

Seasons in the Key of Worship

devotions for

Advent



Reflect: Advent – Week 2

Scripture Readings*: Malachi 3:1-4, Philippians 1:3-11, Luke 3:1-6, Psalm 126 (NRSV)

Malachi speaks to people who had slipped into the practice of calling evil things good. Accommodating and winking at sin will eventually be confronted. Malachi reminds the people that the LORD is coming. And when He comes it will be a time of purification. In fact, the LORD will be like a “refiner’s fire” which removes impurities, and a stiff “fuller’s brush,” which cleanses.

Paul’s heart-felt love for the believers in Philippi is expressed – not only for their participation with him in the gospel – but because of an underlying desire that at the appearance of Christ, they would be found pure and blameless.

The Gospel reading reminds us that John the Baptist (like Malachi), confronted people with a message that demanded repentance and the forgiveness of sins. He echoed the voice of the prophet Isaiah in both a call to repentance and the promise of all flesh seeing the salvation of God!

The Advent message is one that calls us to purity, requiring us to acknowledge and repent of our sins.

Celebrate: Plant Seeds of Love for Christmas

The prophets planted seeds of repentance, cultivating the hearts of God’s people for the forgiveness of sins. They pointed to a coming harvest where God mends what is broken, when “the crooked will be made straight and all flesh will see the salvation of God.”

Advent is the perfect season to plant the seed of God’s love in our homes and the world around us. When gathered with your family to light the candles on the Advent wreath, take a moment to cultivate the hearts of those present with a special prayer of blessing on each one. Adopt a family in need or a local charity and, as a family, gather food, blankets, clothes, and toys that can be shared in time for Christmas.

Working together with your family to construct an Advent Chain can deepen family prayer times. This paper chain is made out of alternating loops of red and green construction paper, 50 loops long. Write the names of friends and family members to pray for on the red loops and the blessings God has given on the green ones. Each day during Advent, take off one red and green loop and use them to guide the prayers for the day.

Prayer when lighting the second candle of the Advent wreath – “God of light, in love, you call us to repentance and reconciliation through the gift of your Son, Jesus. As we wait for your appearing, help us sow seeds of your love in the lives of everyone we meet. Blessed be God forever. Amen.”

*Readings are from the Revised Common Lectionary, Year C

