



With Us

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

CHRIST:
With Us
FOREVER

| WEEK FIVE |

Scripture

Open your Bible and read today's verse with your family.

John 1:18

“No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.”

Luke 2:1-21

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And

an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Colossians 1:15-20

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”

Content

Read today's devotion aloud with your family, Small Group, or simply during your personal time with the Lord.

The waiting is over. Christ has come. Can you imagine what it was like on the night that Jesus took His first breath? The tiny Messiah's cry shattered centuries of silence. Months of his parents' anticipation would turn to wonder as God's one and only Son became their own for 33 years. Christ, who was present at creation, is now present on earth to make God known to all.

God made sure that both kings and shepherds heard the good news of Jesus's birth. The rich, the poor, the seen, the unseen. All were in need of the Rescuer, Jesus. In the presence of the Son of God, only His majesty matters. In the presence of the King of Kings, glory and praise are His alone. Colossians 1:18-19 says that Jesus is supreme above all things, "For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell."

Who Jesus is can change who we are when we confess Him as Savior and Lord. God living among us through His Son Jesus Christ redeems the sin of our past, the power of our present, and the promise of our future. We cannot forget that this tiny baby we place in a manger at Christmas is the Savior who redeems it all and holds it all together.

This is the extraordinary story of God with us. He came in the most ordinary way to bring us His extraordinary hope, peace, joy, and love that can only be found in His presence. God, in His infinite love, chose to draw near to humanity and dwell among us in the person of Jesus Christ. He chose to be known

as Emmanuel, God with us. But do you understand that God wants to be with you? The only way that the truth of Christmas will transform your life is if you allow God to make it personal. It cannot be merely a Christmas season feeling, a family tradition, a church activity, or a positive intellectual idea. God with us is the story of Christmas. God with you is the story of your eternal life. And it can only come through personal faith and belief that Jesus is who He says He is and has done what He said He would do.

The Christmas story is not just a story that was. This is a story that is and forever will be! God makes Himself known to humankind on that first Christmas night so that we could have hope for our today and our tomorrow. Jesus's first breath on earth gave us hope for our last!

As we have journeyed through the truths of John chapter one, we have come face to face with the Lamb of God, full of grace and truth. We have discovered that God has been with us from the beginning. He is with us in darkness. He is with us in light. He is with us in grace. And because of Jesus Christ, we can rest in the promise that He will be with us forever.

Like Mary, may we treasure these truths and ponder them in our hearts even after the glow of Christmas lights has faded. May these truths inspire us to surrender our lives to God, embrace His grace upon grace, and seek the fullness of His presence.

Christ the Savior is born. God is truly "With Us!" Glory to God in the highest!

Conversation Starters

Use these questions to start conversation with your family, small group, or simply to further your own understanding and application of today's scripture and devotion.

Consider the account of Jesus' birth in Luke 2. What part of the Christmas story impacts you? Why?

What do you think it means in Colossians 1:17 when it says "in him all things hold together"? How does this encourage you in your current season?

Discuss what it means to have a personal relationship with God. When is it difficult to believe that God wants to be with you? Why?

Connections

Use the following activities and ideas throughout the coming week to further connect the lessons from today's scripture and devotion as well as deepen connections with family, friends, and community.

1. Begin the tradition of pausing on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day ahead of gifts or other celebrations to read the Christmas story from Luke 2 individually or with family and friends.
2. Have each person choose an ornament on your family tree and explain why it is unique and special to them. Enjoy a time of remembering and conversation. Connect this back to the truth that we are each intentionally designed by God for a purpose. God is with us and empowering us for our good and His glory.
3. Make a list of the many blessings the Lord has given you in 2024 and thank Him for those. Next, pray over the new year ahead. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you make a list of goals for 2025. Pray over those, believing that the Lord has great things in store for your future.

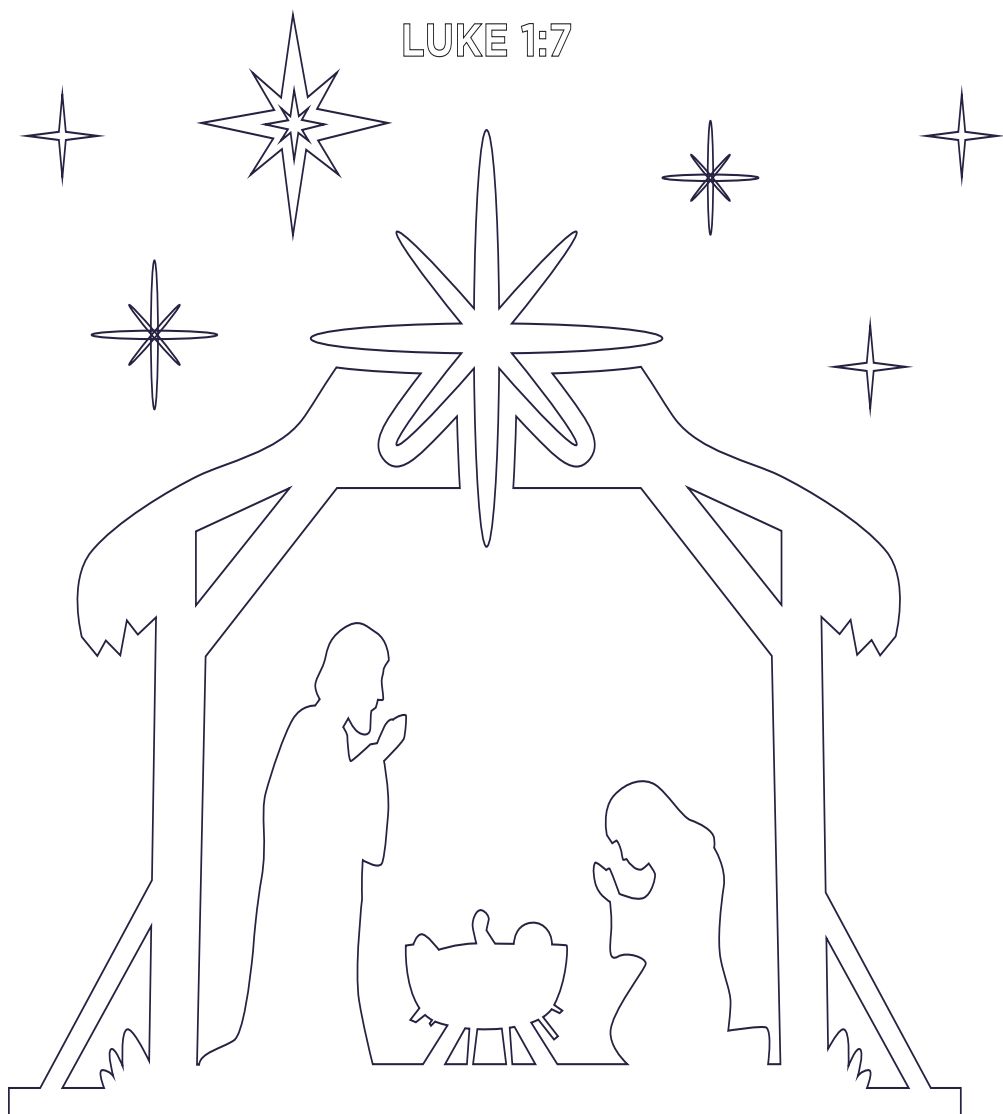
Memory Verse

Use the memory verse to lock in the biblical truth of today's lesson throughout the week.

**"And he is before all things and in him all things hold together."
- Colossians 1:17**

*And she gave birth to her firstborn son
and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and
laid him in a manger, because there was
no place for them in the inn.*

LUKE 1:7





CHURCH AT THE MILL