
Reflections
for the
SEASON of ADVENT
2024



Dear Edgewood College Community,

It is our pleasure to continue the Edgewood College tradition of sharing this reflection booklet for the season of Advent. The holiday season can sometimes feel hectic or overwhelming, but Advent invites us to be present in the process as we wait and long for the birth of Christ, our Hope and Love in a troubled world.

This year, we want to invite you more deeply into the Dominican practice of contemplating and sharing the fruits of your contemplation with others. The root of the word contemplation is *contemplare*, “to observe, to notice.” We encourage you to take time in slowness and stillness, to listen for God’s voice, to notice the Hope and Love already present around us, and to share those gifts.

For each Sunday in Advent, as well as Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, this booklet will guide you in practicing the four pillars of Dominican life: *Prayer, Study, Community, and Ministry.*

PRAYER: Each week will begin with an opening prayer to center our spirits and put ourselves in the presence of God.

STUDY: The practice of lectio divina¹, a slow, rhythmic reading of a scripture passage, gives us the opportunity to spend time learning from the scripture and reflecting on how it might be relevant in our lives today. The readings² for the rest of the days of Advent are also listed for your own study and reflection.

COMMUNITY: Dominicans are “happy to beg a little bit of illumination from everyone we meet on the road” (St. Thomas Aquinas, OP). Enjoy a reflection from our campus community to experience and learn from one another’s “little bit of illumination.”

MINISTRY: A series of reflection questions will carry us into the rest of our week, providing opportunities to observe, notice, and share the fruits of our contemplation with others.

Blessed Advent,

Laura Hermanns, MSP
Director of Campus Ministries

Gretchen Baumgardt, M.Div., Ph.D.
Vice President for Mission Integration

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FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 1, 2024

Jeremiah 33:14-16, Psalm 25, 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2, Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

PRAYER

God of Justice,
We don't always know which way to turn.
It's not always easy to trust your promises of hope.
Guide us in Your ways.
Show us what is right and just.
Help us to be places of safety for all we meet.
Amen.

STUDY

Jeremiah 33:14-16
The days are coming, says the LORD,
when I will fulfill the promise
I made to the house of Israel and Judah.
In those days, in that time,
I will raise up for David a just shoot;
he shall do what is right and just in the land.
In those days Judah shall be safe
and Jerusalem shall dwell secure;
this is what they shall call her:
"The LORD our justice."

1) READ:

Slowly and thoughtfully, read the scripture passage the first time. What word or phrase captures your attention and grabs your heart?

2) REFLECT:

Slowly read the passage again. What is God saying to you in this passage? Offering you? Asking you? What feelings are arising within you?

3) RESPOND:

Slowly read the passage again. Respond to God from your heart. Speak to God of your feelings and insights. Offer these to God.

4) REST:

Stay in God's presence, noticing any invitations God has for you. What might God be saying to you? Rest in God's love and listen.

COMMUNITY

"Jeremiah was imprisoned at the time he wrote this prophecy, precisely due to his faithfulness to God's word. And as we reflect upon the scripture, it becomes clear how God is speaking to us. Have Faith in what the Lord has promised and how he is working in our lives. The prophecy was fulfilled by Jesus Christ, descendant of David whom God sent to earth as a lamb for our sins. We are the righteousness of God in him.

Therefore, let us rejoice in the truth that in Jesus Christ, all accusations have been dropped. We have been saved and rescued. Knowing that the Lord is our Shepherd, and our defender enables us to live with security. Everything he has spoken toward us will come to pass, and all justice belongs to him. For God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent. He hasn't broken his promise. Jeremiah 33:14 serves as a reminder to us, his children, that we have hope even in an unpredictable and unfair world. Encouraging us to keep our eyes on our rock and trust the Lord our savior. Urging us to live in a manner that reflects his peace and goodness. Because God is good and remains faithful all the time."

Saira Ardon '25

Psychology Major;
Mission, Values, & Inclusion Intern

MINISTRY

Where in your life do you struggle to know what the "right" or "just" answer is? Who do you usually turn to for help or guidance?

Do you think God's definition of justice is the same as yours?

What might God's justice look like in your place of struggle?

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Continue the Advent journey. Consider writing your own prayer, practicing lectio divina, or writing down the questions that come up for you.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2: Isaiah 2:1-5,
Psalm 122:1-9, Matthew 8:5-11

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3: Isaiah 11:1-10,
Psalm 72:1-17, Luke 10:21-24

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4: Isaiah
25:6-10, Psalm 23:1-6, Matthew 15:29-37

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5: Isaiah
26:1-6, Psalm 118, Matthew 7:21, 24-27

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6: Isaiah 29:17-24,
Psalm 27, Matthew 9:27-31

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7: Isaiah
30:19-26, Psalm 147:1-6, Matthew 9:35-
10:1-8

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 8, 2024

Baruch 5:1-9, Psalm 126, Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11, Luke 3:1-6

PRAYER

God of Joy,
Open our eyes to the beauty around us.
Even in times of struggle, waiting, or longing,
we know we can look to you for good things.
Help us pay attention to the moments of grace, love, and delight
that you have planted like seeds throughout our days.
Amen.

STUDY

Psalm 126
*When the LORD brought back the captives of Zion,
we were like men dreaming.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with rejoicing.
Then they said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."
The LORD has done great things for us;
we are glad indeed.
Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the torrents in the southern desert.
Those who sow in tears
shall reap rejoicing.
Although they go forth weeping,
carrying the seed to be sown,
They shall come back rejoicing,
carrying their sheaves.
The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.*

1) READ:

Slowly and thoughtfully, read the scripture passage the first time. What word or phrase captures your attention and grabs your heart?

2) REFLECT:

Slowly read the passage again. What is God saying to you in this passage? Offering you? Asking you? What feelings are arising within you?

3) RESPOND:

Slowly read the passage again. Respond to God from your heart. Speak to God of your feelings and insights. Offer these to God.

COMMUNITY

"There are times in life when we might feel hopeless, sad, or alone. This passage acts as a reminder that these hardships are part of life, but God is always with us. Even in our darkest moments, God walks beside us, guiding us toward true healing and joy. While it might not be immediate, the struggles we go through make us appreciate the joy and peace that follows. This is a piece of encouragement to keep doing good, trusting that, in God's time, true happiness and renewal will come."

Maria Chacin '23

Administrative Assistant & Program Coordinator
for the Division of Mission, Values, and Inclusion

4) REST:

Stay in God's presence, noticing any invitations God has for you. What might God be saying to you? Rest in God's love and listen.

MINISTRY

What was a moment of joy for you this week?

Who brings joy to your life? How might you show gratitude to them?

How might you bring joy to the communities to which you belong this week?

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Continue the Advent journey. Consider writing your own prayer, practicing lectio divina, or writing down the questions that come up for you.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9: Genesis 3:9-15, 20, Psalm 98, Luke 1:26-28

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10: Isaiah 40:1-11, Psalm 96, Matthew 18:12-14

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11: Isaiah 40:25-31, Psalm 103, Matthew 11:28-30

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12: Zechariah 2:14-17, Judith 13, Luke 1:26-38

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13: Isaiah 48:17-19, Psalm 1, Matthew 11:16-19

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14: Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11, Psalm 80, Matthew 17:9-13

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 15, 2024

Zephaniah 3:14-18, Isaiah 12:2-6, Philippians 4:4-7, Luke 3:10-18

PRAYER

God of Wisdom,
Remind us of your dream of abundant life,
a “kin-dom” where all are fed, clothed, and included,
Guide us to care for all your children,
and transform our hearts so that we may live out our purpose in the world.
Amen

STUDY

Luke 3:10-18

The crowds asked John the Baptist, “What should we do?” He said to them in reply, “Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise.” Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him, “Teacher, what should we do?” He answered them, “Stop collecting more than what is prescribed.” Soldiers also asked him, “And what is it that we should do?” He told them, “Do not practice extortion, do not falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages.”

Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, “I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

1) READ:

Slowly and thoughtfully, read the scripture passage the first time. What word or phrase captures your attention and grabs your heart?

2) REFLECT:

Slowly read the passage again. What is God saying to you in this passage? Offering you? Asking you? What feelings are arising within you?

3) RESPOND:

Slowly read the passage again. Respond to God from your heart. Speak to God of your feelings and insights. Offer these to God.

4) REST:

Stay in God’s presence, noticing any invitations God has for you. What might God be saying to you? Rest in God’s love and listen.

COMMUNITY

“Luke 3:10-18 is a beautiful passage that depicts John the Baptist preaching about repentance and preparing people for the coming of Jesus. The verses offer us an opportunity to reflect inwardly on our heart posture. What does it look like to repent and what is the significance of it?”

A large part of John the Baptist’s response has to do with the idea of righteousness—being right in relationship with God and others. When they ask what they should do, to avoid being cut at the roots and being cast into the fire, he describes actions that demonstrate what our heart posture should be towards ourselves and others. To give to the person who has no cloak, to not cheat each other, to not extort one another, and to instead utilize compassion, integrity, and love.

John’s message shows us that repentance is way more than just a sorry feeling. It is an action and a heart posture that is involved in this change. The transformation that God seeks is so much more than just us feeling sorry for our past transgressions as scripture tells us to rend our hearts and not our garments (Joel 2:13).

Another Biblical theme that ties in with this passage is the idea of the coming Kingdom of God being an upside-down kingdom. The coming Kingdom of God is through Jesus as described in (Luke 17:20-21) and involves us serving and loving others. As John the Baptist was sent ahead of Jesus to prepare His people for the coming Messiah he was sent to help set their minds on One greater than them and to prepare their hearts for a mission and a higher calling on their life. Just as he did this for them this is also a calling for us to look inwardly at our heart and to invite the Holy Spirit in which we

have been baptized with (as prophesied in this passage) to remove our fleshly desires and to instead first seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matt 6:33). The world wants to change you from the outside-in, but Jesus wants to change you from the inside-out.”

Ezekiel Brown ’26

Biology & Environmental Science; Siena Scholar

MINISTRY

How do you respond to the commands and callings of Jesus in your own life?

How are these commands and callings the same or different than the ones of our society and culture?

How might you feel called to share from your own abundance this week?

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Continue the Advent journey. Consider writing your own prayer, practicing lectio divina, or writing down the questions that come up for you.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 16: Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17, Psalms 25, Matthew 21:23-27

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17: Genesis 49:2, 8-10, Psalm 72, Matthew 1:1-17

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18: Jeremiah 23:5-8, Psalms 72, Matthew 1:18

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19: Judges 13:2-7, 25-25, Psalms 71, Luke 1:5-25

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20: Isaiah 7:10-14, Psalms 24, Luke 1: 26-38

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21: Songs of Songs 2:8-14 or Zephaniah 3: 14-18, Psalms 33, Luke 1:39-45

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 22, 2024

Micah 5:1-4, Psalm 80, Hebrews 10:5-10, Luke 1:39-45

PRAYER

God of Grace,

We know we cannot do this alone,
but the vulnerability of relationship can be frightening.

Give us the courage to both support and be supported,
So that we may open ourselves to the gifts and grace of relationship,
With You, ourselves, and others.

Amen.

STUDY

Luke 1:39-45

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

1) READ:

Slowly and thoughtfully, read the scripture passage the first time. What word or phrase captures your attention and grabs your heart?

2) REFLECT:

Slowly read the passage again. What is God saying to you in this passage? Offering you? Asking you? What feelings are arising within you?

3) RESPOND:

Slowly read the passage again. Respond to God from your heart. Speak to God of your feelings and insights. Offer these to God.

4) REST:

Stay in God's presence, noticing any invitations God has for you. What might God be saying to you? Rest in God's love and listen.

COMMUNITY

"How does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" In this passage, Elizabeth demonstrates humbleness in receiving the expectant Mary. This moment of peace reminds us to invite the presence of our Mother and our Lord. When we open ourselves to the gift of relationship, we welcome its grace as well. It becomes easy to take our faith for granted. Distractions surround us; we find ourselves scrambling to check off every box on our to-do lists. The Lord may keep falling down our list of priorities.

Edgewood's core value of partnership calls for an honest, open, and respectful commitment; God does too. He waits with open arms, but it is our responsibility to embrace humility and go to Him. However, in this season of refocusing and preparing, I invite you to revisit your spiritual relationship with the perspective of honor. Find yourself honored to know God and his desire to connect with you."

Irene Ehrhart '25

Psychology, Environmental Studies, & Philosophy;
Siena Scholar

MINISTRY

When do you find yourself feeling most connected to God? Disconnected?

What relationships in your life offer you the gift of grace?

How might you show gratitude for those gifts this week?

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Continue the Advent journey. Consider writing your own prayer, practicing lectio divina, or writing down the questions that come up for you.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 23: Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24, Psalm 25, Luke 1:57-66

CHRISTMAS EVE

Tuesday, December 24, 2024

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16, Psalm 89, Luke 1:67-79

PRAYER

God of Light,
With the birth of Jesus you show us a new way.
A way of unexpected beginnings and power through peace.
Open our eyes to this new light that is shining,
And give us courage to walk in your light of joy and justice.
Amen.

STUDY

Isaiah 9:1-6

*The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom
a light has shone.
You have brought them abundant joy
and great rejoicing,
as they rejoice before you as at the harvest,
as people make merry when dividing spoils.
For the yoke that burdened them,
the pole on their shoulder,
and the rod of their taskmaster
you have smashed, as on the day of Midian.
For every boot that tramped in battle,
very cloak rolled in blood,
will be burned as fuel for flames.
For a child is born to us, a son is given us;
upon his shoulder dominion rests.
They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero,
Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.
His dominion is vast
and forever peaceful,
from David's throne, and over his kingdom,
which he confirms and sustains
by judgment and justice,
both now and forever.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!*

1) READ:

Slowly and thoughtfully, read the scripture passage the first time. What word or phrase captures your attention and grabs your heart?

2) REFLECT:

Slowly read the passage again. What is God saying to you in this passage? Offering you? Asking you? What feelings are arising within you?

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Slowly read the passage again. Respond to God from your heart. Speak to God of your feelings and insights. Offer these to God.

4) REST:

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COMMUNITY

"This time of year, many of us experience the darkness and gloom referred to in the reading. It's getting colder, daylight is sparse, and holidays can come with their own plethora of heavy emotions. However, tonight, a light will be born into our hearts. Christ doesn't want us to live in the darkness, He wants us to experience the joy and peace of His presence. Christ can fill our hearts with His light in many ways. This could be being reunited with family and friends. It would be watching a loved one open a gift of which you put thought into. Christ could also bring His light in the serenity of an evening spent sitting by the Christmas tree as its lights glisten like stars.

Whatever emotions you're feeling, or burdens you're carrying, be reassured

that Christ is with you. On this most Holy night, He will be born into our hearts to share with us His "vast and forever peaceful" dominion. What Jesus wants for us this Christmas Eve is to rest in His peace."

Cassie Radl '25

Biology, Environmental Science, Spanish, & Nutrition; Siena Scholar

MINISTRY

How might you rest in God's peace?

In what ways do you experience Christ's light and peace?

How might you be peace to others this week?

CHRISTMAS DAY

Wednesday, December 25, 2024

Isaiah 9:1-6, Psalm 96, Timothy 2:11-14, Luke 2:1-14
(Readings for Mass During the Night)

PRAYER

God of Peace,
The world feels far from peaceful,
but we hold on to the hope shown to us in Christ's birth.
Help us to follow and trust the teachings of our Prince of Peace.
Give us courage when we are afraid and compassion for when we fall short.
Amen.

STUDY

Luke 2:1-14

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

1) READ:

Slowly and thoughtfully, read the scripture passage the first time. What word or phrase captures your attention and grabs your heart?

2) REFLECT:

Slowly read the passage again. What is God saying to you in this passage? Offering you? Asking you? What feelings are arising within you?

3) RESPOND:

Slowly read the passage again. Respond to God from your heart. Speak to God of your feelings and insights. Offer these to God.

4) REST:

Stay in God's presence, noticing any invitations God has for you. What might God be saying to you? Rest in God's love and listen.

COMMUNITY

My home church has the most beautiful Christmas pageant. Every year the kiddos dress up like shepherds, angels, and the wise men and there are even real donkeys, sheep, and goats to complete the nativity scene. We sing the beloved Christmas carols, and everything feels warm and bright and cozy. There's so much comfort in these shared traditions and these familiar readings!

While "tidings of comfort and joy" are an essential part of the season, sometimes the familiarity can cause us to forget that the story of Christ's arrival is also full of *discomfort* and of God working in very *unexpected* ways.

In this reading, we see that Christ was not born to an educated religious leader, or into a wealthy family, but rather he was born to a surprised young couple living in a small village occupied by a foreign power. Christ was not born in a soft bed surrounded by healers or professionals, he was wrapped in whatever bits of cloth could be found and placed in an animal's feeding trough. Christ's arrival was not proclaimed with a picture-perfect baby shower, but rather through a group of shepherds—in this time period these were likely teenagers from poor families, and likely very smelly!

Right from the beginning, Jesus entered into our world in an unexpected way. God chose the powerless, those on the margins, and those at the bottom of the social hierarchy to usher in God's "kin-dom" of peace. And to me *that is comforting*, because while life can be warm and bright and cozy—it is more often unexpected and uncomfortable!

The story of Christ's birth shows us that God is with us, *especially* on the margins and *especially* in the unexpected and uncomfortable places of our lives and world.

Laura Hermanns, MSP
Director of Campus Ministries

MINISTRY

How might you keep your eyes open to God's presence in unexpected places this week?

How might you bring comfort to others in the messiness of life?

During the Christmas season, what might Christ be trying to birth in you?

Thank you!

Thank you for sharing this Advent Journey with us

— to all who contributed reflections, and to you who have taken the time to pause, read, reflect, and pray during this Season. We are especially grateful to the Siena Scholars Leadership Program³, our Marketing and Strategic Communications team, and the Office for Institutional Advancement.

We wish you God's holy gifts of joy, hope, and peace
in this sacred season!

~The Division of Mission, Values, and Inclusion
We welcome your feedback! Please email mvi@edgewood.edu.



EDGEWOOD COLLEGE

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COVER ART:

Messianic Predictions, Thomas Ingmire, Copyright 2005, The Saint John's Bible, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

FOOTNOTES:

¹ *This version of lectio divina is sourced from the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa Associate Guidebook. Learn more at: <https://www.sinsinawa.org/vocations/>*

² *Daily readings can be found on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website: <https://bible.usccb.org/>*

³ *Rooted in our Dominican values and inspired by the life of St. Catherine of Siena, Siena Scholars is a selective scholarship program for student leaders committed to developing “right” or thriving relationships with Self, God, and Others. Using this model of relational leadership, students develop practical leadership skills, build a network for professional and spiritual growth, and explore how they are called to build a more just and compassionate world.*

For more information, contact Laura Hermanns at lhermanns@edgewood.edu.