

ADVENT FOUR

Bethlehem: A Place of Humility (Love)



It is time we got to Bethlehem. A decree set by Rome, a declaration of birth for an elderly couple in Jerusalem, and a girl surprised by news of pregnancy in Nazareth, now culminates in travels to Bethlehem. It is the ancestral home of mighty King David as well as his humble and faithful descendant—Joseph, the carpenter. Bethlehem was called “little” by the prophet Micah who recognized that something of great worth would come from a humble place. As a champion of the “least of these,” Jesus’ ministry would shine light on the worth of humble people and places. Let us ask, how will we show this kind of humble love to others?

Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; you shall not murder; you shall not steal; you shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

— Romans 13: 8-11 NRSVUE

A small seed I planted that grew into something amazing this year:

A PRAYER FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

21

Holy and Living God, we pray for hearts and minds
to open wide to merciful acts in your name.
Too often, we clench our fists in fear that what we have
will not be enough for us.
Give us the humility to make more room.
Call us to a “generosity of grace.”
Call us to be generous—not to a fault—but to a future
where all have a place and a home where they are deeply loved.
We pray this in the name of your Son,
Jesus, the Christ, your Love Incarnate. **Amen.**

Click this link or scan the QR code below
to go to a short video of the scripture
and visualization of our journey.
(<https://youtu.be/WeWsYtWfsPY>)



Monday: Signs

22

Read Luke 2: 1-14. "This will be a sign for you," the angels told the shepherds. Have you ever witnessed a "sign" in your life that made a significant impact for you on a spiritual level? What happened?

Tuesday: Love Notes

How have you felt loved during this Advent season? What efforts have you made to show love to others?

Christmas Eve is on Tuesday,
December 24th, 2024!
Go to the Christmas Eve reflection
pages starting on p. 25
of this journal.

Wednesday: The House of Bread

23

'Bethlehem' translates in Hebrew and Aramaic to "the house of bread." Jesus later said, "I am the bread of life." In what ways do you see the communities or church you are a part of as a container for nurturing love and life?

Thursday: Love Your Neighbor

Read Romans 13: 8-11. It's easy to love our neighbors when we get along, but sometimes we share space (or a planet) with people whom we find difficult to get along with. How do you show love to others whose values, world views, or choices differ from your own?

Friday: Generosity vs. Greed

24

Have you ever struggled with the worry that making room for someone else at the table will threaten your own stability and security? How do you personally view the tension between “earning” resources that are necessary for survival and ensuring equity for all people?

Saturday: Looking to the Manger

What has been most meaningful for you during this Advent season? How did focusing on the journey to the manger rather than the final destination impact your reflections and experience of the story?
