

My soul  
*Magnifies*  
the Lord



*An Advent Devotional*



CHURCH OF THE  
SAVIOR

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# INTRODUCTION

## PRAYING THE MAGNIFICAT WITH MARY

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In Luke 1, Mary – early in her pregnancy with Jesus, visiting her also miraculously pregnant cousin Elizabeth – speaks a powerful prayer that has become known as the *Magnificat*. For centuries, Christians have read and prayed Mary’s words, resonating with her bold declaration that God has accomplished mighty deeds, has filled up the poor with good things and overthrown oppressors, has fulfilled what was promised through the prophets of old. Mary’s words ring through the world, filled with hope and faith.

This devotional invites you to spend time with Mary’s prayer during this season of Advent. Advent is a season of waiting and preparation: we remember the people of Israel, waiting for their savior; we wait with Mary for the birth of her child; and we long with all of God’s people for the full coming of God’s kingdom. And as we wait, Mary’s prayer reminds us that God is already with us, already at work to bring about the justice and peace of his kingdom. Like Mary, we live in the in-between time. We see war and injustice, sin and death, all around us. But with Mary, we affirm our hope and boldly proclaim that, through the gift and mystery of the Incarnation, God has done great things.

## HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL

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The contents are divided into four sections, corresponding to the four weeks of Advent. Each section has three devotional exercises: a modified daily office, a *visio divina*, and a way to pray. You might set aside some time one day a week to go through all three; you might split them up over several days. You might skip one exercise and repeat another. The aim of these practices is to help you connect with God as you meditate on Mary’s words and on God’s many promises that begin to break into our world at the Incarnation of Jesus.

Additionally, coloring sheets are available for each week. Pick up extra paper copies in the foyer or download printable pdf versions from Savior’s website.

—Sarah Lindsay

**First Week  
of Advent**

~  
*Hope*

## DAILY OFFICE

### INVITATORY

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The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

Our King and Savior now draws near: Come, let us adore him.

### MAGNIFICAT

---

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has come to the help of his servant Israel,  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
The promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

(Luke 1:46-55, BCP)

<sup>2</sup> Surely God is my salvation;  
I will trust and not be afraid.  
The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defense;  
he has become my salvation.”  
<sup>3</sup> With joy you will draw water  
from the wells of salvation.

<sup>4</sup> In that day you will say:

“Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name;  
make known among the nations what he has done,  
and proclaim that his name is exalted.  
<sup>5</sup> Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things;  
let this be known to all the world.  
<sup>6</sup> Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion,  
for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

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Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**CLOSING**

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Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## VISIO DIVINA: VISITATION

*Visio divina* is the practice of praying with and through what we see. As you contemplate the image on the next page, use the reflection questions below to guide your prayers.

- Take a moment to quiet your heart and mind: set aside distractions and sit comfortably; you might light a candle to remind you of the presence of God. Invite the the Holy Spirit to be with you.
- Look at the piece of art, taking your time. Can you see this scene as God sees it? What do you most notice in the image? What feelings does it evoke?
- Talk to God about what the image stirs in you, what you see and experience as you contemplate this work of art.





*Visitation*, unknown artist, a painting for the church in El Sitio, Suchitoto, El Salvador.  
<https://walktheway.wordpress.com/2016/05/31/a-revolutionary-song/>

## IMAGINATIVE PRAYER

Imaginative prayer is part of the Ignatian spiritual practice of contemplation. In this practice, begin by imagining what you would see, hear, or feel if you were there with Mary and Elizabeth. As you enter the scene through your imagination, notice how God may be speaking to you — and how you might speak to God — through the story.

### READ LUKE 1:39-56 (NLT)

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<sup>39</sup> A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town  
<sup>40</sup> where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth.  
<sup>41</sup> At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

<sup>42</sup> Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, "God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. <sup>43</sup> Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me?" <sup>44</sup> When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. <sup>45</sup> You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said."

<sup>46</sup> Mary responded,

"Oh, how my soul praises the Lord.

<sup>47</sup> How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!

<sup>48</sup> For he took notice of his lowly servant girl,  
and from now on all generations will call me blessed.

<sup>49</sup> For the Mighty One is holy,  
and he has done great things for me.

<sup>50</sup> He shows mercy from generation to generation  
to all who fear him.

<sup>51</sup> His mighty arm has done tremendous things!  
He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.

<sup>52</sup> He has brought down princes from their thrones  
and exalted the humble.

<sup>53</sup> He has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away with empty hands.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel  
and remembered to be merciful.

<sup>55</sup> For he made this promise to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and his children forever.”

<sup>56</sup> Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back to her own home.

## **PRAY**

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- As you imagine this scene, what stands out to you? What do you notice? What do you feel?
- Imagine hearing Mary speak. How do you respond to her words?
- Talk to God about what you are experiencing as you imagine this scene. Guided by Mary’s words, spend time praising God for what he has done.

**Second Week  
of Advent**

~  
*Peace*

## DAILY OFFICE

### INVITATORY

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The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

Our King and Savior now draws near: Come, let us adore him.

### MAGNIFICAT

---

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has come to the help of his servant Israel,  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
The promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

(Luke 1:46-55, BCP)

- <sup>14</sup> Sing, Daughter Zion;  
shout aloud, Israel!  
Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,  
Daughter Jerusalem!
- <sup>15</sup> The Lord has taken away your punishment,  
he has turned back your enemy.  
The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you;  
never again will you fear any harm.
- <sup>16</sup> On that day  
they will say to Jerusalem,  
“Do not fear, Zion;  
do not let your hands hang limp.
- <sup>17</sup> The Lord your God is with you,  
the Mighty Warrior who saves.  
He will take great delight in you;  
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,  
but will rejoice over you with singing.”
- <sup>18</sup> “I will remove from you  
all who mourn over the loss of your appointed festivals,  
which is a burden and reproach for you.
- <sup>19</sup> At that time I will deal  
with all who oppressed you.  
I will rescue the lame;  
I will gather the exiles.  
I will give them praise and honor  
in every land where they have suffered shame.
- <sup>20</sup> At that time I will gather you;  
at that time I will bring you home.  
I will give you honor and praise  
among all the peoples of the earth  
when I restore your fortunes  
before your very eyes,”  
says the Lord.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

---

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.

## COLLECT

## THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

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Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

## CLOSING

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Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## VISIO DIVINA: VISITATION

*Visio divina* is the practice of praying with and through what we see. As you contemplate the image on the next page, use the reflection questions below to guide your prayers.

- Take a moment to quiet your heart and mind: set aside distractions and sit comfortably; you might light a candle to remind you of the presence of God. Invite the the Holy Spirit to be with you.
- Look at the piece of art, taking your time. Can you see this scene as God sees it? What do you most notice in the image? What feelings does it evoke?
- Talk to God about what the image stirs in you, what you see and experience as you contemplate this work of art.

## INTERCESSORY PRAYER

In the middle of the *Magnificat*, Mary speaks of God's justice that upends the oppressive power structures of the world:

- <sup>51</sup> He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;  
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
- <sup>52</sup> He has brought down rulers from their thrones  
but has lifted up the humble.
- <sup>53</sup> He has filled the hungry with good things  
but has sent the rich away empty.

Read these verses and pay attention to situations or people that come to mind. Pray for God's justice to be made manifest and God's peace to come; pray for the oppressed to be protected and the hungry to be filled. You might also pray for eyes to see where you might enter into God's work towards justice in the world around us.





*Magnificat*, woodcut by Ben Wildflower, 2016. Used by permission of the artist.  
<https://benwildflower.com/products/magnificat-print>

**Third Week  
of Advent**

~  
*Joy*

## DAILY OFFICE

### INVITATORY

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The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

Our King and Savior now draws near: Come, let us adore him.

### MAGNIFICAT

---

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has come to the help of his servant Israel,  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
The promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

(Luke 1:46-55, BCP)

<sup>14</sup> “‘The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah.

<sup>15</sup> “‘In those days and at that time  
I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line;  
he will do what is just and right in the land.

<sup>16</sup> In those days Judah will be saved  
and Jerusalem will live in safety.  
This is the name by which it will be called:  
The Lord Our Righteous Savior.’

### THE LORD’S PRAYER

---

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

**CLOSING**

---

Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## VISIO DIVINA: ANNUNCIATION

*Visio divina* is the practice of praying with and through what we see. As you contemplate the image on the next page, use the reflection questions below to guide your prayers.

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- Look at the piece of art, taking your time. Can you see this scene as God sees it? What do you most notice in the image? What feelings does it evoke?
- Talk to God about what the image stirs in you, what you see and experience as you contemplate this work of art.

### NOTE ON THIS PAINTING

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For many centuries, artists have depicted Mary reading at the Annunciation. Historically, it's unclear whether Mary would have been literate – and if she were, she would have read from scrolls, not books. However, the book symbolizes Mary's devotion to God and her knowledge of the Hebrew scriptures, a knowledge that shines through the *Magnificat* as she echoes the song Hannah sings in 1 Samuel 2:1-10 and references the promises of God spoken to Abraham and the prophets.



*Annunciation*, work by unknown artist, c. 1420, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona (public domain).

## LECTIO DIVINA

Like *visio divina*, *lectio divina* invites us to slow down, pay careful attention, and talk to God about what we notice and experience – but in the practice of *lectio divina*, we read (or listen to) a section of scripture. Today, we're reading about the Annunciation, so you might gain new insights on the passage from your experience contemplating the artwork on the previous page. Use these traditional steps of *lectio divina* as you read the passage on the next page:

- **Silencio:** quiet your mind and heart and enter into God's presence.
- **Lectio:** read the passage slowly, paying attention to the words or images that capture your mind. Hear what God is saying to you.
- **Meditatio:** read the passage again, listening to God's invitation to you and pondering the words in your heart.
- **Oratio:** respond to God, talking to God about the thoughts and feelings that have arisen in your reading.
- **Contemplatio:** wait in the presence of God, allowing the words of the scripture to sink into your soul.



<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

<sup>34</sup> "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail."

<sup>38</sup> "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

**Fourth Week  
of Advent**



*Love*

## DAILY OFFICE

### INVITATORY

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The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

Our King and Savior now draws near: Come, let us adore him.

### MAGNIFICAT

---

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has come to the help of his servant Israel,  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
The promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

(Luke 1:46-55, BCP)

<sup>2</sup> “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
though you are small among the clans of Judah,  
out of you will come for me  
one who will be ruler over Israel,  
whose origins are from of old,  
from ancient times.”

<sup>3</sup> Therefore Israel will be abandoned  
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,  
and the rest of his brothers return  
to join the Israelites.

<sup>4</sup> He will stand and shepherd his flock  
in the strength of the Lord,  
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.  
And they will live securely, for then his greatness  
will reach to the ends of the earth.

<sup>5</sup> And he will be our peace

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## THE LORD'S PRAYER

---

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**CLOSING**

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Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## VISIO DIVINA: DANCES FOR JOY

*Visio divina* is the practice of praying with and through what we see. As you contemplate the image on the next page, use the reflection questions below to guide your prayers.

- Take a moment to quiet your heart and mind: set aside distractions and sit comfortably; you might light a candle to remind you of the presence of God. Invite the the Holy Spirit to be with you.
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- Talk to God about what the image stirs in you, what you see and experience as you contemplate this work of art.



*Handwritten signature*

## WAITING

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During this fourth week of Advent, the wait for Christmas is almost over: kids are out of school, gifts have been purchased and maybe even wrapped, travel plans are set. Liturgically, we are ready to light the Christ Candle, change from the somber purple of Advent to the celebratory gold of Christmas and Epiphany, and rejoice in the birth of Jesus. And yet, amidst the joy of the season, we still wait. We wait for healing, for reconciliation, for justice. We wait for things that we know will come – and for things that we may never see in this world. Sometimes we wait patiently; other times, we rage or weep in our impatience.

Advent invites us to embrace waiting, to lean into the anticipatory tension between Mary’s declaration that God has done mighty deeds and the reality that God’s kingdom has not yet arrived in its fullness. Adele Calhoun writes,

“Waiting with God is where we learn how to be happy when we don’t get our own way. It’s where we get practice in learning how to forgive reality for being different than we want. Waiting is where we learn how to forgive people for being their less-than-perfect selves, and waiting is where we learn how to forgive God for not being like a magician, a conjurer or a wizard. Waiting with God teaches us to let go of our expectations so we can receive what is given.”

Today, spend time praying about the places where you are waiting. As you pray, you might contemplate this promise from the Hosea 6:3:

Let us acknowledge the Lord;  
let us press on to acknowledge him.  
As surely as the sun rises,  
he will appear;  
he will come to us like the winter rains,  
like the spring rains that water the earth.

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Quote from Adele Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* (Downer’s Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2015), pp. 139-40.



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Created and compiled by Sarah Lindsay.

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Daily Office adapted from the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*. Public domain.

*Visio Divina* questions adapted from Adele Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* (Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2015), pp. 46-48.



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*Journeying Together: Loving God, Loving Others, Loving Life*

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