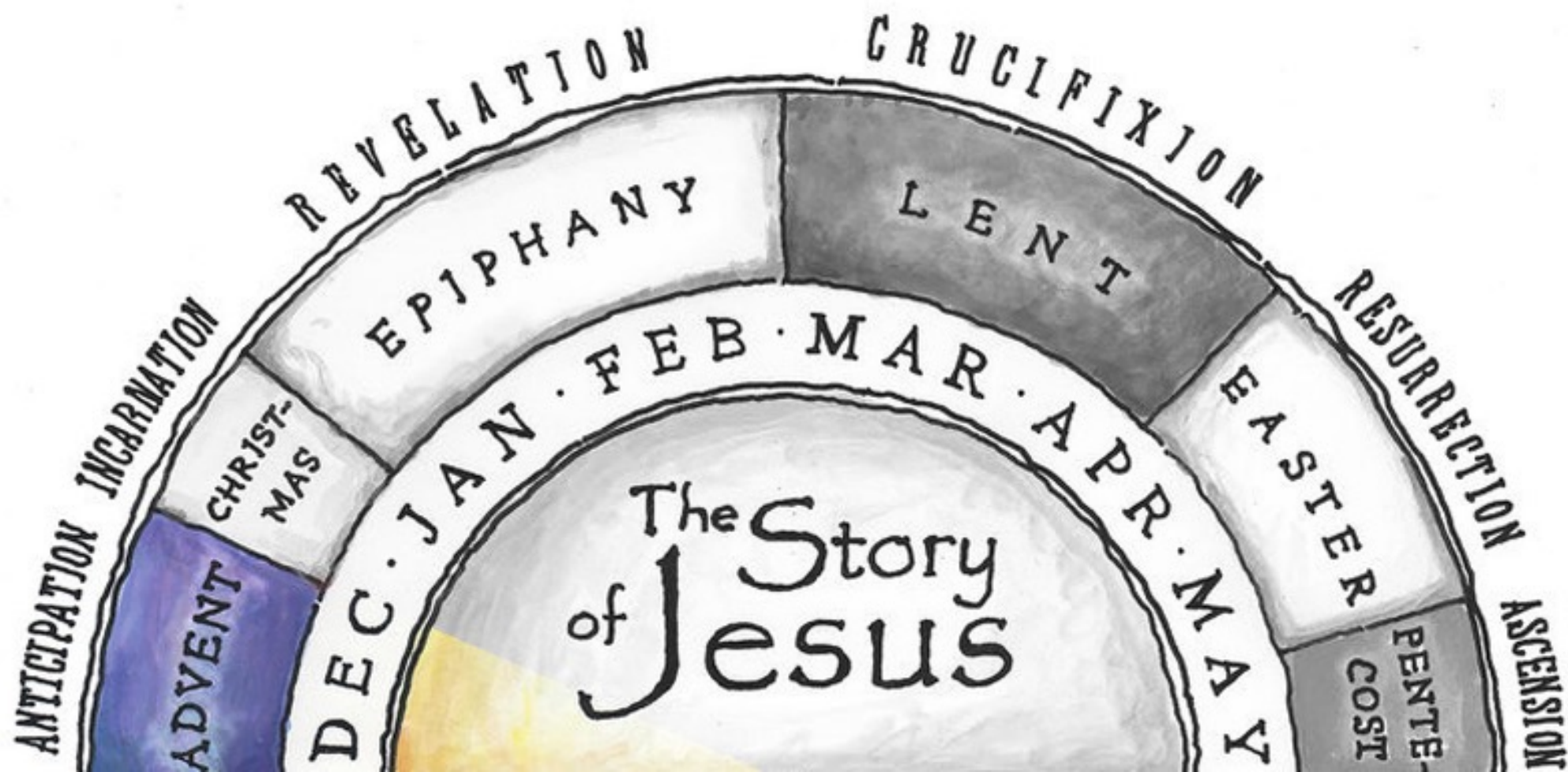


Shepherd of Israel,
may Jesus, Emmanuel, Son of Mary,
be more than just a dream in our hearts.
With the apostles, prophets, and saints,
save us, restore us, and lead us in
the way of grace and peace,
that we may bear your promise
into the world. Amen.

Opening Prayer





A photograph of three lit candles against a black background. The candles are lit, with bright flames. The word "ADVENT" is written in a white, distressed, hand-painted font across the middle candle. Below the word is a small, colorful illustration of a holly branch with green leaves and red berries. The word "JOY" is written in a clean, white, sans-serif font below the holly decoration.

ADVENT

JOY

PRESIDENT JED BARTLET

“Joy cometh in the morning,” *Psa 30:5*
scripture tells us. I hope so.
I don't know if life would
be worth living if it didn't.



JOY

LUKE 2:10-11

*Do not be afraid; for behold,
I bring you good news of great joy
which will be for all the people;
for today in the city of David
there has been born for you
a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*

JOY

JAMAL SHEHADE

In the Holy Land, fear has led to walls both physical and emotional—walls that separate people. Yet the angel's proclamation offers something else: good news of great joy. This joy is not a superficial emotion that ignores pain, but an entrenched assurance that God is at work, even in the darkest places.



JOY



It gets darker and darker,
and then Jesus is born.

— Wendell Berry

FLEMING RUTLEDGE

Advent begins in the dark and moves toward the light—but the season should not move too quickly or too glibly, lest we fail to acknowledge the depth of the darkness.



JOY

Wake Up Dead Man

— A **Knives Out** MYSTERY —





It's like someone has shone a story at me that I do not believe that's built upon the empty promise of a children's fairytale filled with malevolence and misogyny (and I want to kick back) and get to a truth I can swallow without choking.

You're right...it's (all) storytelling.
I guess the question is: do these
stories convince us of a lie?
Or do they resonate with
something deep inside us
that's profoundly true...
that we can't express
any other way except
storytelling?



THE STORY OF ADVENT

- Jesus is the *beginning and end* of **HOPE**
source of **PEACE**
revelation of **LOVE**
reason for **JOY**

JOY

PERSPECTIVE

What do we make
of joy's story amidst
the experience
of sorrow?



*Fleming
Rutledge*



*Dallas
Willard*

JOY

FLEMING RUTLEDGE

The world as God sees it is a panorama of deprivation and exploitation and death. The history of the world has shown over and over and over again that it is incapable of rescuing itself from forces too strong for mere human nature.





DALLAS WILLARD

We should, to begin with,
think that God leads
a very interesting life,
and that God is full of joy...
God is simply one great,
inexhaustible, and eternal
experience of all that is
good and true and
beautiful and right...
This is God's life.



(To God there is available...)
Towering clouds of gasses
trillions of miles high,
backlit by nuclear fires
in newly forming stars,
galaxies cart wheeling into
collision, and sending ex-
plosive shock waves boiling
through millions of light
years of time and space.



These things are
all before God,
along with numberless
unfolding rosebuds,
souls and songs –
and immeasurably more,
of which we know
nothing...

QUESTION

So...who is correct?
Is God's perspective
one of "deprivation,
exploitation and
death," or one
"full of joy"?



*Fleming
Rutledge*



*Dallas
Willard*

JOY

QUESTION

So...who is correct?
Is God's perspective
one of "deprivation,
exploitation and
death," or one
"full of joy"?

My answer: YES.



*Fleming
Rutledge*



*Dallas
Willard*

JOY

JAMAL SHEHADE

In this Advent season...let us hold tightly to the **hope** that Christ's birth brings. Let us pray for **peace** in the land where He was born and for all who live there today.

And let us live out that **hope**, embodying Christ's **love** and **peace** in a world that so desperately needs it. For, as the angel declared, this good news of great **joy** is indeed for all people.



JOY

LUKE 2:10-11

*Do not be afraid; for behold,
I bring you good news of great joy
which will be for all the people;
for today in the city of David
there has been born for you
a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*

JOY

May the hope of Christ go with you,
wherever he may send you
May the peace of Jesus guide you through
the wilderness, and protect you through the storm
May God's love bring you home rejoicing
at the wonders the Spirit has shown you
And may God bring you home rejoicing
once again into our doors.

Closing Benediction

