The background is a vibrant, colorful nebula or cosmic scene. It features swirling clouds of gas in shades of deep blue, purple, red, and orange. A bright, multi-pointed star is visible on the right side, surrounded by a circular lens flare effect. A solid purple circle is also present near the center-right. The overall atmosphere is ethereal and celestial.

Songs of the Savior

EASTBROOK CHURCH
ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

Songs of The Savior

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL 2019





Have you ever been at a gathering, maybe with family or maybe a concert, where someone begins singing a song that everyone knows and, shortly after one person starts, a whole group of people have joined in? Everybody wants to join in with a song that's worth singing.

As a child, I remember hearing a haunting melody sung in church as we prepared for Christmas. The melody of that song, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," stuck in my head, as did its confident chorus: "Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel." That song, I later discovered, is one of the oldest songs still sung regularly in churches today, drawn from a series of choral responses at least as old as the 8th century. Christians over the centuries have joined in singing it because it is a song worth singing. It tells our story.

There are many stories that animate Christmas in our culture: the story of finding joy through possessions, the story of finding joy through generosity, the story of finding joy with others in belonging, and the story of finding joy through belief in some abstract hope. The story of Christmas for followers of Jesus involves aspects of those stories, but something different. The focus is on finding joy in Jesus, who brings what we most need to possess, who shares out of divine generosity, who invites us to belong, and gives a hope that is sure for now and for eternity. All of that is a joy worth singing about.

The psalms in the Bible are a collection of prayer-songs that do two things simultaneously. First, they gather up the wide-ranging experiences and emotions of humanity, and bring that into connection with God through prayer. Second, they bring us into encounter with God, specifically through the Messiah promised and sung about in Scripture. Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes: "If we want to read and to pray the prayers of the Bible, and especially the Psalms, we must not, therefore, first ask what they have to do with us, but what they have to do with Jesus Christ." The psalms are songs worth singing, all the while bringing us to Jesus.

This Advent we are going to journey through the psalms in a preaching series entitled "Songs of the Savior: Psalms for Advent" and through this devotional. Advent is the season covered by the four weekends before Christmas. It comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means 'appearing,' and calls us to prepare our hearts as we draw near to Christmas. That preparation calls us to enter into the longing of God's people, Israel, as they await the Savior who was promised, even as we enter into anticipatory waiting for Jesus' second coming with a renewed focus on what matters most. Our preparation with the psalms this Advent should help us re-encounter our Savior, putting new songs worth singing back into our lives.

This devotional aims to help in that journey, whether used individually, in groups, with housemates, or with families. Find more information about how to interact with the weekly readings on the following page (at right). May God draw us close again this Advent, so that our Christmas celebration might be marked with true joy.

Pastor Matt Erickson

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USING THIS DEVOTIONAL

Each week of this devotional begins with a Sunday reading written by Senior Pastor Matt Erickson for older students and adults. There is also a version called "Family Talk" written by our NextGen Pastor Laure Herlinger, intended for families with young children. During the week, reflect on the "Choose Your Own Advent-ure" pages. Since God speaks to each of us in different ways, you, your family, or even your small group may wish to mix and match a number of the spiritual disciplines listed. Choose between daily Bible readings, a prompt for deeper theological study, a serving opportunity, an invitation to sacrifice, prompts for small groups, practices of prayer and worship, creative crafts to get your hands dirty, and our always-popular nativity-building activity.

Look for these icons throughout the devotional. You can also follow along online with the Eastbrook app (eastbrook.org/app) or at eastbrook.org/advent2019.



DAILY BIBLE READINGS



STUDY



SERVICE



SACRIFICE



GROUP RESPONSE



PRAYER



CREATE



WORSHIP



NATIVITY BUILDING

Although it is not necessary, this devotional is intended to be paired with an Advent Wreath. On Sunday of Week 1, when you open your devotional, light one candle on your Advent Wreath. Every Sunday thereafter, light an additional candle, so there are four on Week 4. On Christmas Day, light the final candle.


WEEK 1 OF ADVENT

The Beloved Anointed of God

WHY DO THE NATIONS CONSPIRE
AND THE PEOPLES PLOT IN VAIN?
THE KINGS OF THE EARTH RISE UP
AND THE RULERS BAND TOGETHER
AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS ANOINTED.
(PSALM 2:1-2)

A READING FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Read Psalm 2



The story of God's people, Israel, in the Bible feels like a story of people constantly looking for something. When Abraham and Sarah follow God's call, they end up looking for a child of promise until Isaac is born. When Joseph is sold off into captivity by his brothers, he is looking for freedom, forgiveness, and a new beginning. When the people end up enslaved in Egypt, they call out to God, looking for deliverance.

Eventually, God's people begin to look for a sort of leader who will come forth chosen by God. God raises up the judges one after another to fill this role, but the people want something more dependable. They ask for a king, like the nations around them. First it is Saul, then David, and eventually a succession of kings, some who are good and others who are bad. All the while, there is a deep searching for the kind of king truly set apart by God.

There is a word for that sort of king: the anointed one or, in Hebrew, messiah. When a leader was anointed, oil was poured upon their head as an outward symbol of God's Spirit being poured upon them for the role of leadership. All through Scripture we hear the longing for an anointed one to come and make things right, both internally for God's people and in relation to the peoples surrounding them.

Psalm 2 is a prayer song of that latter kind, calling out for God and His anointed to set things right with the nations raging around them. The anointed one is described as the son of the Most High, one whom the nations should kiss as a sign of their service to that kingly figure.

The early believers in Jerusalem later quote this psalm when they are being persecuted by religious and political authorities in Acts 4. It becomes a point of reference for them as they pray that God would enable them to step forward boldly to witness to Jesus, the true Messiah.

When we read Psalm 2 with Jesus in mind, suddenly some phrases take on new meaning. Verses 11 and 12 read: "Serve the Lord with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling. Kiss his son." Once these words may have sounded like a demand from the writer, but now, through Christ, they sound like an invitation to devoted worship. It is probably no mistake that the most common word for worship in the New Testament (*proskyneō* / προσκυνέω) literally means to "kiss toward" someone as a sign of reverent adoration.

This Advent, may the words of Psalm 2 help us sing the song of the beloved anointed one of God, Jesus the Messiah, who is worthy of our love and worship.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT: _____

1. When you think back on Christmases past, what have been things you've sought throughout the season that determine whether it was a "successful" season for you or your family?
2. Knowing that Christ is the anointed one, the promised Messiah of God, what are the ways you will keep Him as the object of your focus/worship this Christmas?

REFLECT & RESPOND

CHOOSE YOUR OWN

Adventure

WEEK 1: DECEMBER 2-7

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES, YOU WILL FIND A VARIETY OF WAYS TO REFLECT ON PSALM 2 THIS WEEK. SINCE GOD SPEAKS TO EACH OF US IN DIFFERENT WAYS, YOU, YOUR FAMILY, OR EVEN YOUR SMALL GROUP MAY WISH TO MIX AND MATCH A NUMBER OF THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES LISTED. NO MATTER WHAT “ADVENT-URE” YOU SELECT, WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL FIND AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT MORE DEEPLY WITH JESUS, THE BELOVED ANOINTED OF GOD.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Read one of these passages each day this week, and reflect on these questions:

How do these verses describe the anointed one of God? What do they say He is or does? What does it mean in your life that Jesus is the anointed one of God?

- Monday, December 2: Psalm 2
- Tuesday, December 3: Isaiah 61:1-11
- Wednesday, December 4: Luke 4:14-21
- Thursday, December 5: Acts 10:34-44
- Friday, December 6: Psalm 20



DEEPER STUDY

Read Psalm 2 and Acts 4:23-31. Why do you think the early believers would look to this Psalm as a source of hope when faced with opposition? What promises would they have trusted in?



GROUP RESPONSE: LECTIO DIVINA

Latin for "divine reading," *lectio divina* is a devotional reading of scripture originally designed at a time period when literacy rates were low and access to written texts was limited. Communities of believers practiced *lectio divina* as an intentional method to allow all members of the community an opportunity to receive God's Word.



This week, take 20 minutes with those in your community to practice *lectio divina*, using Luke 7:36-50, another passage in scripture that speaks to us about the beloved anointed of God.

How to Begin: Set a timer for 20 minutes. Invite someone in your group to read the passage.

- *Lectio* (reading): Read the passage aloud, slowly. Listen for a word or phrase that stands out to you. Repeat the word to yourself silently and let it resonate with you. You may choose to read the passage once more during this step to provide more space for a word to resonate.
- *Meditatio* (meditation): Read the passage aloud again. Meditate on your word or phrase and ask God how it speaks to your life. Is there an image that comes to mind? A feeling or thought? Allow your imagination to be engaged in this prayerful exercise.
- *Oratio* (prayer): Pray what you desire to say to God and listen. Does the Spirit have an invitation for you today from this passage?
- *Contemplatio* (contemplation): Allow your group a few moments of silence before God. Pray that the ways the Spirit met you during this time would transform you. Thank God for this encounter with the Beloved Anointed.

Take a few moments at the end of the *lectio divina* to share about the experience with others in the group.

PRAYER: LAMENT



As Pastor Matt wrote in his devotional for this week, Psalm 2 is a prayer song “calling out to God and His anointed to set things right with the nations raging around them.” We live in a world today in which the nations are still raging around us, and the Psalms provide us with a model (lament) to pray our fears, grief, anger, and sorrow. Spend some time this week writing a prayer of lament, a passionate and personal expression of grief and sorrow. Follow the pattern below as you write your lament:

- Cry out to God (your address to God, we cry out to God in lament, not an empty complaint to no one)
- Complaint (express your anger, pain, heartache, or sadness)
- Affirmation of Trust (remember how God has been present and faithful in the past)
- Petition/Request (express your deepest desire to God)
- Additional Argument (is there anything else? any other reason why God should intervene?)
- Rage against Your Enemies (bring your enemies before God)
- Assurance of Being Heard (what do you need to feel heard?)
- Promise to Offer Praise to God (offer your own promise to God)
- Assurance (tell God which attribute of His you are most thankful for in the moment)

WORSHIP



Messiah...King... Scripture is filled with names and titles that allow us to come into more reverent worship of Jesus. Search your Bible for some of the names and titles that are used in Scripture to refer to God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Spend time worshiping God with the title that most stands out to you today. If you are unsure where to start, consider the Advent Hymn, “Of the Father’s Love Begotten,” printed on page 8, which draws from Psalm 2.

SERVICE



Bake desserts for the International Student Christmas party on December 6. Pray for the students who will be eating these desserts. They come from various countries and religious backgrounds, but are united in their need to know the hope that Jesus offers. Send cookies to the Eastbrook office by 12 pm (noon) on Friday, December 6.

SACRIFICE



This week, practice the discipline of fasting. This could be for a day or just for a meal. When you feel the pangs of hunger, remember your need for God, and use that time to pray.

NATIVITY BUILDING



Throughout the season of Advent, you will be prompted to build the nativity scene. This is a great way for kids to experience the anticipation and expectation of the season of Advent in a tangible way. Each week, you will be prompted to add or move some of the biblical characters.

- Tuesday, December 3: Set up the stable, but leave it empty for now. Long before Jesus was born on earth, God was getting everything ready.
- Thursday, December 5: Place Mary, Joseph and an angel figure across the room from the stable. God sent an angel to tell Mary and Joseph that Jesus would be born to Mary.
- Friday, December 6: Place a donkey near Mary. She may have ridden a donkey to Bethlehem, because she was so close to having a baby. Donkeys were known to be animals of PEACE. Years later, Jesus Himself would ride a donkey into Jerusalem.

CREATE: CLAY POTS



Some of us are wired to learn better when we work with our hands. So this week, reflect on Psalm 2 as you make a clay pot. The verses use poetic language to talk about how Jesus, the beloved anointed Messiah, will exert His power and break His enemies into pieces, like a clay pot.

Choose to take this activity in one of two directions:

1. The imagery of Jesus the Messiah and King, smashing His enemies like a clay pot is strong and powerful. Spend some time this week crafting a few small pots out of modeling clay (available online or at a craft store). Before they dry/harden, use a tool to scratch one word into each pot, representing something that Jesus hates and will destroy in His power. These could be words like “death,” “cancer,” “unforgiveness,” etc. Once the pots harden, take them to safe space and smash them, watching as they break into tiny pieces. Jesus is King, He will return, and He will put an end to the fallenness of this world!
2. The imagery from Psalm 2 also brings to mind the idea that we find in other parts of Scripture, that God is the potter and we are His clay (Isaiah 64:8, Jeremiah 18, Romans 9). Spend some time this week crafting a pot out of modeling clay (available online or at a craft store). As you do so, think about how God has created you uniquely and carefully. Think about what it means that Jesus is the “beloved” of God. Think also about what it means that God calls YOU His “beloved.” Display your pot somewhere to be reminded of the fact that you are Jesus’ beloved.

FAMILY TALK WEEK 1

INTENDED FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

There’s a playground game called “Captain, May I?”. Maybe you’ve played it before? The “Captain” stands on one end of the play area while everyone else lines up at the opposite end. The Captain calls out a player and gives directions: *Take five hops forward, or Spin in place three times.* The player called on must first ask: “Captain, may I?”. If a player forgets to ask, they are sent back to the starting line!

Of course, *everyone* wants to be the captain! It’s fun to be the one in charge, telling some players to go and others to stop, and really fun to send some all the way back to the start! This is what some people think it’s like to be king—telling everyone else what to do. The king is IN CHARGE!

But, who is in charge of the king?

This is what happened to God’s people. God wanted to be their king, but His people wanted to be like all the other nations—they wanted a person to be king. So, God allowed this. Sometimes, these kings were good, but sometimes they were bad—*really bad*.

Then, God sang a Savior Song! We hear it in Psalm 2: “I have placed my king on my holy mountain of Zion” (verse 6). God would set apart a special king, his own Son, Jesus, to be a king over all other kings!

This is what we celebrate throughout the season of Advent—the coming of God’s Son Jesus as the chosen, anointed king who would make everything right again. That’s why later in Psalm 2 God says:

*Kings, be wise!
Rulers of the earth, be warned!
Serve the LORD and have respect for him.
Celebrate his rule with trembling. (verses 10-11, NIV)*

As God’s people today, we can be happy knowing that Jesus is in charge! And we can worship Him as the king over all other leaders on earth.

Of the Father's Love Begotten

Unison



1. Of the Fa-ther's love be-got - ten, Ere the worlds be-gan to be,
 2. O ye heights of heav'n, a-dore Him; An-gel hosts, His prais - es sing;
 3. Christ, to Thee with God the Fa - ther, And, O Ho - ly Ghost, to Thee,

He is Al - pha and O - me - ga, He the Source, the End - ing He
 Pow'rs, do - min - ions, bow be - fore Him And ex - tol our God and King;
 Hymn and chant and high thanks-giv - ing, And un-wear - ied prais - es be:

Of the things that are, that have been, And that fu - ture
 Let no tongue on earth be si - lent; Ev - ery voice in
 Hon - or, glo - ry, and do - min - ion And e - ter - nal

years shall see, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 con - cert ring, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 vic - to - ry, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more. A - men.

TEXT: Aurelius C. Prudentius, 4th century;
 translated by John M. Neale and Henry W. Baker
 MUSIC: Plainsonz, 13th century; arranged by C. Winfred Douglas

WEEK 2 OF ADVENT

The Suffering Messiah

MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?

WHY ARE YOU SO FAR FROM SAVING ME,

SO FAR FROM MY CRIES OF ANGUISH?

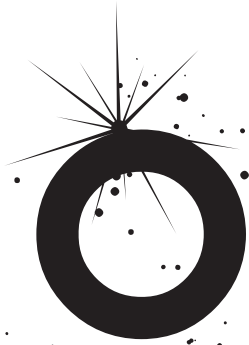
MY GOD, I CRY OUT BY DAY, BUT YOU DO NOT ANSWER,

BY NIGHT, BUT I FIND NO REST.

(PSALM 22:1-2)

A READING FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Read Psalm 22



One of the most memorable events of my life was seeing my grandfather, a person I respected greatly, enter into a battle with cancer at the end of his life. While he retained great dignity to the end, his body became worn out and drawn thin. When we see people of strength in our lives go through times of suffering, it is a difficult thing to watch.

Of all the psalms connected with Jesus, perhaps the most penetrating is Psalm 22. This psalm of anguish and suffering serves as a backdrop for Jesus' crucifixion, the first phrases leaping from His lips while He hangs affixed to that tortuous wood. There is a wonder here because the chosen one, anointed by God and by His Spirit, now enters into the suffering of humanity. He endures both the suffering humanity deserves and the suffering humanity inflicts. The intensity of the cup of suffering that Jesus drinks at the Cross finds expression in the strong words of this psalm.

It is ironic that the political and religious leaders who gather around to watch Jesus' crucifixion mock Him as He suffers. "They said, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One'" (Luke 23:35). They seem to delight in the suffering of this supposed Messiah, even as Jesus' followers hide away in fear or lurk nearby in anguish. This is ironic because even as they mock, the Jewish belief structure of Jesus' time earnestly anticipated a messiah figure to relieve their suffering under the oppression of the Roman regime. As happens to all of us, they failed to see that what they most need is right in front of them.

Advent may seem like an odd time to focus on Psalm 22. The theme and words seem more like a Good Friday portion of Scripture. Yet the anticipation of Advent calls us to a watchful attention of the way that God works. Even before the foundations of the earth, God had a plan to reveal His glory in Christ and to bring us back to Him through the suffering of Jesus. "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us" (Ephesians 1:7-8a).

As we continue our Advent journey, may the suffering of Jesus the Messiah, described in Psalm 22, give us hope that God has come to rescue us. And may we meet that hope with faith as we live for God and wait for Christ's return.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT:

1. "The Lord works in mysterious ways" is a phrase we often hear. In what way was the arrival and suffering of Jesus a mysterious path of God? And in what way would you say it all made sense?
2. As you reflect on the birth stories of Jesus from the Gospels, where do you see His purpose and suffering anticipated? What is your reaction to God's long-planned and perfectly-executed plan for our salvation?

REFLECT & RESPOND

CHOOSE YOUR OWN *Adventure*

WEEK 2: DECEMBER 9-14

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES, YOU WILL FIND A VARIETY OF WAYS TO REFLECT ON PSALM 22 THIS WEEK. SINCE GOD SPEAKS TO EACH OF US IN DIFFERENT WAYS, YOU, YOUR FAMILY, OR EVEN YOUR SMALL GROUP MAY WISH TO MIX AND MATCH A NUMBER OF THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES LISTED. NO MATTER WHAT "ADVENT-URE" YOU SELECT, WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL FIND AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT MORE DEEPLY WITH JESUS, THE SUFFERING MESSIAH.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Read one of these passages each day this week, and reflect on these questions:

What do these verses tell us the suffering of Christ brings about in our lives? What does the fact that God's plan for our salvation was carried out in an unexpected way say to you about how He might be working in your life?

- Monday, December 9: Psalm 22
- Tuesday, December 10: Hebrews 2:9-18
- Wednesday, December 11: Isaiah 53:3-12
- Thursday, December 12: Luke 9:18-27
- Friday, December 13: Ephesians 1:3-10



DEEPER STUDY

Do a comparison of Psalm 22 and Matthew 27:27-54. What are the similarities you see in these two passages of scripture? What stands out to you most as you read these together?



GROUP RESPONSE: COMMUNION

Communion is the regular remembrance of the Messiah who suffered and died for us. Since the time that Jesus initiated this practice, believers have gathered in churches, homes, and communities to remember the faithfulness of the Messiah who bled and died to give us life. Take time this week to take communion with others. Reflect on Psalm 22 and use the words Jesus spoke to His disciples in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 as you serve communion. If this practice is new for your community outside of corporate worship services, feel free to ask someone more familiar with serving communion for help planning a time of communion.



PRAYER: THE JESUS PRAYER

If you practiced the Prayer activity with us last week, you likely already noted the elements of lament in Psalm 22. And while Psalm 22 begins in one of the most famous laments in the Bible, "My God, why have you forsaken me?" it also ends in thanksgiving and worship as the Psalmist reminds us that God listens when we cry out for help (v. 24). Psalm 22 is a reminder that God never leaves us nor forsakes us (Deuteronomy 31:6).



This week, practice the Jesus Prayer, also sometimes called Breath Prayer. Breath prayer is a way that Christians from as early as the 6th century have practiced the command in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." In breath prayer, we are reminded that just as we cannot live on only one breath of air, so also we cannot live on only one breath from God. Breath prayer reminds us that God is living in us. We even hear echoes of breath prayer in Psalm 22:2! Breath prayer is *not* a meaningless set of words that we mindlessly repeat, it is a way that we can practice abiding in Jesus.

Generally, breath prayer involves praying one phrase as we inhale and another as we exhale. This week, practice the Jesus Prayer, taken from Luke 18, first thing when you wake up and later when you go to bed. As you inhale, pray the words of Luke 18:38-39 "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God" and exhale Luke 18:13 "Have mercy on me, a sinner." Breathe in and out slowly as your heart prays these words.

WORSHIP

Jesus in His suffering demonstrated the ultimate act of humility. Spend time worshipping the Messiah and praying in a physical posture of kneeling, expressing humility and reverence. Consider using the hymn, "When I Survey the Wonderful Cross" (page 14), a hymn that speaks of Jesus' suffering.



SERVICE

Spread the hope of Jesus in a tangible way. Think of a family or friend within your social circle who could use some encouragement. Find a way to encourage them through a tangible gift. Possible ideas are to make them a meal, bake cookies, send a gift with a note, pay a bill for them, etc.



SACRIFICE COMFORT

Fast from going to something or spending money on a regular item. Use the money you would've spent and give this to some recommended community organization. Contact Missions Pastor Dan Ryan for some organizations in Milwaukee, dryan@eastbrook.org.



NATIVITY BUILDING

- Monday, December 9: Place the magi in another room. These travelers remind us that Jesus' followers would be from all nations. We hope for the day when people of all nations, together, will worship Jesus as King of all Kings.
- Tuesday, December 10: Bring out the figures of sheep and shepherds and set them outside of the stable. These will be the first to hear that Jesus is born!
- Thursday, December 12: Scatter some sheep figures all around the room. Let them remind you of how people are lost without the Good Shepherd, Jesus.
- Friday, December 13: Bring your sheep figures close to the shepherd figures. The shepherds were keeping watch at night when they heard the news about Baby Jesus!



CREATE: BAKE BREAD

This week, as we reflect on Jesus as the Suffering Messiah, it brings to mind the bodily death of Jesus upon the Cross, who cried out the words of Psalm 22, "My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?" This week, bake bread using the recipe below, or your own favorite recipe, and reflect on what it means that Jesus, the Messiah, suffered upon the Cross for you and for me—to bring us hope. This is truly good news of great joy for all nations!



Ingredients:

2 cups white flour
1 3/4 cups wholewheat flour
1 1/2 tsp baking soda
1 1/2 tsp salt
2 cups buttermilk

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 450° F. Line a baking tray with parchment paper. Whisk together white and whole wheat flour, baking soda, and salt. Add buttermilk slowly, until the batter is too hard to stir anymore. Sprinkle a surface with flour and gently knead the dough no more than 8 times, bringing together into a ball. Transfer to the parchment-lined tray and cut a cross on the surface, around 1/4" deep with a serrated knife. Bake 20 minutes, then turn the oven down to 400° F. Bake 20 more minutes, or until the base sounds hollow when tapped. Transfer to rack and cool for at least 30 minutes before serving.

FAMILY TALK WEEK 2

INTENDED FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Read Psalm 22:11, 14-19, NIV:

*Don't be far away from me.
Trouble is near,
and there is no one to help me.
My strength is like water that is poured out on the ground.
I feel as if my bones aren't connected.
My heart has turned to wax.
It has melted away inside me.
My mouth is dried up like a piece of broken pottery.
My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.
You bring me down to the edge of the grave.
A group of sinful people has closed in on me.
They are all around me like a pack of dogs.
They have pierced my hands and my feet.
Everyone can see all my bones right through my skin.
People stare at me. They laugh when I suffer.
They divide up my clothes among them.
They cast lots for what I am wearing.
Lord, don't be so far away from me.
You give me strength. Come quickly to help me.*

When park rangers rescue someone from a mountaintop or deep in a canyon, they have to do a *short-haul rescue operation*. This means that they fly a helicopter as close as possible to the rescue site, then one ranger straps on a harness and is let out of the helicopter on a cable. The ranger dangles over the rescue site and eventually lands near the person to be rescued. The ranger links his harness to the stranded person, and together they are pulled back toward the helicopter where they can be safe.

Short-haul rescues are really dangerous! Park rangers who do them know that they are risking their own lives to save someone else's.


This is exactly what Jesus did—but *so much more!* Jesus *did* lay down His life in order to save us. This is the whole point of the Savior Song in Psalm 22. Even though it was written hundreds of years before Jesus came to earth, this psalm gives clues about Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. It tells us that Jesus would feel all alone (verse 1-2), that He would be made fun of (verses 6-8), that His body would be weak and broken (verses 14-17) and it even tells us that soldiers would play games for His cloak (verse 18). It's a sad picture!

But, it's also a hopeful picture. Jesus loved us enough to rescue us—to take the punishment for our sins! Like the short-haul rescuer, he links Himself to us and brings us to safety! We know that Jesus rose again, and those of us who trust Him, will rise to live forever with Him!

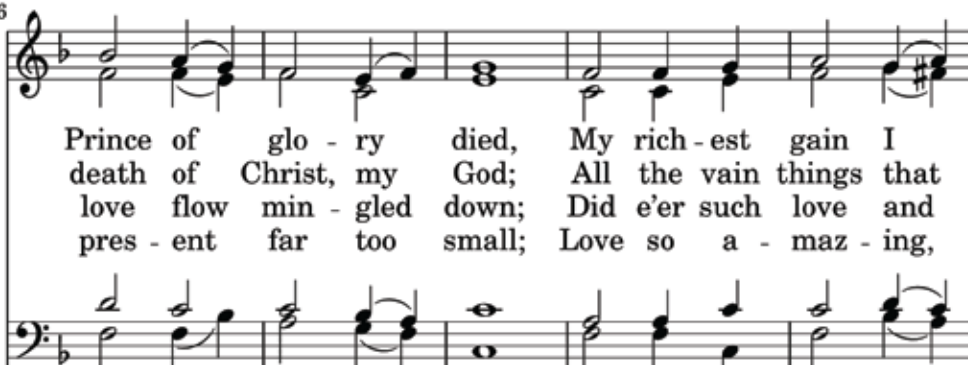
**SHARE
YOUR OWN
ADVENT-URE**

**SHARE YOUR ADVENT-URE ONLINE BY USING
THE HASHTAG #EASTBROOKADVENTURE OR
BY TAGGING EASTBROOK CHURCH ON
FACEBOOK OR @EASTBROOKCHURCH ON
INSTAGRAM AND TWITTER!**


When I Survey the Wondrous Cross



1. When I sur - vey the won - drous cross, On which the
 2. For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast, Save in the
 3. See, from His head, His hands, His feet, Sor - row and
 4. Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, That were a



Prince of glo - ry died, My rich - est gain I
 death of Christ, my God; All the vain things that
 love flow min - gled down; Did e'er such love and
 pres - ent far too small; Love so a - maz - ing,



count but loss, And pour contempt on all my pride.
 charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to His blood.
 sor - row meet, Or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
 so di - vine, De - mands my soul, my life, my all.

WORDS: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748
 MUSIC (HAMBURG 8.8.8.8 (L.M.)): Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

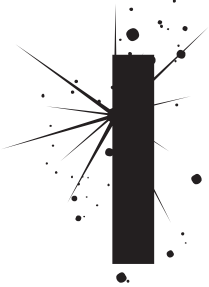
WEEK 3 OF ADVENT

The Eternal Priest

THE LORD HAS SWORN
AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND:
YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER,
IN THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.
(PSALM 110:4)

A READING FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Read Psalm 110



In the book of Genesis, Abraham and Sarah leave their homeland in present-day Iraq to follow God to wherever He will lead them. Their nephew, Lot, accompanies them, eventually getting into all sorts of trouble. At one point, Lot and his family are taken captive in the midst of a military campaign waged between two groups of kings who formed alliances between cities (Genesis 14). Abraham follows after his family members, eventually successfully delivering them and many others. On his return, Abraham encounters Melchizedek, king of Salem, who pronounces a priestly blessing over Abraham and his descendants.

The episode is interesting, but seems like a side alley in the journey of Scripture, until it reappears in Psalm 110. There, the messiah is described both as a conquering king and an eternal priest, bringing together both political and religious duties before people and God. King David seemed to serve in this way, leading the people to military victory while also restoring worship with the ark of the covenant in Jerusalem.

Melchizedek never appears again until the book of Hebrews, which mentions him nine times, each time describing this unique king and priest as a precursor of Jesus. In Hebrews 5, the description of Jesus as king from Psalm 2 is immediately connected with a description of Jesus as priest from Psalm 110. Jesus is simultaneously the once-for-all sacrifice that restores us to God through the Cross and the one-of-a-kind priest who offers that sacrifice in a way that endures forever. The entire book of Hebrews is an exploration of Jesus as the eternal priest before God on behalf of all humanity. “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 6:19-20).

As we journey through Advent, we readily remember how Jesus was born of Mary in Bethlehem many years ago, heralded by angels as “good news that will cause great joy for all the people” (Luke 2:10). May we also remember that good news of joy arises because this infant Messiah would one day stand before God unlike anyone else, and both offer and become the atoning sacrifice for our sins. And now, “Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us” (Romans 8:34). He is our Eternal Priest.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT:

1. As Romans 8:34 points out, Jesus stands before God interceding for us. What does that mean for you and your life today?
2. The sacrifice Jesus offered as “the perfect high priest” was Himself. How does this change your perspective on Advent and what kind of response does that invoke from you in your celebrations this year?

REFLECT & RESPOND
**CHOOSE
YOUR OWN**
Adventure
WEEK 3: DECEMBER 16-21

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES, YOU WILL FIND A VARIETY OF WAYS TO REFLECT ON PSALM 110 THIS WEEK. SINCE GOD SPEAKS TO EACH OF US IN DIFFERENT WAYS, YOU, YOUR FAMILY, OR EVEN YOUR SMALL GROUP MAY WISH TO MIX AND MATCH A NUMBER OF THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES LISTED. NO MATTER WHAT “ADVENT-URE” YOU SELECT, WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL FIND AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT MORE DEEPLY WITH JESUS, THE ETERNAL PRIEST.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Read one of these passages each day this week, and reflect on these questions:

What do these verses tell us the uniqueness of Jesus’ priesthood? What does the fact that Jesus’ serves eternally in this way mean for you and your hope?

- Monday, December 16: Psalm 110
- Tuesday, December 17: Romans 8:31-39
- Wednesday, December 18: Hebrews 5:1-10
- Thursday, December 19: Hebrews 6:13-20
- Friday, December 20: Hebrews 9:24-28



DEEPER STUDY

Do a comparison of Psalm 110 and Hebrews 7. Both describe a King/Priest. What aspects do each emphasize and how do they fit together to give us a powerful picture of Jesus as our Warrior Priest?



GROUP RESPONSE: ADVOCACY

In Isaiah 61, we hear the proclamation of our coming Eternal Priest, who will be an advocate of those the religious authorities cast aside, "The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners."



As a community in Jesus, we join His example as advocates for those on the margins. With your community this week, choose a way that you can speak out as an advocate for those whose voices are not often heard (examples: the unborn, refugees, etc.)

PRAYER OF EXAMEN

The Prayer of Examen is a daily practice of discernment, intended to create deeper awareness of the God-given desires in one’s life, as well as the voice and activity of God within the flow of the day. This prayer practice provides us a way of noticing where God shows up in our day, and can be helpful in seasons of busyness (like this third week of Advent!) where we may otherwise miss God’s work in our lives.



This prayer practice is often written down, so as to more clearly see and note the movements of God over time. At the end of each day this week, take some time to write down your answers to these questions:

- What was the most life-giving part of my day?
- What was the most life-thwarting part of my day?
- When today did I have the deepest sense of connection with God, others and myself?
- When today did I have the least sense of connection?
- Where was I aware that I was living out of the fruit of the Spirit?
- Where was there an absence of the fruit of the Spirit?

Take note of your answers to these questions over time, using + or -, or a series of columns. Ask God to show you His desires for you through your daily reflection. Consider sharing your reflection with your family, friends, or trusted advisor as you discern what God is doing in your life, where He is at work, and what He may be calling you into.

WORSHIP

The hymn "O come, O Come, Emmanuel" calls us to look forward to the Priest who will set captives free. We have an advocate who is truly Emmanuel 'God with us,' interceding for us as a Savior who intimately knows the pains and struggles of life. Sing this hymn today in worship to our Emmanuel! You will find it on page 20.



SERVICE

Write Christmas cards to fellow Eastbrookers who are hospitalized or homebound. Contact the church office (414.228.5220 or info@eastbrook.org) to get names and addresses for individuals who could use some encouragement this holiday season.



SACRIFICE TIME

This week, use personal time to serve someone in your neighborhood, or donate your time to a local organization (Food Pantry, Soup Kitchen, Rescue Mission, etc.). Consider a way you might connect with our church's local outreach ministries as well. For more information on Eastbrook's local ministries, contact Catie Boon at cboon@eastbrook.org.



NATIVITY BUILDING

- Monday, December 16: Move Mary and Joseph and the donkey a little closer to the stable. Mary and Joseph were filled with JOY as the time for Jesus' birth came closer.
- Thursday, December 19: Place animal figures in the stable. This barn was a humble, but safe place for Jesus to be born!



CREATE A COLLAGE

Psalm 110 is rich and deeply theological. It teaches of Jesus' role as intercessor on our behalf. This week, take some time to make a collage on paper or canvas. Use words and photos cut from magazines or newspapers to represent the areas in your life in which you most need Jesus to intercede for you, or draw and write your own words and images. Approach this week's creative activity with a prayerful heart and as an opportunity to surrender all areas of your life and heart to Jesus' transformational work. Pray your way through this art project. When you are done, you may want to share your collage with a family member, friend, loved one, or with your small group. Pray together and give thanks to Jesus, your priest, who intercedes for you at the right hand of the Father (Romans 8:34).



FAMILY TALK WEEK 3

INTENDED FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

*"The LORD has made a promise.
He will not change his mind.
He has said, 'You are a priest forever,
Just like Melchizedek.'" (Psalm 110:4, NIV)*

"First, the name Melchizedek means 'king of what is right.' Also, 'king of Salem' means 'king of peace.' Melchizedek has no father or mother. He has no family line. His days have no beginning. His life has no end. He remains a priest forever. In this way, he is like the Son of God. . . He [Jesus] isn't like the other high priests. They need to offer sacrifices day after day. First they bring offerings for their own sins. Then they do it for the sins of the people. But Jesus gave one sacrifice for the sins of the people. He gave it once and for all time. He did it by offering himself." (Hebrews 7:2-3, 27 NIV)

God is 100% super-holy.

People are not.

So, back in the Old Testament, God made a way for people to come near to Him, even though they had sinned. God appointed "priests"—men who would offer people's sacrifices on the altar, so that their sins would be forgiven. Priests represented the people before God.

In the Savior Song from Psalm 110, God is saying that Jesus is like a priest. Not like most Old Testament priests, but like one called Melchizedek (*Mel-KIZ-uh-dek*).

Most priests were born into the tribe of Levi.

Melchizedek was not from Levi. He lived before God's people were divided into tribes.

Jesus was not from the tribe of Levi. He was from Judah.

Most priests were born into a family and died.

Melchizedek doesn't have any family, or birthday, or time of death recorded in the scripture.

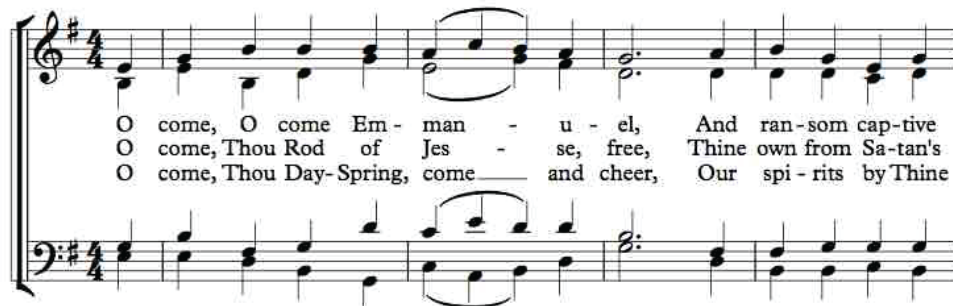
Jesus lives forever.

Most priests had to offer sacrifices over and over.

Jesus offered one sacrifice—HIMSELF—to pay for everyone's sin, for all time!

This is why we don't offer animal sacrifices at church. Jesus Himself is our priest, representing us before His holy Father, and Jesus Himself is our once-for-all-time sacrifice. He is our priest, sitting at the Father's right hand, always praying for us (Romans 8:34).

O Come, O Come Emmanuel



O come, O come Em - man - u - el, And ran-som cap-tive
O come, Thou Rod of Jes - se, free, Thine own from Sa-tan's
O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer, Our spi - rits by Thine



Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here, Un -
ty - ran - ny, From depths of Hell Thy peo - ple save, And
a - dvent here, Dis - perse the gloo-my clouds of night, And



10
til the Son of God ap - pear. Re - joice, re - joice! Em -
give them vic - t'ry o - 'er the grave.
death's dark sha-dows put to flight.



15
man - u - el, shall come to Thee, O Is - ra - el!

WEEK 4 OF ADVENT

The Perfect King

MAY HIS NAME ENDURE FOREVER;

MAY IT CONTINUE AS LONG AS THE SUN.

THEN ALL NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED THROUGH HIM,

AND THEY WILL CALL HIM BLESSED.

(PSALM 72:17)

A READING FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Read Psalm 72



During winter, one of our sons began cultivating seeds in the basement to plant in our gardens during spring. It was a lot of work to keep them watered and sufficiently warm during the cold months. When the weather finally turned, we planted the seedlings throughout our gardens. A new sort of work began, cultivating the seedlings outdoors with newly planted seeds so that tomatoes, radishes, peppers, and green beans could grow and later be gathered to our table to share with others.

In the winter of our world, Jesus comes to sow and cultivate the seeds of the kingdom of God in human lives, like Simon Peter and Mary Magdalene, like you and me. He comes as the chosen one, the beloved of God, the suffering messiah, and the eternal priest. And He comes as the perfect king, just as the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary:

"You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

(Luke 1:31-33)

Waiting for Messiah Jesus to be born, Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, speaks about God's plans, "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David" (Luke 1:68-69). Here is this infant Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, born in the line of King David, in David's town of Bethlehem. He is heralded by angelic hosts and worshiped by a ragtag group of shepherds. Exotic magi from other lands visit in His early years. His mother and earthly father watch in wonder.

Once grown, He calls out, "The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15). But what is this kingdom and what throne will this king sit upon? All His earthly life seemed less than regal. He had nowhere to lay His head, yet always had more than He needed. He was rejected by elites, yet people from various nations searched for Him. Raised high upon the Cross, He became a sign to all of how far God will go to bring the good news of His kingdom into our lives.

But Jesus' story does not end with the cross, resurrection, and ascension. The testimony of Scripture is that a new heaven and a new earth will arrive in God's timing connected with the majestic return of King Jesus to rule over all the earth. "The Lamb will triumph over them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings" (Revelation 17:14). Advent is a time of remembering Jesus' incarnation, but also anticipating His future return as the enduring perfect King, even as Psalm 72 describes. May we be found ready!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT:

1. Why does it matter for this life and eternity that Jesus is the perfect King of God's eternal Kingdom?
2. What does the anticipation of His identity as King do to your celebration of Advent this year?

REFLECT & RESPOND

CHOOSE YOUR OWN *Adventure*

WEEK 4: DECEMBER 23-28

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES, YOU WILL FIND A VARIETY OF WAYS TO REFLECT ON PSALM 72 THIS WEEK. SINCE GOD SPEAKS TO EACH OF US IN DIFFERENT WAYS, YOU, YOUR FAMILY, OR EVEN YOUR SMALL GROUP MAY WISH TO MIX AND MATCH A NUMBER OF THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES LISTED. NO MATTER WHAT "ADVENT-URE" YOU SELECT, WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL FIND AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT MORE DEEPLY WITH JESUS, THE PERFECT KING.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Read one of these passages each day this week, and reflect on these questions:

What do these verses tell us about the type of King Jesus is? What does the fact that Jesus is the perfect King of Kings mean for your life?

- Monday, December 23: Psalm 72
- Tuesday, December 24: Luke 1:26-35
- Wednesday, December 25: Luke 1:68-75
- Thursday, December 26: John 12:12-15
- Friday, December 27: Revelation 19:11-16



DEEPER STUDY

Read Psalm 72. This is a prayer of David for God's blessing on him and his rule. List the characteristics of the prayer in two columns: one of all the things he is asking for himself, and one of all that he is asking God to enable him to do for his people. Now read Isaiah 61. List from this passage all the things God promises to do through His anointed one. What similarities or differences do you see?



GROUP RESPONSE

We live in a time of the "now, and not yet." We look forward to the return of King Jesus to rule over the earth, and yet this Kingdom is coming even now. Although we see the sin and brokenness around us, we also see beautiful pieces of this New Kingdom coming. We as a community are called to use our gifts and strengths as ambassadors for the coming Kingdom in this world. Ask others in your community what they see as your spiritual gifts and strengths. Encourage each other in those and go out and serve God's Kingdom purposes through them.



PRAYER: SILENT LISTENING PRAYER

We often associate prayer with the words we say, but prayer is a two-way conversation in which we must also learn to listen to the Triune God. This is something that is very hard to do—especially in a busy week like this one! This week, we invite you to the truly counter-cultural practice of silent listening prayer. Just as friends can enjoy one another without conversing, contemplative prayer is a way of being with God without wordiness. In this practice of attending and listening to God in quiet, without interruption and noise, we learn to allow God to set the agenda for prayer. In other words, rather than talking at God, we learn to be *with* God.



There are many ways to practice silent listening prayer, and some will find that it comes naturally. For those who need a nudge to get started with silent listening prayer this week, try the ideas on the next page:

- Set a period of time in which you don't speak. If silent prayer is new for you, start with ten minutes each day, and set a timer so that you are not tempted to watch the clock.
- If you find it hard to quiet your mind, consider also quieting your body through stillness.
- If your mind wanders, focus on a portion of Scripture (we suggest Psalm 72), allowing it to sink deeper into your heart as a prayer to God.

WORSHIP

Lying facedown or bowing low to the earth is a posture of obedient worship. We serve a King who truly is worthy. Worship this week in a posture of bowing down in reverent worship to King Jesus. Consider singing or listening to "Crown Him With Many Crowns," found on page 26.



SERVICE

Provide a ride to the Christmas Service (international students, homebound etc). We have services at 1, 2:30, 4, & 5:30 pm this year. Contact the Eastbrook Church office (414.228.5220 or info@eastbrook.org) for more information on who needs a ride and how to serve.



SACRIFICE FINANCES

As a family, small group, or individual, find a way to use your finances to bless and encourage someone. This could involve donating to a charity, buying lunch for the homeless, paying the rent for someone in need. The possibilities are endless!



NATIVITY BUILDING

- Monday, December 23: Place Mary and Joseph in the stable. The time has almost arrived for Baby Jesus to be born!
- Monday, Tuesday 24: Place the Baby Jesus figure in the stable. In the middle of the night, in this little barn, Jesus was born! "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son . . ." (John 3:16).
- Monday, Wednesday 25: Place the shepherds near the stable. The angel told them that the Savior had been born! They believed, and there were the first to see Jesus and to tell others about Him!
- Monday, December 30: Bring your wise men figures a little closer to the stable. They are following the star, on their way to worship the King of Kings!
- Monday, January 6 (Epiphany): The magi arrive, and present Jesus with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Jesus is the chosen beloved God, the suffering servant, the forever priest, and the coming King!



CREATE: PLANTING PAPERWHITES

Psalm 72 is rich with agrarian imagery. In verse 15-16 in particular, this messianic psalm compares Jesus' eternal reign with flourishing crops and thriving fields. In this passage, we hear an echo of what makes the season of Advent so special. Not only is Advent a time when we *expect* the birth of Christ that we celebrate this week at Christmas, but we also *anticipate* this eternal reign of Jesus. To put this into practice creatively this week, plant a paperwhite bulb in an indoor pot according to the instructions provided with your bulb. Wait with anticipation for your beautiful paperwhite to bloom!



**SHARE YOUR ADVENT-URE ONLINE BY USING THE
HASHTAG #EASTBROOKADVENTURE OR BY TAGGING
EASTBROOK CHURCH ON FACEBOOK OR
@EASTBROOKCHURCH ON INSTAGRAM AND TWITTER!**

**SHARE
YOUR OWN
ADVENT-URE**

FAMILY TALK WEEK 4

INTENDED FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

When a king comes to town, his arrival is announced by a trumpet fanfare, *tum-ta-dum!* He is greeted by a parade of people waving and shouting! A herald cries out, "Hear ye, hear ye, His royal highness has arrived!" When the king goes home to his castle, a special flag called a "royal standard" is flown from the rooftop, letting everyone know that he is there. It's a colorful, noisy, joyful day!

But . . . when King Jesus was born in Bethlehem, his arrival wasn't anything like that! Jesus was born in the quiet of night, in a stable, greeted only by some animals and shepherds.

Remember back to the first Savior Song in Week 1 of Advent? We learned that God set apart his own Son, Jesus, to be a king over all other kings. So, what happened?

Well, Jesus' kingdom is a little upside down:

Instead of ordering people around, Jesus served them.

Instead of hanging around with the rich, important people, Jesus made friends with lepers, outcasts, and, sinners.

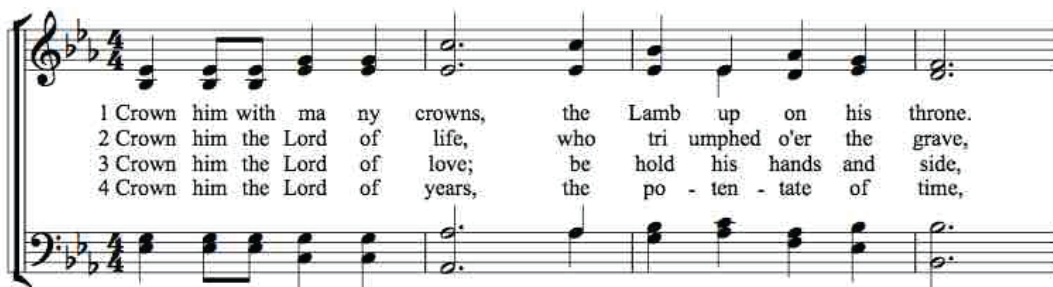
Instead of holding on to His own life, Jesus gave Himself up on the cross.

Jesus *has* been in charge all along, but His kingdom is unlike any other earthly kingdom! The Bible tells us that one day He will return with trumpet, heralds, even riding a white horse! (Revelation 19:11-16). People everywhere will have to admit that He is the one true king, and they will bow to Him. As God's people, we are *so excited* for that day! We wait—just like God's people did for Jesus' first coming—and we say, "Maranatha!, Come Lord Jesus!"

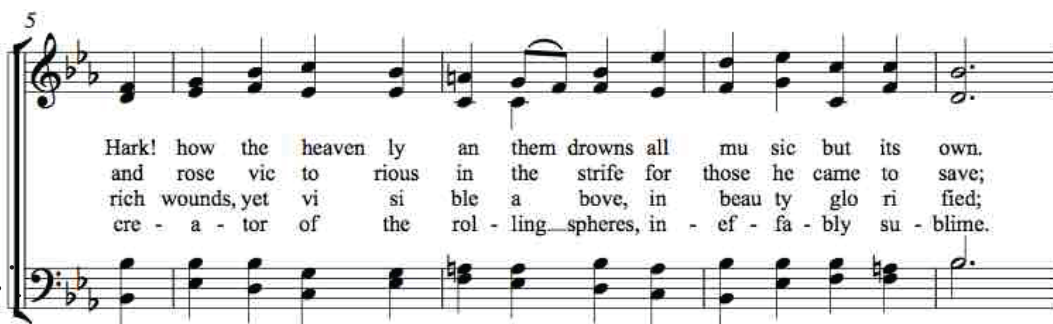
Crown Him with Many Crowns

Matthew Bridges

George J. Elvey



1 Crown him with ma ny crowns, the Lamb up on his throne.
2 Crown him the Lord of life, who tri umphed o'er the grave,
3 Crown him the Lord of love; be hold his hands and side,
4 Crown him the Lord of years, the po - ten - tate of time,



5
Hark! how the heaven ly an them drowns all mu sic but its own.
and rose vic to rious in the strife for those he came to save;
rich wounds, yet vi si ble a bove, in beau ty glo ri fied;
cre - a - tor of the rol - ling spheres, in - ef - fa - bly su - blime.



10
A wake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,
his glo ries now we sing who died and rose on high,
no an gels in the sky can ful ly bear that sight,
All hail, Re - dee - mer, hail! for thou hast died for me;



15
and hail him as thy match less king through all e ter ni ty.
who died e ter nal life to bring, and lives that death may die.
but down ward bends their bur ning eye at my ste ries so bright.
thy praise shall ne - ver, ne - ver fail through - out e - ter - ni - ty.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Worship Jesus

SUDDENLY A GREAT COMPANY OF THE
HEAVENLY HOST APPEARED WITH THE
ANGEL, PRAISING GOD AND SAYING,

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST HEAVEN,
AND ON EARTH PEACE TO THOSE
ON WHOM HIS FAVOR RESTS.

(LUKE 2:13)

A READING FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

Read Luke 2:1-21



The birth of Jesus happens in humble circumstances, amidst movements caused by government census-taking. Mary and Joseph are there, as well as perhaps some other individuals to help care for this newborn and His mother. But in another place there is something more:

"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'" (Luke 2:8-12)

As you may know, shepherds were not figures of great value in society at this time. They worked with animals and were seen as messy and common. What a great gift that it is to ordinary people like them, and like us, that the angelic message arrives.

"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.' When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.'" (Luke 2:13-15)

The angels worshiped and invited the shepherds to do so as well. Regardless of whether our worship is more like the angels or more like the shepherds, Jesus receives our praise. Today, as we celebrate the end of our Advent journey and the beginning of our celebration of Christmas, let us mark it with worship. Let us worship Jesus—the chosen one, the beloved of God, the suffering servant, the eternal priest, the perfect king—who brings good news of great joy to our lives today.

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel has come to Thee, O Israel.

FAMILY TALK CHRISTMAS DAY

INTENDED FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

When Jesus was born, his birth wasn't announced to kings or queens, sports heroes or celebrities, rich business people or political leaders. When Jesus was born, His messengers were sent to shepherds!

During Bible times, being a shepherd was a rough-and-tumble job. It meant working and sleeping outside around the clock. It meant taking on a bear or wolf with only a club for protection. Shepherds didn't get to town much, and when they did, they weren't welcomed. Most people thought that shepherds were liars, and didn't allow them to speak in a court of law.

So the angels appearing to shepherds? What is God telling us? By going to the shepherds, the angels were showing us that everyone matters to God. No one is outside of His love.

So, here on the first Christmas, angels and shepherds are worshipping Jesus. Let's join them! This Christmas, let's remember to praise Jesus who is... the beloved, chosen One of God... the suffering servant, our rescuer... the priest who lives forever, and... the perfect, coming king!





*Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel!
(from "The First Noel")*


SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Weekly Devotionals: Matt Erickson
Family Talk Devotionals & Nativity Building Prompts: Laure Herlinger
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Daily Readings & Study Prompts: Jim Caler
Service & Sacrifice Prompts: Laura Fears
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Prayer & Creative Prompts, Design & Layout: Liz Carver

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OFFICE: 5385 N. Green Bay Ave. Milwaukee, WI 53209
414.228.5220 | eastbrook.org |    
SERVICES: Saturdays@5 pm, Sundays@8, 9:30 & 11 am



THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD;
THE SKIES PROCLAIM THE WORK OF HIS HANDS.
DAY AFTER DAY THEY POUR FORTH SPEECH;
NIGHT AFTER NIGHT THEY REVEAL KNOWLEDGE.
THEY HAVE NO SPEECH, THEY USE NO WORDS;
NO SOUND IS HEARD FROM THEM.
YET THEIR VOICE GOES OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH,
THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD.
IN THE HEAVENS GOD HAS PITCHED A TENT FOR THE SUN.
IT IS LIKE A BRIDEGROOM COMING OUT OF HIS CHAMBER,
LIKE A CHAMPION REJOICING TO RUN HIS COURSE.
IT RISES AT ONE END OF THE HEAVENS
AND MAKES ITS CIRCUIT TO THE OTHER;
NOTHING IS DEPRIVED OF ITS WARMTH.

PSALM 19:1-6

