



Advent Devotional

**CROP
HUNGER WALK** 
ENDING HUNGER ONE STEP AT A TIME
BY  **CWS**

First Sunday of Advent

Read

GOSPEL READING: Mark 13:24-37 – the coming of the Son of Man, watchfulness.

CWS STORY:



"I Am No Longer Alone — And That Matters." recounts how Silvia and her family fled war in Ukraine and found support in a CWS-partner center in Moldova.

cwsglobal.org/stories/i-am-no-longer-alone-and-that-matters/

Reflect

On the first Sunday of Advent, we lean into hopeful watchfulness. Mark 13:24-37 invites us to stay awake for the signs of Christ's arrival, even in places of waiting and need. In Moldova, Silvia and her family found more than shelter; they found belonging through a Church World Service partner center, a tangible sign that they were not alone in their waiting. As we reflect on waiting, we acknowledge that abundance of mercy is often through small but faithful acts that restore health and dignity. Advent is a call to join in bringing help and hope to those who still wait, turning longing into belonging for neighbors near and far.

How have you seen God move in your life through small and faithful acts? Who did that for you? Who can do you do that for?

Pray

Lord of hope, as we await the arrival of your Son, open our eyes to the waiting places of the world: the borders, the shelters, the homes where fear lingers and grace is hard to see. Move our hearts to listen deeply, to act justly, and to walk beside those who wait for a safe place to call home. Grant us the faith to see our neighbor as Christ sees us and the courage to respond. Amen.

Second Sunday of Advent

Read

GOSPEL READING: Luke 3:1-6 – John the Baptist preparing the way, raising up valleys, making straight paths.

CWS STORY:



“Replacing Losina’s discouragement with hope” describes a Tanzanian woman empowered by CWS-supported livestock training (chicken/pig program) to build livelihood.

cwsglobal.org/stories/losina/

Reflect

Hope isn’t always easy. Whether a person living in occupied first century Judea or Losina in modern day Tanzania – challenges make hope hard. How do we hope for the coming Christ when there are so many struggles in this world? We work for a better world – that’s how! Just as John the Baptist prepares the way for the coming of Christ, through Church World Service, we’re able to work to prepare pathways of dignity and resilience for families like Losina’s. And just like in Losina’s story, her move from discouragement to hope acknowledges that bad things may still happen, but she feels prepared for them when they come.

What path are you clearing in your community or through your giving so others like Losina may walk with dignity and move toward hope?

Pray

God of new ways, open a straight path in our hearts and in the world for your justice and peace. Help us continue to take steps toward doing the work of justice and peace this season of Advent and beyond. The world cries out for hope, and we are your hands and feet through which it can be given. Amen.

Third Sunday of Advent

Read

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 11:2-11 – John asks “Are you the one who is to come?” and Jesus replies, pointing to the blind receiving sight, the lame walking, the good news proclaimed.

CWS STORY:



“A New, Sanitary Toilet for Thary and Her Family” describes how a Cambodian family moved from open defecation to proper sanitation thanks to CWS support

cwsglobal.org/stories/a-new-sanitary-toilet-for-thary-and-her-family/

Reflect

In Cambodia, Church World Service models the tangible signs of God’s coming through the Promoting Better Lives program that helps families meet basic needs like clean water, sanitation, and start-up grants. In Matthew 11:2–11, Jesus points to healing and mercy as proof that the kingdom is near. That echoes Isaiah 61:1–2, which says “the Spirit is upon us to bring good news to the poor and bind up the brokenhearted”. As supporters of the CROP Hunger Walk, we celebrate how your gifts turn suffering into belonging and hope. We respond not with grand promises but with steady, faithful acts that mirror God’s coming in our neighborhoods locally and globally.

For what small signs of hope do you give thanks? How might you participate in bringing such signs to others?

Pray

Prince of Peace, we rejoice for the countless ways you have been the one to come and enrich our lives, renew our hope, heal our afflictions, and move through us in the building of your kingdom. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear those that are asking us “are you the one that is to come?” within our communities and around the world. Amen.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Read

GOSPEL READING: Luke 1:39-55 – Mary visits Elizabeth; the Magnificat. God lifts the lowly, fills the hungry.

CWS STORY:



"A Journey to Mutual Learning: Stories of Resilience in Latin America" shares how CWS works with communities for clean water, sanitation, indigenous youth training, and the right to stay in place.

cwsglobal.org/blog/a-journey-to-mutual-learning-stories-of-resilience-in-latin-america/

Reflect

God seems to have a way of not doing what we expect – and not only that but turning things on their heads. From Mary's older relative Elizabeth being pregnant (with the baby leaping in her womb upon her arrival), to God choosing a humble young woman like Mary to be the mother of Jesus – and even to God using each and every one of us to make a difference in the world – God surprises us. The song Mary presents in the second half of the passage similarly turns things on their heads - lifting up the lowly and striking down the mighty, filling the hungry with what they need – this would not have been the experience of many of those hearing it for the first time. This likely is not your experience even today. But Mary's song echoes in the work of Church World Service - God lifting up marginalized communities, enabling voices to be heard and their rights to be affirmed. Monica reflects on that in her blog and how she's seen people's lives impacted first-hand – which is only possible because of your support of CWS through the CROP Hunger Walk.

What community of people in need are you most engaged with? What practice can you take up to advocate for them this next year?

Pray

God of humble birth, as we lift our eyes to heaven, turn our hearts to the lowly and grant us the grace to stand with them. Break our hearts for what breaks yours and help us continue in your work of justice and peace. Amen.

Christmas Eve

Read

**GOSPEL READING: Luke 2:1-20 – The birth of Jesus, the angelic proclamation:
“Glory to God in the highest... peace on earth among those whom God favors.”**

CWS STORY:



“The Human Impact of Policy Disruptions: Stories from CWS Fort Collins” shows how domestic newcomers (refugees and immigrants) are impacted by policy and how CWS helps families rebuild.

cwsglobal.org/blog/the-human-impact-of-policy-disruptions-stories-from-cws-fort-collins/

Reflect

On Christmas Eve we proclaim Emmanuel - God with us. That means God with refugees, immigrants, newcomers, and neighbors close to home. Church World Service's domestic work reminds us that the Good News comes to all. We see this truth throughout Scripture: the shepherds - among the lowest in society - are the first to witness the Christ child in Luke's Gospel. The magi - Gentile outsiders - arrive in Matthew's Gospel to worship and acknowledge Jesus as God. From the very beginning, the Good News was and is for everyone. We carry that Good News forward today by providing food for the hungry and shelter for the homeless. And just as Jesus, Mary, and Joseph later found safety in Egypt, we too are called to offer welcome and protection to our new neighbors. We can stand with neighbors - like those highlighted in Fort Collins - in real and tangible ways.

How will you live in this season as one who welcomes God with and among neighbors?"

Pray

Emmanuel, God-with-us, open our hearts to your presence in every neighbor near and far. Make us agents of your peace so that all may know peace. This Advent, Christmas and beyond continue your call on our lives to stand with the least of these. Amen.