

DECEMBER 18, 2022
FOURTH SUNDAY
OF ADVENT



Who is this Jesus born of God's love?

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 1:18-25	God is with us
Monday	Isaiah 7:10-16	A son named Immanuel
Tuesday	Romans 1:1-7	A salutation
Wednesday	Isaiah 9:1-7	A child is born
Thursday	1 John 4:7-12	God is love
Friday	Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19	Israel's restoration
Saturday	Luke 2:1-20	The birth of Jesus
Sunday	John 1:1-14	The Word became flesh

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 1:18 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Holy God, we praise you for reaching out to us and all the world with your eternal love through your Son, our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for restoring us each day with the gift of food. Strengthen us with this meal to love others as you love us through Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May Jesus, the Son of God and Savior of the world bless you with God's steadfast love.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

Away in a Manger



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When you think of a special friend or relative, how do you describe that person to others?
- When you think of Jesus, how do you describe him?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Matthew 1:18-25.

Since it speaks of Jesus' birth, this is almost an odd text for the last Sunday in Advent. It could be a Christmas Eve or Day writing, except that the focus is less on Jesus' birth and more on his identity: Who is this Jesus? He is divine (conceived by the Holy Spirit) yet also of the lineage of David (son of David, a title for the royal messiah). His role is seen in his name Jesus, meaning, "to save." His entrance into history is the fulfillment of scripture. Jesus' birth is prophetically linked to Isaiah 7 by the name Emmanuel, God with us. This essential point is brought back at the end of the Gospel of Matthew when Jesus says, "I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). It is worth reflecting on the coming of Jesus as the Son of God who comes to save and to fulfill the scriptures. This Jesus is not just a historical figure of the past but the very presence of God who is with us today. Jesus is present in the midst of our personal and community needs for salvation from sin, death, and the presence of real evil.

Discuss: What part of Jesus' identity do you focus on or relate to during the Advent season?

Pray: **Eternal God, help us to sense the awe of Jesus' birth through whom you have come to be with us as our Savior and promise to be with us always. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how might you help others experience God's love and mercy?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

During the four weeks of Advent, we prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of Jesus Christ. For the fourth and last week of Advent, light the first candle of hope, the second candle of peace, the third candle of joy, and the fourth candle of love on the Advent wreath. This week, we focus on God's unconditional love for us and our love for one another.

Say: **Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord, the light of Christ that gives us hope, peace, joy, and love.**



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