

Songs of
Christmas

ADVENT 2022

INTRODUCTION

Merry Christmas Cherry Hills, and welcome to the season of Advent. Advent, if you are unfamiliar with the term, is a season in the Church worldwide that is traditionally celebrated on the four Sundays prior to Christmas. The word Advent comes from Latin and means “arrival” or “coming.” During this season, we the Church global remember that we live between the first and second arrival or coming of Christ. The season of Advent begins the “Christian Calendar” year that many Christians from all different denominations have followed for centuries. It begins this year on November 27th, not with celebration, fireworks, or feasting but rather in stillness and waiting. We remember there were 400 years between the Old and New Testaments when the world waited for the Messiah. And so, as we wait for His second coming, we are invited to rise each morning not in a posture of striving or straining but rather a posture of quietness and confidence that the Kingdom of God is already making itself manifest and will come fully one day. Emmanuel, God with us, is making all things new.

The season of Advent is about the proclamation of this promise. We stand confidently in between the first and second coming of Christ amidst the wreckage of sin, the pain, the sorrow, the grief, to boldly proclaim that there is hope and that hope is Jesus Christ! Get up to a high mountain herald of good news, the people walking in darkness have seen a great light (Isaiah 40:9; 9:2)! Behold, the Kingdom of God is near, the light of the world is with us, setting the world to rights.

Now it's one thing to know this and it's quite another to live as if it's true. This is the difference between belief and knowledge. Belief, as Dallas Willard says, is the “readiness to act as if

what you believe is true.” Few things made Jesus more excited than seeing people exercise belief in Him and His Father when he walked the earth (Matthew 8:10; 9:2; 9:22). So passionate was He about this that at the end of His greatest teaching He charged those within the sound of His voice to put His words “into action” to “do them” (Matthew 7:24).

To this end, the practice guide you hold in your hands is designed to accompany our Advent series entitled “The Songs of Christmas.” Each Sunday we will look at a traditional Christmas carol and the scripture passages that inspired its writing. We will consider the proclamation of the gospel in each song and the people who have sung it long before us as well as how we might embody belief in it’s truth. Throughout the season, via the guide and our Sunday morning gatherings, we will participate together in the practices of silence, song, the slow reading of scripture, gratitude, and reflection.

As we journey toward December 25th, it’s our desire to do so exercising belief in Jesus and His way. No matter your experience level with these practices, we encourage you to participate and invite the slowing they bring. You may be stretched and even feel unproductive at times. That’s ok. Remember that Advent is not about fireworks and feasting. We will feast soon enough on Christmas Day. Advent is about being led into the non anxious presence of the Spirit of God, grounded in His word, and at peace because we know Jesus and have been with Him. May the people we come in contact with this December be encouraged by the hope of Jesus, the light of the world in and through us.

WHY SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Why the spiritual disciplines? Why spend time practicing things like silence, song, the slow reading of scripture, gratitude, and reflection this December? Is this some initiative to turn us all into modern day monks or worse, enter the kingdom of heaven through works? The simple answer, of course, is no. Rather, it seems that the pull of our secular society on our hearts, our minds, and our bodies has never been more acute than in this cultural moment. The sense of hurry, anxiety, and isolation only grows with each passing year. The question I find myself asking is, “Did Jesus give us anything to battle this?” In fact, He did. Jesus gave us both ideas and practices to combat this assault. Ideas form our minds. Practices form our bodies. It is the participation in embodied belief over a long period of time that forms us into true disciples. “If you do what I said to do, you are truly my disciples,” Jesus says in John 8:31.

When I was a teenager my parents signed me up for voice lessons. I would go to a one hour session per week where I would learn how to create the right kind of space in my throat, where to direct the tone inside my head and how to use breath to support the vocal line. But that wasn't all. I would then spend time watching and listening to a myriad of other vocalists. I would mimic what they did. I would try to sound just like them. I would copy their runs or their volume or their placement of tone. I usually did this on my own in my bedroom or in front of a video recording of a performance on our living room TV or standing in front of the speakers with the remote to pause and rewind, pause and rewind. I didn't learn how to sing at my senior recital in college nor did I “practice” in front of audiences later in life. At that point, I simply had to rely on what I had disciplined my

body and mind to do in the hours of practice in which I participated.

In the same way, we don't become less anxious, more grateful, and more at peace by willing ourselves to do so in the middle of an argument with a family member on an extremely busy December evening. No, we become less anxious, more grateful, and more at peace a little more each day as we spend time with Jesus practicing the disciplines he gave to us in order to help us become more like Him. Jesus said "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me," and we often decline His invitation to put on His yoke because we'd rather not wear one. But the reality is, we are all wearing one. It's just a matter of what yoke we choose to wear. In other words, the question is not whether we will be formed, but by whom and in what way we will be formed? I resonate with the words of the disciple Peter who, when asked if he was going to turn away from Jesus as well, said "To whom shall we go, you have the words of eternal life."

Teach us your way this Advent season, Jesus.

Teach us your practices.

Chuck

Silence

The practice of silence is a lost art in our day. Jesus, as sought out as He was, insisted on making time to slow and get away from the crowds and the hustle and bustle. In the book *Live No Lies*, John Mark Comer states “Many people misunderstand solitude and stillness as a way to relax and recharge or a kind of emotional break for introverts to catch their breath before they return to the fray of life. But that is not the solitude of Jesus. For Jesus, it was not a break from the battle, it was the field on which the battle was won or lost.”

After Jesus’ baptism, the official beginning of His public ministry as Messiah, the first thing He did was go and spend 40 days in the wilderness or *eremos* in Greek (Mark 1:12-13). The devil came to tempt Him at the end of the 40 days and we think, intuitively, that the devil chose an opportune time, because after all this fasting in the wilderness, Jesus was at his weakest. On the contrary, Jesus has been nourished this entire time by abiding with His Father. He’s better equipped than at any other time in His ministry to face the devil because He has just spent 40 days practicing silence, solitude, fasting and meditating on scripture. There’s a sense that Jesus is preparing for the war but there’s another sense that He is actually waging the war during those 40 days. The devil thinks he has shown up at just the right time, but to his surprise, he is actually 40 days too late. The war has already been won in the “eremos”. During His ministry Jesus will return to the “eremos” again and again. Like Jesus, we want to learn to return to the “eremos” and so we will begin each day by taking a moment to practice silence.

PRACTICE OF SILENCE

1. Choose a place to practice silence this December (an office, a desk by a window, a favorite nook).
2. Resolve in your heart to be with Jesus in silence.
3. Plant your feet on the ground and sit in a comfortable location and posture.
4. Place your hands in your lap, consider opening your palms and breathe slowly. If it helps silently pray “Emmanuel” as you breathe in and “God with us” as you breathe out.
5. As thoughts clamor for your attention resolve not to get on board. You are with Jesus. Other things can wait. As you finish this time (5-10 min) thank Jesus for His presence.

Song

Have you ever considered that as darkness was over the face of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters, there was song? Job 38:4,7 says, “where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” In the beginning there was music and at the end there will be music (Gen 1:2, Is 55:10-12, Rev 22:3). Singing, in fact, is one of the most commanded practices in the scriptures second only to prayer. Singing is mentioned so often in the scripture that perhaps we forget it is a helpful practice, let alone a command.

Not only is song important to God, but its power is undeniable. It has the potential to bring tears, recall memories, shape culture, and influence purchases. It brings back memory and movement to those suffering severe memory loss. It shapes patriotism in countries worldwide. It's often one of the first things overseen by dictators seizing control. It's used by almost every company that advertises, military that rallies support, sports team that celebrates, and religious community that gathers. Could it be that the power of music is inherent in the design of the universe? Could it be that every time a good song is played, regardless of whether or not it is even Christian, it is a reminder that at the creation of all things there was music? And therefore, this world did not happen by chance but rather by design?

So, sing! Not when things are better but now. Not when you feel like it but just as you are. Sing! Sing a new song to the

Lord. Sing and make music and join with all creation. For unto us is born this day in the city of David, a savior which is Christ the Lord!

SONG PRACTICE AS YOU BEGIN EACH WEEK

- Place your feet on the ground and sit in a comfortable location and posture.
- Play the Christmas carol for the week on the digital companion.
- Slow your breathing, allowing the Spirit of God to clear the cobwebs from your mind as you listen to the melody and reflect on the lyrics.
- Remember that you are a part of a people, a family, nations wide and centuries deep. God is faithful.

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

- Choose random and unique times to lift a song to the Lord and note the difference you sense afterwards if any. (e.g., in the car, on a walk, getting ready in the morning, on a break at midday)
- So many Christmas carols are actually worship songs. Allow the lyrics to sink in this Advent season.

AT SUNDAY GATHERINGS

- As you rise on Sunday morning, resolve in your heart to sing full voice to the Lord, regardless of your circumstance, regardless of the song choice, regardless of your singing voice.
- Sing with the intention both to praise the Lord and to encourage other believers in the gathering.
- Sing as a way to proclaim the good news that God is with us.
- Note the difference you sense as you practice singing.

Gratitude

Does our mood inform our gratitude practice or does our gratitude practice inform our mood? Do we give thanks when our heart is free and light or is our heart free and light because we give thanks? Brenee Brown, in her stunning research on the relationship between joy and gratitude, 12 years of study, 11,000 pieces of data, says this, “I did not interview one person who had described themselves as joyful, who also did not actively practice gratitude.” Most of us are convinced that if we are joyful then we will be grateful but author and priest David Steidl-Rast suggests the opposite is true, “It’s not joy that makes us grateful, it’s gratitude that makes us joyful.”

Jesus gave thanks to His Father that His teaching was revealed to those with the heart of a little child (Mt 11:25). He gave thanks before He multiplied the loaves (Mt 15:36). He gave thanks to His Father for allowing him to raise Lazarus from the dead... before He did it (John 11:41-42). And on the night before He was crucified He took bread, broke it and gave thanks, giving the church a practice to remember Him by until he comes again (Luke 22:19). Jesus said, to a group of grumpy and bitter religious people that it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks (Matthew 12:34). Out of the heart of Jesus flowed rivers of living water, the source of which was overwhelming gratitude towards the smallest act of faith, the basic provision of a meal, the beauty of community. Surely He embodied Pauls command to “give thanks in all circumstances,” it was He that inspired Paul to pen these very words.

This Advent season, we invite you not just into an attitude of gratitude but into the tangible practice of giving thanks. As you walk in this way, may the joy of Jesus be yours and may rivers of living water flow from your heart to bless others.

GRATITUDE PRACTICE

GRATITUDE FOR BLESSINGS IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS

- Ask the Spirit of God to bring to mind friends, family, co-workers, or neighbors that have experienced a celebration of some kind. Perhaps it's a raise or promotion, the welcoming of a newborn, an unexpected gift or award, or a small victory of sorts.
- Spend time thanking God for the blessings in others lives.
- Praise God for being the giver of every good gift.

GRATITUDE FOR BLESSINGS IN YOUR OWN LIFE

- Take a moment to reflect on the celebrations, small or big, in your own life or your immediate family. What are you grateful for?
- Be as specific as you can and don't neglect to name both what's obvious as well as what is not so obvious. (e.g., the kindness of an individual, or tastebuds and the flavor a that meal)

Each week you will write down 3-5 things you are thankful for. Consider making the practice of gratitude more of a concrete rhythm for yourself or your family this Advent season (At the dinner table, at the end of the day, on the commute to work).

Scripture

In this Advent practice guide we will be using a way of reading scripture called *Lectio Divina*. *Lectio Divina* simply means “sacred” or “divine” reading. It is a practice used by followers of Christ for centuries, designed to help the reader slow and engage the scriptures as an encounter with Christ. The goal is not so much analysis, but rather communion. Analysis is a good thing, but not the goal of this particular practice. Because analysis is the norm in our Western culture, it may take some time before you feel comfortable with this switch. But don’t give up. It’s worth it! We promise!

Lectio Divina has 4 movements, which are less like distinct categories or steps, and more like smaller motions within a singular movement (e.g., a golf swing). It is intended to move us deeper and deeper into a quiet and speechless communion with God that nevertheless leads ultimately to action in the world. The practice engages the “true self”, as does all prayer, and forms us from the inside out to enjoy communion with God that results in a renewed understanding of our calling and purpose. To put it simply, this practice is about the “wonder of being with.”

FOUR MOVEMENTS OF LECTIO DIVINA

When you practice Lectio in this practice guide you will go through each of the movements in order 3 times, on 3 separate readings of the text.

READ (LECTIO)

Read the text

REFLECT (MEDITATIO)

Reflect on the prompt for that read-through

REST (ORATIO)

Enjoy God speaking through silence

RESPOND (CONTEMPLATIO)

Write down what the spirit is speaking to you
through journaling prayer

FIRST READING

Read: Read the selected text slowly and intentionally.

Reflect: Note a word or phrase that stands out to you.

Rest: Take 2 minutes to rest in silence before writing.

Respond: Write down the word or phrase in journaling prayer.

SECOND READING

Read: Read the selected text slowly and intentionally.

Reflect: This time, use your imagination and your 5 senses to note what stands out. Be mindful of stories that come to mind, pictures you get in your mind's eye, a memory you recall, etc. What do you hear, see, imagine, or feel as you read the text a second time? Note: The text itself doesn't need to have imagery or concrete language for you to do this.

Rest: Take 2 minutes to rest in silence before writing.

Respond: Write down what you noticed.

THIRD READING

Read: Read the selected text slowly and intentionally.

Reflect: Make note of God's invitation for you in this text. In other words, if you could write down what God is saying to you, what is it? It's ok to hear God saying something that challenges us (we should be suspicious if God were always giving us gold stars), but it's also ok to simply enjoy an embrace. True transformation and change comes both from increasing mindfulness of our imperfections, as well as our obedience. Speak to yourself with grace and truth.

Rest: Take 2 minutes to rest in silence before writing.

Respond: Write down what you noticed.

Reflection

In Matthew chapter 3 Jesus is baptized and as He comes up out of the water the Father speaks these words: “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Jesus moves into His public ministry assured of the approval of His Father rather than in search of approval from others (Matthew 3:17). He would often withdraw from the crowds to spend time alone with His Father (Luke 5:16). Because He was fully human, Jesus had an emotional life like us; He took time to process His feelings and desires (Luke 22:42).

The third practice we are participating in this December is “reflection” and it is taken from the ancient practice of Examen. The prayer of Examen has been used by followers of Christ for centuries as a way to reflect on a previous time period with the Lord. Our everyday lives, though often seemingly mundane and rote, are actually packed with rich and meaningful moments that will help us not only to understand ourselves better, but to grow in our relationship with God. Think of the practice of reflection as rummaging through a day’s or week’s experience, looking for God. Could it be that we feel so little of God’s presence in our lives because we simply don’t make time to “rummage” or reflect on meaningful moments with Him? This kind of work is richly rewarded.

Each week this Advent season we will spend time practicing reflection (or Examen). Before you begin, set aside anything

that would keep you from being fully present such as a smartphone or computer. Take a minute to breathe. When you're ready, ask the Holy Spirit to help guide you in this practice by praying the following prayer:

“Holy Spirit I seek to make myself completely available to You. Open my eyes to see and in seeing to understand what you have to show me.”

REFLECTION PRACTICE

WORK YOUR WAY SLOWLY
THROUGH THE FOUR PROMPTS

Step One: Replay the last few days in your mind.

- Take a few minutes to practice active remembering of the last 24-72 hours. What significant things happened? Name them.

Step Two: Rejoice - Where did I feel grace in the last 24-72 hours? Where was God particularly present?

- Recall a moment, however simple or brief it was, when you felt grace in your life. Where did God “show up” for you?

e.g., “I noticed God yesterday, when I walked outside and smelled the fragrant autumn air. What I felt was a sense of well-being, of feeling gratitude to God for so lovely a day, and of wishing that I could go for a walk right now with a good friend.”

Step Three: Repent - Where did I feel emotional pain in the last 24-72 hours? Where did I sin?

- Name the strongest feelings you have experienced in the last few days. When have you felt most strongly moved in your emotions? Which emotion in particular was activated strongly? Give a name to that particular feeling: joy, depression, anger, delight, contentment, hope, shame, regret, confusion, disgust, compassion, doubt, gratitude, etc.
- Be honest with Jesus about what “caused” this strong affective response in you, and try to name accurately which particular feeling it was that you felt.
- Ask Jesus whether He ever felt this same thing, the way that you felt it, when He lived and moved and had His earthly life among us. You may turn to a Gospel text, to a scene in Jesus’ life in which you think that He reacted as you did. Read that text to yourself and explore Jesus’ affective response if applicable. Like yours, or different?
- The main goal of step three is to notice your strongest emotional reactions to particular things, and wonder with God about those reactions. “Why did I feel that so strongly?” “Does this strong reaction reveal my faith in God, or a lack of it?” If lack of it, ask God for forgiveness.

Step Four: Resolve - With the help of the Spirit, what changes can you make in the coming day?

- Thank God for being present to you in this practice and for helping you grow in your relationship with Him.

We hope that as you start to practice these disciplines they will become life giving for you. As you move through this practice guide we will remind you of prompts and steps. If you get stuck simply flip back to these pages and reference each practice. Cherry Hills family, we are grateful for you and excited to practice the way of Jesus with you this Advent season.

♩ = 120

1. O come, all ye faithful, joy - ful and tri - un -
 2. True God of true - God, Light of Light, Li - te -
 3. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - la -
 4. See how the shep - herds, sum - moned to His -
 5. Lo, star led cheer - tants, Ma - ri - Christ, a - do -

come, ye, O come, ye, to Beth - le - ham, C -
 Lo, The shep - herd, the Vir - gin's womb; C -
 sing, al - ye cit - i - zens of heav'n a - bore! C -
 I leav - ing their flocks, draw high - ly gaze; C -
 Of - fer them in - - - - - gold, and myrrh C -

hold Him, born the King of an - gels; O come,
 Fa - ther, let - get - ten, no cre - - - - - ted,
 God, who glo - ry in the high - - - - - est,
 this - the be - born on joy - ful feet - - - - - steps,
 Christ - Child bring out hearts' ob - li - - - - - tions.

dox Him, O come, let us a - dox Him, O come, let us a - dox Him, Ch.

child, for us sinners, poor and in the manger,
we would embrace Thee, with love and awe.

8. Adagio, fideles, festi intonantes;
Ventre, ventre in ferberibus.

1. Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, Glo - ry to the new - born
 2. Christ, by high - est Heaven a - doxed, Christ the ex - ce - - - - - pt
 3. This, the heav'n - ly Prince of Peace! Hail the Son of Right - eous
 4. Peace, the sov - er - eign, sov - ereign, come, For in us Thy love is
 5. Ad - am's like - ness, Lord, of - - - - - lace, Stump Thine im - age in us

se on earth, and ever - y mind, God and in - - - - - cre - - - - -
 e in time, be - hold Him, come, Oll - - - - - spring of a - - - - - vie - gin's
 in our time, so all He, to - - - - - come, Born with - out - - - - - ing in - - - - -
 - - - - - sound Ad - - - - - am from a - - - - - bowe, Re - - - - - in - - - - - state us in - - - - - Thy

ful, all ye an - gels see, I am the first - - - - - born of the vir -
 led in flesh, the first - - - - - born, the first - - - - - born of the vir -
 ld He says His glo - ry by, Born that man - - - - - may die,
 we do play Thy sav - ing po - - - - - we, Born - - - - - in - - - - - tate now, it is -
 t - us Thus, through low, re - - - - - gain, There, the Life, the a - - - - - ner man

th' an - gel - ic host pro - claim, 'Christ is born in Beth - le -
 seen with us in flesh to dwell, Je - sus our Em - man - u -
 in us to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them re - - - - - cord
 w in His side, un - - - - - join Time to our, and ours to
 to all Thy - self in - - - - - part, Formed in each (re - - - - -)

let the her - ald an - gels sing, 'Glo - ry to the new - born!

come all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um -
 True God of true Gods, Light from Light E - ter -
 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - cel - si -
 See how the sleep - heads, sun - tired to His era -
 Let star led chief - tains, Ma - gi, Christ a - dor -



ye. O come ye, to Beth - le - hem. Come
 He shuns not the Vir - gin's womb; Son
 all ye ci - ties of Je - ru - sa - lem! Glo -
 ing their flocks, draw nigh to gaze; We
 for Him in - conse - crate, and myrra, We



Hum, born the King of an - gels, O come, let
 - ther, be - got - ten, not ere a ted; O come, let
 - ther, glo - ry in the high - est,
 - ther, Child, our joy - ful foot - steps,
 bring our hearts ob - la - tions



O come, let us a - dore Him, O come, let us a - dore Him, Christ



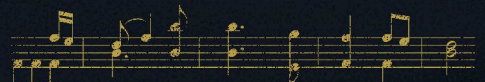
ard is come! Let earth re - ceive her King;
 Pa - vor reigns! Let men their songs em - ploy;
 er - rows grow, Nor thorns in - fest the ground;
 ath and grace, And makes the na - tions prove



pure Him room, And Heav'n and na - ture sing,
 hills and plains Re - peat the sound - ing joy,
 bless - ings flow Far as the curse is found,
 right - eous - ness, And won - ders of His love.



And Heav'n, and Heav'n, and na - ture sing,
 Re - peat, re - peat, the sound - ing joy,
 Far as, far as, the curse is found,
 And won - ders, won - ders, of His love.





O come O come

Emmanuel

WEEK ONE



O come, O come, Emmanuel and ransom
captive Israel; That mourns in lonely exile here,
until the Son of God appears.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Day-spring come and cheer our spirits
by Thine advent here; Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things,
far and nigh; to us the path of knowledge show,
and cause us in her ways to go.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Desire of nations bind, all peoples in one
heart and mind; Bid envy, strife, and quarrels cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Week One

DAY ONE

Song

AS YOU BEGIN EACH WEEK

- Place your feet on the ground and sit in a comfortable location and posture.
- Play the Christmas carol for the week on the digital companion.
- Slow your breathing, allowing the Spirit of God to clear the cobwebs from your mind as you listen to the melody and reflect on the lyrics.
- Remember that you are a part of a people, a family, nations wide and centuries deep. God is faithful.

SCAN CODE FOR DIGITAL COMPANION



Gratitude

GRATITUDE FOR BLESSINGS IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS

- Ask the Spirit of God to bring to mind friends, family, co-workers, or neighbors that have experienced a celebration of some kind. Perhaps it's a raise or promotion, the welcoming of a newborn, an unexpected gift or award, or a small victory of sorts.
- Spend time thanking God for the blessings in the lives of others.
- Praise God for being the giver of every good gift.

GRATITUDE FOR BLESSINGS IN YOUR OWN LIFE

- Take a moment to reflect on the celebrations, small or big, in your own life or the life of your immediate family. What are you grateful for?
- Be as specific as you can and don't neglect to name both what's obvious as well as what is not so obvious. (Thank you Lord for the kindness of this individual, thank you Lord for my tastebuds and the flavor of that meal.)

**Write down 3-5 things you are thankful for
on the next two pages.**

Consider making the practice of gratitude more of a concrete rhythm for yourself or your family this advent season (At the dinner table, at the end of the day, on the commute to work).

PRAYER TO END YOUR TIME

Help me Lord to live this day in gratitude,
present to the truth that I have nothing
that's not been given to me from Heaven.

Amen

Week One

DAY TWO

Silence

Plant your feet on the ground and sit comfortably.

Place your hands in your lap, open your palms and breathe slowly. If it helps silently pray “Emmanuel” as you breathe in and “God with us” as you breathe out.

Scripture

MATTHEW 1:22-23
(ISAIAH 7:14)

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel” which means “God with us.”

FIRST READING

MATTHEW 1:22-23

(ISAIAH 7:14)

As you read, note a word or phrase that stands out to you.

Write down the word or phrase below.

SECOND READING

MATTHEW 1:22-23

ISAIAH 7:14

This time as you read, use your imagination and your 5 senses to note what stands out. Be mindful of stories that come to mind, pictures you see, a memory you recall, etc. What do you hear, see, imagine, or feel?

Note: The text itself doesn't need to have imagery or concrete language for you to do this.

THIRD READING

MATTHEW 1:22-23

ISAIAH 7:14

In this last read through make note of God's invitation for you in this text. If you could write down what God is saying to you as if He wrote you a letter, what would it say?

PRAYER TO END YOUR TIME

Jesus Your word has the power
to transform my
life and redeem the world.

Thank you for the opportunity
to experience it as
living and active.

I receive this specific invitation
you have for me as good news over my life
and I say yes to it.

May my “yes” be a sign of my belief that
you are the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Amen

Week One

DAY THREE

Silence

Plant your feet on the ground and sit comfortably.

Place your hands in your lap, open your palms and breathe slowly. If it helps silently pray “Emmanuel” as you breathe in and “God with us” as you breathe out.

Scripture

JOB 38:4-7

“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation?

Tell me, if you understand.

Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!

Who stretched a measuring line across it?

On what were its footings set,

or who laid its cornerstone—

while the morning stars sang together

and all the angels shouted for joy?”

FIRST READING

JOB 38:4-7

As you read, note a word or phrase that stands out to you.

Write down the word or phrase below.

SECOND READING

JOB 38:4-7

This time as you read, use your imagination and your 5 senses to note what stands out. Be mindful of stories that come to mind, pictures you see, a memory you recall, etc. What do you hear, see, imagine, or feel?

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to transform my
life and redeem the world.

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to experience it as
living and active.

I receive this specific invitation
you have for me as good news over my life
and I say yes to it.

May my “yes” be a sign of my belief that
you are the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Amen

Week One

DAY FOUR

Silence

Plant your feet on the ground and sit comfortably.

Place your hands in your lap, open your palms and breathe slowly. If it helps silently pray “Emmanuel” as you breathe in and “God with us” as you breathe out.

Scripture

1 PETER 1:3-4

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.
This inheritance is kept in heaven for you.

FIRST READING

1 PETER 1:3-4

As you read, note a word or phrase that stands out to you.

Write down the word or phrase below.

SECOND READING

1 PETER 1:3-4

This time as you read, use your imagination and your 5 senses to note what stands out. Be mindful of stories that come to mind, pictures you see, a memory you recall, etc. What do you hear, see, imagine, or feel?

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THIRD READING

1 PETER 1:3-4

In this last read through make note of God's invitation for you in this text. If you could write down what God is saying to you as if

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PRAYER TO END YOUR TIME

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Thank you for the opportunity
to experience it as
living and active.

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Week One

DAY FIVE

Reflection

Take the next two pages to reflect and prayerfully journal on these questions.

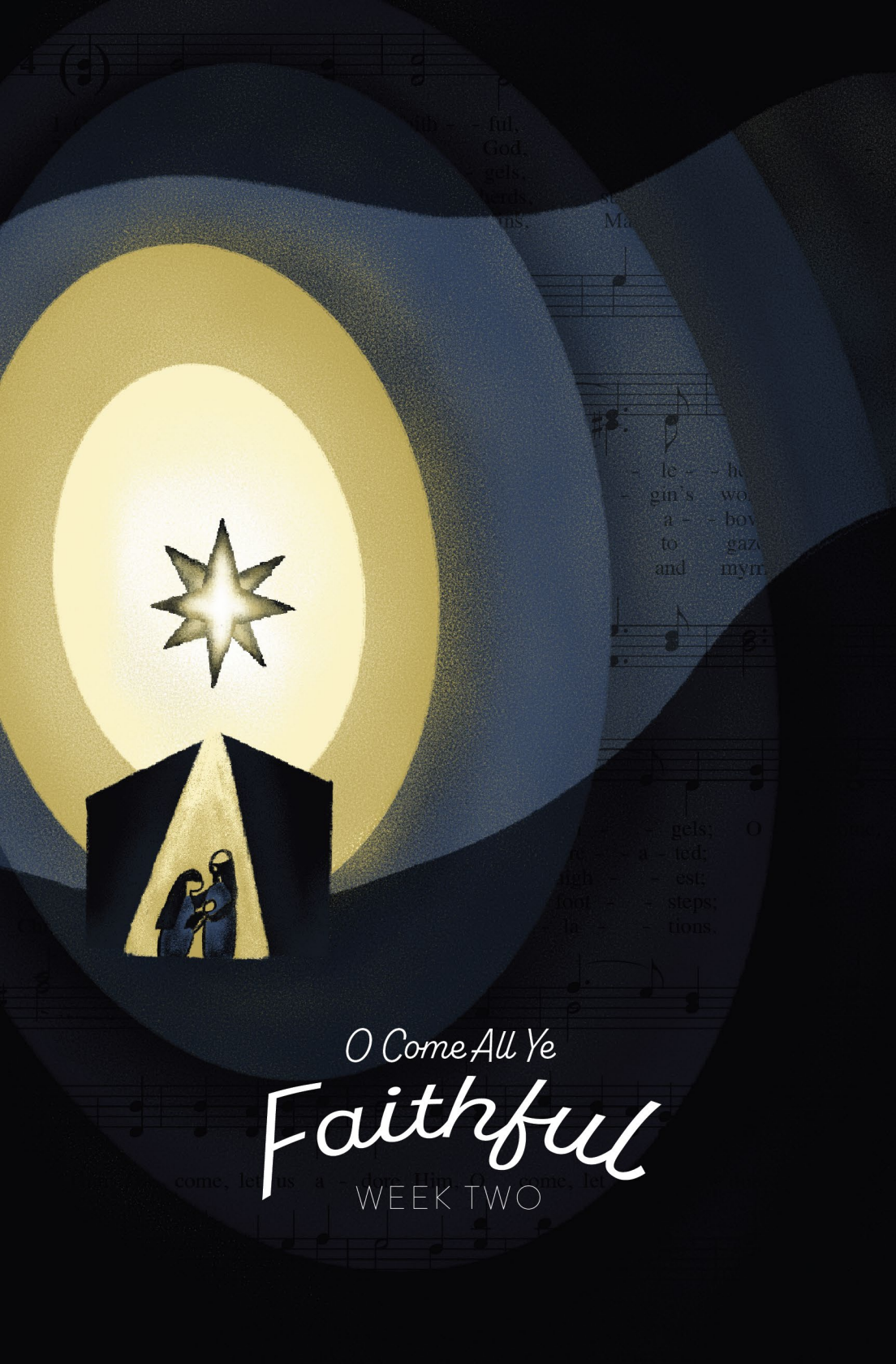
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Step Four: Resolve - With the help of the Spirit, what changes can you make in the coming day?

Refer back to the introductory section on reflection for more information on each prompt.



O Come All Ye

Faithful

WEEK TWO

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord!

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
O sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord!

Week Two

DAY ONE

Song

AS YOU BEGIN EACH WEEK

- Place your feet on the ground and sit in a comfortable location and posture.
- Play the Christmas carol for the week on the digital companion.
- Slow your breathing, allowing the Spirit of God to clear the cobwebs from your mind as you listen to the melody and reflect on the lyrics.
- Remember that you are a part of a people, a family, nations wide and centuries deep. God is faithful.

SCAN CODE FOR DIGITAL COMPANION



Gratitude

GRATITUDE FOR BLESSINGS IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS

- Ask the Spirit of God to bring to mind friends, family, co-workers, or neighbors that have experienced a celebration of some kind. Perhaps it's a raise or promotion, the welcoming of a newborn, an unexpected gift or award, or a small victory of sorts.
- Spend time thanking God for the blessings in the lives of others.
- Praise God for being the giver of every good gift.

GRATITUDE FOR BLESSINGS IN YOUR OWN LIFE

- Take a moment to reflect on the celebrations, small or big, in your own life or the life of your immediate family. What are you grateful for?
- Be as specific as you can and don't neglect to name both what's obvious as well as what is not so obvious. (Thank you Lord for the kindness of this individual, thank you Lord for my tastebuds and the flavor of that meal.)

**Write down 3-5 things you are thankful for
on the next two pages.**

Consider making the practice of gratitude more of a concrete rhythm for yourself or your family this advent season (At the dinner table, at the end of the day, on the commute to work).

PRAYER TO END YOUR TIME

Help me Lord to live this day in gratitude,
present to the truth that I have nothing that's
not been given to me from Heaven.

Amen

Week Two

DAY TWO

Silence

Plant your feet on the ground and sit comfortably.

Place your hands in your lap, open your palms and breathe slowly. If it helps silently pray “Emmanuel” as you breathe in and “God with us” as you breathe out.

Scripture

LUKE 2:15-20

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.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

FIRST READING

LUKE 2:15-20

As you read, note a word or phrase that stands out to you.

Write down the word or phrase below.

SECOND READING

LUKE 2:15-20

This time as you read, use your imagination and your 5 senses to note what stands out. Be mindful of stories that come to mind, pictures you see, a memory you recall, etc. What do you hear, see, imagine, or feel?

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THIRD READING

LUKE 2:15-20

In this last read through make note of God's invitation for you in this text. If you could write down what God is saying to you as if

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Amen

Week Two

DAY THREE

Silence

Plant your feet on the ground and sit comfortably.

Place your hands in your lap, open your palms and breathe slowly. If it helps silently pray “Emmanuel” as you breathe in and “God with us” as you breathe out.

Scripture

JOHN 21:15-18

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter,

“Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

The third time he said to him,

“Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time,

“Do you love me?” He said,

“Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.”

FIRST READING

JOHN 21:15-18

As you read, note a word or phrase that stands out to you.

Write down the word or phrase below.

SECOND READING

JOHN 21:15-18

This time as you read, use your imagination and your 5 senses to note what stands out. Be mindful of stories that come to mind, pictures you see, a memory you recall, etc. What do you hear, see, imagine, or feel?

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Week Two

DAY FOUR

Silence

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Scripture

PSALM 145:1-4

I will exalt you, my God the King;

I will praise your name for ever and ever.

Every day I will praise you

and extol your name for ever and ever.

Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;

his greatness no one can fathom.

One generation commends your works to another;

they tell of your mighty acts.

FIRST READING

PSALM 145:1-4

As you read, note a word or phrase that stands out to you.

Write down the word or phrase below.

SECOND READING

PSALM 145:1-4

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Week Two

DAY FIVE

Reflection

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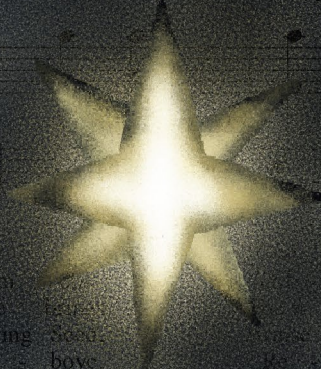
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an - gels sing
Heav'n a - dored,
Prince of Peace!
na - tions, come
Lord, of - face

Glo - ri - ous
Christ the Son
Hail the Son
Fix in our
Stamp Thine



Hark the Herald

Angels Sing

WEEK THREE



Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King
Peace on earth, and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled
Joyful, all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
With angelic hosts proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem
Hark! the herald angles sing,
Glory to the newborn King!

Christ, by highest heaven adored
Christ, the everlasting Lord
Late in time behold Him come
Offspring of the virgin's womb
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see
Hail the incarnate Deity
Pleased as man with men to dwell
Jesus, our Emmanuel
Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King!

Hail the heav'n born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son of Righteousness
Light and life to all He brings
Ris'n with healing in His wings
Mild he lays His glory by
Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King!

Week Three

DAY ONE

Song

AS YOU BEGIN EACH WEEK

- Place your feet on the ground and sit in a comfortable location and posture.
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SCAN CODE FOR DIGITAL COMPANION



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Amen

Week Three

DAY TWO

Silence

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Place your hands in your lap, open your palms and breathe slowly. If it helps silently pray “Emmanuel” as you breathe in and “God with us” as you breathe out.

Scripture

LUKE 2:13-14

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.”

FIRST READING

LUKE 2:13-14

As you read, note a word or phrase that stands out to you.

Write down the word or phrase below.

SECOND READING

LUKE 2:13-14

This time as you read, use your imagination and your 5 senses to note what stands out. Be mindful of stories that come to mind, pictures you see, a memory you recall, etc. What do you hear, see, imagine, or feel?

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THIRD READING

LUKE 2:13-14

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Week Three

DAY THREE

Silence

Plant your feet on the ground and sit comfortably.

Place your hands in your lap, open your palms and breathe slowly. If it helps silently pray “Emmanuel” as you breathe in and “God with us” as you breathe out.

Scripture

ISAIAH 9:6-7

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.

FIRST READING

ISAIAH 9:6-7

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SECOND READING

ISAIAH 9:6-7

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Week Three

DAY FOUR

Silence

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Scripture

EPHESIANS 2:14-17

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations.

His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

FIRST READING

EPHESIANS 2:14-17

As you read, note a word or phrase that stands out to you.

Write down the word or phrase below.

SECOND READING

EPHESIANS 2:14-17

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Week Three

DAY FIVE

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come! Let each re - ceive
reigns! Let their songs
grow, No - fest
grace, And the na - tions



Joy to the World
WEEK FOUR

Joy to the world
the Lord is come
Let earth receive her King
Let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and heaven and nature sing!

Joy to the world
The Savior reigns
Let men their songs employ
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat repeat the sounding Joy!

No more let sins
and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found
Far as the curse is found
Far as far as the curse is found

He rules the world
With truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love
And wonders of His love
And wonders, wonders of His love!

Week Four
DAY ONE

Song

AS YOU BEGIN EACH WEEK

- Place your feet on the ground and sit in a comfortable location and posture.
- Play the Christmas carol for the week on the digital companion.
- Slow your breathing, allowing the Spirit of God to clear the cobwebs from your mind as you listen to the melody and reflect on the lyrics.
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SCAN CODE FOR DIGITAL COMPANION



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Amen

Week Four

DAY TWO

Silence

Plant your feet on the ground and sit comfortably.

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Scripture

LUKE 2:10-11

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.

FIRST READING

LUKE 2:10-11

As you read, note a word or phrase that stands out to you.

Write down the word or phrase below.

SECOND READING

LUKE 2:10-11

This time as you read, use your imagination and your 5 senses to note what stands out. Be mindful of stories that come to mind, pictures you see, a memory you recall, etc. What do you hear, see, imagine, or feel?

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THIRD READING

LUKE 2:10-11

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Silence

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Scripture

ROMANS 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

FIRST READING

ROMANS 15:13

As you read, note a word or phrase that stands out to you.

Write down the word or phrase below.

SECOND READING

ROMANS 15:13

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Scripture

1 PETER 1:8-9

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

FIRST READING

1 PETER 1:8-9

As you read, note a word or phrase that stands out to you.

Write down the word or phrase below.

SECOND READING

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do
Pea
com
et - face

tions rise, Join the
head see; Hail this
by, Bom
ng po - wer, Ruin
re - gain, Thee,

host
flesh
sons of earth
un - ion
self

is sus
Bon to
give
ours,

*Songs of
Christmas*

JOY TO THE WORLD, THE LORD IS COME!

The day we have long waited for is finally here, and we celebrate the birth of Jesus – God with us.

Thanks for joining on this Advent journey through the Songs of Christmas. We pray that through the practices of silence, song, gratitude, scripture, and reflection you have been able to slow down this Christmas season and enjoy the presence of family, friends, and the Lord Himself.

Before you step into the busyness of the day and the tradition of opening presents, we encourage you to slow down once again and read the story of Jesus' birth found in the Gospel of Luke 2:1-20.

Then, stop and thank God for the greatest gift ever given – Jesus.

We look forward to 2023 and continuing to give ourselves fully to the way of Jesus and His mission.

Merry Christmas Cherry Hills family,
Brian and Steve

