



Advent Reflections

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This devotional contains reflections, artwork, and prayers for a portion of the Advent season created by the members and friends of Church of the Holy Cross UCC in Hilo, Hawai'i. Advent is a season of preparation and of expectation, an awareness of what has already happened and what is still to come. May these devotional offerings help you find the hope, peace, joy, and love of God within your soul.



Sunday, December 7: Peace

Psalm 85:10

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

Ah, peace. Our hearts' peace. Our families' peace. Our communities' peace. Our nations' peace. Our world's peace.

Yet it is not peace with the kiss, with the embrace, without the full inclusion of righteousness.

Without steadfast love for our neighbor, some will grow increasingly needy. Without steadfast love for our family members, some may feel valued and others dismissed. Without steadfast love for ourselves, we may neglect our bodies' needs, with results that might be a headache or might be serious illness.

Righteousness and peace must fully embrace if either is to be found for long in the world.

Prayer:

Guide us in righteousness, O God. Guide us in steadfast love and steady our faithfulness. In this spirit, may we embrace and celebrate peace. Amen.

Sunday, November 30: Hope

The year: 1993. Janine and I were asked to light the candle of hope by our deacon, James Yoshiyama.

Our husband and father, called home to our Lord on September 30. A candle of hope to bring light into our time of darkness.

Emmanuel, God with us. We placed our complete trust in the faithfulness of our Lord. The grace of God, Lord Jesus Christ, blessed us with strength and courage, love and hope, comfort and refuge. Protected and provided for throughout our sorrowful healing journey.

We praise the Lord.

Jane Kawazoe

Monday, December 1

Romans: 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
HOPE – What is HOPE? Why is HOPE a word I use daily? In thinking about this, I conclude that to me, HOPE is my desire for a certain thing to happen, or something I want to happen. But, why am I always hoping?

I guess through my life experiences, I have learned that my faith in the goodness of people and what happens in life has allowed me to count on my hope for things to happen. I have learned that planning, hard work, cooperation, collaboration, and other facets help make good things come to be. Just hoping is not enough! We must work at things and have faith that what we do will help to bring about what it is we are hoping for. Hope helps us to live a life pleasing to God, and the faith we have in Him, allows us to have hope for all!

Anne Sadayasu

Tuesday, December 2

Advent is a season of anticipation and preparation, inviting us to reflect on our relationship with God as we await the coming of Christ. The lectionary readings for the first day of Advent are Psalm 122; Daniel 9:15-19; and James 4:1-10. The James 4:8a verse, “Come near to God and he will come near to you.” stood out to me.

A story comes to mind: A woman, riding with her husband

Saturday, December 6

AN ADVENT ACROSTIC

HOPE

Heaven
Ornaments
Peace
Everlasting Life

PEACE

Peace
Everlasting Father
Advent
Christ
Eden

JOY

Jericho
Offering
Ye People

LOVE

Lord
Organ
Vital
Endure

CHRIST

Candles
Hear
Reassurance
Incense
Sacrifice
Teaching

Emmyann Siperia Omae

Friday, December 5

Advent is a season of waiting — a time when we look forward with expectation and longing. Hope is at the heart of this waiting. It's more than wishful thinking or vague optimism. Hope is the quiet confidence that, even in uncertainty, God is present and working for our good.

We use the word “hope” in everyday life: hoping for good weather, for joyful gatherings, for healing. But Advent hope is deeper. It's the assurance that, even when the path ahead is unclear, God walks with us. The prophets spoke of a coming Messiah, and generations waited in hope for God's promise to be fulfilled. Their hope was not passive; it moved them forward, sustained them through darkness, and gave them courage to “boldly go” into the unknown.

Today, we may find ourselves hoping for restoration, for peace, for God's presence in our struggles. Advent reminds us that hope is not just for the future — it's for now. It's the light that guides us through uncertainty, the anchor that steadies us when life feels unpredictable.

As we journey through Advent, let us hold onto hope — not because we know exactly how things will turn out, but because we trust the One who holds our future. Hope gives us strength to move forward, to love boldly, and to wait with joyful expectation for the coming of Christ.

Prayer

God of hope, in this Advent season, fill my heart with your light. Help me to trust you in times of uncertainty and to move forward with courage. May your presence guide me and may my hope in you grow stronger each day. Amen.

Lorraine Davis

in their farm pickup with bench seats, lamented how distant they'd become. She recalled how, when newly married, she sat close to him, often with his arm thrown over her shoulder but now found herself across the cab. Her husband smiled, opened his arm in invitation, and said, “I haven't moved.” This simple gesture speaks volumes. When we feel far from God, it's often we who have shifted, not Him.

This echoes the story of the Prodigal Son. The son left home, seeking his own way, but the father remained, waiting and watching. Yet, the father's love was not passive — when he saw his son returning, he didn't wait for him to reach the door. Instead, the father ran to meet him, embracing him with open arms and celebrating his return. God's response to us is similar — when we take even a small step toward Him, He rushes to meet us with love and joy.

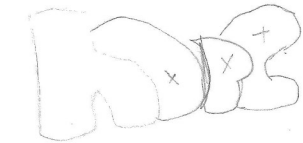
Advent is our invitation to move closer to God, trusting that He is always ready to welcome us. No matter how far we've wandered, God's arms remain open. As we journey through Advent, let us draw near, knowing that God draws near to us.

Prayer

Gracious God, as Advent begins, help me to draw near to You. Remind me that Your love is constant and Your arms are always open. Renew my heart and fill me with hope as I prepare for the coming of Christ. Amen.

Lorraine Davis

Wednesday, December 3



Yoshiro Mori

Thursday, December 4

Hosea 6:1-2

For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,

the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

In Hosea's day, there were clearly people who used their religious offerings as a way to ignore the emptiness of their spirits.

Religions, it must be said, lend themselves to that kind of behavior. Hosea and Jews eight centuries before Jesus, Martin Luther fifteen centuries after Jesus, and the Hawaiians influenced by Hewahewa all found that the worship in which they engaged failed to fill their souls. They felt disordered, discontented, and disconnected from what was holy.

Strangely, they also shared a hope that this could be different. They believed in something they had not experienced. They believed in something greater than what they knew. They turned to new practices to seek it, and to find it.

Hope is found in emptiness, an emptiness we trust can be filled.

Prayer:

For the ways in which you have filled us, O God, we give thanks. For the ways we still are empty, O God, we hope in you. Amen.

ESA