WHILE WE WAIT

A DEVOTIONAL FOR ADVENT
WELCOME TO ADVENT

I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along. He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what He has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the Lord. Oh, the joys of those who trust in the Lord!

Psalm 40:1-4a

We know that the Lord is good to those who wait for him (Lamentations 3:25), that he’s promised to lead us down paths of steadfast love and faithfulness (Psalm 25:10), but do we trust that our time of waiting is worth all the discomfort? Is our time of waiting marked by integrity and uprightness (Psalm 25:22)?

This Advent season, we’ll be making space to wrestle with our waiting in faith that the Lord will, in fact, be good to us as we seek Him. Advent is the Church’s annual practice of remembering the coming of God to earth in the body of Christ (celebration) and yearning for His return (longing). At its essence, Advent is the delicate balance of yearning and consummation in the Christian heart. As it is with much of the Christian life, we hold two seemingly opposing realities at once.

Longing and waiting are unpleasant, at best. We long to heal from disease or heartbreak, to feel peace in ourselves and in our relationships, for our circumstances to change, for promises to be realized. During Advent, we acknowledge our unmet desires with honesty, and we trust that God sees and hears and is working all things for our good (Romans 8:28). We also use our flesh-bound yearnings as reminders of our soul’s true home: with God. In the next four weeks, we intentionally seek to remember that our ultimate peace, our eternal safety, the exhale of our bated breath is actually coming with the return of Christ. And we can be certain because through Jesus, God proved Himself trustworthy in keeping His promises.
We’ll be spending the next four weeks meditating on four Psalms that guide us through the discipline of waiting on God: Psalm 25, Psalm 27, Psalm 40, and Psalm 130. Scriptural meditation requires us to slow down and enter the Psalms from our hearts. We’ll practice allowing the word of God to form us and transform us, not merely inform us.

Each day, you are encouraged to read the given text three times. Feel free to underline and take notes, to read aloud or rewrite the text for yourself. Once you’ve ingested the verses, you are encouraged to pray honestly through them using the given prompts. Ask that God would reveal dark places in you through his illuminating word. There is space on each page to write and reflect on what the Spirit revealed to you during your time of quiet pondering and prayer. It will be helpful later to look back on what God taught you each day.

We hope and pray that this season will be rich in rest, encouragement, and peace for each of us. We trust that God will, in fact, be faithful to us while we wait.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

Prepare Him Room: Celebrating the Birth of Jesus (Family Devotional that corresponds with our Advent lessons in The Oaks Kids 4 years old - 1st grade)

Song of the Stars: A Christmas Story by Sally Lloyd-Jones

A Jesus Christmas: Explore God’s Amazing Plan for Christmas by Barbara Reaoch

The Christmas Promise by Alison Mitchell

The Littlest Watchman: Watching and Waiting for the Very First Christmas by Scott James

The Family Tree of Christ: Advent Cards by Tiny Theologians

A Very Noisy Christmas by Tim Thornborough

Free Advent Calendar Printable + Reading Plan to use alongside The Jesus Storybook Bible

This Is the Christmas Story: A Kids Read Truth Story & Scripture Book

Advent Table Cards by Kids Read Truth

Please note: we do not affirm every aspect of every resource, and inclusion on this page doesn’t equate to a full endorsement of all an author’s works.

With questions, contact us at kids@theoakscommunitychurch.org
Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!  
O Lord, hear my voice!  
Let your ears be attentive  
to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,  
O Lord, who could stand?  
But with you there is forgiveness,  
that you may be feared.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,  
and in his word I hope;  
my soul waits for the Lord  
more than watchmen for the morning,  
more than watchmen for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the Lord!  
For with the Lord there is steadfast love,  
and with him is plentiful redemption.  
And he will redeem Israel  
from all his iniquities.
DAY 1: Psalm 130

1. Read through the Psalm three times
2. Use the space below to name your longings and fears
3. Reflect on what the Spirit revealed in your reading
DAY 2: Psalm 130:1-2

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!
    O Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
    to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

1. Read through the text three times
2. Reflect: Whether or not you relate to the psalmist’s position in “the depths”, you have pleas to take before God. List them below. Take as much time as you can this morning to plead for the mercy of God in circumstances you know are thirsting for the peace of God.
DAY 3: Psalm 130:3-4

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,  
    O Lord, who could stand?  
But with you there is forgiveness,  
    that you may be feared.

1. Read through the text three times  
2. Reflect: Ponder the starting place of reverence for God. Does knowledge of your forgiveness through Christ lead you to fear God? Reflect using the space below.
DAY 4: Psalm 130:5-6

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
    and in his word I hope;
my soul waits for the Lord
    more than watchmen for the morning,
    more than watchmen for the morning.

1. Read through the text three times
2. Reflect: The watchman waiting for the morning is certain that the sun will rise in its time. Are you convinced that the Lord will provide exactly what you need, that God is trustworthy?
O Israel, hope in the Lord!
   For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
   and with him is plentiful redemption.
And he will redeem Israel
   from all his iniquities.

1. Read through the text three times
2. Reflect: Write these verses in your own words below. Is the someone you know who needs this word of encouragement? Take time to remind them today.
1. Read the psalm aloud to yourself
2. Reflect: Is there something you’ve been waiting on that you’ve not brought to the Lord? Perhaps something you’re embarrassed to desire, or something you think you should be “over” by now. Dig deep today by confessing the hidden longings of your heart.
To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame;
    let not my enemies exult over me.
Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;
    they shall 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 the day long.

Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love,
    for they have been from of old.
Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
    according to your steadfast love remember me,
    for the sake of your goodness, 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.
All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,
    for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great.
Who is the man who fears the Lord?
    Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.
His soul shall abide in well-being, and his offspring shall inherit the land.
The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him,
    and he makes known to them his covenant.
My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted.
The troubles of my heart are enlarged;
    bring me out of my distresses.
Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins.

Consider how many are my foes, and with what violent hatred they hate me.
Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me!
    Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.
May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you.

Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.
DAY 1: Psalm 25

1. Read through the Psalm three times
2. Use the space below to name your longings and fears
3. Reflect on what the Spirit drew your heart to in your reading
DAY 2: Psalm 25:1-5

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame;
    let not my enemies exult over me.
Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;
    they shall 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 the day long.

1. Read through the text three times
2. Reflect: What is your posture toward God while you wait? Have you grown hard-hearted and bitter? Is your head hung low in disappointment, believing God won’t come through for you?
DAY 3: Psalm 25:6-7

Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.
Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O Lord!

1. Read through the text three times
2. Reflect: Today, we join David in asking God to remember his mercy and steadfast love. Let’s also practice remembering that mercy for ourselves. Where have you seen the mercy and steadfast love of God this year, this month, this day?
DAY 4: Psalm 25:8-10

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. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

1. Read through the text three times
2. Reflect: Consider the path of your waiting. Has it been winding and disorienting? Dark and mysterious? Are you convinced that it is a path of the Lord, marked by steadfast love and faithfulness?
For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great. Who is the man who fears the Lord? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose. His soul shall abide in well-being, and his offspring shall inherit the land. The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant. My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

1. Read through the text three times
2. Reflect: Consider your gaze as you struggle against the “net” of sin, suffering, sorrow, or anticipation. Do you relate to the feeling of being stuck? Do you tend to focus on the tangled mess or on the eyes of your coming Rescuer?
DAY 6: Psalm 25:16-22

Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted.
The troubles of my heart are enlarged;
    bring me out of my distresses.
Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins.

Consider how many are my foes, and with what violent hatred they hate me.
Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me!
    Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.
May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you.

Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

1. Read through the text three times
2. Reflect: List your afflictions, troubles, sins, and foes, and take them to God, one by one, in prayer. Pray for the redemption of each one, and integrity and uprightness while you wait.
The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
   The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh,
   my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;
   though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:
   that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
   to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;
   he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
   he will lift me high upon a rock.

And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me,
   and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the Lord.

Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me!
You have said, “Seek my face.”
   My heart says to you, “Your face, Lord, do I seek.”
Hide not your face from me.
Turn not your servant away in anger,
   O you who have been my help.
Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation!
For my father and my mother have forsaken me,
   but the Lord will take me in.

Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path
   because of my enemies.
Give me not up to the will of my adversaries;
   for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence.

I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!
Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage;
   wait for the Lord!
**DAY 1: Psalm 27**

1. Read through the Psalm three times
2. Use the space below to name your longings and fears
3. Reflect on what the Spirit drew your heart to in your reading
DAY 2: Psalm 27:1-2

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?  
    The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh,  
    my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.

1. Read through the text three times  
2. Reflect: What does God’s light and salvation mean to you in light of your fears? Can you list tangible examples of each? How does God’s refuge comfort you today?
DAY 3: Psalm 27:3-4

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

1. Read through the text three times
2. Reflect: Imagine dwelling in the house of the Lord, gazing upon his beauty, and meditating in his temple. This will be our physical reality one day! Let’s ask for that hope to permeate our hearts today, even as we wait on the hope of future glory.
DAY 4: Psalm 27:5-6

For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.

And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord.

1. Read through the text three times
2. Reflect: What sacrifices are you making in this season – are you making them with “shouts of joy”? Why or why not?
DAY 5: Psalm 27:7-10

Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me!
You have said, “Seek my face.”
   My heart says to you, “Your face, Lord, do I seek.”
Hide not your face from me.
Turn not your servant away in anger,
   O you who have been my help.
Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation!
For my father and my mother have forsaken me,
   but the Lord will take me in.

1. Read through the text three times
2. Reflect: It is easy to feel isolated and forgotten in seasons of waiting, but we’re promised that God will always take us in.
   Emmanuel means “God with us”, take some time to meditate on that name of God today, and ask to be made aware of his presence.
DAY 6: Psalm 27:11-14

Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.
Give me not up to the will of my adversaries;
for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence.

I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!
Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the Lord!

1. Read through the text three times
2. Reflect: In light of your enemies (be they people, circumstances, or spiritual battles), pray the following words aloud as many times as possible today:

I believe that I will look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!
Lord, as I wait for you, make me strong and give courage to my heart. I will wait for you.
I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry.
He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.
He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.

Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust, who does not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after a lie!
You have multiplied, O Lord my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you!
I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told.

In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear.
Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.
Then I said, “Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.”

I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation; behold, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O Lord.
I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart;
I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;
I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation.

As for you, O Lord, you will not restrain your mercy from me; your steadfast love and your faithfulness will ever preserve me!
For evils have encompassed me beyond number; my iniquities have overtaken me, and I cannot see; they are more than the hairs of my head; my heart fails me.

Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me! O Lord, make haste to help me!
Let those be put to shame and disappointed altogether who seek to snatch away my life; let those be turned back and brought to dishonor who delight in my hurt!
Let those be appalled because of their shame who say to me, “Aha, Aha!”

But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who love your Salvation say continually, “Great is the Lord!”
As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God!
DAY 1: Psalm 40

1. Read through the Psalm three times
2. Use the space below to name your longings and fears
3. Reflect on what the Spirit drew your heart to in your reading
DAY 2: Psalm 40:1-3

I waited patiently for the Lord;  
    he inclined to me and heard my cry.  
He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog,  
    and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.  
He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.  
Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.

1. Read through the text three times  
2. Reflect: Reflect on a time of waiting in the past – how did God draw you up out of despair and set your feet on a rock? What is your new song of praise? What can you say with certainty about God today that you couldn’t have said previously?
DAY 3: Psalm 40:4-8

Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust, who does not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after a lie!
You have multiplied, O Lord my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you!
I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told.

In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear.
Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.
Then I said, “Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.”

1. Read through the text three times
2. Reflect: Write out the wondrous deeds of the Lord toward you, your loved ones, your church, your city, and your world. Determine to watch for the works of God around you today.
DAY 4: Psalm 40:9-10

I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation; 
    behold, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O Lord. 
I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart; 
    I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; 
I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness 
    from the great congregation.

1. Read through the text three times 
2. Reflect: Has God delivered you from something that you’re choosing to remain in? Has God made a way to freedom that you’ve not yet accepted? Is there some very good thing extended to you that you’re not receiving?
DAY 5: Psalm 40:11-15

As for you, O Lord, you will not restrain your mercy from me; your steadfast love and your faithfulness will ever preserve me!
For evils have encompassed me beyond number;
my iniquities have overtaken me, and I cannot see; they are more than the hairs of my head; my heart fails me.

Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me! O Lord, make haste to help me!
Let those be put to shame and disappointed altogether who seek to snatch away my life; let those be turned back and brought to dishonor who delight in my hurt!
Let those be appalled because of their shame who say to me, “Aha, Aha!

1. Read through the text three times
2. Reflect: The prayer of the weary is welcome in the kingdom of God. What is causing your heart to fail today? Pray boldly for justice, peace, and rest.
DAY 6: Psalm 40:16-17

But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who love your Salvation say continually, “Great is the Lord!”
As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me.
You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God!

1. Read through the text three times
2. Reflect: Pray these verses over loved ones you know are in a season of difficult anticipation – may they be strengthened to say “Great is the Lord!”