

Advent Devotions 2018

25 Days to Jesus

Over the next twenty-five days we will have the Bible as our companion as we journey to the birth of Jesus. You will want to have your favorite translation at hand as you read and pray these devotions, written by members of Creekside. The days correspond to the calendar dates of December: Day 1 = Dec. 1. May God bless your reading and prayer as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth.

DAY 1

A Promise Genesis 15:4-6



Our journey of 25 days begins with a promise which was made more than 2,500 years ago. Abraham, the patriarch of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths, was told by God that he would be the father of a great nation. Jesus, and every believer since, is part of that great promise.

Prayer: Thank you for your faithfulness to Abraham and Sarah, and to everyone who is part of the family of faith. Be with us in our reading and prayer as we journey to Jesus. Amen.

DAY 2

Family Tree Matthew 1:1-16



The genealogy at the beginning of Matthew's gospel – sometimes called the “begats” from the archaic word for conceived – may seem boring and repetitive, but this genealogy would have been fascinating and a bit scandalous to Jewish readers. Matthew included women – Rahab, a prostitute, and Bathsheba who conceived a child out of wedlock – to show that there was imperfect fruit in the family tree.

Prayer: Thank you for our families and the generations which have come before us. Even though we are imperfect, we all have a place in the family of faith. Amen.

DAY 3

The Mountain of the Lord Isaiah 2:2-4



Mountains and high places were places of worship for the Jewish people. Isaiah's vision of all nations streaming (upward!) to the Lord's house is a vision of unity. The Lord instructs nations not in dominance, but in justice and peace.

Prayer: We pray for our neighbors. May we all be led to the Lord's house to learn the ways of justice and peace. Amen.

DAY 4

A Child in Government Isaiah 9:6-7



This text continues the idea of righteous leadership, but with a twist: this leader is a child, who is already wiser than any ruler the world has ever seen. This promise resonates not only in the Jewish consciousness, but with Christians who know that child is Jesus Christ.

Prayer: We pray for the leaders of our government. Give them wisdom and compassion to rule so that all people will know peace. Amen.

DAY 5



Bless the Beasts and the Children Isaiah 11:6-9

Isaiah is expanding his vision of righteous leadership: it began with nations and generations, and here encompasses even the animals. The beasts which are usually predator and prey will live in harmony, and the most vulnerable of all – a little child – will lead them.

Prayer: We pray for the vision to see beyond our stereotypes of strength and weakness. When we are vulnerable, help us to rely on your strength and righteousness. Amen.

DAY 6



Stumped Isaiah 11:1-5

The Jewish people were losing hope. The great family tree of King David and his son Solomon had been weakened by mis-management and greed, and cut down by the Babylonian army. What was to come from God's promise? New life. A leader after God's own heart would bring fresh hope.

Prayer: We pray that Your Spirit would rest upon us. Help us to live so that our neighbors will see that hope in us.

DAY 7



Prepare the Way! Matthew 3:1-6

Today's scripture is from the New Testament; the account of God's promise fulfilled in Jesus Christ. It isn't a new promise; even John's words would have been familiar to Jewish listeners – he is quoting Isaiah 40. John reminds us that in the wilderness of sin and despair, repentance and righteous are the way we prepare for Christ's coming.

Prayer: We pray for repentance. When we are lost in the wilderness, guide us back on to the paths of righteousness which lead to Jesus. Amen.

DAY 8



God's Son Matthew 3:13-16

Jesus' birth is part of God's promise to all people. John's baptism of Jesus is recognition of the special ministry which Jesus had been given to fulfill that promise; the Spirit of God which descends on Jesus is the same Spirit which was proclaimed in Isaiah. What is amazing and new is that Jesus is God's Son.

Prayer: We are amazed that you sent Your Son to us. Help us to follow Jesus so that our lives will be pleasing to You. Amen.

DAY 9



Fulfilled Luke 4:16-21

Jesus proclaims to his hometown of Nazareth what *we* have known all along: *he* is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. Although folks were impressed initially, the idea that they might have to change was not well-received; it turned out to be a disastrous first sermon.

Prayer: We pray that You would be revealed through your Word. Give us the humility and the courage to share that message in our community. Amen.