Advent Devotional December 15, 2026

Scripture

Isaiah 9:2-7

2 The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
3 You have multiplied exultation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
4 For the yoke of their burden
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
5 For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
6 For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders,
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7 Great will be his authority,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Devotion

The Rev. Thomas John Henion Jr., Doctor of Ministry Student, Reformed Focus

Growing up, it wasn't unusual for our Sunday afternoon lunches to include a few guests I didn't know. My dad never hesitated to ask people if they had somewhere to go after church. That particular Sunday, our guest was an unhoused gentleman I'll call Ted.

I couldn't have been older than eight or nine, and I wasn't quite sure what to make of Ted or his circumstances. He struggled to walk and explained that severe back pain kept him from pounding the pavement in search of work. In my young mind, it was simple: Ted didn't have a home because his back hurt.

As I peered across the table, I saw my dad give my mom one of those telepathic looks: “We need to do something.” Then he looked down. My eyes followed. Ted’s sneakers were incredibly worn, with his toes poking through.

After lunch, my mom suddenly raced out the door. Sometime later, she returned with a shopping bag of new sneakers and socks.

Ted was ecstatic. “This is exactly what I needed! Now I can walk better!”

Months, maybe years, later, a well-dressed man came to my dad’s office.

“Do I know you?” my dad asked.

“Yes,” he grinned. “I’m Ted. Remember the shoes?”

Ted explained that the shoes allowed him to walk with less pain. He found a job and eventually became a vice president at a software company. He returned to thank my dad and to make a donation to our church’s homeless ministry.

Advent announces that “the people walking in darkness have seen a great light.” Christ has entered our darkness and will come again to make all things new. Until then, we are called to bear witness to that Light, sometimes in remarkably ordinary ways—even a pair of shoes.

Who has God placed in our lives who “needs shoes”? We may never know what God will do with our simplest acts of compassion; we are called to be faithful, trusting God with the rest. When God is at work, even our ordinary acts of love can bear witness to Christ’s Light in ways more transformative than we could ever imagine.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, You have come as Light into our darkness, and You will come again to make all things new. Until that day, open our eyes to those in need of Your love. Make us faithful in ordinary acts of compassion, so that through us, others might glimpse the extraordinary light of Your love. Amen.