



the fullness of

hope
peace
joy
love

EXTRAVAGANT CHRISTMAS

SERIES COMMUNITY GUIDE

THRIVE LA CHURCH
December 2025

How to Use This Guide

As a church we're using Rich Villodas's "Waiting for Jesus" devotional for Advent. This 2-week group discussion guide is pulled from that book, so some people may have already read it that week. Please encourage your groups throughout the Advent season to engage with the devotional! Advent is Nov 30th-Dec 24th, 2025.

Watch the Sermon

In Person on Sundays at 10am: 2234 W Temple St, Los Angeles, CA 90026
Online Live on Sundays at 10am: thriveonlinechurch.com
Archived: thrivechurch.com/media

Gather Weekly

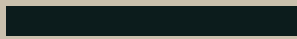
We have multiple Thrive Groups throughout Los Angeles and Online. We encourage our groups meeting in person to share a meal together.

Discussion

In your groups you will discuss the week's sermon and Bible readings with reflection/discussion questions designed to help you go deeper.

Join or Start a Group

Go to thrivechurch.com/thrivegroups or Text "Groups" to 323-709-0711 to be placed in a group and to learn more.



Week 1: Hope & Waiting

week of December 1st

Advent began on Sun, Nov 30th and goes until Dec 24th. Advent means “arrival” and is a season of preparing for Christ’s arrival, which we celebrate on Christmas: God with Us. In this season we can get so busy focusing on preparing for Christmas, that we lose sight of Christ. Advent trains us to prepare our hearts to celebrate Christ’s arrival - he has come, he is come, and he will come again. Jesus *is* our hope.

This week’s sermon as well as in “Waiting for Jesus,” both focus on the themes of hope, waiting, and expectation. This is taken from “Day 4” of the devo book.

Opening Question:

Christmas decorations... What color lights are you hanging? All-white? Multicolor? A specific color, like pink or blue?

Bible Reading:

Psalm 5:3; Acts 2:1-4

Activity:

Read page 27 “Waiting with Expectation” and page 29 “Waiting with One Another” aloud as a group:

Discussion Questions:

Why is “waiting” important to our spiritual lives? Why do we pause to focus on this during Advent?

When was there a time in your life (or currently) when you were “waiting on the Lord”?

How can you invite others into your current or future waiting?

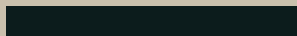
How can you come alongside others in their waiting?

Anything else standing out from the devo readings this week?

Prayer Practice:

Spend two minutes in stillness and silence before God. You are welcome to pray silently, but try practicing being silent and still - if your mind wanders, that’s totally okay! Then try directing your attention back on God.

Amen.



Week 2: Peace & Peacemaking

week of December 8th

When God entered the world, he came in the most surprising and subversive way - he came as a vulnerable baby, Jesus. In doing this, Jesus established the way of the kingdom of God, defined by love and peace. Advent reminds us that Jesus came *into* a broken world to make it whole by restoring peace - *shalom* - to what is broken. His presence brings peace.

Day 10 of the devo book is our main source today.

Opening Question:

What does your family eat for Christmas?

Bible Reading:

Isa 9:6; Phil 4:6-7

Discussion Questions:

Anything standing out to you from the devotional this week?
How would you define what it means to have "peace"? How is Jesus our peace?

Activity:

Paul wrote this while he was in prison. He names 3 channels for receiving the peace of Jesus: **prayer, petition, thanksgiving**. This isn't a magic recipe - these are practices that, over time, help us live from a different center. Think of Advent as a season of training.

We are going to write our own prayers and include:

1. **Petition** - pouring out requests to God. Longings, desires, fears, and requests. To raise your burdens to God is to open yourself up to His power and *peace*.
2. **Thanksgiving** - as you name the gifts you've received, you anchor your heart, mind, and soul in God's goodness. You remind yourself that He is faithful. You rest in His promises, which brings *peace*.

(Spend ~5-8 minutes on prayer writing.)

Next, with a partner: Share your **gratitudes** with a partner (what you feel comfortable sharing). Then discuss how you will each commit to prayer this week of Advent.

Finally, re-gather as a group and spend time thanking God in prayer to close your time together.

This week:

Text your partner to see how their prayer time with Jesus has been and commit to praying for one another!