Experiencing the Season

Regional Youth Council
Advent Devotional 2026

The Regional Youth Council invites you to experince the season through sight, sound, taste, and touch.

We hope this devotional will bring you joy and meaning this Advent. Perhaps it will even bring some of your own memories to mind as you prepare to celebrate Christmas!

Week One

Mark 13:24-37

32 “But about that day or hour no one knows,
neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but
only the Father. 33 Beware, keep alert, for you do
not know when the time will come. 34 It is like a
man going on a journey, when he leaves home
and puts his slaves in charge, each with his
work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on
the watch. 35 Therefore, keep awake, for you do
not know when the master of the house will
come, in the evening or at midnight or at
cockcrow or at dawn, 36 or else he may find you
asleep when he comes suddenly. 37 And what I
say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

Reflection: something you see that reminds you of hope or light and share why.

The sun poking through the clouds in the mid morning--God is always watching. The way it shows a new day to try and make things better--God is always watching. A new day means making amends. A new day means having hope for making things better for the future.

--Brooke W.

I am reminded of hope when I see people my age caring and loving others who aren't like them. It's very easy in the world we've created to not understand others and to unknowingly put people down. But when I see kids my age showing care and treating others with respect, I'm reminded of the love and hope that we can bring.

--Maggie J.

Something I see that reminds me of hope would have to be my church's mission trips. Every year In July all the youth/youth adults at my church take time away from work or plans that they had so that we can go out and help serve are community.

--Alorah R.

Something that reminds me of hope is when people around me get together to buy something for someone or when we work together to keep the magic of different seasons alive.

--Derek H.

Anytime I see someone welcoming others in, whether it's into church, their home, or just welcoming them into their world, it reminds me of hope. Being welcoming and inviting can impact people in ways that no one could imagine. Those welcomers are the light that can lead someone through the darkness, and guide them to where they need to be.

--Darby D.

Whenever I see string lights tangled up on a porch railing in the middle of a freezing December night, it honestly reminds me of hope. Even when everything around them looks dark, dead, and winter-gray, those tiny little bulbs still glow like they're refusing to give up. It makes me think about how hope doesn't have to be loud or huge to actually matter. Sometimes it's just a small spark showing up right when things feel the coldest.

--Jasmine G.

Seeing the generosity of people reaching out to help their neighbors whether that is adopting a child from the angel tree, volunteering at Christmas event that is serving those in need this Christmas season, or serving a hot meal to a senior adult all helps me to see the hope in a world. When we look beyond ourselves to the needs of others and step out to help them in a tangible way we are Christlike.

And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.Matthew 25:40

--Tara Dew

Week Two

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

1 Lord, you were favorable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
2 You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you pardoned all their sin.
8 Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for God will speak peace to God's people,
to God's faithful, to those who turn to God in their
hearts. 9 Surely God's salvation is at hand for those
who fear God,
that God's glory may dwell in our land.
10 Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
11 Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
12 The Lord will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
13 Righteousness will go before the Lord
and will make a path for the Lord's steps.

Reflection: something you hear that reminds you that God is at work in the world.

Something I hear that reminds me God is still working is the sound of people laughing together in a crowded room—especially at youth group or after church. When everyone is talking over each other and just genuinely happy to be around one another, you can literally feel the joy in the space. It reminds me that God uses real people and real friendships to bring light into our lives. Even when the world feels heavy, hearing that kind of pure laughter proves He's still moving and bringing people together.

--Jasmine G.

Something that I hear that reminds me that God is at work is when people come together to make something happen or celebrate a holiday or event.

--Derek H.

When I hear laughter, it reminds me that God is at work in this world. Laughter is contagious and spreads joy from one person to another which is so wonderful to hear. Laughter can bring people together in hard times. Laughter can change moods. Laughter is a joy. Being able to see people laugh reminds me that God is present, and is filling us with joy no matter the situation.

--Darby D.

Kind words. Everyone has the ability to be kind to one another. Sometimes people find it difficult to show kindness when they don't receive it in return. But when people are able to look past that and treat people with kindness anyway, I know that God is at work with them.

--Alorah R.

When I hear kind words and honest opinions, I am reminded that God is at work in our world. People who put in the effort to make others feel seen and heard is a skill that most people don't possess. I remember God's work when I see and hear others sharing love and being kind.

--Maggie J.

Laughter when you are with others shows God is at work. Like when I am messing around with my family during the holidays. Laughter has a way of bringing people together. It can make a bad time better and a good time a great time. God is always there to bring people closer to each other and God.

--Brooke W.

Laughter reminds me of God at work. It's the sound of joy. I think if we're actively working together to bring God's kingdom to earth, then the earth will be full of much more laughter.

--Mindi Godfrey

Week Three

Luke 1:46-55

46 And Mary said,
"My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
48 for God has looked with favor on my lowly state.
Surely from now on all generations will call me
blessed, 49 for the Mighty One has done great things for
me, and holy is the Mighty One's name;
50 indeed, God's mercy is for those who fear God
from generation to generation.
51 God has shown strength with God's arm;
Goad has scattered the proud in the imagination of
their hearts.
52 God has brought down the powerful from their
thrones and lifted up the lowly;
53 God has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
54 God has come to the aid of Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
55 according to the promise God made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Reflection: something you love eating during the holidays (taste) and what memories might be around sharing that food with others.

Deviled eggs. Every Thanksgiving my family likes to make and try new things, but one of the things that has never changed are the deviled eggs. And so it shows me that even over the years as things change there will always be something that stays the same.

--Alorah R.

During the holidays, one of my favorite foods is candy cane cookies. It's a dessert that my grandma used to make every year. I make them now, and they are so good. I think the best memory I have of those cookies is when I would help my mom make a batch or two as a kid.

--Derek H.

One of my favorite foods around the holidays is pumpkin pie. Because it's prepared so many different ways, it holds so many different meanings for different people. For me, I place the memories with my grandmother and eating at her house while out of town. This feeling reminds me of her ability to show love and kindness through food, which is her way of showing she cares.

--Maggie J.

My absolute favorite thing to eat during the holidays is warm, gooey cinnamon rolls straight out of the oven on a cold winter morning. Every time I taste that sweet cinnamon and icing, it instantly takes me back to sitting around the kitchen with my family while everyone is still half-asleep in their pajamas. Sharing food like that slows everything down and makes you appreciate the people right in front of you. It's less about the actual food and more about how safe and loved you feel just being together.

--Jasmine G.

I love to eat warm chocolate chip cookies during the holidays. Something about the gooey chocolate chips, and the soft middle of the cookie fill me with joy and bring back memories. When I eat the cookies, it reminds me of when I was younger, and I would bake those cookies with my mom. We would bake them on Christmas Eve, and I wouldn't know what I was doing but she always made sure I had a part in it. Even if the part meant just licking the bowl and spoons clean.

--Darby D.

Waking up on Christmas morning and running to go eat the breakfast pullapart that is always made. Fighting with my family over who can get the best piece has to be on of the best parts of the day. Making it the night before is also a great time that God brought us together to make memories. God is there to bring us the good food and good times together.

--Brooke W.

Week Four

Luke 1:26-38

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town
in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose
name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was
Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The
Lord is with you."[a] 29 But she was much perplexed by his words
and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel
said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with
God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,
and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called
the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the
throne of his ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of
Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34 Mary
said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"[b] 35 The
angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the
power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to
be born[c] will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36 And now,
your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son,
and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For
nothing will be impossible with God." 38 Then Mary said, "Here am
I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your
word." Then the angel departed from her.

What is one kind thing that someone has done for you that was not expected. (This is the sense of touch, or being the hands of God.)

I remember one night I was stuck in an airport, my plane had just left and I hadn't arrived in time board. I was so worried that I wouldn't make it back in time and so I frantically called people I was close with to hopefully get some calm reassurance. I am forever grateful that someone was able to stay on the phone with me the whole night, and make sure I stayed calm. Through this act, I saw God's love.

--Maggie J.

The holidays are a stressful time and sometimes one thing can be said or heard that make you need someone. I am lucky to have an amazing family to help me when things are rocky and I have God to thank for that. Sometimes all I need is my mom to give me a hug, and I know things will be better. I thank God everyday for the family God gave me.

--Brooke W.

Helping me when I was lost, both physically and mentally. I've been lost many times in my life, but help always comes from somewhere different. Sometimes it's my family and friends. But sometimes it's people I've never even met before, and it's always such a shock when someone I don't know and have never met before asks me if I'm okay or says that my outfit looks nice.

--Alorah R.

There was once a time where I was going through a rough patch, and I felt like I had no one to talk to. One day my friend asked if I was okay and when I told her, she just sat and listened to me. She didn't know it, but her listening to me was one of the nicest things someone has ever done for me. She didn't give me advice or asked questions, she just listened. I will forever be grateful for that moment, because it showed me that listening has a greater impact that most think.

--Darby D.

One thing someone did for me that was unexpected was when my friends went out of their way to make me feel welcome when I was still scared of making friends.

--Derek H.

One unexpected kind thing people did for me recently was when my coworkers threw me a surprise going-away party at the job I loved before I had to quit and move. Leaving a place and people you really care about is already super stressful, so walking in to see they had planned something just for me meant the absolute world. It made me feel so seen and appreciated during a really emotional transition. Moments like that remind me how God takes care of us and shows love through the people God puts in our lives.

--Jasmine G.