

## My Prayer Journal

*Use this weekly prayer to help you begin your time with God each day.*

### Prayer of Confession:

We shudder at signs we see. Anxieties bombard us. Our hearts are afraid. Lord, let us be vigilant, hold our heads high. Make us an Advent people with hope as our stronghold. Jesus, You once came into our world with all its sorrows. Keep us awake and alert to Your presence as we confess our struggles to You. Remind us, because we often forget, that Your love will triumph.

### My Prayers this Week:

### Family Time:

Advent is a time of anticipation and excitement. It is a time in which we gather with family and reflect on many things. We are able to see one of God's promises fulfilled and it shows us the way of God's light. This is the time of year in which we start to remember the importance of Jesus' birth and how He was sent to redeem us. Take some time this week as a family to create an Advent plan. How can you make sure to remember Jesus in the busyness of the holiday season? Make a plan for a weekly activity that brings you back to Jesus' birth.

## MONDAY 11.29.21

## 2 Samuel 7:1-17

Yesterday was the first Sunday of the Christian season of Advent—marking the very beginning of the new “church year,” which begins with Advent, before moving into the seasons after Christmas (beginning December 25), Epiphany (beginning January 6), Lent (beginning this year on March 2), Easter (beginning April 17), and Pentecost (beginning June 5), before a new cycle begins on November 27, 2022. Advent is a time of looking forward to the coming of the Messiah .... A time of anticipation of the fulfillment of God's promise to King David, through the prophet Nathan, that we read about in today's Scripture. God promised David that He would “establish the throne of his kingdom forever,” and that “your kingdom will endure forever.” From the time many years later when the kingdom of David's descendant, King Zedekiah, was utterly destroyed by the Babylonian army, until the time of Jesus, the Jewish people lived in the hope of the fulfillment of God's promise to David. Trusting in the promises of God, for almost 600 years they held on to the hope of a future king, an anointed one (a “Messiah”) who would again lead God's people.

- Why do you think the people continued to believe in the promise for so long? What hope are you clinging to?

## TUESDAY 11.30.21

## Isaiah 9:1-7

Early in his career, the prophet Isaiah recognized that destruction would come upon both halves of the divided kingdoms of the Jews—both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah—due to their abandonment of the covenant they had made with God. In the chapters leading up to today's reading, Isaiah has tried to convince the national leadership of this reality—“the Lord is about to bring against them the mighty floodwaters of the River—the king of Assyria with all his pomp” (8:7). But looking to the future, Isaiah held out hope. “Nevertheless, ... to us a child is born, to us a son is given, ... He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom.” Astonishingly for a strictly monotheistic people, Isaiah says that this man will be called not only a “Wonderful Counselor” and a “Prince of Peace,” but “Mighty God,” and “Everlasting Father”! Later, the earliest Jewish Christians recognized in Isaiah's prophecy insight into just how God would work to bring a reign of “justice and righteousness.” Through the miracle of the Incarnation, and the birth of a child, a son, who would grow to proclaim the reality of the Kingdom of God, God had brought David's promise to fulfillment.

- What in Isaiah's prophecy continues to give you hope? How does Jesus fulfill the specific hopes Isaiah describes?

## WEDNESDAY 12.1.21

## Isaiah 11:1-11

In today's reading, Isaiah provides an even fuller prophecy regarding this child who is to be born. Jesse was David's father, so this child will be a “shoot from the stump of Jesse” - in other words, even though David's immediate successors had been destroyed, leaving only a “stump” of descendants, it is one of these descendants who will fulfill God's promise. This child will be full of the Holy Spirit, full of wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge, and the fear of the LORD. He will have the ability to judge based on an inner core of righteousness, not like a human judge who only has his ears and eyes to rely on. He will rule with justice, defending the poor and condemning the wicked. Finally, the vision moves into a picture of a restored Eden, where wolves and lambs, leopards and goats, calves and lions, cows and bears, and even human infants and cobras live together peaceably. Full of the “knowledge of the Lord,” the Kingdom of God will be a reality throughout the earth. And in the midst of this restored perfection, “a little child will lead them.” Once again, the earliest Jewish Christians recognized here what God had done in Jesus. God had initiated the process of restoring us to His first design.

- Do you believe Isaiah's vision as a future reality in Christ?

## THURSDAY 12.2.21

## Micah 5:1-5

The prophet Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah. He, too, knew that the days of the kingdoms of Israel were numbered, as the great nation of Assyria was about to lay waste to them. In today's reading, Micah tells Jerusalem to be prepared for a lengthy siege. He foresees that Israel “will be abandoned.” And yet, this will only be for a time—“until she who is in labor gives birth.” In time, a ruler for Israel will emerge from one of the smallest, and most insignificant clans in all of Israel—Bethlehem Ephrathah. This ruler will reunite the people of God, shepherding all of God's people with the strength of God Himself. His “greatness will reach to the ends of the earth, and He will be their peace.” And in another astonishing proclamation, His origins will be “from old, from days of eternity.” No wonder, when King Herod inquired of his chief priests where the Messiah was to be born, they quickly told him, “In Bethlehem in Judea” (Matthew 2:5). And no wonder the Jewish Christians realized that Jesus' humble birth in Bethlehem, coupled with His conception through the power of the eternal Holy Spirit, pointed to His true identity as Israel's Messiah, just as Micah had said hundreds of years earlier.

- What do humble earthly beginnings, coupled with an eternal genealogy, suggest to you about Jesus?

