## December 2022

November 27 was the 1st Sunday in Advent, marking four weeks leading up to Jesus' arrival. Our focus is always anticipation of the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. This year's lectionary texts also remind us to look beyond that to the *return* of Christ. We know he is always with us, and we trust his promise to return to take us to be with him. This month in our prayer times we look at some Scripture and some songs of Christmas, as we pray for some of the Lord's workers.
Blessings!

Bruce Stumbo, Ministry Lead
North American Mission

**1 Read Matthew 24:42-44.** These verses offer good guidance in light of Christ's return: Know that he is coming. Pray with an expectant heart. Pray for Kristian and Mary Anderson in Boston.

**2 "Stay awake!"** Pray that God would give us a spirit of joyful expectation of his return. Let's not take our days here for granted. "Lord, how might I serve you today? Wake us up, Lord!" Pray for Carl and Emily Juhl in Lincoln, ND.

**3 "Be ready."** Are your bags packed? Are you ready for the journey? Are your eyes focused on the only One who saves? Pray for your friends today; help them with their bags, too. Remember Jason and Savanna Rogness, serving in Parker, CO.

**4 2nd Sunday in Advent. Matthew 3:1-12.** Are you lighting Advent wreath candles? What is the emphasis today? Bethlehem? Love? Hope? Faith? Pray the world receives Jesus, who brings all these things! Pray, too, for all missionaries who bring the true Word to the world.

**5 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel…** Ransom captive Israel." So many are in bondage to sin, slaves to destruction. Pray for neighbors, near and far. Pray for Nick Olson and Jason Lang as they lead the New Prague, MN church plant.

**6 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel…** disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to light." Jesus is the light of the world. "Open our eyes, Lord, to see you."

**7 "O Come, Thou Key of David, Come…** and open wide our heavenly home. Make safe the way that leads on high." Jesus leads us home, promising a safe arrival. Let's all bring friends! Who comes to mind that you should pray for?

**8 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel…** and close the path to misery." Pray that we stay awake to the needs of our neighbors and nations. Only Jesus brings peace, healing, love, and joy to all.

**9 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel…** from depths of hell thy people save, and give them victory o'er the grave." May the Lord help us realize the great battle he won for the world. We pray for pastors and their wives and families today. Keep them strong in faith and the Word.

**10 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel…** in cloud and majesty and awe." This is the Lord Jesus whom we talk to in prayer. Seek his awesome presence through the whole day. Then see what he's up to in your life.

**11 3rd Sunday in Advent. Matthew 11:2-15.** Jesus sums up his ministry: "The blind receive sight, the lame walk… and good news is proclaimed to the poor." What is good news to us poor people? Our sin debt is forgiven!

**12 "O Come, All Ye Faithful…** come and behold him." Take time today to quietly think on the One who *has* come, *is* here, and *is yet* to return. "Come, Lord Jesus."

**13 "O Come, All Ye Faithful…** O come let us adore him." This adoration goes way beyond Sunday morning worship. Each day, each moment, worship the Lord with all your heart. Pray this for yourself. Name and pray for all individuals at your church.

**14 "O Come, All Ye Faithful…** joyful and triumphant." Church planting is often hard and even discouraging. Pray God's strength for all our workers who are called to the harvest.

**15 "O Come, All Ye Faithful…** sing all ye citizens of heaven above." There is room for many more! Pray for those living in areas where we plant congregations, not that they join a church, but that they enter an eternal kingdom!

**16 "O Come, All Ye Faithful…** Word of the Father now in flesh appearing." We've a story to tell to the nations. Pray for us as we tell the story in the U.S. and Canada.

**17 "O Come, All Ye Faithful…** O come let us adore him." Prepare for worship tomorrow by focusing on him today. Pray for our churches.

**18 4th Sunday in Advent. Matthew 1:18-25.** Joseph was told to not be afraid to marry Mary. He obeyed and was blessed. Pray over your fears today—what challenges your trust in God? Fear not.

**19 "O Holy Night…** He appeared, and the soul felt its worth." The redemption Jesus brings makes us whole, rich, and full of grace—full of worth. Do you know someone who doesn't feel worthy? Please pray for them today.

**20 "O Holy Night…** a thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices." Missionaries overseas and at home minister to a weary world. Pray for all who are weary and need rest. You know what Jesus said: "Come to me, you who are weary."

**21 "O Holy Night…** fall on your knees, oh, hear the angels' voices!" Join their song today. And pray, that the world, your world, will hear.

**22 "O Holy Night…** long lay the world, in sin and error pining," maybe without even knowing it! May our congregations to be senders of the gospel. Jesus, meet those who "pine" where they are.

**23 "O Holy Night…** for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn." All things are made new in Jesus. Pray for your family, friends, and neighbors today. Invite them into this glorious morning!

**24 Christmas Eve…**
If you are giving presents, be sure to share the best present of all: God's gift to the world!

**25 Christmas Day! "**Joy to the world, the Lord has come." He is here *and* is coming soon! Give thanks with your friends at church—joyfully!

**26 "Joy to the World…** Let every heart prepare him room." Have you prepared room for him? He's preparing a room for you!

**27 "Joy to the World…** the Savior reigns; let men their songs employ." Employ? Use songs of praise to announce the joy found in Christ. Where will you be "singing" today?

**28 "Joy to the World…** while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the sounding joy." All creation rejoices at Jesus. Let's get the word out! Pray for unsaved friends.

**29 "Joy to the World…** No more let sins and sorrows grow." Sin is such a devastating disaster to all humanity, and to all creation. It's why Jesus came—to rescue and redeem! Give thanks!

**30 "Joy to the World…"** We draw near to the end of a year full of challenge. Who has helped you get through it? Thank them, and God.

**31 Thank you** for praying through the month with me. Please let me know how we all can pray for each other—send prayer requests, whether personal or congregational, to me at bstumbo@clba.org

P.S. Happy New Year!

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