



# EXTEND HOPE

*AN ADVENT GUIDE*

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

3	<b>Introduction</b> <i>Hope Has a Name</i>
4	<b>Instructions</b> <i>How to Use This Guide</i>
5	<b>Advent Week One</b> <i>The Candle of Hope</i>
7	<b>Advent Week Two</b> <i>The Candle of Peace</i>
9	<b>Advent Week Three</b> <i>The Candle of Joy</i>
11	<b>Advent Week Four</b> <i>The Candle of Love</i>
13	<b>Christmas Eve</b> <i>The Candle of Christ</i>

---

## HOPE HAS A NAME

---

We use the word *hope* fairly often in our day-to-day language—“I hope the weather’s good tomorrow”; “I really hope we have time”; “We’re hoping for some good news.” We hope for things and circumstances outside of Christ, and when we do that, we often feel hopeless. In a world where it feels like we can’t be fully confident in anything, where nothing feels absolute, hopelessness is too often felt.

For 400 years, the Israelites felt all of the emotions and feelings surrounding hopelessness—they were oppressed, enslaved, unrestful, defeated, and disheartened—but they were anticipatory of the Messiah’s arrival, He who brought **hope** and light into the darkness.

But when we think about hope within the biblical context of our Savior, we need to dig a little deeper. In the original Greek, the word for *hope* is **ἐλπίς**, pronounced *elpis*—an expectation of what is sure or certain, joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation. We can live with confident expectation in Christ—a hope that never fails, that is never deferred. Advent is a time where we remember the incredible landscape in which the Messiah came. In Him we place our hope, and He draws us near in love, peace, and joy.

Sometimes, we really just need reminded where our hope lies. This Advent devotional is a reflection guide that offers poems, prayers, and prompts to draw us back to the hope of Jesus. Set aside some time each week to sit before the King of Kings, open your hands in humble adoration and readiness, and reflect on the prompts within this guide.

---

*“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.”*

*—James 4:8*

---

As we sit in His presence, let us remember that hope has a name—Jesus.

---

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

---

The Christian tradition of Advent is a season of remembrance, looking ahead, and holding on to hope. Advent spans the four weeks leading up to Christmas, and the passing of each week is represented by lighting a candle with a specific meaning each Sunday.

Week 1: Hope

Week 2: Peace

Week 3: Joy

Week 4: Love

A fifth and final candle—called the Christ candle—is lit on Christmas Eve. The light of these candles is symbolic of the light of Christ, which pushes back the darkness.

---

*“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. . . . For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*

*—Isaiah 9:2, 6*

---

Each devotional includes Scripture readings and a Psalm along with a prayer prompt. Every Sunday during Advent and on Christmas Eve, meditate on the passages listed, ponder the content provided—poetry, prose, and prayers—and discuss or pray through the prompt. Whether you use this devotional guide over the dinner table, with a small group, or individually, we pray it will enrich your life in Christ this Advent season.

May we lean in individually and collectively to experience all that the Lord has for us as we actively hope in He who is our everlasting, our Prince of Peace.



*ADVENT WEEK ONE*  
**THE CANDLE OF HOPE**

*By Sarah Bourns Crosby*

---

**AN INVITATION**

Come before the Lord in a posture of humility. He delights in you. Let's delight in Him. Whether you open your hands as a sign of obedience, close your eyes to focus your mind, or kneel to center your heart, draw close to Him as He draws close to you (James 4:8). Let's give all of ourselves to the King of Kings.

---

**READ**

*Genesis 18:9–15, Hebrews 11:1–16*

---

**FOR THOSE WHO WAIT**

What if the seemingly endless delay  
Is full of gifts you wouldn't receive any other way

What if walking in the wilderness IS the point,  
What if waiting in the stillness IS the joy

What if the roots need to burrow down deeper  
So the fruit will be that much sweeter

What if the waiting makes the heart grow stronger  
Just as absence makes the heart grow fonder

## *Advent Week One: The Candle of Hope*

What if it's less about getting to the other side  
And more about the slow transformation taking place deep inside

What if the best things don't happen overnight  
And time is actually on your side

What if you really (truly) are not in control  
And all you can do is let it unfold

What if God hasn't forgotten His plans for you  
He's simply inviting you to lean in and pay close attention to what He is about to do

What if, when it seems like nothing is happening at all,  
That's right when God is saying, *I Am Still Faithful*

What if it looks really different than you thought it would,  
But even then, it could still be really, really good.

---

### **PRAYER PROMPT**

Read Psalm 25 and put your hope in Him.

Which of the above “what if” questions ring true for you right now? How does it encourage you to hold on in hope? Prayerfully ask God to remind you where you have seen His faithfulness through another season of waiting in your life.

*Lord, I desire more of You. There are so many “what if” questions in my life—help me to look to You before I look inward. Father, would You remind me of Your character, of Your incredible goodness. My hope is in You—teach me to draw close. Amen.*



## ADVENT WEEK TWO

# THE CANDLE OF PEACE

By Eli Pfau

---

### AN INVITATION

Come before the Lord in a posture of humility. He delights in you. Let's delight in Him. Whether you open your hands as a sign of obedience, close your eyes to focus your mind, or kneel to center your heart, draw close to Him as He draws close to you (James 4:8). Let's give all of ourselves to the King of Kings.

---

### READ

*Luke 2:22–35, Isaiah 26:3*

I was dripping in sweat, pushing myself physically more than I ever had (I'm not the exercise type). But there I was: hurting, pushing, fighting with my whole being. Then finally, he was here. The boy I had waited for the last nine months. The one who I had daydreamed about so often. Would he have olive skin like his daddy? Would he be sweet and tender or rowdy and wild? (He would be the latter). This boy that I imagined was really, truly here and screaming for his mama. The feeling of seeing him was enough to make me burst into tears. *He was finally here, and I could rest.*

Rest and peace are the emotions I imagine Simeon felt on that day he saw Jesus. The Bible describes Simeon as, "righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him" (Luke 2:25). Simeon was waiting for the Messiah to come through and rescue his hurting people. They needed peace in the world, but more than that, they needed peace in their hearts.

## *Advent Week Two: The Candle of Peace*

Since the Lord promised Simeon that he wouldn't die before he saw the Messiah, I imagine he spent a lot of time daydreaming about what Jesus would be like. Would he be a strong warrior or a conquering king? What kind of person would make the world right again? Then the day finally came when Simeon, guided by the Holy Spirit, saw Jesus. He picked up Mary's baby and looked at Him. I imagine tears in his eyes as he said, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation" (Luke 2:29-30). *The Messiah was finally here, and Simeon could rest.*

We live in a broken world and know the pain that sin has caused. It's easy to be overcome with the feeling that *this is not how life should be* or that *our world doesn't feel like home*. And yet, in the midst of it all, we can have hope. Simeon looked at Jesus. The promise was fulfilled, and he rested in God-given peace.

We can access that same peace even now. Let's look to Jesus as Simeon did and meditate on His fulfilled promises toward us. In His loving-kindness and complete authority, He has saved us from our sin. His peace will keep us as we hope for a future of uninterrupted joy with Him. Let's look at Him. *He is here, and we can rest.*

---

### **PRAYER PROMPT**

Read Psalm 29 and rest in His embrace.

Ask Jesus to fill you with His perfect peace as you navigate a broken world, knowing that He who has promised is faithful. Think of a time when you experienced God's peace in your life. Share that story with a friend to encourage them.

*Father God, would You show me what it means to rest in You. Would the fragrance of Your peaceful Spirit continuously fill me as I seek Your face. Lord, as I lean into the peace that only You can give, draw me to Yourself more than anything. Allow me to come before You, humbled, grateful, and hopeful. I love You. Amen.*





*ADVENT WEEK THREE*  
**THE CANDLE OF JOY**

*By Lorie Huneycutt*

---

**AN INVITATION**

Come before the Lord in a posture of humility. He delights in you. Let's delight in Him. Whether you open your hands as a sign of obedience, close your eyes to focus your mind, or kneel to center your heart, draw close to Him as He draws close to you (James 4:8). Let's give all of ourselves to the King of Kings.

---

**READ**

*Matthew 2: 1–12, Luke 2:8–20, Romans 5:1–5, Colossians 1:9–14, 1 Peter 1:3–9*

Joy is light, love, and full of hope of what is to come. And yet, the fullness of joy would not be what it is without the existence of darkness, sin, and suffering. Our loving Father, in His grace and love, sent His son in human form through many rich allegories that I am sure were no mistake. He allowed Christ, our King, to be born in the darkness of night. Had He not been born at night, God could not have used light to show others the way.

*Without* darkness, the angel that appeared to the shepherds and the glory that shone around them would not have shone as brightly. *Because* of the darkness of night, he was able to use the light of a star that shone so brilliantly—it led the wisemen straight to Jesus. Joy is something we often want without sacrifice, suffering, or work. We can feel that we are entitled to joy simply because we follow Jesus. And yet, truly following Jesus and suffering *with* Him as we endure various trials here on earth is often the path we must take to find the joy we seek.

## *Advent Week Three: The Candle of Joy*

It is His redemption in our pain, the renewing of our hearts, and shifting of our gaze to focus on the light of Jesus that will lead us to the unspeakable joy we seek. The more we surrender, the more we will be able to recognize the love and light of Jesus, His redemption and healing, in ways beyond our comprehension. The darkness of this world serves as a backdrop for His light to be seen in *all* its brilliance. And when we can find the light in the darkest of nights, it is there that our hearts will find true joy and hope in knowing that there is *nothing* that can overcome the light and love of Jesus.

---

### **PRAYER PROMPT**

Read Psalm 145 and prepare your heart to praise Him.

What is an obstacle you face in finding true joy, and how does joy differ from happiness? What moments or experiences of darkness in your life can you look back on and see where Jesus showed up in light?

*Jesus, thank You for the beautiful ways You redeem pain and darkness and bring joy in unexpected ways. If there are things I need to surrender that may be preventing joy in my life, would You reveal those to me. I give all I am to You. Allow me to experience more of Your hope and joy. Amen.*



*ADVENT WEEK FOUR*  
**THE CANDLE OF LOVE**

*By Hannah Packard*

---

**AN INVITATION**

Come before the Lord in a posture of humility. He delights in you. Let's delight in Him. Whether you open your hands as a sign of obedience, close your eyes to focus your mind, or kneel to center your heart, draw close to Him as He draws close to you (James 4:8). Let's give all of ourselves to the King of Kings.

---

**READ**

*Luke 2:22–38*

Simeon and Anna are two of the few who, at their very first look at Jesus, a month old in Mary's arms, *knew*. No angels visited these ones. It was the Holy Spirit, with joy and delight, who whispered to their hearts, *This is He*. The consolation of Israel, the Lord's Messiah, the hope of the world—He had come.

Like many before them, Anna and Simeon had waited all their lives to see the hope of the Messiah. And God wanted to share this moment with them, His friends.

We know that Anna and Simeon were friends of God because they had spent so much time before His face, worshiping Him, that they knew Him on sight. What a contrast with many of the Pharisees, who ostensibly knew everything about God and His Law yet looked Him in His face and hated Him.

## *Advent Week Four: The Candle of Love*

When I think of Simeon and Anna, I think of their love for God. I think of the hours spent hearing the Scriptures, the time spent in worship, the friendship that they had each built with God. It is one of my greatest desires to know Him anywhere, like they and other friends of God did. Whether He is a pillar of flame or smoke, a burning bush, an uninvited dinner guest, a wrestler, a quiet voice, a stranger on the road, or a month-old infant—I want to know Him.

This is how I imagine they greeted Him that day in the temple. Simeon and Anna, stroking wrinkled fingers down the petal-soft cheek of God-made-flesh, whispering, *“Shalom. I would know You anywhere.”*

May our love be the same.

---

### **PRAYER PROMPT**

Read Psalm 139 and thank Him for knowing you intimately.

Take a deep breath and get into a comfortable position. Read the passage again and ask the Holy Spirit what He has to say to you today. Listen to His response and let your heart settle.

*Lord, is my love for You deep enough that I recognize You where I'm perhaps not used to seeing You? Do I recognize Your hand at work? Draw me deeper into friendship with You. Help me know You more so that my hope can be assured in You. You say, “Seek My face.” May my response always be, “I'm seeking You!” Amen.*



## *CHRISTMAS EVE* **THE CANDLE OF CHRIST**

*By Hannah Castro*

---

### **AN INVITATION**

Come before the Lord in a posture of humility. He delights in you. Let's delight in Him. Whether you open your hands as a sign of obedience, close your eyes to focus your mind, or kneel to center your heart, draw close to Him as He draws close to you (James 4:8). Let's give all of ourselves to the King of Kings.

---

### **READ**

*1 John 4:9–10, Philippians 2:5–7*

---

### **HOPE HAS A NAME**

Prophecies brought forth out of anxious anticipation and fervor  
of the One who shall be King,  
but what crown satisfies the expectation of jewels in place of thorns?

A Messiah made manifest through the promises of old—  
a field of forgiveness not yet recognized by the presence of the shepherds,  
though they, too, are like those they attend.  
But a lowly cradle of trough-likeness is no place for royalty.

## *Advent Week Five: The Candle of Christ*

Yet, a gentle cry of humility exceeds such to bring healing to the nations—  
even the lepers would find their spots dissolving through the presence of His divine.  
What a witness in servanthood—a birth of submission and honor,  
a testament of obedience, and not just of His own.

A nativity of entire nations bowing down staked claim on His arrival,  
enduring the birth pains, groaning in anticipation of foretelling.  
It is not without strain that the Hallowed arrived,  
a tenderness of the submissive holy.

The fulfillment of faithful hope across generations—  
a continuation of presence-filled proclamations that extend beyond the grave.  
For His name is spoken, broadcast among those who have hearts to hear  
only because He created, because He lives—through He who resurrected.

A continuation of grace made flesh,  
propitiation in the form of a gift, that which prophetic word brings in abundance.  
A Messiah in a manger—the perfect picture of awe, conviction, and splendor.  
It is in Him we find that hope has a name.

---

### **PRAYER PROMPT**

Read Psalm 23 and seek the presence of the Lord.

Take a breath and sit before the King of Kings. Posture yourself in a way that is centering, and listen for His voice. There are many seasons in which we find ourselves longing for something that has yet to be. How can we rest in His embrace today and trust that the promises He has given us will one day be fulfilled?

*Lord, I acknowledge that so much of myself is often looking toward things other than You. Thank You for continuously drawing me back, drawing me close to You. I am thankful for the gift of Your Son, for grace made flesh. Remind me again and again of the fulfillment of Your Word and promises. Amen.*