

| advent
at
pcc

Reflection

For Christians, Christmas is a celebration of Jesus' birth — that light has come into darkness. But Advent bids us first to pause and to look, with complete honesty, at that darkness.

To practice Advent is to lean into an almost cosmic ache: our deep, wordless desire for things to be made right and the incompleteness we find in the meantime. We dwell in a world still racked with conflict, violence, suffering, darkness. Advent holds space for our grief, and it reminds us that all of us, in one way or another, are not only wounded by the evil in the world but are also wielders of it, contributing our own moments of unkindness or impatience or selfishness.

Even among observant Christians, the holiday season has often been flattened into a sentimental call to warm religious feelings. Still, I think Advent offers wisdom to the wider world. It reminds us that joy is trivialized if we do not first intentionally acknowledge the pain and wreckage of the world.

The believer and atheist alike can agree that there is an undeniable brokenness to the world, a sickness that needs remedy. Whether we assign blame to human sinfulness, a political party, corporate greed, ignorance, tribalism or nationalism (or some of each), we can admit that things are not as they should be. American culture insists that we run at breathless pace from sugar-laced celebration to celebration — we suffer from a collective consumerist mania that demands we remain optimistic, shiny, happy and having fun, fun, fun.

But life isn't a Disney Cruise. The tyranny of relentless mandatory celebration leaves us exhausted and often, ironically, feeling emptier. Many of us suffer from "holiday blues," and I wonder whether this phenomenon is made worse by the incessant demand for cheer — the collective lie that through enough work and positivity, we can perfect our lives and our world.

I'm all for happiness, joy, eggnog, corny sweaters and parties, but to rush into Christmas without first taking time to collectively acknowledge the sorrow in the world and in our own lives seems like an inebriated and overstuffed practice of denial.

We need communal rhythms that make deliberate space for both grief and joy. For me, the old saying rings true: Hunger is the best condiment. Abstaining, for a moment, from the clamor of compulsive jollification, and instead leaning into the reality of human tragedy and of my own need and brokenness, allows my experience of glory at Christmastime to feel not only more emotionally sustainable but also more vivid, vital and cherished.

Our response to the wrongness of the world (and of ourselves) can often be an unhealthy escapism, and we can turn to the holidays as anesthesia from pain as much as anything else. We need collective space, as a society, to grieve — to look long and hard at what is cracked and fractured in our world and in our lives. Only then can celebration become deep, rich and resonant, not as a saccharine act of delusion but as a defiant act of hope.

- Tish Harrison Warren, *Want to Get into the Christmas Spirit? Face the Darkness*

Scripture

Genesis 15:1-18

¹ After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” ² But Abram said, “O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³ And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.” ⁴ And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.” ⁵ And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” ⁶ And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

⁷ And he said to him, “I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.” ⁸ But he said, “O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?” ⁹ He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰ And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. ¹¹ And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹² As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ Then the Lord said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

¹⁷ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates”

Sermon

Waiting and Hoping

Rankin Wilbourne

Information and Resources

View and sign up for all events on our mobile app **Pacific Crossroads**, website **PacificCrossroads.org/Events** or speak with someone at the 'New Here' tent.

General Fund Update (as of 11/17/19)

Offerings Budget: **\$3,817,388**

Expenses Budget: **\$4,391,376**

Offerings Actual: **\$3,630,295**

Expenses Actual: **\$3,977,664**

To give from your phone, text **give2pcc** to **77977**

Sunday Volunteer Roles Needed

Westside - 68 volunteers needed to serve once a month:

Ushers (18), Welcome (17), Hospitality/Coffee (8), Lyric Projection/Camera Operator (8), Post-Service Prayer (6)

Downtown - 28 volunteers needed to serve once a month:

Hospitality/Usher/Greeter/Communion Prep (8), Communion Servers (4), Lyric Projection (7),

Our Highest Need: Post-Service Prayer (9)

To serve on Sunday or to volunteer for any of these roles

Email: alexscott@pacificcrossroads.org

Congregational Care

Our congregational care team is here to help if you are in a difficult place.

Email: congregationalcare@pacificcrossroads.org or call our office at **310.551.0081**

Parking Information

Westside: Volunteers will pay for your parking for 30 minutes after service at a garage pay station.

Downtown: The Adams' parking structure closes at 8pm. Cars cannot be accessed after that time.



Why should I prayerfully consider investing in PCC Kids?

Did you know that 43% of Christians came to faith before the age of 12?
(“Kids and Salvation Survey” 4/2019)

29% say children’s ministry has played a big part in making a decision to follow Jesus (ministry-to-children.com)

DL Moody once said, “When you save a child, you save a life—a whole life.” Childhood is when they’re most open to learning what it means to trust God. It’s when they’re forming their understanding of the world of relationships, of love, of God. They are impressionable, and we should be intentional about ensuring that they get the right understanding of God and who they are in Christ.

Sunday ministries is the perfect setting for relational ministry to children. Think of it as community groups for children!

This is one of the greatest investments you can make in the life of the church.
Will you prayerfully consider SAYING YES?

Upcoming Events

New Sunday Service Schedule | 12.22.19 | 10:00am & 5:00pm

Beginning 12.22.19 we will be moving our regular Sunday morning service schedule to a single 10:00am service.

Prayer Gatherings | Wednesdays & Thursdays

Our elders and deacons invite you to join them for informal prayer gatherings during the next several weeks.

Wednesdays | 12.11, 12.18 | 6-7pm at the Pacific Crossroads Church Office

Contact **Harold Shin** at hshin@pacificcrossroads.org

Thursdays | 12.19 | 8-9pm in Highland Park

Contact **Brian Covalt** at bcovalt@pacificcrossroads.org

Congregational Forum | 12.12.19 | 7:00pm

The elders invite you to join us for our next congregational forum. The forum will include updates from the elders, and an opportunity to pray together. This will be held at the Pacific Crossroads Church Office.

The Gospel Story | Begins 1.1.20

Study the basics of our Christian faith in an intentional, three-part online study. The course is taught by R.C. Sproul, Rankin Wilbourne, and other noted scholars. Spend two hours per week discovering the long historical arc of the Gospel truth in each week's lesson, connecting these people & times to Christ

View and sign up for all events on our mobile app **Pacific Crossroads**, website PacificCrossroads.org/Events or speak with someone at the 'New Here' tent.

by
faith

advent at pcc

| DECEMBER 8: BY FAITH ABRAHAM |

| DECEMBER 15: BY FAITH GOD'S PEOPLE |

| DECEMBER 22: BY FAITH MARY + JOSEPH |

| DECEMBER 29: BY FAITH SIMON PETER |

DECEMBER 8 + 15: 9AM, 11AM, 5PM

DECEMBER 22 + 29: 10AM + 5PM



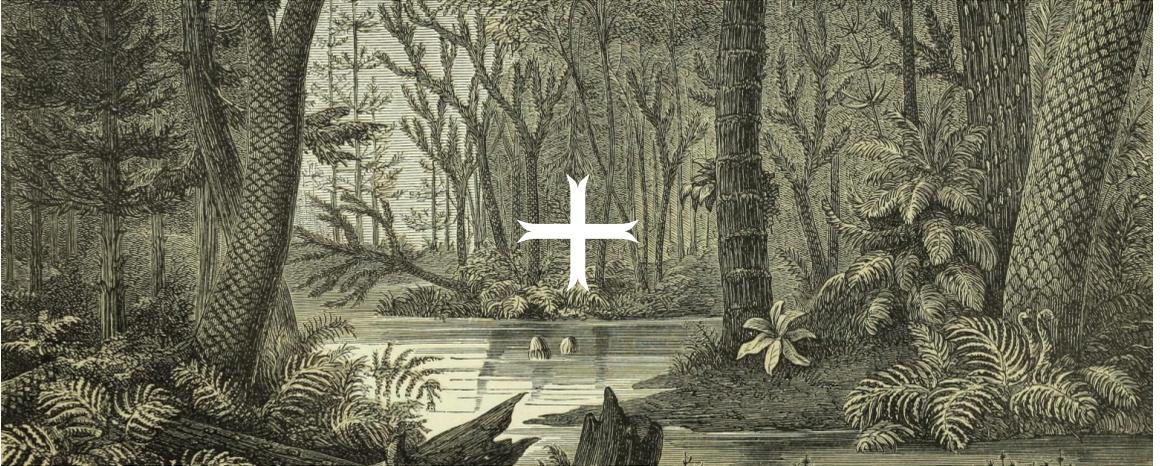
AM SERVICES

SANTA MONICA HIGH
PICO BLVD AND 4TH ST
SANTA MONICA, 90405

PM SERVICES

ST JOHNS EPISCOPAL
514 W ADAMS BLVD
LOS ANGELES 90007

THE GOSPEL



STORY

Study the basics of our Christian faith in an intentional, three-part online study.

GOSPEL STORY, PART ONE

OLD TESTAMENT STORY

Begins January 1, 2020

A 13-week overview of how the Gospel story began in Creation and moved in the lives of Abraham, Moses, the Judges, Kings, & Prophets over a 2000 year timeframe. Taught by R.C. Sproul, Rankin Wilbourne, and other noted scholars. Spend two hours per week discovering the long historical arc of the Gospel truth in each week's lesson, connecting these people & times to Christ and our redemption in Him.



LIMITED TO 75 STUDENTS. ENROLL EARLY TO GUARANTEE A SEAT.

GOSPEL STORY, PART TWO

NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY

Begins May 2020

GOSPEL STORY, PART THREE

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

Begins September 2020