



ADVENT

Scripture, Art and Action
reflection, connection, creativity

The season of anticipation and preparation,
a time to reflect on the profound mystery
of Christ's coming into the world.

Advent is also a time for action, where we
embody these themes in our lives through
kindness, creativity, and connection. Each
reflection includes an action prompt,
encouraging us to live out the message of
the season in ways that can inspire and
uplift both ourselves and others.

This year we are using the Narrative
Lectionary following scripture, art, and
action, let us draw closer to the heart of
God and the good news that the light shines
in the darkness, and the darkness has not
overcome it.

LIBERATION

Advent begins not in comfort but in longing. Isaiah speaks into a world where people stand in ruins — cities broken, confidence shaken, and hope thin. Into that landscape, a voice rises: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.” Liberation, Isaiah insists, is not an afterthought in the life of God — it is the opening line. God moves towards the oppressed, the weary, the overlooked, the captive. Advent names that movement.

When Jesus reads this passage in Nazareth, he does not rewrite it or explain it away. He steps inside it. He claims it. Good news is for the ones who most need it. Liberation begins with God’s attention turning toward those who have been pushed to the edges and left in the shadows.

This week we listen for a God who still anoints, still heals, still proclaims freedom, still rebuilds ruins — even the ones inside us. Advent’s first light is not soft or sentimental. It is a flame that insists: things do not have to stay as they are.

Scripture:

Isaiah 61:1–11

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners...”

Luke 4:18–19

“Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Action Prompt:

Take a slow walk today. As you walk, holding the words:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.”

Notice where captivity lingers; exhaustion, shame, injustice, silence, fear. What would liberation look like, in one small, tangible way? Commit to making, or praying toward, that one change this week.



“The Annunciation” by Sadao Watanabe

RENEWAL

Reflection:

The valley is silent at first – nothing but dust, bone, and memory. Ezekiel is led there by God, not to witness despair, but to confront it. Renewal in scripture rarely begins in tidy places. It begins where breath has left and hope has thinned. God asks the prophet to speak into what no longer listens.

“Prophecy to these bones.” Speak life where life is absent. Breathe hope where breath has failed. Advent is the season of breath returning – slowly, gently, persistently. And like Ezekiel, we are invited to become participants in renewal, not just observers. Dry bones come together not by magic but by partnership: God breathes, and we speak.

When Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life,” he echoes the same promise: nothing is beyond renewal. Not communities fractured, not individuals exhausted, not hearts gone silent.



“The Madonna and Child of Soweto” by Larry Scully

Scripture:

Ezekiel 37:1-14

“I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live.”

John 11:25

“I am the resurrection and the life.”

Action Prompt:

Sit somewhere quiet. Place a hand on yourself, feel each breath.

With each inhale pray: “Breathe in me.”

With each exhale pray: “Renew me.”

Then ask: Who in my life needs shared breath – encouragement, presence, kindness? Offer it this week.

COURAGE

Reflection:

Courage is not loud. It is not fiery speeches or triumphant declarations.

Sometimes courage is simply standing when everyone else kneels.

Daniel's friends do not seek the fire — but they will not bow to what destroys their integrity. Advent invites us into that kind of courage: the courage to remain faithful even when the world burns.

In the furnace, they discover a truth Advent whispers: God is not distant from human struggle. God is found in the flames with them. The fourth figure in the fire is the promise that we are never alone, even when faith costs us something.

Jesus echoes this courage when he says, "My kingdom is not of this world." He refuses the powers that demand fear and conformity. His courage reshapes the world.



"The Angel Appearing to the Shepherds" by Thomas Cole

Scripture:

Daniel 3:1, 8-30

"Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us... but even if not, we will not serve your gods."

John 18:36-37

"My kingdom is not from this world."

Action Prompt:

Light a candle today. Sit with its flame. Ask yourself gently: Where do I need courage? What small step of faithfulness can I take this week even if it goes unnoticed?

RESTORATION

Restoration, in Scripture, is rarely a single moment. It moves in rhythms – like breath, like returning waves, like the patterns that shape our years. Zechariah's vision is full of this holy rhythm: life returning to abandoned streets, play returning to places once marked by fear, community returning where hope had been thin.

Advent itself is a rhythm we enter again and again. Each year we circle back to familiar stories – to prophets who spoke of renewal, to streets where light returns, to the manger where God begins again with us. We do not repeat this journey because we have forgotten it, but because God restores us through it. The pattern is part of the promise: what God has renewed before, God can renew again.

In a world where fear still unsettles us, Jesus' words echo across the centuries: "Why are you afraid?" Not as rebuke, but as reminder.

Restoration is already underway. The movement of God's hope is steady, sometimes subtle, sometimes surprising, always faithful. Like cycles in creation, like the turning of seasons, God's renewal carries us forward even when we cannot yet see its fullness.

Scripture Reading:

Zechariah 8:1-17

"Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets... and the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing."

Matthew 8:26

"Why are you afraid, you of little faith?"

Action Prompt:

Take time to notice your community, its sounds, its people, its life.

Pray for restoration street by street.

Then choose one act of peacemaking you can offer this week however small.



"I will worship you" by Dawn Savidge