

ADVENT 2025

Hope

Peace



Joy

Love

.... in a Longing World

**Four studies and conversations starters
introduced by Bishop Tricia**

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A message from Bishop Tricia

A warm welcome to our explorations in Advent as we watch, wait, pray and act together.

Each week we shall focus on one of the traditional Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, exploring Christian truths in the times in which we live.

Short videos and podcasts accompany these resources and below you will find readings for each week along with prayers, questions for thought and discussion and suggestions for action.

These explorations are offered for you to use alone and / or with others, maybe a prayer partner, family or a group.

HOW TO USE THIS MATERIAL

- If you are leading a group please ensure that each member has access to a copy of these notes.
- Watch the video, listen to the podcast or read the text of the reflection. The video is on YouTube. The podcast is on the Diocesan website.
- Read the passages of scripture.
- Draw from the questions offered for reflection and/or discussion. Please remember that you are not expected to look at every question. Instead choose the ones which seem to speak most to you and/or the group.
- Pray – you may wish to use the prayer provided but you are encouraged to pray in your own way too.
- Consider which of the suggestions for rooting this in daily life appeals to you.

 **Tricia**

WEEK 1: HOPE, EVEN IN TIMES OF DARKNESS

Short sentence:

‘The people walking in darkness have seen a great light:
on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned’

Isaiah 9.2

Reading:

‘Therefore, since it is by God’s mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. We have renounced the shameful, underhanded ways; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God’s word, but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing clearly the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’s sake. For it is the God who said, “Light will shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed, always carrying around in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.’

2 Corinthians 4. 1-10

You are invited to watch, listen or read Bishop Tricia's reflection at this point. The video is on YouTube. The podcast is on the Diocesan website. The text of the reflection can be found on page 7.

PRAYER

Jesus, Lord of Light, in the darkness of this world
and in the struggles of my own life,
may your hope shine.
Remind me that you are near,
your promises are sure
and despair never has the last word.
Help me to be a bearer of hope to those around me.
Amen.

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## ***Invitation to Reflection/Discussion***

1. What struck you in Bishop Tricia's reflection? What would you like to think about or to explore more?
2. Where do you most feel the weight of darkness, uncertainty or turmoil in the world or in life at the moment?
3. What robs people of hope and what is the effect?
4. How does Isaiah's prophecy of light in darkness shape our understanding of hope? What difference does it make to know that God enters into the darkness of the world?
5. How does Christian hope differ from simple optimism or wishful thinking? What does it mean if we say that our hope is not rooted in circumstances but in God's character?
6. When have you seen hope begin even in the midst of darkness and God's promises fulfilled in unexpected ways?

7. Remembering the quote from Nelson Mandela ‘Let your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears’, what would look different if we took this seriously?

## SUGGESTIONS FOR ROOTING HOPE IN DAILY LIFE

### **Morning Candle Prayer**

Light a candle each morning and pray:

*“Christ, my Light, help me see today with your hope.”*

Sit in silence for one minute before speaking to God.

### **Look for One Sign of Hope Each Day**

Write down one thing—however small—that hints at goodness, healing, or renewal.

Keep a “Hope Journal.”

### **Send Encouragement**

Send one message (text, card, email) each day to someone who may feel forgotten or discouraged.

### **Practice Hopeful Consumption**

Choose one action that reflects trust in God’s sufficiency:

- Buy less
- Reuse something instead of replacing it
- Wait before purchasing

### **Pray for the World in Groans**

Sometimes hope *begins* in lament.

Choose a place in the news that feels heavy.

Pray without forcing words—just hold the pain before God.



## *Bishop Tricia's Reflection 1*

### *HOPE, EVEN IN TIMES OF DARKNESS*

Andrew Graystone\*, notes it is said that human beings can survive five weeks without food, about five days without water, but we can't survive five minutes without hope.

As Advent begins and we think of the hope that is available because of the child whose birth we will soon celebrate it is important to remember that hope is more than just wishful thinking or naïve optimism.

Our expressions of hope come in so many ways from wishful thinking to what are essentially the prayers of our hearts and the conviction of our souls.

'I hope I manage to complete the Parish Walk even though I've done no training..'

may fall into the first category of wishful thinking, but

'I hope I can make my money stretch to the end of the week'

and

'I am hoping and trusting in God to give me the strength I need for today'

fall into the latter; prayers of our hearts.

As Advent begins we are reminded that hope often begins in darkness.

We will over the coming weeks be following the story of Jesus' birth.

This week we begin with the darkness which Isaiah drew for us.

We begin here because much in the world seems heavy right now. Wars continue; divisions run deep; and some of us, or those we love, face our private battles – fears about today and uncertainty about tomorrow.

*\* theologian and religious broadcaster*

For those of us here in the northern hemisphere, the night can feel very dark, echoing what might feel like the darkness of our world. So I for one take much joy in seeing the houses and streets gradually fill with the twinkling of lights as Advent progresses and the feast of Christmas draws near.

The season of Advent calls us to be realistic about the darkness but precisely in the midst of that reality we dare to speak of hope.

Isaiah spoke of God's coming to a weary people: of light and hope in the darkness.

Think of the glimmer of a fire or a candle seen from far off, or the piercing brightness of car lights on far off hills and headlands here on the Island. Even the smallest, apparently insignificant light can cut through the darkness in striking ways.

Isaiah spoke of light coming to weary people – a light which would come in a most unexpected way. As we retell the story of the first Christmas and Jesus, the light of the world, born amongst we remember that the story began in darkness in fragility and apparent insignificance.

Mary lived under Roman occupation in a small and powerless village. Her world was uncertain. And yet in that time, that place, the angel would come and God's promise would break through.

Jesus was on his way ... but he came not into safety, security and power but into uncertainty and danger. He came to us in the darkness and his life and presence transformed it – as it always will.

In our world and our time, it would be easy to give way to cynicism rather than to choose hope. But that is not the message of Advent.

The hope of Advent is rooted in Jesus, light in the darkness. Faithful and true.

His coming was for us, for others and our hope in him invites us to unleash that hope for others too.

Nelson Mandela urged

‘Let your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears’.

How will the hope we take hold of this Advent affect our choices, our actions, our words?

Glad recipients of Advent hope, we are called to hold the light for others and to the work of liberation and consolation for those who are oppressed and wounded by the darkness in our world.



## WEEK 2: PEACE: A DIFFERENT KIND OF PEACE

*Short sentence:*

‘Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid’

*John 14.27*

*Reading*

‘In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”’

*Luke 2.1-11*

*You are invited to watch, listen or read Bishop Tricia’s reflection at this point. The video is on YouTube. The podcast is on the Diocesan website. The text of the reflection can be found on page 14.*

## PRAYER

Jesus, Prince of Peace,  
when I am anxious or afraid,  
call me to draw closer to you.  
Quieten my restless heart  
and secure me in your presence.  
Let your peace flow through me  
into a world that is restless  
and longs for hope, joy, calm and healing.  
Amen.

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Invitation to Reflection/Discussion

FOR PERSONAL CONSIDERATION AND /OR DISCUSSION

1. What struck you in Bishop Tricia's reflection? What would you like to think about or to explore more?
2. What situations in life or in the wider world make you feel restless, unsettled, anxious or angry at the moment? Where do you see God's peace to be most needed? And where do you most long for peace?
3. The biblical concept of peace, 'shalom' describes more than an absence of conflict, rather it points to the wholeness, wellbeing and health which God gives. What difference does this understanding of peace make?
4. What difference does it make that it is Jesus himself who promises to provide HIS peace? What is distinctive about his peace?
5. When have you personally experienced God's peace in the midst of chaos or turmoil?
6. What might it mean to be at peace with oneself, at peace with others and at peace with God?

7. In a divided, conflicted world, how is being a peace-maker an act of resistance?
8. Where might God be calling you to be a messenger and agent of peace this Advent?
9. What practical steps can you take?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ROOTING PEACE IN DAILY LIFE

Breath prayer

Find a moment to keep silence and attune yourself to your breathing. Let it find a comfortable rhythm. Then for as long as you feel you wish to offer these words in your thoughts as you gently inhale and exhale

Inhale: "Christ, my peace."

Exhale: "Be near."

Create a Pocket of Quiet

Spend 5–15 minutes in silence each day.

Not "productive silence"—just **presence**.

Determine to speak kindly, especially when tired or disturbed

Make it your daily intention to avoid sarcasm, harsh tone, or unnecessary criticism.

Peace can be begun and lost in speech.

Forgiveness Practice

Identify one person or situation where resentment lingers.

Pray: *"Lord, soften my heart. Show me how to begin."*

No pressure to *finish* forgiveness—just begin.

Support a Peace-Making Cause

Peace is not passive; it is lived. Choose one way to contribute to reconciliation or justice:

- Fair trade purchase
- Donation to a charity supporting those caught up in conflict
- Spend time learning about a situation of conflict in our world today so that you can pray in

Bishop Tricia's Reflection 2

PEACE: A DIFFERENT KIND OF PEACE

Christmas-time might be as the song puts it 'the most wonderful time of the year', but it can also bring particular stresses and, for some, challenging memories or decisions.

What then does 'peace' mean amidst the 'yet to be done' list and the 'I don't even want to think about it now' feelings which some of us may have?

I find reassurance that despite the glossy carefully framed tv ads and the 'How to host the perfect Christmas' articles online, and in magazines and supplements, the first Christmas was messy and hard.

Much of the work associated with the first Christmas, perhaps glossed over, speaks to our lives today:

- The social awkwardness of this pregnancy.
- The journey from Nazareth at just the moment in a pregnancy you would not want to be on the road. Heavy with pregnancy it would have been physically hard and painful for Mary.
- And it was not a journey Joseph and Mary had chosen, it was interjected into their lives by those who ruled over their land, it disrupted plans and cost them money.
- Joseph worked with his hands, a carpenter amongst other things. Might he then have hoped that the first resting place for his first new-born child might be something he'd fashioned with care. Instead of a feeding place for the animals?

And yet something was astir, beyond the disruption and challenges. Something which would be good news for a world in turmoil.

We often think of peace as either the absence of conflict or the absence of disruption. As I was growing up often when I asked my Mum what she wanted for Christmas she would answer, only half-jokingly 'just some peace and quiet!'

But Advent peace is much more than the absence of conflict or of disruption.

Jesus lived amongst us a life woven through with conflict and disruption. Whilst he was still young and vulnerable the local ruler Herod sought to have him brutally killed, a plan thwarted only because the family fled to Egypt. Throughout his ministry people plotted against him, a friend betrayed him and his path to life led through the cross. Yet he was the one who was able to turn to his friends, and to us saying

‘My peace I give you, not as the world gives.’

That night of the nativity, the shepherds were terrified to the bone when the angel appeared and yet the angels’ song over Bethlehem was of joy and of peace to be shared. Into their terror came promise and assurance of presence.

As the angels sang the world was anything but peaceful, and yet the promise of peace echoed over the hills of Bethlehem.

This peace did not mean the immediate end of Rome’s oppression nor the end of hardship. It meant that God Himself had come near – Emmanuel, God with us.

His peace, Advent peace is not fragile, not dependent on everything going perfectly. It holds steady in the darkness and through turmoil.

In our restless and divided world, we need this peace – to receive it, to live by it and to share it. When the world is overtaken with hate or negativity we shall be the peacemakers whom Jesus said would be blessed and who shall bless. In our humble confidence we will sing songs of praise and of resistance, of joy and compassion, telling a different story. Advent reminds us that peace has come and comes still in Jesus. We look to him anew in this season: the Prince of Peace.

WEEK 3: JOY BEYOND ALL JOYS

Short sentence:

‘The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”’

Luke 2.10-11

Reading:

‘In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”’

And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour for he has looked with favour on the lowly state of his servant.

Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me and holy is his name indeed, his mercy is for those

who fear him from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and
lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

And Mary remained with her about three months and then
returned to her home.’

Luke 1.39-56

*You are invited to watch, listen or read Bishop Tricia’s reflection at
this point. The video is on YouTube. The podcast is on the Diocesan
website. The text of the reflection can be found on page 21.*

PRAYER

Jesus, Lord of all joy,
teach me to rejoice and open my eyes
to the small gifts of joy you give each day.
Help me to take hold of the joy
with which you see this world you have made
and each of your children,
Help me to share joy freely with others
that your light may come.
Amen.

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## ***Invitation to Reflection/Discussion***

### **FOR PERSONAL CONSIDERATION AND /OR DISCUSSION**

1. What struck you in Bishop Tricia's reflection? What would you like to think about or to explore more?
2. What brings you joy, and why? How can you protect and cultivate that joy?
3. What do you think is most remarkable about Mary's joy? How does her joy challenge or inspire you?
4. What part did Elizabeth play in this overflowing of joy? How easy is it to take joy in another's joy?
5. How can joy co-exist with sorrow? What does this reveal about the Christian faith?
6. What would re-orientating ourselves towards Jesus this Advent look like and how might that bring joy?
7. How might I / we spread joy in tangible ways this Advent?

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR ROOTING JOY IN DAILY LIFE**

#### **Gratitude Prayer Before Meals**

Pause before eating and thank God for one specific blessing, not a generic one.

#### **Savour Something Slowly**

Spend 10 minutes enjoying something beautiful and receive it as a gift. Something such as:

- A piece of music
- An aspect of nature
- An object or piece of Art
- A warm drink

### **Bless Someone Unexpectedly**

Give a small gift, kindness, or compliment to someone you don't "owe" anything to.

### **Choose Joy for Another**

Make a choice that prioritizes another person's delight.

### **Night-time Joy Examen**

Before sleep ask:

- Where did I experience joy?
- Where did I block joy?
- How can I be more open tomorrow?

Talk with God about your answers to these Examen questions.

## *Bishop Tricia's Reflection 3*

### *JOY BEYOND ALL JOYS*

The season of Advent is associated with watching, waiting and preparing. Like Lent it was a season during which those wishing to be baptised prepared themselves for that serious sacrament and reorientation of life.

We too are invited to prepare heart and mind as well as hearth and home in this season. We are invited to watch and to wait for His coming amongst us again and to re-orientate ourselves towards him.

In this Advent course we are considering the postures of heart, mind and soul with which we wait. We've thought together about preparing with hopeful expectation and with the peace which sustains.

This week we turn to consider the posture and gift of Advent joy.

Joy which is already blooming, even before what we await has fully arrived. And perhaps nowhere in Scripture is that joy expressed more beautifully than in the words of Mary's song which we know as the Magnificat: *"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour."*

Mary's joy is remarkable not because her circumstances are easy, but precisely because they are not. She is young, vulnerable, and overshadowed by uncertainty. Her future is unclear. She has been given a calling that will profoundly disrupt her life; in fact her life was about to become harder not easier. And yet, she sings.

Her joy does not come *after* everything is sorted out. It comes in the *midst* of the unknown. This is a joy rooted not in what she possesses, nor in how well her life seems to be going, but in who God is and what God is doing. Mary rejoices because she recognizes God's presence and God at work.

The Magnificat is not simply a private hymn of praise; it is also a proclamation. Mary sees the mercy of God stretching from generation to generation. She sees God lifting up the lowly, remembering the

forgotten, filling the hungry with good things. Joy, for Mary, is found in the realization that the world is being reshaped by God's love—beginning in her own heart. Joy is intrinsically linked to justice.

This Advent I wonder where we can look for glimpses of God at work, day by day, week by week. Taking the stance of curiosity and the assurance that God is already moving in ways we may not yet fully see. And having seen to join in with God's activity, that joy and justice may be shared.

Mary teaches us that joy is an act of trust. It is saying with our lives:

- *I believe God is present here.*
- *I believe God is working even now.*
- *I believe what God has promised will come to pass.*
- I offer myself to share in the work of transforming joy

Mary's song is also an invitation. The joy she proclaims is not only hers—it is *for the world*. We, too, are called to magnify the Lord—to reflect, enlarge, and make visible the presence of God in our world. When we act with compassion instead of indifference, when we encourage instead of criticize, when we lift up instead of tear down, we continue Mary's song. Joy grows when it is shared and as we were reminded last week this is joy for the whole world.

During Advent then, our task is not to *manufacture* joy, but to *notice* it . . . . . To take joy and to notice God's joy in what he has made and declared 'good', even 'very good' and to nurture, practice and share it.

To let joy rise in us as it rose in Mary—not as a response to having everything figured out, but as a declaration of trust in the God who is with us, the God who comes to us, the God who is making all things new. Mary sang and the apostle Paul declare 'rejoice always' – not because life is easy but because Christ is near.

This Advent may we take hold of the Joy of the Lord, that which he has over us and his world and through which this world will be renewed and transformed.

## WEEK 4: LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET GO OF US

*Short sentence:*

‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.’

*John 3.16*

*Reading:*

‘When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.”

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.’

*Luke 2.15-20*

*You are invited to watch, listen or read Bishop Tricia’s reflection at this point. The video is on YouTube. The podcast is on the Diocesan website. The text of the reflection can be found on page 27.*

## PRAYER

Jesus, love embodied,  
love beyond measure,  
help me to rest in your unshakable love,  
then send me to share this love freely  
in a world which is wounded.  
May my life witness to your love which gives life to all.  
Amen.

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Invitation to Reflection/Discussion

1. What struck you in Bishop Tricia's reflection? What would you like to think about or to explore more?
2. How have you experienced the transforming power of God's love? Where do you most need to receive God's love at the moment?
3. John 3.16 is a very familiar verse to many of us. Re-reading it slowly, what does it reveal about the depth and nature of God's love? How might it challenge assertions about who is 'worthy' of love? What would you say or do in the light of this verse to someone who finds it hard to 'feel' God's love for them?
4. Paul writes that nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8.38-39) How does this truth change how we face times of uncertainty and trouble?
5. How do we reconcile God's love with the on-going brokenness of the world?
6. How do the various aspects of the Christmas story show us what love (human and divine) looks like?
7. Why might we see love as the culmination of our Advent themes of hope, peace, joy and love?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ROOTING LOVE IN DAILY LIFE

Lectio Divina on 1 Corinthians 13 or John 15:9–17

Read the passage through slowly. Do this three times.
Do it aloud if you can.

Listen and notice which phrase or word catches your especial attention, such as “Love is patient.” Let that word or phrase guide and speak to you through the day.

Sit in the presence of Love.

Read George Herbert’s poem ‘Love Bade Me Welcome’ and sit with love for a few moments

LOVE bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
 Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
 From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
 If I lack’d anything.
‘A guest,’ I answer’d, ‘worthy to be here:’
 Love said, ‘You shall be he.’
‘I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
 I cannot look on Thee.’
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
 ‘Who made the eyes but I?’
‘Truth, Lord; but I have marr’d them: let my shame
 Go where it doth deserve.’
‘And know you not,’ says Love, ‘Who bore the blame?’
 ‘My dear, then I will serve.’
‘You must sit down,’ says Love, ‘and taste my meat.’
 So I did sit and eat.

Practice One Act of Attentive Love

Slow down and offer your and **undivided attention** to one person each day.

Listen more than you speak.

Serve Someone Without Being Acknowledged

Do one hidden good deed (cleaning, giving, supporting) without telling anyone.

Give a Small Portion Away

Give away something: a grocery item, money to a charity, a compliment, an encouragement, or your time.

Love is generous because God is.

Bishop Tricia's Reflection 4

LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET GO OF US

In these weeks of Advent we have come far:

- We began with **Hope**, the steady flame that refuses to be extinguished by darkness.
- We moved to **Peace**, not as the absence of struggle, but as the deep assurance of God's presence in the midst of life.
- We reflected on **Joy**, rooted in the very joy God has in his world and the joy which will one day transform the world.

Now, we come to the final and greatest theme of Advent: **Love**.
Not the fragile love that depends on our effort.
Not the hesitant or conditional love the world so often offers.
But **God's love**—love that will not let us go.

In Luke's Gospel, we see this love made tangible, visible, and touchable.
His breath rising with that of the animals in the cool of the night.

The shepherds in the field heard the news of his coming and raced to find the one of whom the angels said:

"To you is born this day... a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."

Not to the powerful, the professionally holy or the prestigious.
It was to shepherds—that the news of love came.

It is as if God wanted to make something unmistakably clear:

No one is too small to be seen.

No one is too distant to be loved

And so they get up from the grass, stones and dirt of the hills, urging and encouraging one another

'let us go now to Bethlehem and see...'

they ran with haste, towards love.

And what do they find?

Not a throne.

Not a temple.

Not a spectacle.

They find a child.

A child who breathes our air, shares our vulnerability, and rests in the arms of tired human parents.

This is the astonishing truth of Christmas towards which we turn our eye this last week of Advent:

God does not love us from a distance.

God draws near.

God enters the world as we enter it—small, dependent, needing to be held.

Having found love, having found Him. The shepherds left the manger changed.

They didn't keep this news to themselves but made it known.

They return to their fields *"glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen."*

The love they experienced sends them back into their ordinary lives — but they return *different*.

This is the pattern of discipleship:

We come to Jesus.

We receive love.

And we carry that love back into the world.

Not perfectly.
Not always confidently.
But truthfully.

Because we have seen something that we cannot forget.

Hope lights the candle.
Peace steadies the heart.
Joy awakens the spirit.
But Love — *Love completes the story.*

Love is the reason God came.
Love is the reason Christ lives among us still.
Love is the promise that remains when all else falls away.

Love has come.
Love is here.
Love will never let us go

Let us, like the shepherds run towards love this advent.

