself into experience.

– Malcolm Guite, “*Sounding the Seasons*”



# DECEMBER 12: GIVING OF HIMSELF

ROMANS 8:32, EPHESIANS 2: 8-9  
WRITTEN BY GARRY ROHLER

Reverence for the Lord God has so many different facets. Silence is one of those. As we meditate in silence, it allows us to hear that still small voice from God in our mind, during a devotion, worship, or prayer. The Magi (Wise Men), known to be the first Gentiles to come before the Christ Child at the manger to honor this newborn king in silent reverence, bringing gifts, quiet and humble, even though they were wealthy and wise. The Magi understood the magnitude of this event in history, that a silent reverence was necessary for that moment of visitation, because of what they had been told about the birth of the Christ Child.



Chapter 8 of Romans, in verse 32...“He who did not spare His own Son but gave him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?”

We know the gift he gave was salvation, God's grace and love given freely to all people. As with all gifts, there's a giver, and a recipient. We are called upon by the Holy Spirit to accept this great gift from God.

Verses 8 and 9 of Ephesians, chapter 2 says.... “For by grace, you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

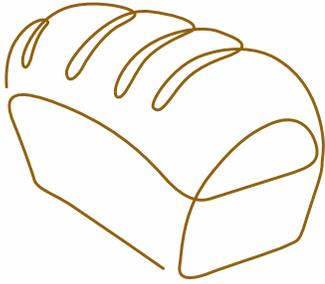
God's grace in this gift not only offers salvation, but it also secures our salvation through the gift of faith in Christ Jesus. We are brought to this gift of faith by the power of the Holy Spirit.

*Secure in us O Lord, Through your Holy Spirit, a continual and holy reverence for the gift of your Son Jesus not just in this Advent season, but every single day. Strengthen our faith, make us bold to proclaim Your Word. Through Your Son Jesus Christ, Amen.*

# DECEMBER 13: BREAD FROM HEAVEN

JOHN 6: 47-51

WRITTEN BY JANICE DAHL



Bread appears first in the Bible in Genesis, and certainly makes its way through the Bible as a staple food of humankind. God knew if He provided for the physical needs of people, they would be able to hear Him. Bread is woven through the Bible until the time Jesus Christ announces, “I Am the Bread of Life.”

Wow! This whole passage from John gives me goosebumps. Can you even imagine hearing Jesus lay down the way to eternal life right in front of you? It would be pretty amazing. But it is right in front of us, not only in this beautiful passage, but in so many others.

I don't know about you, but I love bread. All kinds of bread. Doesn't everyone? So here is Jesus, telling us that He is the bread. I'm up for it. This bread, His bread, will give me eternal life. I don't have to worry about gluten or getting fat. I'm telling you, this, my friends, is the most important food ever: the food of eternal life.

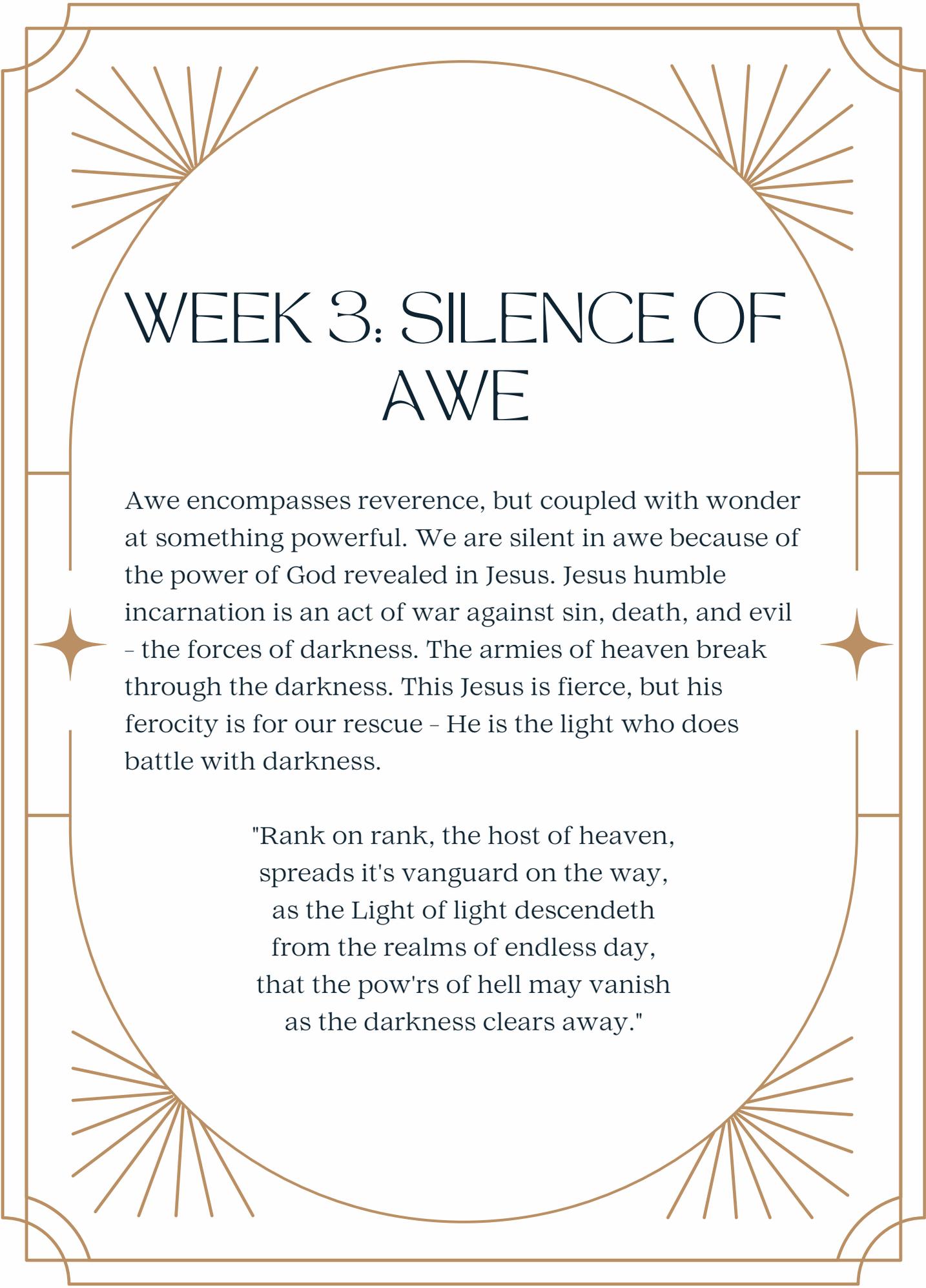
So what do we have to do to eat at this bread bar? Jesus tells us that the bread of life comes down from heaven, the bread that is of His flesh, given to us for the life of the world. We can eat all we want and feel the fullness of His love. All we have to do is come to Him.

In John 6:49, the manna from heaven is both physical and temporal. The bread kept their bodies alive for a day, but Jesus keeps us alive forever. I feel sadness that so many fall away at the struggle to keep the faith beyond the day, to the struggle to retain a relationship with Jesus. That is what leads to a greater satisfaction and peace. Hey, don't get me wrong, it's not easy - it's just worth it.

Sometimes I struggle to feel full. I want things of the world and I have to remember to turn first to the Lord to feel that fullness in His love. Americans are pretty steeped in the culture of “more stuff,” so when I want “more stuff,” I try to remember not to stuff myself, but to put down what I'm doing and pick up the Word of God. After all, if the Lord can provide the Bread of Life, the very least I can do is fill myself with it.

I watch so many people struggle and feel lost while they delve ever deeper into the internet. I relate it to that new song “*Dusty Bibles*,” where the lyrics go “We got dust on our Bibles, brand new iPhones. No wonder why we feel this way.” The song goes on to sing about returning to old ways, and I pray we do.

***The Silence of Reverence.*** If you know me, you know I struggle a bit with silence. I love to laugh, sing loudly and off-key, and I'm kind of bossy. I laughed out loud when I saw the title of our Devotional and the invitation to write. Still, I feel such a sense of reverence when I think of this gift Jesus gave to us. He is the provider of bread that never, ever runs out. He is the Life.



## WEEK 3: SILENCE OF AWE

Awe encompasses reverence, but coupled with wonder at something powerful. We are silent in awe because of the power of God revealed in Jesus. Jesus humble incarnation is an act of war against sin, death, and evil - the forces of darkness. The armies of heaven break through the darkness. This Jesus is fierce, but his ferocity is for our rescue - He is the light who does battle with darkness.

"Rank on rank, the host of heaven,  
spreads it's vanguard on the way,  
as the Light of light descendeth  
from the realms of endless day,  
that the pow'rs of hell may vanish  
as the darkness clears away."

# DECEMBER 15: THE HOST OF HEAVEN

LUKE 2: 8-14

WRITTEN BY SONJA GENKE

What comes to mind when you hear the words of Luke 2? For me, I picture children dressed as shepherds, angels, and sheep—trying to remember when to stand or sit, or what line they're supposed to say. I've lost track of the number of Christmas programs I have been a part of, which means that I have read, recited, or heard the words from Luke 2 more times than I can count. That's why I was surprised by the images that came to mind as I pondered these verses this year.

Although not exactly how the Bible describes angels, I usually think of them robed and white with sparkly, silver halos. My understanding of "heavenly hosts" has grown. Heavenly hosts, or the host of heaven, would have been more like an army in strength and number. God sent an army of mighty, powerful angels to announce the arrival of His son, our Savior!

We don't know how many angels there were, but we know it was a multitude—far more than just a few. So, with a sky filled with angels singing and glorifying God, where is the silence of awe that is our focus this week? Imagine if you were at work or school, and outside your window you saw the sky filled with angels telling of the birth of a baby. How would you react?

I think this is where the silence of awe enters our story. I'm sure that we would be like the shepherds. Some versions of the Bible say that the shepherds were filled with great fear. While they may have been afraid, the word fear in the Bible often means a great respect or awe. May we, too, be filled with awe when we think about the birth of Jesus—the One who came to be our Savior from sin.



# DECEMBER 16: OUR VANGUARD

REVELATION 19: 14-16, DEUTERONOMY 31: 7-8

WRITTEN BY PASTOR AIDAN MOON

What battles are you fighting?

We live in a world with many battles. Perhaps we take comfort in saying, “God is on my side!”

Joshua had a very real battle before him. But this was only a part of a larger spiritual struggle. He wondered if God was on his side, but that was the wrong question. The question was whether Joshua was on God’s side.

Joshua was moved to awe, but also was comforted by the fact that the battle God was fighting was far larger than his own – a battle against the spiritual forces of darkness. In this battle, Joshua had to listen and trust that God went before him, a vanguard that would protect His people.

When you picture Jesus, what do you see? A baby in a manger? A gentle shepherd with his lamb? What about a powerful warrior king?

Behind the humble reality of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, there is a battle raging, and Jesus is a warrior. Revelation shows Him at the head of mighty angel armies. It is an awe-inspiring image.

Amid the fear, violence, and injustice of our world, remember: “*We do not wrestle against flesh and blood*” (Ephesians 6:12). “*The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.*” (1 John 3:8). Jesus does not take sides in our earthly battles, but fights to win all people back to Himself.

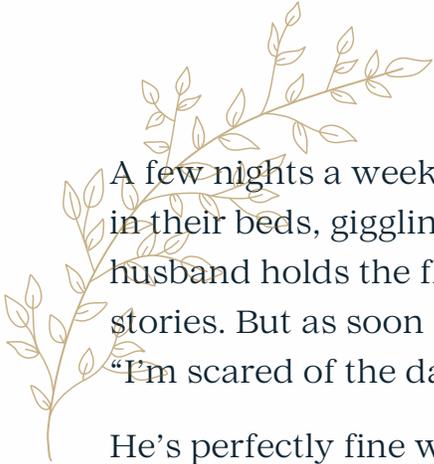
Those baptized into Christ have been rescued, bought back, and brought to God’s side. The victory is His, and He goes before us. He is our vanguard, so we have no reason to be afraid.

*Dear Jesus, help us be brave. Forgive us when we fight our own battles. Go before us and help us to trust you, speaking your Word of peace. Amen.*

# DECEMBER 17: “I HAVE COME AS A LIGHT”

JOHN 12: 44-50

WRITTEN BY AMANDA GUTZMANN



A few nights a week before bed, a little ritual unfolds in our home: our kids lie in their beds, giggling and creating shadow puppets on the wall while my husband holds the flashlight. Together, they invent silly songs, characters, and stories. But as soon as the flashlight clicks off, our 3-year-old often whispers, “I’m scared of the dark.”

He’s perfectly fine when the room is lit—but once he’s surrounded by darkness, his worries creep in.

Isn’t that just like us?

As adults, we may not be afraid of literal darkness, but we, too, face seasons where we feel overwhelmed—by anxiety, fear, stress, or the unknown. Darkness takes different forms, but the feeling is the same.

In John 12:46, Jesus reminds us:

“I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.”



Just as my husband doesn’t shame our son for being afraid but gently comforts him and assures him he’s safe—Jesus does the same for us. He doesn’t come to condemn or judge. He comes to rescue. He invites us to believe, to trust, and to step into the light of eternal life through the Father.

As we walk through the Advent season—a time of anticipation and hope—I pray that instead of being weighed down by to-do lists, stress, or fear, you will remember Christ’s promise. Let His light shine brighter than the darkness.

*Trust in His promises. Walk in His truth. And let His light lead you to the promise of eternal life.*



# DECEMBER 18: FROM HEAVEN FOR GOD'S WILL

JOHN 6: 37-40  
WRITTEN BY KARISSA HENGST

Christmas is full of sound—bells ringing, songs playing, children laughing. But sometimes, it's good to be quiet for a moment. There's an old hymn that begins:

*“Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand;  
ponder nothing earthly-minded, for with blessing in His hand,  
Christ our God to earth descendeth, our full homage to demand.”*

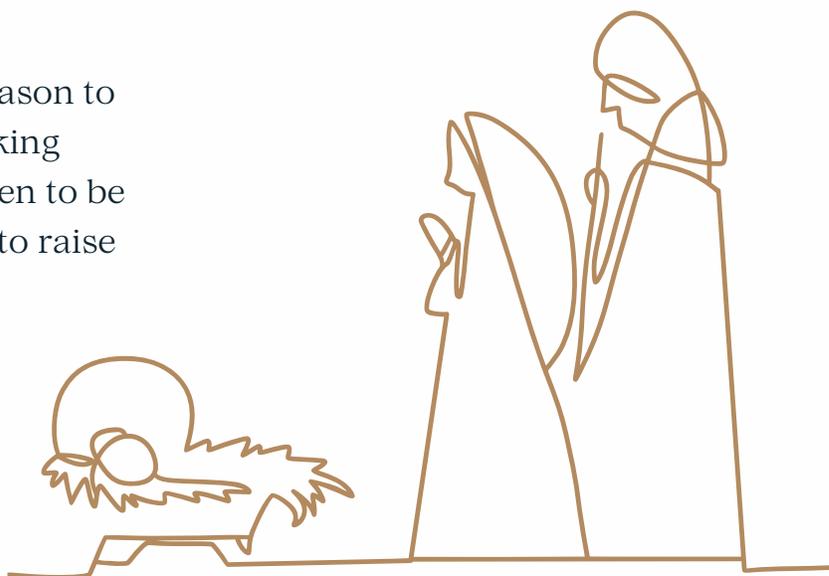
These words invite us to “keep silence”—not because there's nothing to say, but because something wonderful is happening. In the stillness of that first Christmas night, heaven touched earth. Jesus, the Son of God, came down from heaven to do his Father's will - to bring life, forgiveness, and hope to every one of us.

When we stop and grow quiet, we can listen better.

In the silence, we remember that God has come near to us in Jesus. He keeps his promise never to turn us away, and He gives us life that never ends.

Christmas is not only about a baby in a manger long ago; it is about Jesus still coming to us today. He comes through His Word, through worship, through His love shared among us.

So, take a few moments this season to “keep silence.” Sit quietly, thinking about Jesus -- how He left heaven to be with us, and how He promises to raise us up to be with Him forever.



# DECEMBER 19: RESCUED FROM DARKNESS

COLOSSIANS 1:13-14  
WRITTEN BY NAOMI MOON

*“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”*  
*Colossians 1:13-14*



Paul writes to the church of Colossae, encouraging them in their ministry and perseverance in the Lord. One might imagine a domain of darkness Paul refers to as a vast void, where there is nothingness and silence. Yet, in the world today and even when Paul was writing these words of encouragement, the domain of darkness might be more like constant and chaotic noise. Maybe it's the news, or the hatred, or hurtful words between family members. Maybe this is harsh words at work, or the constant whining and complaining of children. It can sometimes feel like too much, that we can't take the noise. We might feel blind in the darkness while our ears are overwhelmed.

Yet, Christ brings peace to the chaos. He not only pulls us out of the domain of darkness and into His kingdom of light, but labels us as his own in His new kingdom. He has spoken a new identity of beloved children to us, those redeemed in His name. Christ's words of forgiveness are proclaimed to us, whispers of calm in the bombarding noise. Instead of leaving us in the chaos, God fills us with the sound of His voice through the words of His Son. We must only sit in silence and hear the words of our Lord.



# DECEMBER 20: THE DARKNESS CLEARS AWAY

JOHN 1: 4-5  
WRITTEN BY ANNA HAIAR



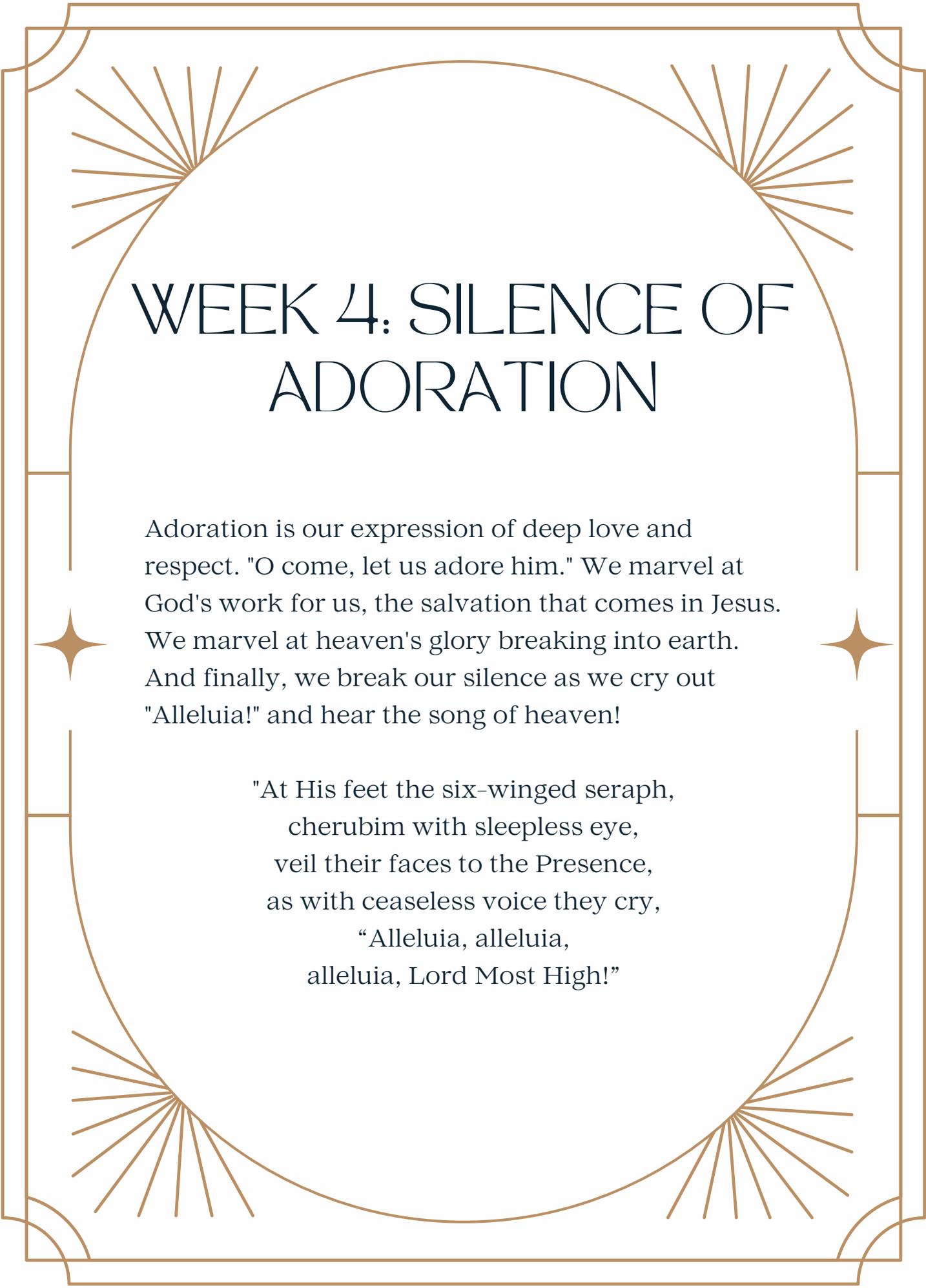
There are moments when words just aren't enough. We can only imagine what John felt as he began describing when God's Word became flesh – a moment too holy, too weighty, too wondrous to capture. A moment met with silent awe. The season of Advent invites us into that same kind of silence.

Jesus entered a world thick with shadow. The darkness was loud – filled with fear, oppression, and sin's relentless echo. Yet when the Light came, the brilliance of His presence scattered the darkness without a sound. Heaven's armies stood at attention, not to wage war with noise and fury, but to herald a victory already assured.

This is the silence of awe: standing before power cloaked in humility, before the infant wrapped in swaddling cloths. The humble manger where God's Word became flesh was not a sign of weakness; it was the opening move of a divine rescue. Jesus' first breath was the wind of redemption – the quiet beginning of hell's undoing. The tiny hands that reached for Mary were the same hands that would crush the power of death. While the manger looked peaceful, it marked the front line of the greatest victory in history.

This Advent, may we find ourselves standing in awe of the Light breaking through the darkness. We fall silent because we are witnesses to triumph – the triumph of Jesus over sin, death, and the devil. We keep quiet not because there's nothing to say, but because we stand before something greater than words can describe.

*Light a candle & stand in silence together praying a prayer thanking Jesus for the light that overcomes darkness this Advent season.*



# WEEK 4: SILENCE OF ADORATION

Adoration is our expression of deep love and respect. "O come, let us adore him." We marvel at God's work for us, the salvation that comes in Jesus. We marvel at heaven's glory breaking into earth. And finally, we break our silence as we cry out "Alleluia!" and hear the song of heaven!

"At His feet the six-winged seraph,  
cherubim with sleepless eye,  
veil their faces to the Presence,  
as with ceaseless voice they cry,  
"Alleluia, alleluia,  
alleluia, Lord Most High!"

# DECEMBER 22: SERAPHIM AND CHERUBIM

REVELATION 7:11-17, PSALM 103:17-22

WRITTEN BY JENNY PAYTON

Sometimes I like to imagine what things will be like in heaven. Are the streets really made of gold, and do people continuously praise the Lord? I read about it in the Bible, and yet I know that my imagination doesn't do it justice.

When my nephew passed away a few years ago, my aunt had a vision of all our family members who have passed, running up to meet him in heaven. They cheered, shouted, and patted him on the back.

They were so excited to welcome him home. Most of these relatives had never met him on earth, and yet here they were, helping welcome him to heaven. I believe that's because nothing else compares to it. It's a place with no sorrow or pain, no hunger or thirst. A place where, according to Revelation chapter 7, angels bow down and praise God. Those of us who believe will get to experience that one day for ourselves. We will get to praise him for all eternity.

But why wait until then? God is worthy of our praise now! Psalm 103:22 says, "Praise the Lord, my soul." It reminds me of the song, "*Same God*" by Hannah Kerr. She says, "The same God who makes the planets spin, tells the tide when it should rise, put the color in my eyes. The same God who makes the seasons change, knows the number of the stars, every secret in my heart." Think about that for a moment. God, the very one who made the world and everything in it, cares about every detail of your life. He knows the number of hairs on your head and the worries in your heart. How can we not adore and praise Him? Over this next week, think about how big our God is and find ways to worship Him.



# DECEMBER 23: HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ISAIAH 6:2-5, REVELATION 4:8  
WRITTEN BY JEREMI RICHARDSON

Today, as we reflect on Isaiah 6:2–5, we encounter the word holy—thrice repeated, a biblical proclamation and the very heart of worship. “Holy, holy, holy” calls us into awe-filled reverence for God’s perfect and unmatched holiness. It reminds us that God alone is worthy of all praise and adoration, a truth perfectly fitting as we prepare to celebrate His coming at Christmas.

Though we’ve sung the *Sanctus* countless times, today I pray we hear its depth: the Holy God who reigns above chose to dwell among us in the vulnerable birth of a child. This is the miracle of Christmas. Immanuel, God with us is our joy, our salvation, our everlasting hope.

Isaiah’s vision shows the throne room of heaven, where six-winged seraphim stand before God. He describes them covering their faces and feet with wings, flying with the others, crying ceaselessly, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” (Isaiah 6:2–3). The sound shakes the very foundations, and Isaiah is overwhelmed, aware of his unworthiness (Isaiah 6:4–5).

This scene reminds me of the early stages of childbirth—a sacred tension, filled with awe and trembling, veiled in mystery. Like the seraphim covering their faces, a mother prepares for new life, sensing something monumental unfolding. The quiet expectancy holds wonder and intensity, as the foundation of all that will be shifts, just as Isaiah’s temple shakes with those angelic voices.

Revelation paints a similar picture of ceaseless worship around God’s throne, with four living creatures who never stop crying, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!” (Revelation 4:8).

Adoration flows naturally when we marvel at God’s work in our salvation. We stand in wonder as heaven’s glory breaks into earth through the birth of Jesus, the Word made flesh.

Isaiah was overwhelmed by God’s holiness and his own sinfulness. But in Christ, God drew near, bridging heaven and earth. So today, let us join heaven’s song and lift our voices: *Holy, holy, holy!*

In this sacred mystery, we find our greatest hope: God’s overwhelming holiness does not distance Him from us but draws us near. The holy One who veils His glory in heaven stooped down to meet us in our brokenness, bringing salvation, peace, and restoration. As we join the heavenly chorus, may we carry this hope; that the holiness we adore is the holiness that heals, redeems, and invites us into eternal fellowship with Him.

*Lord, fill us with awe and wonder as we stand before Your holiness. Help us to adore You with ceaseless praise like the heavenly hosts. May our hearts join their song this Christmas and always. Amen.*

# DECEMBER 24: THE PRESENCE

REVELATION 21:3 WRITTEN BY PASTOR AIDAN MOON

*“Oh, there's no place like home for the holidays  
'Cause no matter how far away you roam  
When you pine for the sunshine of a friendly gaze  
For the holidays, you can't beat home, sweet home...”*

We all long for home. We long for the warmth of familiar faces and the comfort of belonging. We feel it most in this season. We have moments of peace, joy, and love; yet the more God shapes us, the more we sense that we are not home yet.

This Christmas Eve, may you know the peace of God's presence: the warmth of His face shining upon you. As we adore the Christ-child, may we be in awe that the heavenly, glorious presence of God has come near to us. In Jesus, the promise of the ancient blessing is fulfilled:

“The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make His face shine on you  
and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and  
give you peace.”

FAMILY CONNECTION:  
Take turns speaking this  
blessing over one another.

Your sin, your heartache, your part in this broken world don't define you. God's face shines on us now. Because of Jesus, God looks on you with favor, and one day you will be fully at home with Him. The presence of God is now in *“Immanuel”*; at the end of the story God's presence makes the world new, a home with us forever. So no matter how far we roam, we live in hope for home, sweet home.

*“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.” – Rev. 21:3*

# DECEMBER 25: ALLELUIA, LORD MOST HIGH!

REVELATION 5:13

WRITTEN BY PASTOR MARK MORENO

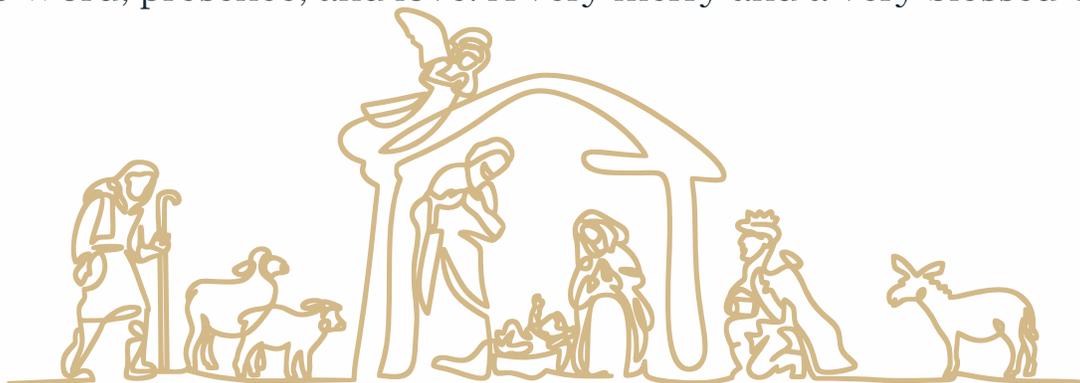
There are sacred moments that are filled with God's Word, with His presence, with His love. Today, Christmas Day, is one of those sacred moments that is filled with the fulfillment of God's promises in the newborn King, Jesus!

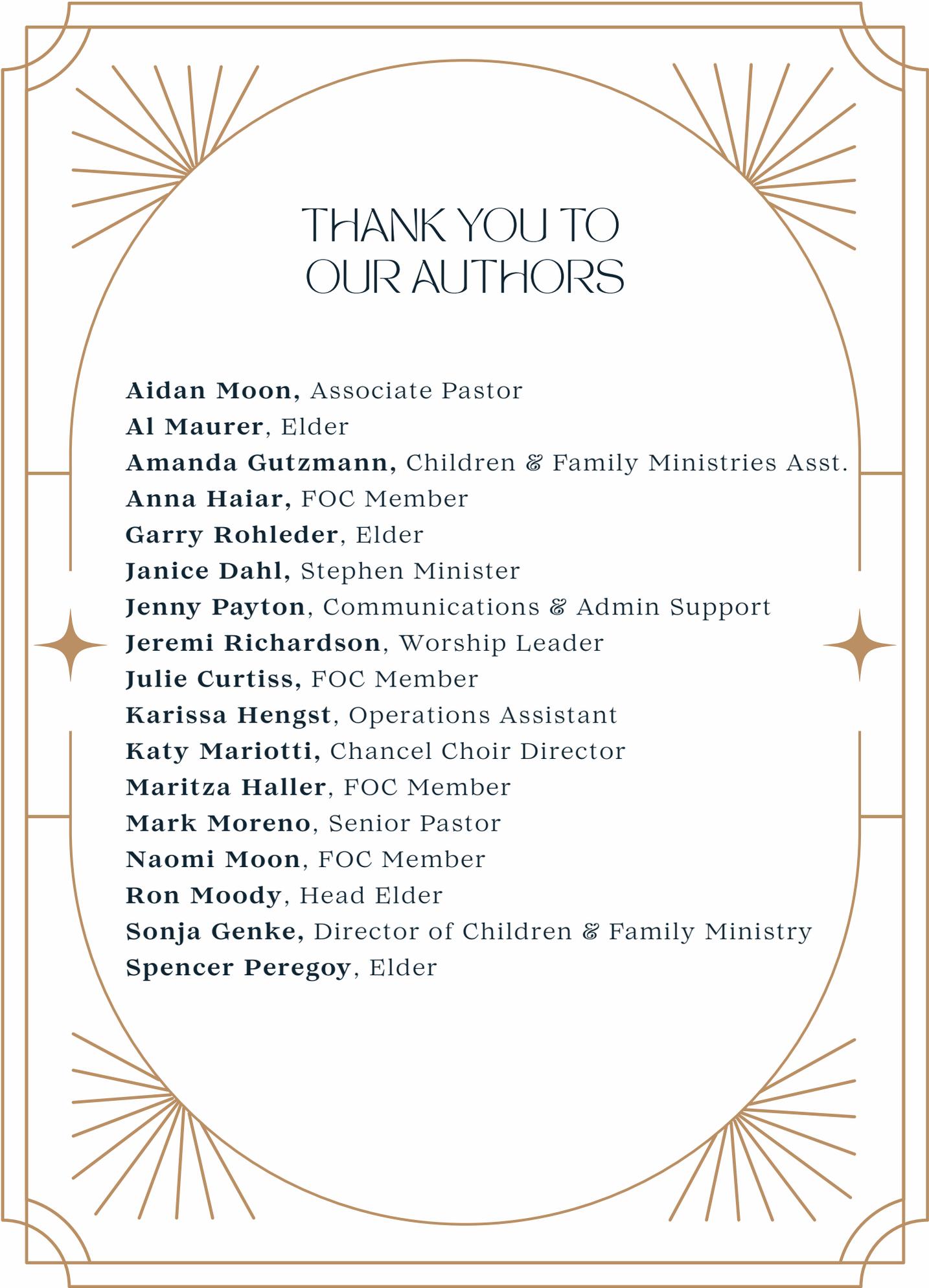
Sometimes words just fail me when it comes to raising a praise, an alleluia to our Lord. One of my favorite writers, George Herbert wrote a poem, "Christmas" that beautifully captures this sentiment.

*The shepherds sing; and shall I silent be? My God, no hymn for thee?  
My soul 's a shepherd too; a flock it feeds Of thoughts, and words, and deeds.  
The pasture is thy word: the streams, thy grace Enriching all the place.  
Shepherd and flock shall sing, and all my powers Out-sing the day-light hours.  
Then we will chide the son for letting night Take up his place and right:  
We sing one common Lord; wherefore he should, Himself the candle hold.  
I will go searching, till I find a son, Shall stay, till we have done;  
A willing shiner, that shall shine as gladly, As frost-nipt sons look sadly.  
Then we will sing, shine all our own day, And one another pay:  
His beams shall cheer my breast, and both so twine,  
Till ev'n his beams sing, and my music shine*

We join the angels, the shepherds, the whole world with our praises this day, "To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever"!

My prayer for you is that you would enjoy the fullness of what it means to praise God for His Word, presence, and love. A very merry and a very blessed Christmas!





# THANK YOU TO OUR AUTHORS

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**Mark Moreno**, Senior Pastor

**Naomi Moon**, FOC Member

**Ron Moody**, Head Elder

**Sonja Genke**, Director of Children & Family Ministry

**Spencer Peregoy**, Elder

# CHRISTMAS AT FAMILY OF CHRIST

- **Wednesday, December 3rd**

“When Hope Is a Whisper: A Service of Lament”

Advent Service of Lament 6:30pm

- **Friday, December 5th**

Christmas Lighting, 6:30pm

- **Sunday, December 7th**

Children's Christmas Program, 11:15am

- **Wednesday, December 10th**

“The Silence Shines: A Service of Stories & Carols”

Advent 6:30pm

- **Wednesday, December 17th**

“Songs for the Coming Light”

Advent 6:30pm

- **Christmas Eve - December 24th**

Classic Service - 12:00pm

Modern Service - 3:00pm

Modern Service - 5:00pm

Classic Service - 7:00pm

- **Christmas Day - December 25th**

Morning Service - 10:00am

