

God is with us

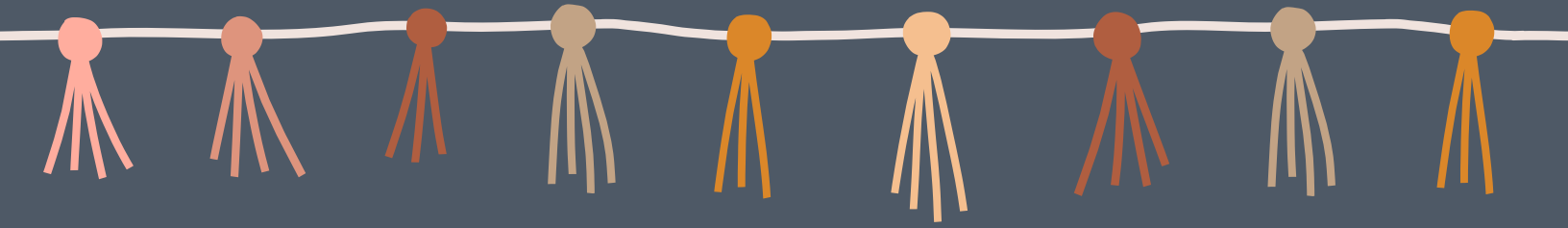
advent

at new life

Welcome to the 2020 Christmas Walk! We pray your time here will be one where you create memories, take photos, have fun, and enjoy the lights! We also pray that our prayer stations would help serve as a reminder of what the Christmas season is about.

That we can have hope in Emmanuel, God with us...as we look simultaneously backward and forward to the day when the Light descended into our darkness...and changed everything!





Believe it or not... there is more to Advent than eating a piece of chocolate each day. (Although that is also a great tradition... yum) Advent is the season when Christians acknowledge that we are living in the “in-between”. Jesus was born, He has come. God has heard the world’s cries and has sent it’s true King to redeem all of creation. Anyone who is in Christ, is already a part of that new creation and we celebrate creation’s long-expected redemption has arrived.

However... we acknowledge that God’s Kingdom has not yet come in ALL its fullness. Things are not yet what they should be. I think we can all agree that 2020 has displayed that truth.

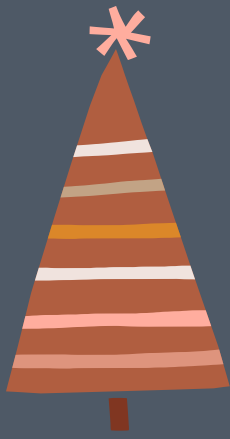
and so we wait... But we do not wait aimlessly or hopelessly. Rather, we wait actively...like a parent preparing for the coming of a child, making sure everything at home is ready for the coming arrival.

Advent doesn’t deny the dark within us,
Advent isn’t afraid of the dark around us,
Advent doesn’t rush through the dark ahead of us,
Advent sits in the dark and yearns for the
Light of the only One who can shatter the
dark for all of us.

pray

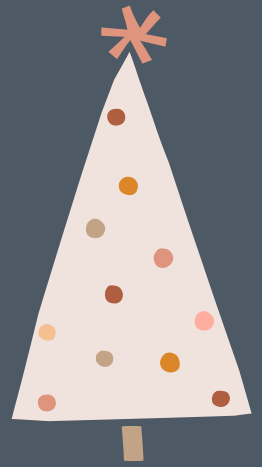
God, I acknowledge that things are not as they should be. The darkness all around me is so evident in these times. I invite you into my darkness... would you please come and light things up!

amen.



hope

with us



BE STRONG AND TAKE HEART, ALL YOU WHO HOPE IN THE LORD.

psalm 37:24

SEE, YOUR KING COMES TO YOU, RIGHTEOUS AND VICTORIOUS, LOWLY AND RIDING ON A DONKEY...RETURN TO YOUR FORTRESS, YOU PRISONERS OF HOPE; EVEN NOW I ANNOUNCE THAT I WILL RESTORE TWICE AS MUCH TO YOU.

zechariah 9:9-11

In 2020, we've watched in real time as the world rapidly changed around us. For many of us, our circumstances have brought us to our knees. As we've looked at all the pain, anger, and confusion around us, it has been easy to be pessimistic and lose hope that things will ever get better. For others, we've done everything we can to muster up some optimism. In

doing so, we've allowed ourselves to place our hope in things that are not meant to carry those burdens. Hope in wealth, in elected officials, in promised vaccines, even in our loved ones. However, we are not called to be pessimistic or optimistic, those are feelings that change based on circumstances. No. We are called to be "prisoners of hope." We've been captured by the faithfulness of the humble yet conquering King, and we simply can't escape the hope that he who began this good work will carry it to completion.

pray

Forgive me for placing my hope in things that won't last. Forgive me for the times that I've settled for despair. I place my hope in your promise to make all things new...including myself + circumstances.

amen.



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 BE AFRAID.

john 14:27

Peace. Something our world is desperate for. However, peace is usually defined by the world as simply the temporary absence of open conflict... and usually worldly peace only comes through violence, fear, and the conquest of one over another. That doesn't really sound like peace, does it? Thank God (literally) that Jesus doesn't give peace like the world does. The world's type of peace does nothing to address the chaos, anger, and division bubbling up, just under the surface. It does nothing to address the anxiety and turmoil felt within our own souls. The world can only imagine peace that is rooted in fear and threat. On the cross, Jesus took on the sin and violence of humankind and responded not with threat but with love and grace. In this way, Jesus offered peace with God and with one another, not through more threat but through reconciliation and forgiveness. This is the peace - the true peace- we celebrate during Advent. This is why we celebrate the Child born - the Prince of Peace.

pray

Thank you for bringing a different type of peace to the world...the only peace that can truly reconcile. Help me to quiet my soul and welcome your peace into my heart this Advent season.

amen.



JOY

with us

BUT LET ALL WHO TAKE REFUGE IN YOU BE GLAD; LET THEM SING FOR JOY. SPREAD YOUR PROTECTION OVER THEM, THAT THOSE WHO LOVE YOUR NAME MAY REJOICE IN YOU.

Psalms 5:11

Much like peace, joy is something unlike anything the world has to offer. Many times we use the word “happiness” interchangeably with “joy”. However, happiness is a temporary emotion based on our circumstances. Joy is not an emotion but rather an assurance that comes from experiencing and trusting in God. Like the divine presence itself, there is no formula for

having or experiencing joy. Joy cannot be controlled, possessed, or held onto with a firm grip. Joy is not

the byproduct of having security and living without risk. Rather joy - like God’s presence - can only be received with gratitude as one perceives the work of God, even, if not often, in difficult circumstances. We can dance in and receive in openness the joy of the Lord, but we can’t constrain it. As C.S. Lewis puts it, “I doubt whether anyone who has tasted it [joy] would ever exchange it for all the pleasures in the world. But then joy is never in our power and pleasure often is.”

pray

I want to experience your joy! I’m tired of settling for temporary moments of happiness that don’t ultimately satisfy. Help me to taste and see your goodness and live in gratitude for it.

amen.



YOUR LOVE, LORD, REACHES TO THE HEAVENS, YOUR FAITHFULNESS TO THE SKIES. YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS IS LIKE THE HIGHEST MOUNTAINS, YOUR JUSTICE LIKE THE GREAT DEEP. YOU, LORD, PRESERVE BOTH PEOPLE AND ANIMALS. HOW PRICELESS IS YOUR UNFAILING LOVE, O GOD! PEOPLE TAKE REFUGE IN THE SHADOW OF YOUR WINGS.

psalm 36:5-7

At the very heart of Christmas is LOVE. I hope that no matter what Advent means for you - an invitation to hope, to make peace, to express joy - that it is also a reminder at the depth of your being that you so incredibly and profoundly loved. God loved you so much that he sent his only Son. The world can still often be a place of darkness, but God's love is making and will someday finally make all things new. God's love is too vast to allow evil, grief, and loss to have the final word. There is no hardship or distress that can separate us from the love of Christ. We know this because Christ took on flesh and entered into our hardships. In Christ, God extended his love to a broken and sinful world. As we, are willing to receive that love with openness and faithfulness, we become reflections, ambassadors, and bearers of that divine love to others - a love that makes all things new.

pray

Remind me today of your love. Thank you for loving me so much that you're willing to enter my pain and worry. Help me to adequately reflect your love to a hurting and broken world.

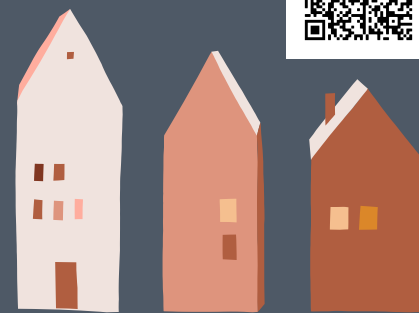
amen.



God

with us

listen to this song!
(scan w/ camera app)



LOOK! THE VIRGIN WILL CONCEIVE A CHILD! SHE WILL GIVE BIRTH TO A SON, AND THEY WILL CALL HIM IMMANUEL, WHICH MEANS "GOD IS WITH US".

Matthew 1:23

THEN CHRIST WILL MAKE HIS HOME IN YOUR HEARTS AS YOU TRUST IN HIM. YOUR ROOTS WILL GROW DOWN INTO GOD'S LOVE...

Ephesians 3:17

If you read through the Bible, cover to cover, hopefully you will notice what the whole overarching story is about... God, holy and loving, moving heaven and earth with one goal in mind...to be WITH his people. God is not some distant being making and enforcing rules.

No. He is a loving father getting his family back together and he was willing to do whatever it took to be with YOU. In this season of 2020, it has been easy to feel isolated and alone. We've all spent more time in our homes and away from friends and family which has given way to loneliness. But the truth is you are NOT alone. God wants to make his home in your heart. As the Christmas favorite "Joy to the World" says, "Let every heart, prepare him room." May you clear out the cobwebs and make some space in your heart this Christmas season, because there is a God who loves you dearly...and he's ready to move in.

pray

Come and make my heart your home. I'm clearing out some space. I want to be in your presence. Thank you for never leaving me. In my moments of loneliness, remind me that you're here. *amen.*

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Thank you so much for stopping by our Christmas Walk! We pray your time here was meaningful and that you walk away today knowing that you are loved and that you are not alone!

We invite you to join us for a Christmas Eve service!
IN-PERSON: Dec. 23 • 6pm or Dec. 24 • 5pm (outdoors)

ONLINE: Any time after 6pm on Dec. 24
NEWLIFEPISMO.COM/CHRISTMAS

