

Grow, Pray, Study for the Week of December 7, 2025

Weekly Prayer

God of life, you call us to prepare the way for your Son. Clear away the distractions that crowd our minds. Remove the fear, pride, and busyness that fills our hearts. Create in us a spacious place where your peace can take root and grow. In the name of the One who is our Peace, we pray. Amen.

Monday, December 8

Scripture: Mark 1:1–8

The beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, God's Son, happened just as it was written about in the prophecy of Isaiah:

*Look, I am sending my messenger before you.
He will prepare your way,
a voice shouting in the wilderness:
"Prepare the way for the Lord;
make his paths straight."*

John the Baptist was in the wilderness calling for people to be baptized to show that they were changing their hearts and lives and wanted God to forgive their sins. Everyone in Judea and all the people of Jerusalem went out to the Jordan River and were being baptized by John as they confessed their sins. John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. He announced, "One stronger than I am is coming after me. I'm not even worthy to bend over and loosen the strap of his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Observation

John the Baptist appears in the wilderness with a message that calls people to repent so that they will be ready *for the One who is coming*. John invites people to make room, not by additional work or study, but by releasing what clutters the heart. Here, the wilderness becomes an unexpected sanctuary, a place stripped of distractions, where God's presence can be fully revealed.

Application

Advent invites us to create room in our hearts by letting go of the noise, pride, and preoccupations that keep us from noticing Jesus. We can practice inward clearing—silence, confession, and simplicity—to prepare the way. What might you unclutter or clear today, to better notice Jesus?

Prayer

God, create space in my life for your presence. Clear out distractions and prepare my heart. Make me willing to step into the quiet wilderness where your voice is easiest to hear. Amen.

Tuesday, December 9

Scripture: Matthew 3:8–12

Produce fruit that shows you have changed your hearts and lives. And don't even think about saying to yourselves, Abraham is our father. I tell you that God is able to raise up Abraham's children from these stones. The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that

doesn't produce good fruit will be chopped down and tossed into the fire. I baptize with water those of you who have changed your hearts and lives. The one who is coming after me is stronger than I am. I'm not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The shovel he uses to sift the wheat from the husks is in his hands. He will clean out his threshing area and bring the wheat into his barn. But he will burn the husks with a fire that can't be put out."

Observation

John warns that repentance isn't just ritual or words, but is a wholly transformed life. God desires real fruit, not outward appearances of faith. The imagery of fire, winnowing, and cleansing reminds us that God's love is refining, not destructive. True repentance makes space for new beginnings.

Application

Making room in our hearts means allowing God to reshape our habits and attitudes. How might we bear fruit that aligns with God's justice, generosity, and mercy? What needs pruning so something new can grow?

Prayer

Holy Spirit, refine me gently, but thoroughly. Help my life bear fruit that reflects your love. Create room in me for the transformation you desire. Amen.

Wednesday, December 10

Scripture: Luke 3:10–14

The crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" He answered, "Whoever has two shirts must share with the one who has none, and whoever has food must do the same." Even tax collectors came to be baptized. They said to him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He replied, "Collect no more than you are authorized to collect." Soldiers asked, "What about us? What should we do?" He answered, "Don't cheat or harass anyone, and be satisfied with your pay."

Observation

The crowds, tax collectors, and soldiers all want to know how to live differently once their hearts awaken. The answers are profoundly practical: share, act with integrity, refuse exploitation. The good news looks like everyday justice and compassion, and repentance becomes visible in our care for one another.

Application

Making room in our heart means making room in life—for generosity, fairness, and truthfulness. Advent reminds us that faith is lived out through simple practices of kindness and equity. How do we, in our words and actions, show others the love and promise of Jesus? Consider an act of kindness today: a donation to a worthy cause, volunteering at the food shelf or FMSC, or sending a note of gratitude. Put your faith into action today, through your care for others.

Prayer

God of justice, guide my choices today. Make room in me for compassion and fairness in every interaction. Let my life reflect your goodness. Amen.

Thursday, December 11

Scripture: Isaiah 40:1–5

Comfort, comfort my people! says your God. Speak compassionately to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her compulsory service has ended, that her penalty has been paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins! A voice is crying out: "Clear the LORD's way in the desert! Make a level highway in the wilderness for our God! Every valley will be raised up, and every mountain and hill will be flattened. Uneven ground will become level, and rough terrain a valley plain. The LORD's glory will appear, and all humanity will see it together; the LORD's mouth has commanded it."

Observation

Isaiah's message begins with comfort—God draws near to a weary people with tenderness and promise. For any of us who have felt longing and grief, this is an important promise of Advent. Let me say it again: When you are weary, God draws near to you with comfort and tenderness. God levels the mountains and raises the valleys, to provide you with an even path. God removes obstacles that stand between you and hope. God is revealed here – in the midst of this promise and restoration.

Application

Advent is a season of trusting that God is actively preparing a way forward. As God levels the landscape, we're given comfort, hope, and healing. How is God approaching you with tenderness this season? What comfort can you experience, imagining that God is with you, right in this moment?

Prayer

Tender God, speak comfort to my soul. Smooth what is rough and lift what is low. Make my heart ready for your hope to shine. Amen.

Friday, December 12**Scripture: Daniel 9:17–19**

"But now, our God, listen to your servant's prayer and pleas for help. Shine your face on your ruined sanctuary, for your own sake, my Lord. Open your ears, my God, and listen! Open your eyes and look at our devastation. Look at the city called by your name! We pray our prayers for help to you, not because of any righteous acts of ours but because of your great compassion. My Lord, listen! My Lord, forgive! My Lord, pay attention and act! Don't delay! My God, do all this for your own sake, because your city and your people are called by your name.

Observation

Daniel prays out of desperation, confessing the brokenness of his people, and pleading for God's mercy. His prayer trusts God's compassion and faithfulness, and so he asks God to act quickly by listening, forgiving, and restoring. We can hear in Daniel's words hope, urgency, and humility: "My Lord, listen! Forgive! Act!"

Application

God invites us to create space in our hearts, so that we can more readily love God, ourselves, our neighbor, and world. Creating spaces requires honesty about our need for God's forgiveness and grace, and trust that God's compassion is far-reaching. Try echoing Daniel's prayer today as your own:

Prayer

Merciful God, hear my prayer. Shine your face upon the places in me that need forgiveness and

renewal. Restore my heart by your grace. My Lord, listen! My Lord, forgive! My Lord, pay attention and act! Don't delay! My God, do all this for your own sake, because your people are called by your name. Amen.

Saturday, December 13

Scripture: Isaiah 35:8–10

A highway will be there. It will be called The Holy Way. The unclean won't travel on it, but it will be for those walking on that way. Even fools won't get lost on it; no lion will be there, and no predator will go up on it. None of these will be there; only the redeemed will walk on it. The LORD's ransomed ones will return and enter Zion with singing, with everlasting joy upon their heads. Happiness and joy will overwhelm them; grief and groaning will flee away.

Observation

Isaiah imagines a holy highway, where no threat can follow, and where sorrow and sighing will flee. It is a picture of God's restoration so complete that even the journey becomes safe and joyful. Joy, singing, and gladness overflow from hearts that have made space for hope. This path is God's gift to a redeemed people.

Application

Advent invites us to walk the path of hope, trusting the joy God is preparing. Making room means choosing joy—not as denial, but as expectation. We can carry God's promise with us, even through wilderness moments.

Prayer

God of joy, lead me on your holy path. Fill my heart with gladness as I wait for your advent here. Help me walk in hope toward the joy you are preparing. Amen.