



# ADVENT

*at new life*

Merry Christmas and welcome to the New Life Christmas Walk! We pray that this space would help you and your loved ones create some fond memories this holiday season. It brings joy to our hearts knowing that these lights and trees would find their way into your photos and into your traditions. But, beyond the twinkling lights and music and photographs, we pray that the words here and the truth behind them would find their way into your heart...that the truth of God's deep, deep love for you would be evident as we look forward to the birth of Jesus on Christmas!

# already + not yet

Advent is not just about getting excited for Christmas. While anticipation is a big part of Advent, the centuries-old tradition speaks to a deeper longing than just some super sweet Christmas toys...even deeper than time with loved ones. This sense of waiting that comes at Advent speaks to the deepest part of who you are.

## advent is about promises

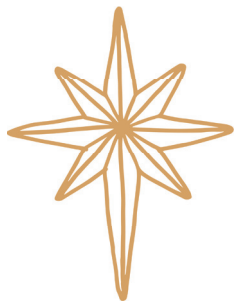
We are living in the "in-between". Jesus has come. He was born in a manger over 2,000 years ago. That's why we celebrate Christmas in the first place. He also didn't stay a baby. He became a man...a human man, who was also God. He taught and healed and upset the status-quo and then he was killed and rose again 3 days later. (hello, Easter). Those are all truths that we celebrate each Sunday (and everyday). However, it is evident all around us that the FULLNESS of his kingdom has not been realized yet. So we live in the tension. Jesus has ALREADY come but NOT YET in all his glory where everything is how he intended. Free of pain and injustice and violence. Free of sin and brokenness and shame. And so... we wait. We rest in God's promises. Promises of hope, of peace, of joy, and of love.

## dear God

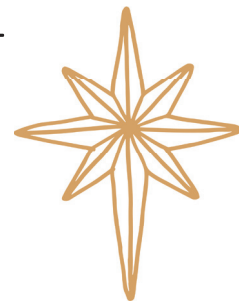
SPEAK TO THE DEEPEST PART OF ME. MY SOUL LONGS FOR THINGS TO BE HOW YOU INTENDED. WHEN I LOOK AROUND AT THE WORLD AND AT MY OWN CIRCUMSTANCES I CAN GET OVERWHELMED. GIVE ME THE FAITH AND PERSEVERANCE NEEDED TO WAIT ACTIVELY WITH ANTICIPATION FOR WHEN YOU WILL COME AGAIN AND SET THINGS RIGHT...WHEN WE WILL SEE YOUR KINGDOM IN ALL ITS FULLNESS AND RECOGNIZE ALL YOUR PROMISES KEPT!

amen





# A PROMISE OF *hope*



THE WORD (JESUS) GAVE LIFE TO EVERYTHING THAT WAS CREATED,  
AND HIS LIFE BROUGHT LIGHT TO EVERYONE. THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE  
DARKNESS, AND THE DARKNESS CAN NEVER EXTINGUISH IT.

*John 1:4-6*

Do you remember the classic 80s movie, "The Goonies"? You better. Well, there's a scene towards the end when the Goonies are seemingly trapped inside a deep cave, running from criminals and they think all hope of rescue might be lost. BUT THEN. Data sees something glimmering in the corner...LIGHT creeping inside the dark cave. Evidence that the outside world is just beyond a few boulders. A few booby traps later and they are reunited with their families. Happy ending. While there are MANY theological parallels in The Goonies... let's just focus on the light for a minute. No matter our circumstances, or the darkness of the world around us, God has promised us there will ALWAYS be light. Darkness cannot extinguish it. Until the day when we all live in the abundant light

of God's eternal kingdom, we need to be light-seekers, light-carriers, and light-identifiers.

Like Data, we can't let the darkness become our focus or we won't see the glimmering light.

This is who we are!

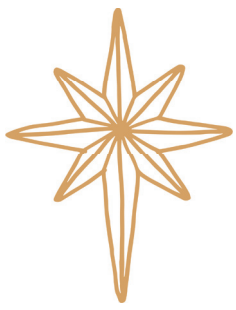
People of the light.

People of hope!

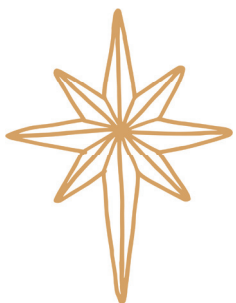
*Dear God*

LET  
THERE  
BE LIGHT!  
HELP ME TO SEE  
THE LIGHT WITHIN ME  
AND AROUND ME. HELP ME  
TO SHOW OTHERS THE HOPE AND  
GOOD IN THIS WORLD AND HELP ME TO  
CARRY YOUR LIGHT WITH ME INTO THE DARK  
PLACES OF THIS WORLD. MAY MY HOPE IN  
YOU NEVER BE EXTINGUISHED, BUT RATHER  
GROW IN BRIGHTNESS!

*amen*



# A PROMISE OF *Peace*



HE WILL BE CALLED: WONDERFUL COUNSELOR, MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING FATHER, PRINCE OF PEACE. HIS GOVERNMENT AND ITS PEACE WILL NEVER END.

*Isaiah 9:6-7*

Peace. What the world is in desperate need of and what seems so unbelievably unattainable as we look around at the deep divisions among us. However, it is a foundational promise of the Lord. So it must be possible, RIGHT?! Right. This prophecy from Isaiah states that anywhere Jesus (Prince of Peace) reigns, His peace will never end. So if we want to see the fulfillment of the promise of peace, we must allow Jesus to reign...and it starts in our heart. You see, peace... true peace, is NOT simply the absence of conflict. In fact, when the world wants "peace" it often comes by means of violence and oppression...but that is NOT the way of Jesus. Until Jesus' kingdom is fully realized, this earth will never be fully devoid of conflict. So what do we do until then? As Hebrews 12 says, "Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life... Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out so that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many." Peace starts in our own hearts and it takes WORK. Allow Jesus to reign and pray his kingdom come, on EARTH as it is in HEAVEN.

*dear God*

WE ARE IN DESPERATE NEED OF YOUR PEACE. JESUS, PLEASE REIGN WITHIN MY HEART AND OVER MY LIFE SO THAT I MAY EXPERIENCE TRUE PEACE. HELP ME TO BE A PEACE MAKER IN MY FAMILY AND MY COMMUNITY.

*amen*



# A PROMISE OF *joy*

"DON'T BE AFRAID!" HE SAID. "I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS THAT WILL BRING GREAT JOY TO ALL PEOPLE. THE SAVIOR -- YES, THE MESSIAH, THE LORD -- HAS BEEN BORN TODAY IN BETHLEHEM!"

*Luke 2:10-11*

The word "JOY" gets thrown around a lot this time of year. It's in the carols we sing, on the painted wooden signs on our mantles, and even printed on the sides of our cups at Starbucks. However, the world usually gets the meaning of joy wrong. You see, joy is not the same as happiness. Happiness is temporary and based on the present circumstance. Joy is something deeper. It's a promise from God that bubbles up from deep in our soul and it can't be snuffed out when our circumstances change.

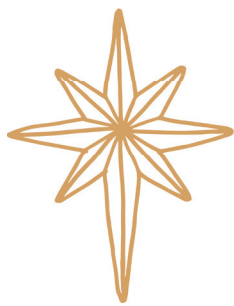
## *make room for joy*

Let's not let the fullness of our calendars or the length of our to-do list rob us of the JOY that God promised us. Slow down long enough to experience delight! Linger a little longer in a great conversation, Allow the wonder of the twinkling lights to seep into your soul. Read a good book. Listen to great music, Cook a delicious meal and enjoy every bite. Hug your loved ones tight...and yes, sip slowly on that warm cup of coffee with JOY printed on the cup.

## *dear God*

YOU ARE THE SOURCE OF MY JOY. I REJOICE IN ALL THE WAYS YOU HAVE BLESSED ME. ALLOW THE JOY THAT YOU HAVE PLANTED IN MY HEART TO BUBBLE UP TO THE SURFACE. MAY IT OVERFLOW ON TO THOSE AROUND ME AND SPARK JOY IN OTHERS AS WELL. YOU HAVE RESCUED ME FROM BONDAGE AND GIVEN ME A HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. HELP ME TO SLOW DOWN THIS SEASON SO I CAN MAKE ROOM FOR MORE JOY!

*amen*



# A PROMISE OF *love*



AND I AM CONVINCED THAT NOTHING CAN EVER SEPARATE US FROM GOD'S LOVE. NEITHER DEATH NOR LIFE, NEITHER ANGELS NOR DEMONS, NEITHER OUR FEARS FOR TODAY NOR OUR WORRIES ABOUT TOMORROW -- NOT EVEN THE POWERS OF HELL CAN SEPARATE US FROM GOD'S LOVE

*Romans 8:38*

Stop for a second and think about what makes you, you. The shape of your nose? The sound of your laughter? Your nunchuck skills? Your personality? While all those things may add to your identity...each of those, even your nose, can be taken from you. What then? There must be some deeper, unseen part of us...something we can't quite put our finger on, yet when we look deeply into each others' eyes...we can ALMOST see it. We might use words like "soul" or "spirit" to describe the intangible part of us. When you stop and think about this deepest part of you, what do you see? This is the truth. At the core of who you are is someone who is deeply and profoundly LOVED. That is the root of your identity...and NOTHING can change that about you. Stop for a moment and think about that.

It might be different than what you've thought about yourself your whole life. You are lovable! This is a promise from the One who created you!

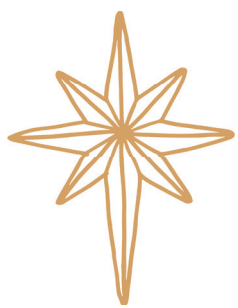
There's nothing you can do and no miles you can stray that will change that!

*Dear God*

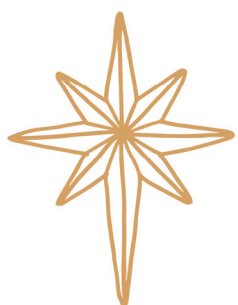
THANK YOU FOR LOVING ME. I AM STILL WORKING THAT TRUTH INTO THE DEPTHS OF MY HEART. HELP ME TO SEE MYSELF AS YOU SEE ME. MAY EVERYTHING I SAY AND EVERYTHING I DO FLOW OUT FROM THE KNOWLEDGE THAT I AM YOUR BELOVED. MAY YOUR LOVE BE THE THING THAT DEFINES ME.

*amen*





# rest + prepare



Residing in between two places is not always easy. Our humanness rebels against perseverance and patience. However, this is where we find ourselves. So...we wait. But we don't just waste the time like we would waiting for our number to be called at the DMV...endlessly scrolling through social media. No, we wait...actively.

## *we rest*

While we eagerly anticipate Christ's return, we rest in his promises of hope, peace, joy, and love. We trust in the character of God and recognize that he always keeps his promise. He is who he says he is and he does what he says he's going to do. So we don't fret and we don't let the darkness we face consume us, but we look forward with expectation to when we will experience the fullness of his promise.

## *we prepare*

We wait like a family expecting a child. We prepare room, we nest, we work to become the best version of ourselves in anticipation of the joy and responsibility that's coming our way. We don't shake our fists at the darkness and retreat to the safety of our own kind. No, we look for the light, point it out to others, and participate in God's redemptive work here on earth...happening right now!

## *dear God*

GRANT ME THE PATIENCE AND FAITH TO REMAIN STEADFAST IN THE WAITING. SHOW ME PLACES YOU'RE AT WORK SO THAT I CAN JUMP IN AND PARTICIPATE IN YOUR ILLUMINATION OF THIS WORLD!

*amen*



# CHRISTMAS

*at new life*

Thank you for stopping by the Christmas Walk! We pray your time here was meaningful! We would love for you to join us for a Christmas Eve service as we celebrate the birth of Jesus together!

FRIDAY DECEMBER 24

**2pm**

INDOOR  
live-streamed online  
+ on the patio

**4:30 + 6:30pm**

OUTDOOR CANDLELIGHT  
chairs + warm beverages are  
provided

[NEWLIFEPISMO.COM/CHRISTMAS](http://NEWLIFEPISMO.COM/CHRISTMAS)