

Week of November 27

Monday:

Psalm 84

Consider This...

It is not true that creation and the human family are doomed to destruction and loss. **This is true:** For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. So let us consider Christ's birth in hope. Let us see visions of love and peace and justice. Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage: Jesus Christ--the life of the world.

Prayer:

O come, O come, Immanuel. Ransom captive Israel that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear. Amen

Tuesday:

Zechariah 8:1-8

Consider This...

It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination, hunger and poverty, death and destruction.

This is true: I have come that they may have life, and that abundantly.

So let us consider Christ's birth in hope. Let us see visions of love and peace and justice. Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage: Jesus Christ--the life of the world.

Prayer

Covenant God, you heard your people yearning for a Savior. Thank you for sending your Son so long ago. We now rehearse your promise that Christ will come again, that death and suffering will end and every tear will be wiped away. Come, Lord Jesus, come. As you fulfilled Israel's hopes long ago, so we long for all these promises to be fulfilled. Amen.

Wednesday:

Zechariah 8:20-23

Consider This...

It is not true that violence and hatred should have the last word, and that war and destruction rule forever—It is not true that we are simply victims of the powers of evil who seek to rule the world. **This is true:** Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, mighty God, the Everlasting, the Prince of peace. This is true:

To me is given authority in heaven and on earth, and lo I am with you, even until
the end of the world.

So let us consider Christ's birth in hope. Let us see visions of love and peace and
justice. Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage: Jesus
Christ--the life of the world.

Prayer:

Jesus, Lord of life and glory
Bend from Heaven Thy gracious ear
While our waiting souls adore Thee
Friend of helpless sinners, hear
By thy mercy O deliver us, Good Lord
By thy mercy O deliver us, Good Lord, Good Lord

Thursday:

Zechariah 9:9-10

Consider This...

It is not true that we have to wait for those who are specially gifted, who are the
prophets of the Church before we can be peacemakers. **This is true:** I will pour out
my spirit on all flesh and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men
shall see visions and your old men shall have dreams.

So let us consider Christ's birth in hope. Let us see visions of love and peace and
justice. Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage: Jesus
Christ--the life of the world.

Prayer: God of power, God of people, You are the life of all that lives. Energy that
fills the earth. Vitality that brings to birth. The impetus toward making whole
whatever is bruised or broken. In you we grow to know the truth that sets all
creation free. You are the song the whole earth sings. The promise liberation
brings now and forever. Through Christ our Lord, Amen. (Miriam Therese Winter)

Friday:

Zechariah 9:11-17

Consider This...

It is not true that our hopes for liberation of humankind, of justice, of human
dignity of peace are not meant for this earth and for this history. **This is true:** The
hour comes, and it is now, that the true worshipers shall worship God in spirit and
in truth.

So let us consider Christ's birth in hope. Let us see visions of love and peace and
justice. Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage: Jesus
Christ--the life of the world.

Prayer:

Hold me in your arms, Lord and bless me with your love. Whisper in the quietness, Lord and bless me with your Word. Lead me through the darkness, Lord and bless

Saturday:

Ruth 1

Prayer:

Come, Thou long expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's Strength and Consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear Desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Week of December 4

Monday:

Psalm 23

Consider This...

The psalmist says that he is sure God's goodness and love will pursue him all the days of his life. Look back over the Psalm and see just what the God, our Shepherd who pursues you wants to give you.

Prayer:

O come, O Wisdom from on high who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show and teach us in its ways to go. Amen.

Tuesday:

Ezekiel 34:1-10

Consider This...

What does it say about God that God is so disturbed by how poorly Israel's shepherds are doing?

Prayer:

God who is the Father who runs down the road to greet his children. God who is the mother who gathers her brood together to protect them. Jesus who blesses the children, Spirit of gentleness: May the patterns of rage and abuse stop. May there be an end to the fists shaken, the heads shielded, the bodies bruised, the tears shed.
May there be safety. Amen. (United Church of Canada)

Wednesday:

Ezekiel 34:11-16

Consider This...

Could today's passage be a glimpse of our True Home in God's Presence? How do we rest in this as we live in troubling times?

Prayer:

From the depths of nature's blindness
From the hardening power of sin
From all malice and unkindness
From the pride that lurks within...
By thy mercy O deliver us, Good Lord
By thy mercy O deliver us, Good Lord, Good Lord

Thursday:

Ezekiel 34: 17-31

Consider This...

Did you catch the promise of a coming Good Shepherd? Can you hear whispers of the New Covenant we celebrate around the Family Table?

Prayer:

O God, whose presence is veiled from our eyes: Grant that when we do not recognize you, our hearts may burn within us, and that when feeling is lost, we may cling in faith to your Word and the power of bread broken in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Friday:

John 10: 1-18

Consider This...

Sheep listen to the **Shepherd's** voice. Sheep follow the Shepherd because they **know** the Shepherd's voice. Will I listen for the Voice of the Good Shepherd today? Will I grow to know it's sound more fully?

Prayer:

Where are you, O God?

We are lost in the night; have you cast us from your presence? Temptations surround us; their masks grin through the darkness. We run from them, but which way should we go? Where can we hide when all lies in shadow?

Have mercy on us, O God. Our eyes are swollen from tears; our bones are cold with fear; our souls have been broken—do you not hear, Lord?

Save us! According to your steadfast love, answer us! Do not hide your face, but draw near and redeem us!

Saturday:

John 10:22-30

Prayer:

Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Week of December 11

Monday:

Psalm 16

Consider This...

The Psalmist claims that God is everything he needs. This week we'll be reading passages about making sure others have what they need. What do we hold onto that we really don't need?

Prayer:

O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem unto your own and rescue them! From depths of hell your people save and give them victory o'er the grave. Amen.

Tuesday:

Leviticus 19:9-10

Consider This...

Can you think of ways we honor the spirit of this passage in our church? In your day to day life? Can we picture a community wherein this "leaving some for the poor" is the default practice?

Prayer:

May our love be as deep as the ocean, as expansive as space, as tender as the sunrise, as passionate as the sunset, as whole as the circle, as wonderfilled as the mystery. May our love flower as a thousand orchids, wrapped in sparkling gossamer. And may it reflect the splendor of Divinity as the dewdrops prism the technicolor sun. This is my prayer, through Christ the Lord, Amen. (variation on W.L. Wallace)

Wednesday:

Leviticus 19:33-34

Consider This...

How do we pursue making the outsider feel at home in the family of God?

Prayer:

When the world around us is smiling
 In the time of wealth and ease
 Earthly joys our hearts beguiling
 In the day of health and peace...
 By thy mercy O deliver us, Good Lord
 By thy mercy O deliver us, Good Lord, Good Lord

Thursday:

Leviticus 25:25-28

Consider This...

Do you think Naomi had these words in mind when traveling back from Moab? I wonder if she expected the People of God to follow this instruction from the Lord. I wonder who comes into our midst expecting the same thing from the People of God.

Prayer

I ask you Lord Jesus, to develop in me your love, an immeasurable urge towards you, and affection that is unbounded, longing that is unrestrained, fervor that throws discretion to the winds! The more worthwhile our love for you, all the more pressing does it become. Reason cannot hold it in check, fear does not make it tremble, wise judgment does not temper it. (From the **Fire of Love** by Richard Rolle).

Friday:

Micah 4:1-5

Consider This...

In the Kingdom of God, all will finally have a home. No one will live in fear.

Prayer:

May it come soon to the hungry, to the weeping, to those who thirst for your justice, to those who have waited centuries for a truly human life. Grant us the patience to smooth the way on which your Kingdom comes to us. Grant us hope that we may not weary in proclaiming and working for it, despite so many conflicts, threats, and shortcomings. Grant us a clear vision that in the hour of our history we may see the horizon, and know the way on which your Kingdom comes to us. Through Christ our Lord, Amen. (Nicaraguan Prayer)

Saturday:

Ruth 2

Prayer:

O Lord of light, who made the stars
 O Dawn by whom we see the way
 O Christ redeemer of us all
 Make haste to listen as we pray
 In lowliness you came on earth
 To rescue us from Satan's snares
 O wondrous love that healed our wounds
 By taking up our mortal cares
 To God the Father and the Son
 For ages of eternal days
 Together with the spirit be
 All glory, honor, might and praise

Week of December 18

Monday:

Psalm 127

Consider This...

If a house is useless unless the Lord builds it, can we ever feel at home outside the arm of our Savior?

Prayer:

O come, O bright and Morning Star and bring us comfort from afar! Dispel the shadows of the night and turn our darkness into light. Amen.

Tuesday:

Isaiah 40:1-8

Consider This...

God says "Comfort my people!" To what is this passage pointing that can comfort us? How can we use these words to ponder our only Comfort as those who belong to Jesus?

Prayer:

Blessed be God for the grandeur and power of crashing waters, and the fearsome downward fall of the cliffs. For the swoop and swing of white birds riding the waves, exultant. For the wind hurtling over moorland miles to break battering around the house, with clawing hands eager to invade and chill. For the silent blanketed folds after snowfall. For trees etched in silver against pewter skies. For winter sunshine brittle as thin ice. (Sister Catherine OHP)

Wednesday:

Isaiah 42:1-9

Consider This...

Can you recall other scenes where God says of Jesus, "I have chosen him. With him I am pleased?"

Prayer:

In the solemn hour of dying, In the holy judgment day
 May our souls, on Thee relying
 Find Thee still our Rock and Stay...
 By thy mercy O deliver us, Good Lord
 By thy mercy O deliver us, Good Lord, Good Lord

Thursday:

Isaiah 53
Consider This...

He took on pain that should have been ours. He takes on your pain to this day.

Prayer

Lord God, help me to see that your designs do not depend upon my assent. Rather, allow me to depend on your ability to bring to pass those things of which you have spoken. Help me to trust your awesome promises and not my own wavering belief in those promises. Amen. (adapted from Norman Shawchuch).

Friday:

Isaiah 64
Consider This...

One day the trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall descend. Your faith will become sight and Christ will wipe away every tear.

Prayer:

O Come, O King of nations, bind in one the hearts of humankind. Bid all our sad divisions cease and be yourself our King of Peace. Amen.

Saturday:

Ruth 3
Prayer

In Thy will, O lord, is my peace. In Thy love is my rest. In Thy service is my joy. Thou art all my heart's desire. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon the earth that I desire besides Thee. Amen. (John Baillie)