Advent Devotional December 1, 2026

Scripture

Psalm 33

1 Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous.
Praise befits the upright.
2 Praise the Lord with the lyre;
make melody to him with the harp of ten strings.
3 Sing to him a new song;
play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

4 For the word of the Lord is upright,
and all his work is done in faithfulness.
5 He loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.

6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made
and all their host by the breath of his mouth.
7 He gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle;
he put the deeps in storehouses.

8 Let all the earth fear the Lord;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him,
9 for he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.

10 The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
he frustrates the plans of the peoples.
11 The counsel of the Lord stands forever,
the thoughts of his heart to all generations.
12 Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage.

13 The Lord looks down from heaven;
he sees all humankind.
14 From where he sits enthroned he watches
all the inhabitants of the earth—
15 he who fashions the hearts of them all
and observes all their deeds.
16 A king is not saved by his great army;
a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.
17 The war horse is a vain hope for victory,
and by its great might it cannot save.

18 Truly the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him,
on those who hope in his steadfast love,
19 to deliver their soul from death
and to keep them alive in famine.

[20] Our soul waits for the Lord;
he is our help and shield.
[21] Our heart is glad in him
because we trust in his holy name.
[22] Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us,
even as we hope in you.

Devotion

The Rev. Paul James Pfeuffer '12/'18

The unmistakable noise of Styrofoam squeaks beneath your fingertips as you unbox the ceramic nativity set that your aunt and uncle got you when you got married decades ago. Your limbs become entangled in the untidy mess of strings of lights that (somehow) tangled themselves when you put them into sturdy plastic containers 11 months ago, because "honestly, honey, they weren't like that when I put them in there." You carefully unbox the Darth Vader ornament from its original 1997 Hallmark ornament box, reflecting on the lost lightsaber that your oldest child scattered to the wind because he simply didn't understand collectors' value.

There is this beautiful and amusing image amid Psalm 33's discussion of the steadfast love of God:

"By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,
and by the breath of his mouth all their host.
He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap;
he puts the deeps in storehouses." (vv. 6-7, ESV)

Imagine the Lord caring enough for creation that God gathers the waters in an orderly fashion and places them into storehouses. If you're anything like me, perhaps you need to outsource the storage of your Christmas decorations to the Almighty! The sharing of such trinkets with our loved ones brings us hope and the reflection on the memories made will last us a good, long while.

And we also realize that unpacking God's love for us is not a one-time deal; when the psalmist talks about our soul waiting for the Lord and placing our trust in God, we have to realize that this is an everyday occurrence. Sure, we may observe Advent as the time of waiting for the birth of Immanuel, but God comes into this world and loves us in the smaller, quieter moments as well as the raucous and joyful celebrations. Even when the last nativity piece is placed in its container, and Darth Vader at last gets put away for the year.

Prayer

My prayer for today, (and for your Advent, dear reader) is a simple one. It is the last line of Psalm 33:

"Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us,
even as we hope in you."