

— *Reflections* —
for the SEASON of ADVENT
— 2025 —



Dear Edgewood University Community,

It is our pleasure to continue the Edgewood University tradition of sharing this reflection booklet for the season of Advent. The season of Advent invites us to be present in the process as we wait and long for the birth of Christ, our Hope, and Love in a troubled world.

This Advent, we want to invite you more deeply into the Dominican practice of contemplating and sharing the fruits of your contemplation with others. The root of the word contemplation is *contemplare*, “to observe, to notice.” We encourage you to take time in slowness and stillness, to listen for God’s voice, to notice the Hope and Love already present around us, and to share those gifts with others.

For each Sunday in Advent, as well as Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, this booklet will guide you in practicing the four pillars of Dominican life: **Prayer, Study, Community, and Ministry.**

PRAYER: Each week will begin with an opening prayer to center our spirits and put ourselves in the presence of God. This year, our prayers come from *The Lives We Actually Have: 100 Blessings for Imperfect Days*, by Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie. Edited for length.

COMMUNITY: Dominicans are “happy to beg a little bit of illumination from everyone we meet on the road” (St. Thomas Aquinas, O.P.). Enjoy a reflection from our campus community to experience and learn from one another’s “little bit of illumination.”

STUDY: The practice of *lectio divina*¹, a slow, rhythmic reading of a scripture passage, gives us the opportunity to spend time learning from the scripture and reflecting on how it might be relevant in our lives today. The readings² for the rest of the days of Advent are also listed for your own study and reflection.

MINISTRY: An invitation to action will carry us into the rest of our week, providing opportunities to observe, notice, and share the fruits of our contemplation with others.

Blessed Advent,

Laura Hermanns, MSP

Director of Campus Ministry

Gretchen Baumgardt, M.Div., Ph.D.

Vice President for Mission Integration

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LECTIO DIVINA FOR EACH WEEK

READ | Slowly and thoughtfully, read the scripture passage the first time. What word or phrase captures your attention and grabs your heart?

REFLECT | Slowly read the passage again. Resting on those lines, phrases or words, meditate on what God might be saying to you. What resonates with you? What feelings are arising within you?

RESPOND | Respond to God from your heart. Speak to God of your feelings and insights, gratitude, struggles, or needs. Offer these to God.

REST | Stay in God's presence, noticing any invitations God has for you. What might God be saying to you? Rest in God's love and listen. Is there a message or invitation?

READINGS FOR THE WEEK | Continue the Advent journey. Consider writing your own prayer, practicing lectio divina, or writing down the questions that come up for you.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday, November 30, 2025

Is 2:1-5/Rom 13:11-14/Mt 24:37-44

PRAYER

God, show us your heart, how you seek out the broken.
Lift us on your shoulders and carry us home –
no matter how strong we think we are.
God, seek us out and find us, we your tired people,
and lead us out to where hope lies,
where your kingdom will come
and your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Fill us with your courage.
Calm us with your love.
Fortify us with your hope. Amen.³

STUDY

Isaiah 2:1-5

This is what Isaiah, son of Amoz,
saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
In days to come,
the mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest mountain
and raised above the hills.
All nations shall stream toward it;
many peoples shall come and say:
"Come, let us climb the LORD's mountain,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may instruct us in his ways,
and we may walk in his paths."
For from Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between the nations,
and impose terms on many peoples.
They shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks;
one nation shall not raise the sword against another,
nor shall they train for war again.
O house of Jacob, come,
let us walk in the light of the Lord!

COMMUNITY

Isaiah's vision of nations coming together toward the mountain of the Lord reminds us of the message of unity and hope. Right now, the world feels divided in more ways than one. Whether that is by borders, beliefs, and/or fears. This passage reminds us of what is possible when humanity turns toward something greater than itself. Isaiah imagines people of every nation walking side by side, seeking wisdom, peace, and understanding—seeking guidance from God himself.

Today, we are faced with conflict and competition. Yet Isaiah's words invite us to imagine change, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares." The tools of destruction become tools of creation. This is a call not only for nations, but for each of us. What would it mean to turn our own "swords," our anger, pride, or impatience, into "plowshares" that cultivate compassion and reconciliation?

As we enter the Advent season, we are reminded that peace begins with us, the daughters and sons of Christ. The light of the Lord, which Isaiah urges us to walk in, can shine through our everyday actions by listening to one another, showing kindness, working together for justice, and believing that community is still possible even when the world feels broken. Advent is not only about waiting for light to come, but about choosing to walk in it now when times are tougher than ever.

– **Danica Flotten, '28**
Siena Scholar
Biology and Chemistry Major

MINISTRY

Who in your life might be in need of a listening ear? How might you be that for them?

What is a small act of kindness you can share with someone this week?

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday, December 1: Is 4:2-6/Mt 8:5-11

Tuesday, December 2: Is 11:1-10/Lk 10:21-24

Wednesday, December 3: Is 25:6-10a/Mt 15:29-37

Thursday, December 4: Is 26:1-6/Mt 7:21, 24-27

Friday, December 5: Is 29:17-24/Mt 9:27-31

== SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT ==

Sunday, December 7, 2025

Is 11:1-10/Rom 15:4-9/Mt 3:1-12

PRAYER

God, we are waiting for love,
not the simple kind or the sweep-you-off-your-feet kind,
but the absurd kind.
The kind wrapped in rags, resting in a bucket of animal feed.
Love enough to save us all.
Blessed are we who look for Love -
deeper, fuller, truer than we have ever known,
than we could have ever hoped for.
Blessed are we who seek you,
the light that dawned so long ago in that dark stable.
Love given. Love received.
Receive this gift, dear one.
Love has come for you. Amen.⁴

STUDY

Isaiah 11: 1-6

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.
The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—
and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.
He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;
but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.
Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.
The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.

COMMUNITY

In this time of immense global change and seeing so many needs and hurts in the world, I can sometimes get frustrated by the limits of my own human capacity. I wish I could do more, show up more, and help more. But my human heart, mind, and spirit can only do so much. When I get to the end of my rope, when I'm feeling overwhelmed by the weight of the world, and frustrated by my own limitations, it can be hard to see a way forward.

To me, this passage is a reminder that that no matter how difficult the situation, God's imagination is always better than my imagination! In the words of Rabbi Nahum Ward-Lev, the three qualities of the prophetic experience are, "engagement with divine love, courage to condemn oppression, and imagination to envision an alternative future."

Isaiah is giving us a glimpse of God's imagination — a vision of growth coming out of destruction, where leadership is rooted in wisdom, compassion, and truth, where peace and justice flow from dialogue and fairness for the poor, rather than the rod or the sword.

It's not always easy to see evidence of this vision today, and it's hard for

us humans to imagine something we haven't seen, especially when we're feeling limited, overwhelmed, or stuck. Happily, God gifted us a living breathing example of God's imagination. In Jesus we have Isaiah's vision embodied. New growth springing from the lineage of Jesse and David, showing us the true way of peace. A peace rooted in justice, in compassion, in wisdom, and in courageous and loving action for those the world has ignored and discarded. In this season of waiting may we trust that the love of God and the way of Jesus Christ will always bring forth more than we can possibly imagine.

– **Laura Hermanns, MSP**
Director of Campus Ministry

MINISTRY

Where in your life do you see signs of new growth or hope?

The Spirit of the Lord brings wisdom, understanding, counsel, and strength. Which of these gifts do you feel you need most right now?

How can you be a peacemaker during this Advent season?

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday, December 8: Gn 3:9-15, 20/Eph 1:3-6, 11-12/Lk 1:26-38

Tuesday, December 9: Is 40:1-11/Mt 18:12-14

Wednesday, December 10: Is 40:25-31/Mt 11:28-30

Thursday, December 11: Is 41:13-20/Mt 11:11-15

Friday, December 12: Zec 2:14-17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab/Lk 1:26-38 or Lk 1:39-47

Saturday, December 13: Sir 48:1-4, 9-11/Mt 17:9a, 10-13

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 14, 2025

Is 35:1-6a, 10/Jas 5:7-10/Mt 11:2-11

PRAYER

God, Surprise us with joy in the midst of the mundane,
abundance in the midst of so much scarcity,
presence in the midst of Christmas chaos.
We have quieted our souls to listen, to wait for you, oh God,
for your Word-Made-Flesh is life to us. Amen.⁵

STUDY

Isaiah 2:1-5

Blessed the one whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD, his God,
The maker of heaven and earth,
the seas and all that is in them,
Who keeps faith forever,
secures justice for the oppressed,
who gives bread to the hungry.
The LORD sets prisoners free;
the LORD gives sight to the blind.
The LORD raises up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.
The LORD protects the resident alien,
comes to the aid of the orphan and the widow,
but thwarts the way of the wicked.

COMMUNITY

Psalms 146: 5-10 is relevant in today's world situations. In today's world, families are being displaced by war, people are living in poverty with little to no help, migrants and refugees seek safety in places where they're not always welcomed, and people are left without support. But Psalm 146: 5-10 is here to remind us that we are not alone because God is here for us. He sees us, is with us, and is our support. The scripture says God, "secures justice for the oppressed, who gives bread to the hungry... sets prisoners free... gives sight to the blind... raises up those who are bowed down... loves the righteous... protects the resident alien." It's a reminder when we feel hopeless or think that injustice wins, God is here and doesn't side with the powerful but stands with the most vulnerable.

The scripture connects with Edgewood's values, especially the commitment to compassion and justice. Psalms 146: 5-10 portrays that God's heart is with the vulnerable, and Edgewood's

values strive to do the same. God is compassionate towards those who need it, God is our support and will stand with those who experience injustice. The verse says God "thwarts the way of the wicked." Over time the wicked will fall because of God's compassion and justice towards the vulnerable. As long as we have faith in God, He will always be the support we need during rough times.

– **Lezly Sobrevilla '28**

Siena Scholar
Pre-Nursing

MINISTRY

What does it mean for you to place your trust in God? When is it hard for you to do that?

How can you be a part of lifting others up this Advent season?

Who in your life might need encouragement or a reminder of love right now?

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday, December 15: Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a/Mt 21:23-27

Tuesday, December 16: Zep 3:1-2, 9-13/Mt 21:28-32

Wednesday, December 17: Gn 49:2, 8-10/Mt 1:1-17

Thursday, December 18: Jer 23:5-8/Mt 1:18-25

Friday, December 19: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a/Lk 1:5-25

Saturday, December 20: Is 7:10-14/Lk 1:26-38

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 21, 2025

Is 7:10-14/Rom 1:1-7/Mt 1:18-24

PRAYER

Blessed are we, the fearful,
though we long to be people of peace.
We can't lie; we are often afraid.
Afraid there won't be enough -
Enough resources, enough time, enough memories.
Blessed are we who ask you for wisdom.
Show us what to turn from,
what to set aside.
Blessed are we who look to you and say,
God, truly, we are troubled and afraid.
Come govern our hearts and calm our fears.
Oh, Prince of Peace, still our restless selves,
calm our anxious hearts, quiet our busy minds. Amen.⁶

STUDY

Matthew 1:18-24

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about.
When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph,
but before they lived together,
she was found with child through the Holy Spirit.
Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man,
yet unwilling to expose her to shame,
decided to divorce her quietly.
Such was his intention when, behold,
the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,
"Joseph, son of David,
do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home.
For it is through the Holy Spirit
that this child has been conceived in her.
She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus,
because he will save his people from their sins."
All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:
Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,
which means "God is with us."

When Joseph awoke,
he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him
and took his wife into his home.

COMMUNITY

The lines that stand out to me the most are: "Do not be afraid" and "God is with us." In this passage, Joseph's story reminds us that love is not just a feeling, but it is, in fact, a courageous choice. Even when his situation was confusing and his reputation was at risk, Joseph responded with quiet trust and compassion. In this quiet faith, he chose to listen — not to his own anxiety or the expectations of others, but to God's voice. His courage to trust, even when the path was unclear, reminds us that faith often asks for obedience before understanding.

In today's world, fear often shapes our decisions — fear of judgment, failure, or change. But this passage invites us, especially during Advent, to move from fear to trust. God's message to Joseph — "Do not be afraid" — is also a message for us: that God is with us in the unknown. Emmanuel, "God with us," is not a distant promise but a living reality.

This story connects deeply with the Dominican pillars of faithful service and community. Joseph models

humble service by protecting Mary and welcoming Jesus into his home, even when it was difficult. His quiet obedience became the foundation of a family that changed the world. Like Joseph, we are called to serve not only through grand gestures but through everyday acts of faithfulness — choosing compassion over pride, trust over fear. In this final week of waiting, may we welcome Christ by choosing love over fear and trust over doubt — remembering that, just as in Joseph's story, God is with us always.

– Esmeralda Sierra-Romero '28
Chemistry and Neuroscience Major
Pre-Medicine Concentration

MINISTRY

How can you show quiet faithfulness in your daily life?

What are some things that you are afraid of right now that you can bring to God?

How can you prepare your heart to welcome others this season?

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday, December 22: 1 Sm 1:24-28/Lk 1:46-56

Tuesday, December 23: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Lk 1:57-66

CHRISTMAS EVE

Wednesday, December 24, 2025

*Readings for Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Advent: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Lk 1:67-79
Readings for The Nativity of the Lord - Vigil Mass: Is 62:1-5/Acts 13:16-17,22-25/
Mt 1:1-25 or Mt 1:18-25*

PRAYER

Jesus, this is the great inversion
I would not have known
had you not appeared and made yourself small.
Jesus, I would have been satisfied
with the God who moves mountains
and whose breath imparts life
but who never cried in his mother's arms.
Your fragility, a witness.
Your dependence, an invitation.
Your cry, a reminder.
Our finitude is not an embarrassment,
because neither was yours.
Blessed are we when we see love.
at long last,
in every small and tender thing,
stealing into our world to change us all. Amen.⁷

STUDY

Luke 1: 67-79

Zechariah [John the Baptist's] father, filled with the Holy Spirit,
prophesied, saying:

"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;
for he has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty Savior,
born of the house of his servant David.
Through his prophets he promised of old
that he would save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all who hate us.

He promised to show mercy to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
to set us free from the hand of our enemies,
free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace."

COMMUNITY

When I read Zachariah's song, I am struck by the amount of hope within his words. After months of silence, his voice is not only returned but also pours out praise and faith in God's promises. There is also recognition that God has not forgotten His people, even after a long period of waiting. I think that speaks powerfully to today. I find that I tend to feel like I am waiting in darkness during times of uncertainty, waiting for clarity, peace, or a sense of God's presence nearby. Advent, too, meets us in that waiting. It reminds us that God still comes. The "dawn from on high" still breaks into our everyday lives, even when we least expect it. God's mercy is not just a story from the past but something that continues to unfold both in and around us. This passage also reminds me of the importance of truth, which I feel is becoming more fragile in our world today. Zechariah speaks the truth about who God is. He is faithful, compassionate, and merciful. He doesn't speak out of doubt or fear but out of a deep trust that God will keep God's word. The truth that he proclaims brings light, exposes us to reality and

gives life. During this period of reflection, I invite you to center your life in the same truth; to be honest with yourself about where God's light could shine brighter in your life, and to let that truth shape the way that you live and the upcoming new year. Truth is not merely a fact; it is about finding an alignment with peace, love, and people.

As the days grow darker and we move towards Christmas, this passage is a beacon. It is a promise that light will always find its way, and that when it does, we are called to walk in it, guided by truth and peace.

– **Nadia Marshall, '25**
Liturgical Assistant, Office of
Campus Ministry

MINISTRY

How do you remind yourself of promise when waiting feels long or difficult?

Where do you see compassion and truth in your life or the people around you right now?

How can you be a small light of hope for others?

How can you prepare your heart to welcome others this season?

CHRISTMAS DAY

Thursday, December 25, 2025

Readings for Mass at Dawn: Is 62:11-12/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20

PRAYER

God, this is a kind of magic,
the way this day shines so strangely,
how it sparkles beyond our understanding.
But somehow this day never fails to awaken a longing,
to love well – or at least better –
all those here with us, and those far away,
and to remember with gratitude
those now gone and missed.

What is this mystery?
Our God, who set the world spinning,
should come down for this one reason
to love us into newness.
Not for gain or our capitalist fantasies,
but for the hope so freely, lavishly given
that we might learn to see, feel, and live Christ's love.
Thank you, Christ the Giver and the Gift. Amen.⁸

STUDY

Luke 1: 67-79

When the angels went away from them to heaven,
the shepherds said to one another,
“Let us go, then, to Bethlehem
to see this thing that has taken place,
which the Lord has made known to us.”
So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph,
and the infant lying in the manger.
When they saw this,
they made known the message
that had been told them about this child.
All who heard it were amazed
by what had been told them by the shepherds.
And Mary kept all these things,
reflecting on them in her heart.

Then the shepherds returned,
glorifying and praising God
for all they had heard and seen,
just as it had been told to them.
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

COMMUNITY

This passage is part of the very familiar Christmas narrative we all hold dear. To set the scene: angels, in all their radiance, appear to the shepherds to tell them a Savior has been born and where they can find him. They hurry off and find an unusual, quiet pastoral scene — a young couple in a barn, with a baby in a feed trough. The shepherds took in the scene with open hearts, which allowed them to recognize the Son of God as a vulnerable infant. They understood, they got it, they were amazed! So much so that they rushed back to tell everyone what they had seen.

Sadly, I am naturally reluctant to see God in the vulnerable and mundane. I look for a God of worldly power and might. I get drawn in by the trappings and preparations of Christmas. In my preconceptions, I miss seeing God as God is! And I am reluctant to share what I know. I get it upside down and backwards.

But this morning (and every morning), we have another chance. My friends, pause with me just for a moment. Let us be like Mary, taking Emmanuel — Christ among

us — into our hearts. Breathe in deeply and feel the joy and peace of Emmanuel among us. A God, not of privilege and power, but one who came to us as an infant resting peacefully in a quiet, unassuming place.

– Stan Winarski, MBA '91

MINISTRY

How can you share the joy of Jesus' birth with others today?

What is something you can praise or be thankful for today?

What are some ways we can be eager to come closer to Jesus this Advent?

Thank you!

Thank you for sharing this Advent Journey with us

— to all who contributed reflections, and to you who have taken the time to pause, read, reflect, and pray during this Season. We are especially grateful to the Siena Scholars Leadership Program, our Marketing and Strategic Communications team, and the Division of Advancement and Alumni Relations.

We wish you God's holy gifts of joy, hope, and peace in this sacred season.

The Division of Mission, Values, and Inclusion

We welcome your feedback! Please email mvi@edgewood.edu.

COVER ART:

I Am Sayings, Thomas Ingmire, Copyright 2002, The Saint John's Bible, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

FOOTNOTES:

¹ This version of lectio divina is adapted from the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa Associate Guidebook. Learn more at: www.sinsinawa.org/vocations

² Daily readings can be found on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website: www.bible.usccb.org

³ Bowler K, Richie J. *The Lives We Actually Have: 100 Blessings for Imperfect Days*. New York, NY: Convergent Books; 2023:214.
For the First Sunday of Advent – Hope.

⁴ Ibid., For the Second Sunday of Advent – Love, page 216

⁵ Ibid., For the Third Sunday of Advent – Joy, page 218

⁶ Ibid., For the Fourth Sunday of Advent – Peace, page 220

⁷ Ibid., For Christmas Eve, page 222

⁸ Ibid., For Christmas Day, page 224

The Siena Scholars is a selective scholarship program for student leaders committed to developing “right” or thriving relationships with Self, God, and Others. Using St. Catherine of Siena as a model of relational leadership, students develop practical leadership skills, build a network for professional and spiritual growth, and explore how they are called to build a more just and compassionate world.

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