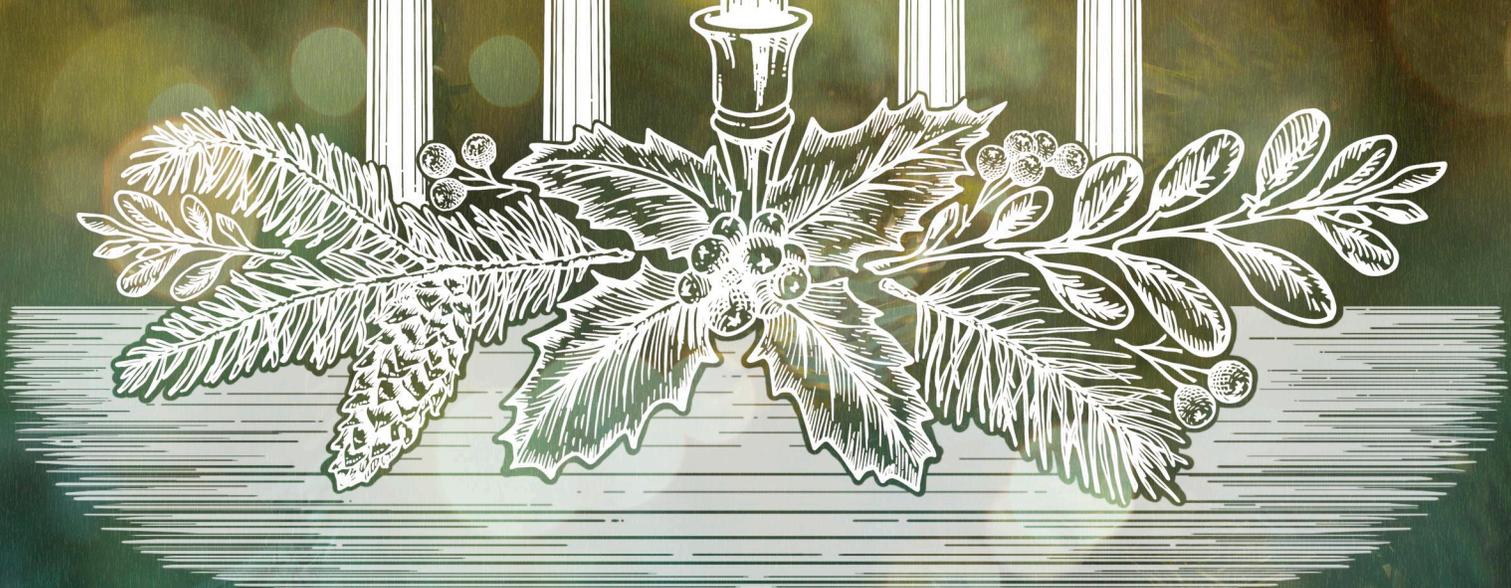


# ADVENT

*A SEASON OF EXPECTATION*



2021 ADVENT READER  
WEEK 1: HOPE

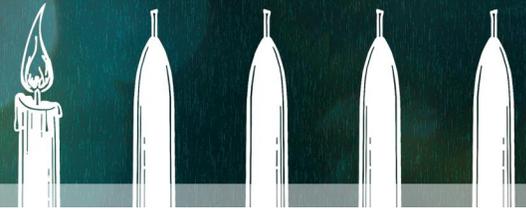


# HOPE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28

HOPE ARRIVES THROUGH THE VOICE OF GOD

BY: KEITH ST JEAN



**READING:** John 1:1-13

Hope arrives through the voice of God.  
And The Word He speaks is Love.  
Cutting through our darkest night the Word cries out,  
“Let there be light.”  
This light enters our world and provides...  
Direction,  
Purpose,  
Identity.  
In the glow of that light, we know  
Who we are  
Who we have been made to be.  
In it is the assurance of love.  
A love that both creates and sustains us.  
In the midst of our pain the voice whispers,  
“I am here.”  
That whisper gives us...  
Comfort,  
Encouragement,  
Hope.  
A hope that will not disappoint because,  
Hope arrives through the voice of God.  
And The Word he speaks is Love.

I believe the hope of this season is always found in the still small voice of God that speaks to us in words of love and invitation. This Word is on repeat uttering over and over again, “I love you. Come to me. I love you. Come to me. I love you. Come to me.”

There is something powerful in the simple truth Jesus utters, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” I believe that it is in these words that we find the true power of what The Word came to accomplish and what the gospel is. These words of hope fill me with a deep sense of both my place and my purpose. I long to rest in them and then, as I drink deeply of the love and rest I am being offered, to become a wellspring of the very same to all I come in contact with.

**This is the hope that sustains. The light in the darkness.**

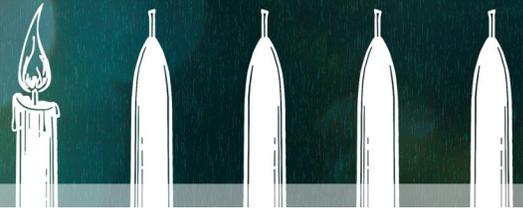
**God is speaking and The Word He speaks is Love. Listen for it and let it transform you.**

# HOPE

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29

WATCHING AND WAITING WITH HOPE

BY: CRYSTAL GELDERMAN



**READING:** Micah 7:7-8

So many of us have been watching the events in Sumas Prairie (and the rest of BC) these past couple of weeks, and all of us have been touched in some way. It seems strange that this week the focus is on hope, when there is so much devastation happening around us.

Take a look at these verses:

But (therefore - KJV), as for me, I will watch in hope for the Lord.

I love the expectation expressed here. Imagine watching as if on top of a watchtower. There is a sense of eager anticipation here; a longing that seems to go beyond what can be explained. It doesn't matter what is happening around us. Every part of our being is focused on something else: HOPE. The KJV uses the word "Therefore" implying that because of what is happening around us, that is why we watch in hope for the Lord.

**What are you watching for in hope right now?  
What is your expectation of what Jesus will do in your life?**

**I wait for God my Saviour...**

Waiting is so uncomfortable in this world of fast and instant everything. Waiting is so uncomfortable when there is calamity all around us, when there is pain and suffering, or grief. Some consider waiting to be the act of doing nothing. But what if waiting is one of the most important journeys we are called to walk? What is your posture while you wait? What are you waiting for in your life right now? What happens to our faith and our heart as we wait? How do you see spiritual growth in those moments?

**My God will hear me...**

We are promised this, always. Even when it feels like we are not heard. Sometimes, there are no words to say and yet our body and spirits groan and the Spirit intercedes for us. There have been many times in my life where all I could do was curl up in a ball. I was in utter anguish, and no human words were possible. Do you feel heard by God right now? Do you trust that He hears you?

**When I sit in the darkness, the Lord will be my light.**

Someone wise once said this to me: "Crystal, when darkness is falling all around you, don't chase the sunset. Instead, have the courage to rise, turn, and face the the other way, and wait for the dawn to come". This sentiment has been near to my heart ever since. Is there anywhere in your life right now where you are trying to chase the sunset? Where are you sitting in darkness? How is Jesus your light right now?

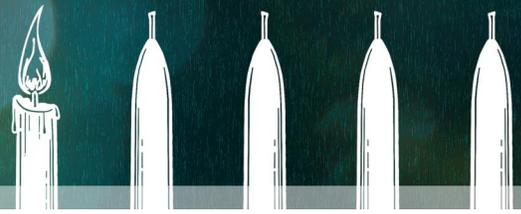
**PRAYER:** *Jesus, keep us strong as we watch in hope. Grant us blessings as we sit in the uncomfortable space of waiting. Thank you that you hear us, even if we have no words to say. Thank you for being our light in the darkness, and that we can trust in you.*

# HOPE

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30

WAITING AND HOPING FOR GOD

BY: ANDREW HAAK



**READING:** Psalm 25:1-10

What are you waiting for, what are you hoping for? In 2021 that's a loaded question. Maybe more than ever, waiting and hoping seems frightfully tangible and relevant.

If you are anything like me, at Christmastime I'm prone to confuse hope with nostalgia. I'm just starting to realize this. Too easily and too frequently I seek out – or attempt to conjure up – the warm happy vibes that I associate with Christmas, and I end up wrongly assuming that this what the Bible means by hope. Maybe it's a simple mistake; after all, nostalgia is about wanting to go back to a better time and hope frequently springs out of the recognition that things aren't the way they should be or can be.

In a similar way, I think it's easy to make hope out to be a list of dreams I am holding onto, things I am waiting for and wishing to be different. This, of course, can range from silly superficial wishes to gut wrenching longings. In a world that is weary and suffering, where do we direct these deep aches of the heart?

In Hebrew thought, "hope" and "waiting" are intrinsically connected. In fact, depending on your translation, the Hebrew word *qawah* found in vs. 3 and 5 of Psalm 25 may be translated "hope" or "wait." The author of this psalm doesn't seem to indicate that hoping or waiting in God is an occasional occurrence; rather, scriptures like Psalm 25 invite us to embrace waiting as a way of life and hope as our full-time orientation.

Nobody wants to spend their entire life waiting. That sounds like torture. So what does the psalmist mean? If I were to start somewhere, I think it's not so much about *what* we are waiting for, but *who* we are waiting for. We are to wait for/hope in God. He is to be the lifelong focus and goal of our hoping and waiting.

Seeing it this way, reading Psalm 25 at Advent makes sense. Hope therefore isn't so much about wanting to relive the good old days or waiting for things to go back to normal; hope isn't about wishing for things to be different; hope is bigger than that, more powerful than that. Advent reminds us that hope doesn't return things back to normal, but changes the world for the better. Advent reminds us that hope doesn't arrive the way people expected or wished for, but still it exceeded their expectations and wildest dreams. Advent reminds us that hope came in the form of a person, and that all things are being made right through him in unexpected and marvellous ways. And maybe most importantly this year, Advent reminds us that God does not minimize, ignore or gloss over the pain, loss, and weariness of the world, but acknowledges it and validates it by entering into it to be with us. He is our Hope, our Emmanuel, God with us.

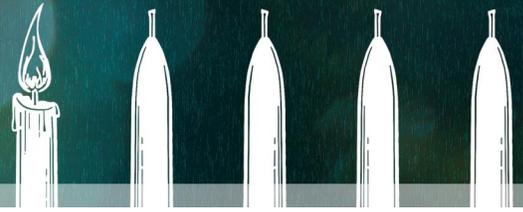
This Advent, with so much uncertainty, strain, and loss, may we remember again to make Jesus the very center of our hopes.

**What does it look like for you wait for God / hope in God this year during Advent?**

**PRAYER:** *Hope of Heaven, in this season of disorientation may we be reorientated to you. In a time of darkness and when we feel lost, may you be for us a guiding star that draws us to yourself.*

# HOPE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1  
MOUNTAINS  
BY: ALVIN ENS



**READING:** Isaiah 40:1-11

*In the desert prepare the way for the Lord;  
Make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God ...  
Every mountain and hill [shall be] made low  
The rough ground shall become level (Is. 40:3,4).  
You who bring good tidings to Zion  
Go up on a high mountain (Is. 40:9).*

The country would have beautiful scenery  
if every time you wanted to see  
there wasn't a mountain  
blocking your view  
but every mountain and hill  
which might impede the view to my God  
shall be levelled

My every mountain and hill  
every impediment and detour  
shall be levelled  
to make a straight path  
a highway for our God  
a highway to my God  
a highway

Every step upward seems a hill  
every incline a wall  
every cliff a fortress  
every hill a mountain  
every ridge a precipice  
every summit insurmountable

Every mountain and hill  
shall be made low  
except those we shall leave  
to climb and shout  
the good tidings to Zion  
the city of our God

Go tell it on the mountain  
that God has come  
that Jesus Christ is born

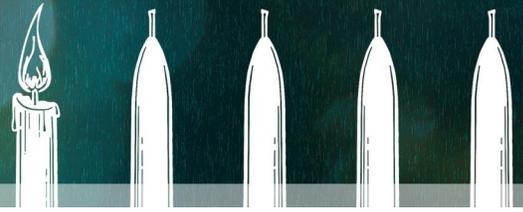
Published in Inscribe  
booklet, Inscribe  
Christian Fellowship,  
October 13, 2010

Revised for LGMC, 2021

Suggestion of  
Christmas activity:  
Listen to [Go tell It on  
the Mountain with  
lyrics / Christian Gospel  
Song](#) (You Tube)

# HOPE

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2  
THE WEEK OF HOPE  
BY: LYDIA FAWCETT



**READING:** Jeremiah 33:10-22

This is the 1st week of Advent; it is the week of Hope. Something we desperately need right now! The Sumas Prairie flood and world wide pandemic have changed our lives. Since March 2020, the pandemic has changed our interactions, everyday working lives, church community gatherings, and how we travel. It has impacted our perspectives and mental wellness individually and corporately. Mid-November, the Sumas Prairie flood devastated homes and farms, animals have been injured and perished, and critical transportation links destroyed. It is hard to comprehend the devastation of this week of flooding for individual families, our communities, and Province. In all of this devastation and chaos, **we long for Hope.**

Jeremiah, the prophet, lived in a time of desolation and chaos. He talks about a wasteland, without humans or animals, and uninhabited towns and streets in chapter 33. He says that "The LORD of heavenly forces proclaims: This wasteland, without humans or animals—and all its towns—will again become pastures for shepherds to care for their flocks." (33:12 CEB)

He says "In those days, Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is what he will be called: The LORD Is Our Righteousness." (33:16 CEB)

That "the sounds of joy and laughter and the voices of the bride and the bridegroom will again be heard. So will the voices of those who say, as thank offerings are brought to the LORD's temple, "Give thanks to the LORD of heavenly forces, for the LORD is good and his kindness lasts forever." (33:11 CEB)

Jeremiah's prophecy seems multi-layered; providing hope for a rebuilding of daily life as understood by the hearers of that generation and, additionally, a far reaching hope for the coming of the King of Righteousness.

We also are looking for hope. We want hope to stir in us, to move us forward with anticipation. We want to rebuild our homes and farms, we dream of the healing of our land and animals, the restoration of work places and transportation corridors, and healing for our sad hearts. We wait for the Giver of Hope to fill our weary hearts with joy.

This Advent week, we also have multi-layered hopes: we wait for our daily lives to return to some kind of normal and for the coming of the Christ child. May we find hope and may the sounds of laughter be in our homes again.

**PRAYER:** *Lord of heavenly forces, in this moment of prayer, my mind can grab hold of any number of things that threaten to steal my peace, divide my mind, and pull me away from trusting in You. So I bring myself to recall: You are Eternal Presence and I am an Everliving Soul.*

*Help me redirect my energy and my thoughts toward You. Replace my anxiety as I focus on breathing in Your Love and breathing out Your Love. Let me experience Your inexplicable peace, and guard my heart and mind from worry.*

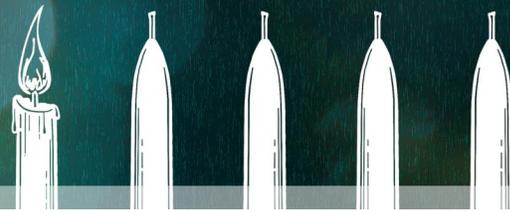
*Thank You that although hard times are part of life, You give abundant life and joy to us as we wait for You. Thank You for hope. I pray this in all the Holy Names of God. Amen.*

# HOPE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3

HOPE

BY: RITA EWERT



**READING:** Isaiah 9:1-7

Hope, such a small word and yet without hope, life is empty and meaningless. These verses in Isaiah are filled with hope.

Isaiah 9:2, *“The people who walk in darkness will see a great light.  
For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.”*

Hope in the darkness. When you are in the dark, things become more frightening and uncertain. A shadow at night becomes filled with anxiety, so one of the first things you look for is a light. That light helps dispel the fear of the unknown of the dark, helps us find the path and gives us new perspective.

Hope in the light. At times, the chaos of the world around us makes us feel helpless, vulnerable and anxious. So, God reminds us that there is hope for all. God is light, and His light penetrates every corner and crack getting rid of darkness. God’s light gives us hope. The light God was offering in Isaiah’s time is still being offered today. He is offering His Son Jesus. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus and remember that God poured out His love on each one of us by sending His Son to earth.

Our problems don’t disappear and dissolve, however, the light and love given to us in Jesus is our hope. We have the assurance that Jesus will never walk away from us. In fact, He will walk through the muck and mire of this life with us. Giving us love and assurance that we are not alone but a person loved by God.

Isaiah 9:6 (*New Living Translation*).  
*For a Child is born to us, a Son is given to us.  
The government will rest on His shoulders.  
And He will be called:*

***Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.***

Take a look at the names given to the Son of God: Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14), Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace and He will be called Jesus. Jesus is the name He will be called; the rest of the names are talking about His character and what kind of work He will do.

During this Christmas season, take some time to look at the names of Jesus and discover for yourself the gift of love, light and hope.

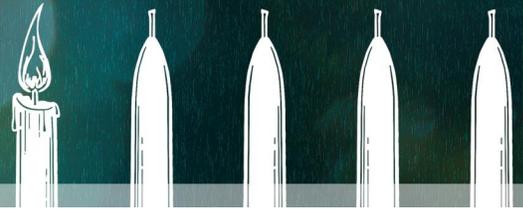
**PRAYER:** *Dear Lord, may we experience and claim the love and light You want to give us this Christmas season and everyday of our lives. Amen*

[‘His Name is Wonderful’](#) sung by Chris Tomlin

[‘Oh What A Glorious Night’](#) sung by Sidewalk Prophets

# HOPE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4  
WILL I SEE YOU AGAIN?  
BY: CLIFFORD WEBER



**READING:** 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Connection: Wifi? Electrical? Square peg round hole? Emotive? Packed elevator? Loose? Strong? Airport, bus, train? Cousins? Family? Lost?

For me, real life drama occurred when my wife started working a new job. Same boss different geography consisting of 7 days home, 7 days away. About the second time she flew away this thing called a pandemic began. SIX WEEKS later she comes home. Did I mention I have two boys? Connection!

Paul yearns for connection with the believers of Thessalonica, especially through the common bond of persecution and hardship but is helpless with his geographical location. Perhaps we have felt a similar helplessness throughout this pandemic and flood. Maybe, maybe not. This is the longing of advent, that we have this hope of meaningful connection and reconnection. This is not the end; Christ is coming again.

**PRAYER:** *Lord Jesus, you have taught us what it is to live life to its fullest. Help me to seek meaningful connection especially when the days seem dim. In Jesus name amen.*