



WISH

CHRISTMAS RESOURCES FROM AMOS TRUST



Readings, liturgy, prayers, poems,
quotes and music.



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ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2020

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“ POLITICIANS COMPETE FOR THE HIGHEST OFFICES. BUSINESS TYCOONS SCRAMBLE FOR A BIGGER AND BIGGER PIECE OF THE PIE. ARMIES MARCH AND SCIENTISTS STUDY AND PHILOSOPHERS PHILOSOPHISE AND PREACHERS PREACH AND LABOURERS SWEAT. BUT IN THAT SILENT BABY, LYING IN THAT HUMBLE MANGER, THERE PULSES MORE POTENTIAL POWER AND WISDOM AND GRACE AND ALIVENESS THAN ALL THE REST OF US CAN IMAGINE.

BRIAN D. MCLAREN

AMERICAN PASTOR, AUTHOR AND SPEAKER



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INTRODUCTION

WISH I COULD BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

Advent's message of Hope and Christmas' call for
'Peace on Earth', are derided as wishful thinking.
There is nothing wrong with wishful thinking, when
it leads to wishful action.

The actions that are formed out of our dreams and deepest
wishes are at the heart of Christmas. Two thousand years
ago it was a baby born to a teenage mother, in a stable in
an occupied town in Palestine.

Today it is for the homeless to be housed, refugees
welcomed, children protected, young people in work,
peace in the Middle East and a halt to global warming.

We desperately need wishful thinking.



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READINGS

ADVENT 2020 BY MARTIN WROE

We wait, like shepherds, like stargazers
We wait for the kind of hearing which can tune
into angel voices
For the kind of sight which can notice God appear
in our world
In these days we wait to see where Jesus Christ
is being born in our lives
We wait for love to come down at Christmas
Some of us are waiting for a decision
What's next? Which is the way?
Waiting for a sign, a clue, a star that seems to move
Some of us are waiting for love — to know we are loved,
to know how to love someone
Some of us are waiting for the gift of life
Some of us are living with the pain of loss and death
All of us are waiting to know our calling in the midst of
everything that arranges itself into our life?
We wait for love to come down at Christmas

Some of us can't wait any longer
We are in countries where conflict never ends
We have fled one nightmare for another
We are the ones judged mean and lowly
The star we followed misled us and now we sleep rough
on the streets of a strange city
In these dark streets shines no everlasting light
We are waiting for Love to appear, wondering who
Love will be



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All of us are waiting,
To be seen and recognised,
To be looked in the eye with love
To know ourselves no longer walking in darkness
To find ourselves under a bright light
in the great sky of all these days
a light which opens a path to follow
We are waiting for Love to come down

We are waiting, like shepherds, like mothers, like stargazers
Waiting for history to change everything

Most days we don't know what we're waiting for
Until it arrives
Until, at Christmas, we understand that God is waiting
for us

In the face of stranger and friend
In the face of someone in trouble, someone in need
In the face of someone we fear or someone we love

As we wait in silence for Jesus Christ to be born
Outside in the darkness, in the noise and confusion
of every sacred day,
Jesus Christ waits for us

As we wait for Love to come down,
Love waits for us to rise up.

**“ WHEN MARY SPOKE HER WORDS
OF PRAISE, SHE TRUSTED IN A GOD
WHO ALWAYS HAS AND ALWAYS WILL
LIBERATE THE OPPRESSED.**

NANCY FRAUSTO

ASSOCIATE RECTOR AT ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA



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CALL IT NAZARETH BY CAROL ANN DUFFY

Now we make the journey home
to where we came from —
call it Nazareth —
hoping still to know the way and find our loved ones, there
in Nazareth —
or any name we have tonight for home. Jerusalem,
Bosnia,
Nazareth,
or any name we have tonight for home.
Now our story twists and turns, we need an ending —
call it Nazareth —
altered so by what we've seen away from the loved ones
there in Nazareth —
or any name we have tonight for home. Baghdad,
New Orleans,
Nazareth,
or any name we have tonight for home.
Now the old year vanishes there comes a new one.
Call it Nazareth,
ringing bells for all who come to hold their loved ones there
in Nazareth —
or any name we have tonight for home. Darfur,
Palestine,
Nazareth,
or any name we have tonight for home. Bethlehem,
Manchester,
Nazareth.



A BOMBED-OUT NEIGHBOURHOOD
JUST OUTSIDE GAZA CITY

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NEVER UNDERSTAND BY CHRIS ROSE

The hopes for a political resolution
have smouldered and grown cold.
The promises of aid to rebuild the ashes of Gaza
have proved as worthless
as the sand on the shore at Beach Camp.
Independent reports and calls for international justice
have been denounced as “politically inexpedient”.
New Year celebrations will be overshadowed
by the commemoration of so many deaths.

The Christmas story reminds us
that the promises of politicians
and the latest round of peace talks
are not where hope is found.
These are the flashlights that dazzle us,
not the slow burn that glows in the darkest places.

The slow realisation
that lies will become transparent,
that violence will not lead to peace,
that human dignity always exerts itself,
that beauty appears amidst the wreckage,
that our protests are not in vain,
that hope is found in the birth of a child
in an occupied village.
The miraculous daily promise of new life.





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ADVENT PRAYERS 2020

A PRAYER FOR BETHLEHEM

We pray for Bethlehem this Christmas.
May the town where the Prince of Peace was born know
peace this Christmas.

May mothers in the refugee camps not weep as Rachel
wept, for their children, but see a future for them free from
fear and oppression.

May the people of Bethlehem experience the good news
the angels promised and hope be rekindled.

May the leaders of Israel and Palestine know that their
fates are intertwined and pursue the difficult steps towards
a just peace.

And may we be resolute in our support of all those who
seek to bring peace, justice and reconciliation in a land we
long to call Holy.



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A PRAYER FOR GAZA

A broken body
Taken down from the cross.
Jesus who gave himself over to death
Trusting that the love that brought forth the world,
Would raise him from the dead
and that injustice would not have the final say.

We pray for the wounded, isolated people of Gaza
As hope disappears and falsehoods abound.
May we challenge the easy political answers
that condemn 2 million people to live among the rubble,
cut off and abandoned.
May we commit not to forget, not to stay silent,
not to wait
till the next round of destruction and death thrusts this
narrow strip of land into our headlines.

May we place our faith in the hope of the risen Christ
In the knowledge that every effort to end injustice,
To bring peace and to speak out for the oppressed is an
effort that God blesses, that God wants and that
God demands of us.



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A PRAYER FOR PALESTINE AND ISRAEL BY RAMINI LEATHARD

Pray not for Arab or Jew
for Palestinian or Israeli
Pray rather for ourselves
that we may not divide them in our
prayers but hold them together in our heart

A PRAYER FOR PEACE BY FLEUR DORRELL

God, help us to lead our world in the ways of
Justice and Peace.

Help us to be at peace with ourselves, our families,
friends and neighbours.

May peace, not conflict, arise from our hearts
wherever we go.

Help us to be active peacemakers — to bring peace
through peace, into the world.

Help us never to stand back and watch people
suffer, but to look for solutions in the smallest and
the largest situations.

May our peace be a sign of strength and not of weakness
that others may follow peace with peace.

**“ LIFE IN A PRISON CELL MAY WELL
BE COMPARED TO ADVENT; ONE WAITS,
HOPES, AND DOES THIS, THAT, OR THE
OTHER — THINGS THAT ARE OF NO REAL
CONSEQUENCE — THE DOOR IS SHUT,
AND CAN BE OPENED ONLY FROM
THE OUTSIDE.**

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

LETTERS FROM PRISON — 21 NOVEMBER, 1943

THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM LOOKING DOWN
FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

“ THE **GRANDEUR** OF
JERUSALEM IS ALSO...
ITS PROBLEM

—
UMBERTO ECO





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CASE STUDY REBUILDING HOPE

Nariman is a young woman from Gaza City. After her father died, her mother's only work was in the home and Nariman was struggling to earn enough as a seamstress with just four hours of electricity a day. She joined NECC's six-month job creation scheme, learning financial management and how to write a business plan.

NECC not only provides practical training to students but also therapeutic support. Levels of stress and trauma are so high in Gaza that young people need strategies to address their anxieties, anger and sleep problems, inability to trust, poor concentration and low motivation that are symptomatic of trauma.

When Nariman had finished the course, the plan she wrote for how she would set up and run her own dress-making business was so good that she received a grant to help her set it up. Since then her income has grown steadily.

Nariman says her face has changed "from sadness to laughter" and that her cell phone is ringing all the time with work requests.



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WORDS OF HOPE ADVENT 2020

INVITATION

*the moon asked about
her luminosity said
I know all about hope*

DANIEL LADINSKY

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth
God said, "Let there be light"
God saw that the light was good
Morning and evening the first day

**In the beginning was the Word
And the Word was with God
And the Word was God**

The Word was with God in the beginning
Through the Word all things were created.
Not one thing came into being without the Word

**In the Word was life
And that life was the light of all people
The light shines in the darkness
And the darkness has never put it out**



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ADVENT PROMISE

The people living in darkness have seen a great light.
Those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them the
light has shined.
For you have ended their oppression and burnt the
garments of war as fuel for the fire.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
Authority rests upon his shoulder, and he shall be called
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.
His rule will grow continually and there will be
endless peace. ISAIAH 9

He came
Where least expected
Longed for but unwelcome
The person they did not want
Proclaiming justice, freedom, love and peace

He still comes
As an unasked for alternative
As the message we try not to hear
The person we try to avoid
Proclaiming justice, freedom, love and peace

He will come
And every tear will be dried
The sick will be healed
The homeless housed
There will be justice, freedom, love and peace

**“ IT IS A SERIOUS THING
JUST TO BE ALIVE ON THIS
FRESH MORNING IN THIS
BROKEN WORLD.**

MARY OLIVER

AMERICAN POET



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ADVENT HOPE

We light this candle in Hope

That one day swords will be turned into pruning hooks,
guns into hospital beds
That all places in Your world will know peace
Yemen, Syria, Libya, Palestine/Israel

We light this candle in hope

That one day we will know that we are all made
in Your image
That we will no longer judge people by
Gender, sexuality, religion, race or ability

We light this candle in hope

That one day we will nurture the gift of creation
That we will no longer destroy it for our comfort and
our greed
For the activists and investors, farmers and
conservationists, planners and visionaries

We light this candle in hope

That one day soon we will be together, to hug, weep
and laugh
That as a cure comes we will know that our lives are
interwoven
For the sick, lonely, scared, confused and mourning,
doctors, carers, nurses and researchers.



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CONFESSION

So often we hide from the light
Afraid that it will show who we really are
So we hide our light away
And are threatened when it shines in others
**May we not be afraid to walk in the light, as children
of the light**

Mary an unwed teenager
Accepted your call to be mother of the promised one
**Forgive us when we are reluctant to hear your calling
And fail to do what we know to be right**

Your son Jesus was born in poverty in a stable, in a
country under occupation
**Forgive us when we only think of our comfort
And shut out the suffering of so many**

The shepherds left their sheep in the field
And ran to Bethlehem to celebrate a new birth
**Forgive us when we do not delight in the wonders
around us
and do not grasp your vision of the world to come**

The magi travelled across borders following a star
Hoping to find an answer to their searching
**Forgive us when we reject those who have had to
flee across borders and may we have enough trust to
follow your lead**

**May we not be afraid to walk in the light, as children
of the light**



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STATEMENT OF BELIEF

The angels sang
Glory to God in the highest
Peace on earth, where God's favour lies

We believe
That justice is how love looks in public
That hope is a song in a weary voice
That stumbling is not falling
Together we can be the change we long to see

We believe
That peace is the apology of the strong to the weak
That faith is being sure of what we hope for
That we all come from the creator
Trailing wisps of glory

We believe
That if we have eyes to see
That if we have ears to hear
That when we least expect it, hope bursts into life
Stable walls echoing to a baby's first cry

CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY,
BETHLEHEM, PALESTINE





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THE LIVING WORD

The Word became flesh and lived among us
So this day

We stand with those whose freedom is denied
We link arms with those who have fled war,
torture and despair
We come in penance for broken promises and
political fixes
We walk the long road with all those who strive
for peace, justice and reconciliation
We weep with those who long to return to home
We pray in hope that one day all people (in Palestine
and Israel) will live in peace, as neighbours with
full equal rights



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CLOSING RESPONSES

When the song of the angels is stilled
When the star in the sky is gone
When the kings and princes are home
When the shepherds are back with their flocks
The work of Christmas begins
To find the lost
To heal the broken
To feed the hungry
To release the prisoner
To rebuild our world
To bring peace

For last year's words belong to last year's language.
And next year's words await another voice.
And to make an end is to make a beginning.

Listen to the pain of the voiceless
Water the barren earth
Plant seeds in the wasteland
Act as if our hope in the future is irresistible.

And may we be blessed with:
A lightness in our spirit
A calmness in our soul
A heart for justice
A peace that forgives
And the knowledge that all will be well

WITH THANKS TO DANIEL LADINSKY,
HOWARD THURMAN AND T.S. ELIOT



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PLAYLIST CHRISTMAS EXTENDED MIX

The funkier Christmas party gives way to a more thoughtful mid-section, before we pick up again with the Pogues, Gregory Porter's Christmas Gospel, Ella and the saddest Christmas song of them all.

JAMES BROWN — Santa Claus Go Straight To The Ghetto

SHARON JONES — Ain't No Chimneys in the Projects

THE STAPLE SINGERS — Who Took The Merry Out Of Christmas

DONNY HATHAWAY — This Christmas

MARVIN GAYE — Purple Snowflakes

TRACEY THORN — Snow in Sun

SMITH & BURROWS — When the Thames Froze

LOW — Long Way Around the Sea

THE POGUES FEAT. KIRSTY MACCOLL — Fairytale of New York

GREGORY PORTER — Take Me To The Alley

ELLA FITZGERALD — Santa Claus Is Coming To Town

JUDY GARLAND — Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas

**“ YET AS I READ THE BIRTH
STORIES ABOUT JESUS, I CANNOT
HELP BUT CONCLUDE THAT THOUGH
THE WORLD MAY BE TILTED
TOWARD THE RICH AND POWERFUL,
GOD IS TILTED TOWARD THE UNDERDOG.**

PHILIP YANCEY

AUTHOR



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CREATE HOPE THIS CHRISTMAS
[AMOSTRUST.ORG/CHRISTMAS-APPEAL](https://amotrust.org/christmas-appeal)

**“ THE SITUATION OF GAZA
STRANGLES US. WE HAVE NO
WORK AND SO LITTLE HOPE.
WHAT WE WANT IS A CHANCE
TO WORK AND PROVE OURSELVES.
ALL WE ARE SAYING IS JUST
GIVE US A CHANCE.**

MOHAMMED AWAD, 17 — GAZA



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This Christmas we are asking you to join us in creating hope for children and young people in Gaza. Can you help to create hope where so little exists?

We are delighted to announce every gift donated online through THE BIG GIVE between 1st and 8th December will be doubled!

You can give by visiting amotrust.org/christmas-appeal

- **£15** could fund play therapy sessions for two children. These early interventions are essential to help children develop coping mechanisms as they try and overcome their trauma.
- **£50** could fund lunches for 40 children attending play therapy sessions. These families are often dependent on food aid so this could well be their only meal of the day.
- **£160** could transform the lives of two young people experiencing PTSD by providing the therapeutic support they need to feel hopeful again.
- **£980** could fund a year-long electrician's course for a young person.

Please donate now — simply visit
amotrust.org/christmas-appeal

THANK YOU.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK KENSETT AND NICK WELSH