

Welcome to Advent! The birth of Jesus Christ happened exactly at the right moment in history, in the fullness of time. This marvelous event—carefully prepared for and orchestrated by God—unveiled the coming of Jesus, the fulfillment of God’s plan of redemption for all people.

Christ’s divine mission saves us from what we cannot overcome ourselves—sin and death. Even more strikingly though, we are adopted into the family of God to live as his children through Christ. And so, this plan of sheer goodness, written into the human flesh of this King from heaven, fittingly first comes to us as a little Child.

This booklet is designed to accompany your meditations this Advent. Consider beginning your devotional time each day this season by quieting your mind, then slowly reading the Scripture verse, allowing your heart to take it in. Read the words of beloved spiritual master Henri Nouwen, followed by a reflection from contemporary writer and retreat leader Amy Ekeh, closing with a prayer. My prayer is that these devotions might serve as a springboard to a fullness of faith in our Savior.

Blessings to you as our Emmanuel, God-with-us, guides your Advent season, in anticipation of the joy of Christmas.



Pat Gohn, *editor*

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Worth Waiting For

... he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Ephesians 1:9-10

*We must listen with our whole being, trusting that the Word that created us will also heal us. God wants to become present to us and thus radically transform our fearful hearts. (Henri J. M. Nouwen, *With Burning Hearts*, 48)*

Advent is a time of waiting. We are waiting for someone to arrive. But why must we wait? Words and phrases from the above readings burst with possibility: making mysteries known, gathering up all things, listening, trusting, transforming. These wonderful, sacred things take time. In a world that is accustomed to “instant,” it is easy to forget how long it takes to truly make a mystery known, or gather up all things, or radically transform hearts.

The coming of our Savior takes time because salvation takes time. God does not snap his fingers or push a button in order to save us. He sends his Son to be with us and love us. Salvation is a relationship. This takes time. This is worth waiting for.

Lord Jesus, help me to savor this time of waiting. Help me to enjoy the slow process of your drawing near to me and to our world. I will wait patiently as you transform my heart. Amen.