Light in the Waiting

Daily Devotional

Rehobeth United Methodist Church

Rehobethumc.org

Advent 2026
November 29 – Christmas Day



Light in the Waiting: Daily Devotional

Written by Pastor Tony Moreau for Rehobeth United Methodist Church.

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Contents

Starting late? Find today's date below and turn to that page.

Light Your Wreath Each Day **2**

Week of Hope

Sun, Nov 29 — Facing East 2
Mon, Nov 30 — The Watchman's Wait 2
Tue, Dec 1 — The God of Hope 2
Wed, Dec 2 — New Every Morning 3
Thu, Dec 3 — Wings for the Weary 3
Fri, Dec 4 — Simeon Kept Watching 3
Sat, Dec 5 — An Anchor for the Soul 4

Week of Peace

Sun, Dec 6 — Swords into Plowshares 5
Mon, Dec 7 — The Guard at the Door 5
Tue, Dec 8 — The Wolf and the Lamb 5
Wed, Dec 9 — Not as the World Gives 5
Thu, Dec 10 — The Wall Came Down 6
Fri, Dec 11 — Making Peace 6
Sat, Dec 12 — The Way of Peace 6

Week of Joy

Sun, Dec 13 — God Sings Over You 7
Mon, Dec 14 — Elizabeth's House 7
Tue, Dec 15 — Joy Before the Evidence 7
Wed, Dec 16 — The Desert Will Bloom 7
Thu, Dec 17 — Yet I Will Rejoice 8
Fri, Dec 18 — Joy Is Your Strength 8
Sat, Dec 19 — Tears and Shouts of Joy 8

Week of Love

Sun, Dec 20 — Love Is a Direction 9
Mon, Dec 21 — The Longest Night 9
Tue, Dec 22 — God So Loved 9
Wed, Dec 23 — All the Way Down 9
Thu, Dec 24 — The Waiting Is Over 10
Fri, Dec 25 — The Light Shines 10

Come Wait With Us **11**

Daily Devotional

One scripture, a short reflection, and a prayer for each day from November 29 through Christmas Day. Each entry also arrives by email each morning. If you keep an Advent wreath at home, light it with the prayer below, then read the day's entry.

Light Your Wreath Each Day

Light the candles for the current week — one in week 1, two in week 2, and so on.

The light shines in the darkness, **and the darkness has not overcome it.**

Read the day's scripture from the Daily Devotional, then pray:

Holy Spirit, thank you for this day and for this light. Wherever it's dark in my house, my heart, or my world, shine there. Keep me watching and waiting for Jesus. Amen.

Sit quietly for a moment, then put out the candles.

Week of Hope

Day 1 · Sunday, November 29 — Facing East

Read: Isaiah 9:2-7

Advent doesn't start with tinsel. It starts in the dark. Isaiah's first listeners had just watched their land overrun and their neighbors carried off. Into that, he says: the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Not "might see." Have seen. God's promise is so sure, Isaiah talks about it like it already happened. That's hope — not crossing your fingers, but facing east in the dark because you know the sun is coming. Whatever darkness you're carrying into this season, you don't have to pretend it isn't there. Just turn toward the light.

Pray: Holy Spirit, Advent starts today, and I'll be honest — some of me is ready and some of me is tired. Turn me east. Help me trust that the light is coming even where I can't see it yet. Amen.

Day 2 · Monday, November 30 — The Watchman's Wait

Read: Psalm 130

The psalmist says his soul waits for the Lord "more than those who watch for the morning" — and then says it again, like he's leaning on it. A night watchman doesn't wonder whether morning will come. He just doesn't know exactly when. That's a different kind of waiting from wishful thinking. It's confident waiting. Notice, too, where the psalm starts: "out of the depths." The writer isn't waiting from a good place. Hope isn't for people who have it all together. It's for people in the depths who keep watching anyway.

Pray: Lord, I'm calling to you from wherever I am today, depths and all. Teach me to wait like a watchman: patient, alert, and sure the morning is on its way. Amen.

Day 3 · Tuesday, December 1 — The God of Hope

Read: Romans 15:4-13

Paul calls God "the God of hope." That's a remarkable title. It means hope isn't something we have to work up on our own, like squeezing water from a dry rag. Hope belongs to God, and God shares it, "by the power of the Holy Spirit." Paul's prayer is that we would "abound" in hope — overflow with it, have more than we need, enough to spill onto other people. If your hope tank feels low today, don't try harder. Ask. The God of hope gives it away freely.

Pray: God of hope, my tank is lower than I'd like. Fill me with joy and peace as I trust you, until hope spills over onto the people around me. Amen.

Day 4 · Wednesday, December 2 — New Every Morning

Read: Lamentations 3:19-26

Lamentations was written after Jerusalem burned. The whole book is grief, and it doesn't rush past it. But right in the middle, the writer says, "This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope." Then comes one of the most hopeful lines in the Bible: God's mercies are new every morning. Hope here isn't a feeling that floats in. It's a decision to call something to mind — to remember who God is when everything around you says otherwise. What do you need to call to mind today?

Pray: Faithful God, when my circumstances are loud, help me call to mind your steadfast love. Thank you that your mercy shows up fresh every morning, including this one. Amen.

Day 5 · Thursday, December 3 — Wings for the Weary

Read: Isaiah 40:27-31

Isaiah heard the complaint of tired people: "My way is hidden from the Lord." In other words, God's forgotten me. Isaiah answers: have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God doesn't get tired, and gives strength to those who are. Then the promise: those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. In Hebrew, "wait" carries the idea of a cord twisted tight — waiting that binds you closer to God. December can wear you down. Today, wait on the Lord, and let God hold you up.

Pray: Everlasting God, I'm more tired than I let on. Thank you that you never are. Renew my strength today — enough to run if I need to, and enough to keep walking if that's all I can do. Amen.

Day 6 · Friday, December 4 — Simeon Kept Watching

Read: Luke 2:25-32

Simeon was old, and he'd been waiting his whole life for God to keep a promise. Plenty of people would have quit by then. He didn't. And one ordinary day in the temple, a young couple walked in carrying a baby, and Simeon took him in his arms and said, "My eyes have seen your salvation." Long waits don't mean God has forgotten. Sometimes the answer arrives in the most ordinary moment, carried by the most ordinary people. Keep watching.

Pray: Lord, thank you for people like Simeon who kept watching. If I'm in a long wait, keep my eyes open. Let me recognize you when you walk in, however ordinary you look. Amen.

Day 7 · Saturday, December 5 — An Anchor for the Soul

Read: Hebrews 6:17-20

Hebrews calls hope "a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul." An anchor doesn't stop the storm. It keeps you from drifting while the storm blows. And notice where this anchor is set: not in our circumstances, not in our feelings, but "inside the curtain" — in the very presence of God, where Jesus has gone ahead of us. That's why Christian hope holds when the news is bad. It's hooked into something that doesn't move. As this first week of Advent closes, check your anchor. What's holding you?

Pray: Jesus, you've gone ahead of me into the presence of God. Anchor my hope there, not in how things are going. When the wind picks up this week, keep me from drifting. Amen.

Week of Peace

Day 8 · Sunday, December 6 — Swords into Plowshares

Read: Isaiah 2:1-5

Isaiah saw a day when nations would stream to God's mountain, and weapons would be hammered into farm tools. Same metal, same strength — now pointed toward feeding people instead of hurting them. It's the most beautiful impossible sentence ever written. Impossible, unless the Prince of Peace actually came. Today many churches, Rehobeth among them, gather at the Lord's Table, where the ground is level and the invitation is open to everyone. The cross, the worst weapon the world ever devised, has become a table. If you're carrying a sword today, bring it. Leave it there.

Pray: Prince of Peace, I bring you the swords I've been carrying. Hammer them into something that plants and feeds. Begin your peace in me, today. Amen.

Day 9 · Monday, December 7 — The Guard at the Door

Read: Philippians 4:4-7

Paul wrote these words in chains. "Do not worry about anything" sounds different coming from a man in prison. His secret is in the order: pray about everything, give thanks, and then the peace of God will "guard" your heart and mind. Paul uses a military word — the peace of God posts a sentry at the door. He's surrounded by Roman soldiers and says, "I've got a better guard than these." Your circumstances may not change today. But you can have a guard posted over your heart while they don't.

Pray: God of peace, here's what I'm worried about today. *(Name it.)* And here's one thing I'm thankful for. *(Name it.)* Now post your guard at the door of my heart and mind. Amen.

Day 10 · Tuesday, December 8 — The Wolf and the Lamb

Read: Isaiah 11:1-9

Isaiah pictures a wolf living with a lamb, a leopard lying down with a young goat, and a child playing safely by a snake's den. These are natural enemies. In God's peace, nobody has to be devoured to survive. Notice it begins with a shoot from a stump — new life out of something that looked cut down and finished. God's peace often starts small and in unlikely places. Who are the "natural enemies" in your world? What would it look like for them to sit down together?

Pray: Lord Jesus, branch from Jesse's stump, grow your peace where things look finished. Where I'm the wolf, gentle me. Where I'm the lamb, make me brave. Amen.

Day 11 · Wednesday, December 9 — Not as the World Gives

Read: John 14:25-27

The night before he died, Jesus told his friends: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives." The world sells peace as the absence of trouble — a quiet house, a full bank account, a vacation. Jesus gives peace as the presence of God in the trouble. He said it knowing the cross was coming. He also promised the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, would stay with them. That's how his peace holds: you are not alone in it.

Pray: Holy Spirit, Advocate, stay close today. Give me the peace Jesus promised — not the kind the world sells, but the kind that holds steady when my heart is troubled. Amen.

Day 12 · Thursday, December 10 — The Wall Came Down

Read: Ephesians 2:13-18

Paul says Christ "is our peace" and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility. In Paul's day, a literal wall in the temple kept Gentiles out of the inner courts, with warnings posted on it. Jesus, Paul says, tore it down in his own body. That means the walls we build — between races, parties, families, neighbors — don't have God's blessing. A few verses later, Paul says we are being built together into a dwelling place for God. Is there a wall you've been maintaining that Christ already took down?

Pray: Jesus, you are our peace. Show me the walls I keep repairing that you already tore down. Give me the courage to stop rebuilding them. Amen.

Day 13 · Friday, December 11 — Making Peace

Read: Matthew 5:9; Romans 12:17-21

Jesus didn't bless peace-*lovers* or peace-*wishers*. He blessed peacemakers. Making peace takes work. Paul gets practical: don't repay evil for evil, do everything you can to live peaceably with all, and if your enemy is hungry, feed them. "So far as it depends on you" — Paul admits you can't control the other person. But you can control your next move. Today, make one move toward peace. A text. A card. A sincere apology. Plant something where you used to fight.

Pray: Lord, I can't fix everyone. But I can make my next move. Show me what it is, and give me the nerve to make it today. Amen.

Day 14 · Saturday, December 12 — The Way of Peace

Read: Luke 1:67-79

Zechariah couldn't speak for nine months after doubting the angel's message. When his voice came back, the first thing out of his mouth was a song. It ends with a promise: "the dawn from on high will break upon us, to shine on those who sit in darkness… to guide our feet into the way of peace." Notice: peace is a way — a path to walk, not just a feeling to have. And God's light is what lets us see the path. As the week of peace ends, where is God guiding your feet?

Pray: Dawn from on high, shine on the dark places in me, and guide my feet into the way of peace. One step today is enough. Amen.

Week of Joy

Day 15 · Sunday, December 13 — God Sings Over You

Read: Zephaniah 3:14-17

Today we light the rose candle. The third Sunday of Advent is called Gaudete — "Rejoice!" Right in the middle of the waiting, joy can't hold itself in any longer. Zephaniah spent almost his whole book warning of judgment. Then, at the very end, he says something astonishing: God will rejoice over you with gladness and exult over you with loud singing. Read that again. God sings. Over you. When you picture God looking at you, you might imagine a frown or a sigh. Zephaniah hears a song.

Pray: God who sings, I'm not used to thinking of you as glad about me. Let that sink in today. Quiet me with your love, and let me hear even a few notes of your song. Amen.

Day 16 · Monday, December 14 — Elizabeth's House

Read: Luke 1:39-45

Mary hurried to her relative Elizabeth's house with news she could hardly explain. Before she could say much at all, Elizabeth's baby leaped, and Elizabeth called Mary blessed. Mary hadn't sung yet. Elizabeth's faith went first and opened the door for Mary's joy. We all need an Elizabeth — someone whose faith lifts ours when we can't find joy on our own. And we can all be one. Who has been your Elizabeth? Whose Elizabeth could you be this week?

Pray: Holy Spirit, thank you for the Elizabeths in my life. Show me someone who needs their faith lifted this week, and make me that kind of house. Amen.

Day 17 · Tuesday, December 15 — Joy Before the Evidence

Read: Luke 1:46-55

Mary's song, the Magnificat, is pure joy. But think about when she sang it. She was young, unmarried, and pregnant, in a town where that could mean disgrace. Nothing was fixed. The road to Bethlehem was still ahead. And she sang: "My soul magnifies the Lord." She even sang about God lifting the lowly and feeding the hungry in the past tense, as if it were done. That's joy before the evidence. It isn't pretending everything's fine. It's trusting God so much you start singing early.

Pray: God my Savior, nothing in my life is completely fixed either. Give me Mary's song anyway. Let my soul magnify you today, before I see how it all turns out. Amen.

Day 18 · Wednesday, December 16 — The Desert Will Bloom

Read: Isaiah 35:1-10

Isaiah says the wilderness will be glad and the desert will blossom. Weak hands strengthened, shaky knees made firm, the blind seeing and the lame leaping. Then the promise: "sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Joy in Scripture often grows in the driest places. Where's the desert in your life right now — a dry stretch of faith, a lonely season, a long illness? Isaiah's word to you is: be strong, do not fear. God is coming, and dry ground is exactly where God likes to make things grow.

Pray: Lord, you know where my life feels like a desert. Bring joy there. Strengthen my weak hands and steady my shaky knees, and let something bloom where I least expect it. Amen.

Day 19 · Thursday, December 17 — Yet I Will Rejoice

Read: Habakkuk 3:17-19

Habakkuk lists everything that could go wrong: no figs, no grapes, no olives, empty fields, no sheep, no cattle. For a farmer, that's total ruin. And then comes one small word: "yet." Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. Happiness is like the weather — it changes daily with whatever's happening. Joy is like the climate — it holds across seasons because it's rooted in God, not circumstances. What would your "yet" sentence say this year? "Even though ___, yet I will rejoice in the Lord."

Pray: Lord, here's my list of what's not going right. *(Name it honestly.)* Yet I will rejoice in you. You are my strength. Give me feet that can climb even here. Amen.

Day 20 · Friday, December 18 — Joy Is Your Strength

Read: Nehemiah 8:9-12

When God's people heard the law read after years in exile, they wept — they realized how far they'd drifted. Nehemiah told them to stop crying and throw a feast instead, and to send portions to those who had nothing. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." Joy here isn't a feeling that ignores sin or sorrow. It's grace that says you're welcomed back, now celebrate — and make sure your neighbor eats too. Who can you share a portion with this weekend?

Pray: Gracious God, thank you that your joy is stronger than my regrets. Let it be my strength today. Show me someone who has nothing prepared, and let me share my portion. Amen.

Day 21 · Saturday, December 19 — Tears and Shouts of Joy

Read: Psalm 126

This psalm holds two things together: "Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy." Tears and joy in the same verse. If December is hard for you this year — the first Christmas after a loss, a hard diagnosis, a broken relationship — this psalm is for you. It doesn't ask you to stop crying. It promises that your tears are seeds, and that God will bring in a harvest. Joy can sit right beside grief. Sometimes it's planted there.

Pray: Lord, some of what I carry this Christmas is heavy. I'm planting it with tears. Thank you that you see every one. Bring me home, in your time, with shouts of joy. Amen.

Week of Love

Day 22 · Sunday, December 20 — Love Is a Direction

Read: Isaiah 7:10-14; 1 John 4:7-11

King Ahaz was scared and had already decided to trust a foreign army instead of God. Isaiah offered him a sign; Ahaz refused. God gave one anyway: a child named Immanuel, "God is with us." That's what God's love does. It doesn't wait to be asked. It moves — down from heaven, toward us, and stays with us. John puts it simply: in this is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us and sent his Son. Love is a direction. And now it's our turn to go that way.

Pray: Immanuel, thank you for coming toward me before I ever asked. Point my love in the same direction this week — down, toward, and with. Amen.

Day 23 · Monday, December 21 — The Longest Night

Read: Matthew 1:18-25

Today is the winter solstice, the longest night of the year. After tonight, the light starts winning, a minute or two each day. Joseph had his own long night. He'd just found out Mary was pregnant, and he planned to end the engagement quietly. Then an angel spoke in a dream: don't be afraid; this child will be called Emmanuel, God with us. Joseph woke up and chose love that cost him. If tonight feels long for you, remember: God is with us, and the light is turning.

Pray: God with us, be with everyone who finds this the longest night — the grieving, the lonely, the afraid. Be with me too. Give me Joseph's courage to choose love when it costs something. Amen.

Day 24 · Tuesday, December 22 — God So Loved

Read: John 3:16-17

You probably know John 3:16 by heart. Read verse 17 too: God sent the Son not to condemn the world, but so the world might be saved through him. Christmas isn't God showing up to scold. It's God showing up to rescue. "God so loved the world" — not just the nice parts of it, the whole messy thing. Including the people on your Christmas list who are hard to love. Including you on your worst day. Read it slowly today, and put your own name where it says "world."

Pray: Loving God, you so loved the world — and you so loved me. Thank you that you came to save, not to condemn. Help me love the hard-to-love people on my list the way you love me. Amen.

Day 25 · Wednesday, December 23 — All the Way Down

Read: Philippians 2:5-8

Paul describes Jesus' journey as a staircase going down. He was in the form of God, but emptied himself. He took the form of a servant. He was born as a human. He humbled himself. He went all the way to death on a cross. Every step went lower. That's the shape of love. Christmas starts at the bottom of that staircase, in a feed trough in a borrowed stable. "Let the same mind be in you," Paul says. Where could you go lower today — serving where nobody's watching?

Pray: Lord Jesus, you came all the way down for me. Give me your mind. Show me one place today where I can go lower and serve, without needing anyone to notice. Amen.

Day 26 · Thursday, December 24 (Christmas Eve) — The Waiting Is Over

Read: Luke 2:1-14

Four weeks of waiting in the dark. Tonight the shepherds are out in the fields, keeping watch by night — watchmen, just like the ones we started with. And suddenly the dark is full of light. "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day… a Savior." Hope, peace, joy, and love all arrive in one small bundle, wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger. Come to worship tonight. Bring someone with you. The light has come.

Pray: Jesus, Light of the World, welcome. Thank you for coming down into our dark. Tonight, as we light the Christ candle, shine in us, and through us, for everyone still waiting. Amen.

Christmas Day · Friday, December 25 — The Light Shines

Read: John 1:1-5, 14

John tells Christmas without a manger or shepherds. He goes back to the beginning: the Word was with God and was God, and in him was life, "and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." Then the miracle: "the Word became flesh and lived among us." That's the light we've been waiting for. And here's the good news for December 26 and every day after: the darkness still hasn't overcome it. It never will. Merry Christmas.

Pray: Word made flesh, thank you for living among us. Your light has come, and the darkness can't put it out. Keep it burning in me long after the decorations come down. Merry Christmas, Lord. Amen.



Come Wait With Us

Sundays in Advent • 10:00 AM

Join us each Sunday morning as we light the candles of Advent.

December 13 • Christmas Cantata

Glorious Night: When Christ Was Born

Christmas Eve • December 24

12:00 noon · Christmas Eve Communion

6:00 PM · Candlelight Service

All are welcome

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