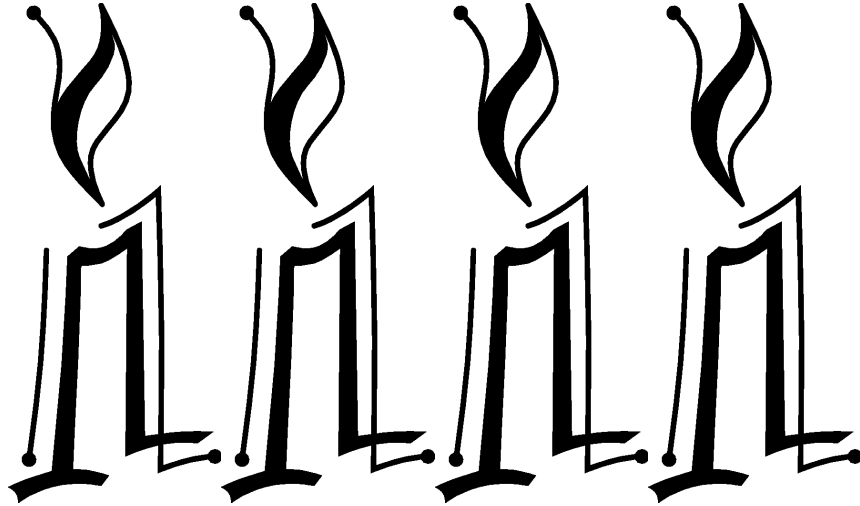


The Gifts of Advent: A Midweek Series for Advent



OVERVIEW

Week 4: The Gift of Family

The Gospel of Matthew begins with a family tree from Abraham to Jesus. Between the recitation of names, we also hear the story of God at work in our world from generation to generation. The Advent and Christmas seasons highlight the significance of family and friends in our lives. We witness Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth and Zechariah, and the shepherds together tending their flocks. As God's children, we become part of the family tree.

OPENING DIALOGUE

Week 4 (Matt. 1)

Mothers, fathers, grandparents, and friends,
aunts, uncles, sons, and daughters,
people who reach out to nurture and love,
people who live by water and word—
God adopts us and names us and claims us.
God renews us, uplifts and restores us.
Generations from Abraham to David to Joseph,
to Jesus, son of Mary, Son of God;
our generations too, and all those to come:
We are joined in the family of God.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

PRAYER

Week 4 (*Luke 1:46, 49, 50*)

O God for whom we long,
we thank you for the gift of family and friends.
Strengthen the ties that bind us together,
that we may sing with Mary:

My soul magnifies you, and holy is your name.

You shower mercy from generation to generation.

We pray in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ,
your gift to all the world. **Amen.**

PSALMODY - Psalm 96

¹ O sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.

² Sing to the LORD, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.

³ Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples.

⁴ For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be revered above all gods.

⁵ For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.

⁶ Honor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

⁷ Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

⁸ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts.

⁹ Worship the LORD in holy splendor;
tremble before him, all the earth.

¹⁰ Say among the nations, "The LORD is king!
The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.
He will judge the peoples with equity."

¹¹ Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;

¹² let the field exult, and everything in it.

Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy

¹³ before the LORD; for he is coming,
for he is coming to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with his truth.

READING - 1 John 3:1-3

3 ¹ See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he^[a] is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. ³ And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

GOSPEL - Matthew 1:1-17

1 An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.
² Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³ and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, ⁴ and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵ and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse the father of King David.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, ⁷ and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, ⁸ and Asaph^[d] the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, ⁹ and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, ¹⁰ and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, ¹¹ and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

¹² And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, ¹³ and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, ¹⁴ and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, ¹⁵ and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, ¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

REFLECTION

The reflection may conclude:

God has given us eternal life,
and this life is in Jesus, God's Son.

PRAYERS

For this time of waiting and watching for the coming of our Savior,
we give you thanks, O Lord.

When the Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words,
we cry to you, O Lord.

For the hope that shines through the darkest night,
we turn to you, O Lord.

For the gift of friends and family who walk with us through life,
we praise your name, O Lord.

Here other prayers may be offered.

Gather us all under the promise of your Son,
who taught us to pray: **Our Father . . .**

LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

BLESSING

The peace of God accompany your waiting,
the light of Christ warm your hearts,
and the joy of the Spirit fill you with hope. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is coming soon.
Thanks be to God.

