

NOVEMBER 29, 2020
FIRST SUNDAY
OF ADVENT



Stay awake, for God is coming with power.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Mark 13:24-37	The day and hour unknown
Monday	Isaiah 64:1-9	A communal prayer for help
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 1:3-9	God is faithful
Wednesday	Revelation 22:12-21	Jesus is coming soon
Thursday	Micah 4:1-5	Peace and prosperity
Friday	1 Thessalonians 5:1-11	Children of light
Saturday	Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19	Prayer for Israel's restoration
Sunday	Mark 1:1-8	The beginning of the good news

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. Mark 13:26 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Deliver us from harm, O Lord God of hosts; let your face shine on us, that we may be saved through Christ our Lord. Amen. (Psalm 80:3, 7, and 19)

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for this food; may it strengthen us that we may await your coming with power and glory through Jesus our Savior and Lord. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May you be blessed with hope and peace through our Lord Jesus Christ.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Awake, Awake, and Greet
the Morn*

WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When have you had a challenging or scary experience?
- What are some dangerous or alarming situations we face in our world today?
- Sometimes it seems easier to deny the dangers we face and pretend they are not really a problem. How does faith in Jesus give us hope and help us to face scary times?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Mark 13:24-37.

Advent begins with an awareness of the frailty of life. We may come up with short-term fixes like finding shelter, warmth, and food. There is always the challenge of the unforeseen storm that can flood our lives with devastation, when the whole world seems to be falling down around us (vv. 24-25). No generation escapes these trials and sufferings (vv. 29-30). It happened to the people who returned from Babylonian captivity (Isaiah 64); it happened to the first Christians as noted by Mark in chapter 13; and, it happens all around the world today. What we need is the God who promises to show up and be the difference-maker. This Advent we are reminded to be alert to this God who shows up in Jesus of Nazareth. In Jesus we have hope because we have the one in whom the truth of his words will never pass away, never end, never fail (v. 31). So live life with gusto, with courage, with hope, and stay awake, keep alert, don't give up (vv. 33, 35, and 37). How does public worship, reading the Bible and prayer help you stay awake to Jesus' coming into our lives?

Pray: **Almighty and living God, give us hope and confidence to await your coming into our lives with faith in your healing and renewing power through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

Advent is a time to recall the basic needs of life: a loving and gracious God and justice and mercy that all may have enough to live. In what ways can you "stay awake" this Advent season by caring for the needs of others and providing needed resources for the homeless?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The church year begins on the first Sunday in Advent. This coming year, the Gospel readings will be from Mark. To launch the new church year, gather together all the Bibles in your home. If you have an Advent wreath, place the Bibles near the wreath. As you light the first candle, the candle of hope, use this prayer of blessing: **Almighty God, we thank for you for the Bible, and especially for the good news about Jesus our Savior. Give us hope as we read, listen to, and think about what the Bible says to us in this new church year. Make us into people who are strong in our faith and full of love. Amen.**



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