



OUR  
**KING**  
HAS COME.

THE STORY OF  
*Jesus*  
PART 1

STONEBRIAR COMMUNITY CHURCH

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## INTRODUCTION

# OUR KING HAS COME.

We are in a season focused on thankfulness, for our families, our friends, our community—our many blessings. Thankfulness is intentional; it is a disciplined choice to find a light in the darkness and shift our mindset to its brightness. This gratitude fosters a longing to reconnect and strengthen ties with those we love, to celebrate traditions or make new ones, and to thank God for His presence in our lives so that the light is always visible.

Soon, we will be swept into the celebration and anticipation of Christ's birth. We will rejoice in the knowledge that our King and Savior was born to man and walked among us. Just as God walked in the garden with Adam under the stars He created, Jesus was born to walk with us once more. The entirety of creation vibrates in worship and celebration that our King has come and will rule the nations.

And then a new year begins—a hope for better days, for healing and restoration, for a fresh start to study God's Word more diligently, to make healthier lifestyle choices, to reach out to those we have been distanced from, or to mourn and heal from the absence of those who are no longer with us. We make promises to ourselves and return to the day to day, longing for the warmer days of summer and forgetting that the story of Jesus is not over.

Then as Easter approaches and flowers begin to bloom, our hearts once more swell with the promise of life that Jesus' sacrifice provides to those who believe in Him. We shift our thoughts from a Child in a manger to a Man set on a path to the cross to die for our sins. And then we rejoice in the knowledge that He conquered death and waits for us in Heaven.

The full story. To truly set our hearts upon the miracle of what God has done, we pause to look at the full story of Jesus' life. Why did He come to us as a fragile baby? Where did His life lead? What did He teach us? Is the story over?

In a cold world that did not accept Him, Jesus grew and learned—His life and experiences the same as yours or mine. He worked with His hands . . . He cried. He laughed. He loved. He felt anger, hunger, loneliness, and loss. He prayed. He lived His life day to day.

**This November through April, in the Christmas through Easter seasons, you're invited to see the full story of Jesus.** In the months ahead, let's continue to be intentional in our thankfulness. To continue to celebrate and hope. To reflect upon Jesus' precious life that He so willingly gave for ours. To live each day in wonder that *Our King Has Come*.



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Original composite painting *Arrival, Ministry, Sacrifice & Return*, Susan Jacobson, 2022

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In the *beginning* was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the life of all mankind.

—John 1:1 (NIV)

TERNAL

The holiday season has started with all the traditions it entails. Food, family, and friends take the priority in our lives during this time. Are you preparing gifts and thinking of things your family can do in the weeks ahead?

In a similar manner, God prepared for His family. In His eternal state, He foresaw everything that was and is to come. He had a plan for His children—a plan older than creation itself.

“But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations.”  
—Psalm 33:11 (NLT)

Through this, a Gift was planned for you and me—Jesus would come to earth as an act of love for God’s children. Prophets foresaw and told of it. Believers watched for Him. And we now enter a time to celebrate that Gift—both in the weeks ahead and for the rest of our lives.

Eternity is such a big concept. No one even knows what tomorrow will bring, despite what the weather channel says. And yesterday? Well, history repeats itself for a reason—with enough time, people forget it. Isn't it interesting that we have an entire field of study dedicated to learning what people before us have done?

But God does not have our limitations. He is ever-present and ever-knowing. Before the beginning, there was God, and after the end of all things, God will still be there. Isn't that amazing? Time is vast, but God is bigger. And He is *our King*! A ruler over all creation with the knowledge and a plan that will carry us safely into His eternal Kingdom.

We now celebrate this plan—the arrival of Jesus on earth. Fully man and fully God, Jesus was born—the promised Savior for mankind.

## WEEK 1: CONSIDER

- God is ever-present and ever-knowing.
- God has no limitations.
- God foresaw everything that was and is to come.
- All things have a beginning and an end, but God is eternal.
- God has a plan for you and me.
- Jesus was fully man and fully God.
- Jesus' birth and sacrifice were always God's plan for the salvation of mankind.

## WEEK 1

### SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27

- God is ever-present and ever-knowing.

"I am the *Alpha* and the *Omega*," says the Lord God, "Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty." —Revelation 1:8 (ESV)

There is nothing hidden in our hearts God does not know. He is the beginning and the end, and the source of our creation and redemption.

#### PRAYER

Lord, remind me that You are the Alpha and Omega. You are sovereign over all things, and nothing takes You by surprise. I ask that You increase my trust in You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

- What thoughts come to mind as you contemplate that there is nothing hidden from God?

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- God foresaw everything that was and is to come.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways *higher* than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”—Isaiah 55:8–9 (ESV)

Each day that passes and every moment we experience, God has seen, and God is present. Find comfort and confidence that there are no surprises in His eyes, and He knows each of us better than we know ourselves.

## PRAYER

Father, I know Your will is far better than mine, yet I still struggle with wanting my own way. Thank You for having a better plan for me than I could ever have for myself. In the name of Jesus I pray, Amen.

- Since God knows every detail of the future, why is it sometimes hard to trust His plan?

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- God has a plan for you and me.

But the *plans* of the Lord stand firm forever, the *purposes* of His heart through all generations.—Psalm 33:11 (NIV)

Before our first heartbeat, God knew us and had a plan for our lives. Each day is an opportunity to know Him better and love Him more.

### PRAYER

Lord, I thank You for always having a plan to rescue and redeem me. Please help me to understand the beauty of what it means that You sent Jesus to earth. Continue to remind me that You are the Lord Most High, Sovereign Creator, the Almighty, and my Savior. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

- How do you see the hand of God in your everyday life?

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- Jesus' birth and sacrifice were always God's plan for our salvation.

For unto us a *child* is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of *Peace*.—Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)

Jesus was born to reconnect us to God. Prophets foretold His coming—a King of restoration. Co-existing with the Father and Spirit, Jesus was born into time to grow, teach, and die for us—all knowingly offered—an unparalleled act of love. (John 1:1, Matthew 26:39)

## PRAYER

Lord, I am humbled at the thought that the God of the universe loved me so much that You sent Your Son to die for me. Thank You that You are willing to forgive me of all my sin. Help me not to take that forgiveness for granted. Make me bold to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus to others so that they can know Your forgiveness too. In my Savior Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

- As Christ modeled perfect submission to His Father's will, in what ways do you need to humbly submit to the Lord?

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- God has no limitations.

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are *possible*." —Matthew 19:26 (NIV)

It's hard to fathom that before the first sunrise, a plan was in place to save mankind from sin—through a Child both fully God, and fully man. An impossible concept, but all completed just as promised. Oftentimes, we divide the enormity of what God has done from what He can do in our lives. But He promises restoration, justice, and a peace beyond understanding if we only accept His gift of salvation.

## PRAYER

Lord, it is only through You that I can know true peace, have complete restoration, and see justice. I thank You that nothing is beyond your ability and yet You care about the smallest details of my life. You are so good to me. In the name of Christ alone I pray, Amen.

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- How has God done the impossible in your life?

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- All things have a beginning and an end, but God is eternal.

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the *everlasting* God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom.—Isaiah 40:28 (NIV)

All things will come and go, but God is forever. Find comfort and awe in that the One who holds you in His loving hand always has been, and always will be.

### PRAYER

Lord, I'm so grateful that because You are eternal, You have always had a plan to send Jesus to pay the penalty for my sin. I look forward to being in Your presence for all eternity because of Christ's victory over sin and death. In the name of my Redeemer Jesus I pray, Amen.

- How are you living in freedom since being forgiven and redeemed by an everlasting God?

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- Jesus was fully man and fully God.

. . . while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great *God* and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good.—Titus 2:13–14 (NIV)

That small Child promised to us—asleep in a manger—a baby holding the infinite power of God. Think about that. His hands made the pillars of creation. His eyes beheld time immemorial. His heart held a love for His people that would lead His sinless life to the cross. Fully man and fully God, Jesus came to us to save us.

## PRAYER

Father, You amaze me! You are comfort and strength, healing and hope, justice and mercy. Thank You for reminding me of Your greatness and Your invitation to spend some extended time in Your presence. Thank You for Your love and sending us Your Son so that we may know Him, and in doing so, know You. And it is in Jesus, our King, we pray. Amen.

- How does your life demonstrate that you are waiting on the blessed hope—the appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ?

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MUSIC TO ENCOURAGE *&* INSPIRE YOU



This season, enjoy a playlist that features Christmas music from the Stonebriar Sanctuary Choir & Orchestra, our Children's & Youth Choirs, and more. To listen and worship along, simply scan the QR code, or visit: [bit.ly/christmasmusicsc](https://bit.ly/christmasmusicsc)







... You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every *promise* has been fulfilled; not one has failed.

—Joshua 23:14 (NIV)

# PROMISE

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In the beginning, God walked with man. He wanted a relationship with His creation—one of family and closeness, since He is the embodiment of love. And although we are separated by sin, He is ever-faithful and made a way for us to reconnect. His love is a promise.

“And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” —Romans 8:38–39 (NIV)

We have so many words and actions to seal a promise. Even the smallest children mark the solemnity and sincerity of the occasion with the hooking of pinkies—unshakable playground



pacts that rulers of countries would envy. Our promises are special and meaningful, and those who keep them are considered trustworthy, honest, and honorable. How much more powerful are God's promises to us?

**Through the life of Jesus, God's promise to us was fulfilled.** He once more walked with us. Taught us. "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means 'God with us.')" — Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23 (NIV)

God is with you and me. Just as in the beginning, He once again walks with us. He promises to provide strength, understanding, hope, redemption, and everlasting life. Are you choosing to walk with God, or away from Him?

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## WEEK 2: CONSIDER

- Nothing can separate us from God's love.
- God's promises never fail.
- God promised our deliverance.
- Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise.
- God walks with us.
- God wants good for us.
- God wants a relationship with us.



## WEEK 2

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

- Nothing can separate us from God's love.

"My Father, Who has given them to Me, is greater than all; *no one* can snatch them out of My Father's *hand*. I and the Father are One."—John 10:28 (NIV)

We are called to follow Him, and when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we attain His protection. Unbreakable. Impenetrable. We can find shelter and peace in the hands of our Creator and King. "... nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:39). As His children, we cannot be removed from His protection and love. He is faithful in His promise.

#### PRAYER

God, I love You. Thank You for all that You are and for the many promises You have given me. Help me to show my love for You with all that I am today. Amen.

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- What does it mean to you that as a believer in Christ, you are forever secure in God's hands?

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## MONDAY, DECEMBER 5

- God's promises never fail.

"For no word from God will ever *fail*"—Luke 1:37 (NIV)

Mary was visited by the angel of the Lord to be prepared for the birth of Jesus. During this revelation, it was also revealed that Elizabeth would also bear a child. Despite the near impossibility of this scenario due to Elizabeth's age, the angel assured Mary that it would be just as told. When God says something will happen—you can trust that it will—His word is and always will be true. Rest in the peace of this knowledge today.

### PRAYER

Lord, I praise You that You are unchanging, and Your word never fails. I pray that the many promises and prophecies that have been fulfilled would encourage me as I wait on You. Thank You for the hope I have in You. In Christ's name I pray, Amen.

- If God's Word never fails, why do we sometimes wrestle with fear and doubt?

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- God promised our deliverance.

... “Do not fear, for I have *redeemed* you; I have summoned you by name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned . . . ”

—Isaiah 43:1–3 (NIV)

The struggles of today and tomorrow pale in comparison to the unwavering promise that our future is secure when we belong to God. As His children through the redemption of Christ, we are also blanketed in the promise of His redemption and grace. He will deliver us, protect us, and be with us. If we are lost, He will find us. If we are grieving, He will comfort us. We will never have to withstand the trials of this lifetime alone, and are assured an eternity with Him.

## PRAYER

Lord, in the unknown and uncertainty of each day, I confess it can be easy for me to feel overwhelmed. When this happens, would you re-direct my heart and my thoughts to You and Your unfailing Word? Thank You for the peace that only comes through You. In the name of Jesus I ask, Amen.

- How do you encourage others with the promises God gives us in His Word?

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- Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise.

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him *Immanuel*.—Isaiah 7:14 (NIV)

Immanuel—God with us. God promised David that He would establish an heir through David's line, One who would establish His kingdom on earth and uphold it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. (2 Samuel 7:12, Isaiah 9:7). Just as promised, Jesus came to be with us—God with us. Humble. Merciful. Loving. Righteous. To guide and teach us, to save us, and to rule as our holy King forever.

## PRAYER

Thank You, God, for making Your Son known to us. Please work in our lives and reshape us to be pleasing to You as well. In my perfect Savior's name I pray, Amen.

- How does your life reflect that you serve a humble, merciful, and righteous King?

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- God walks with us.

... “I am the light of the world. Whoever *follows* Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” —John 8:12 (NIV)

In the still darkness of the night, Jesus was born—the Beacon of light to guide us and lead us into our Father’s arms. He lived a perfect life to model what God desires of us. We are to follow in His footsteps with the promise that He will never lead us astray and will set our path clearly before us. His Spirit accompanies us, encourages us—His Word and protection enlightens our way and holds the shadows at bay. No matter the complexities of our situation, the direction we should go is clear—always toward Him.

### PRAYER

King of kings and Lord of lords, give us a true and living faith in You. By Your Spirit, enable us to set aside our own pride and sinful passions to fully follow You alone. Help us to set our crowns at Your feet and daily seek to know You more. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

- How can you bring glory to God in all circumstances?

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- God wants what is good for us.

“Look at the *birds* of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more *valuable* than they?”  
—Matthew 6:26 (NIV)

We need not worry about day-to-day things; Jesus assures us that they will take care of themselves. God wants no harm to come to us—the hurts of today are byproducts of living in a broken world. He wants our restoration to Him, and through Jesus, that is possible. As any good Father, His love is unconditional and His provision will sustain us. From the birds in the air to the flowers in the field, God dresses and cares for them. (Matthew 6:26) How much more complete is His provision for us?

## PRAYER

Father, You take care of everything I need before I even know to ask for a thing. Your demonstration of love for me is humbling to me. Thank You that You provided a way to be restored to You through Christ Jesus. It's in His name I pray, Amen.

- How have you been overwhelmed by God's provision?

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- God wants a relationship with us.

"Here I am! I stand at the door and *knock*. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."—Revelation 3:20 (NIV)

God is right here. He never left. And He is waiting for all who will receive Him, all who will welcome Him into their lives. He desires to have a personal relationship with each of us, that we may know Him fully and experience His love. We just have to open the door.

### PRAYER

Father, thank You for drawing me towards repentance and sending Jesus to be my Redeemer. Open my eyes to anyone who needs to hear the Good News of Jesus and help me to be bold to share the Gospel with them. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

- Who in your life do you need to share the Gospel of Jesus with?

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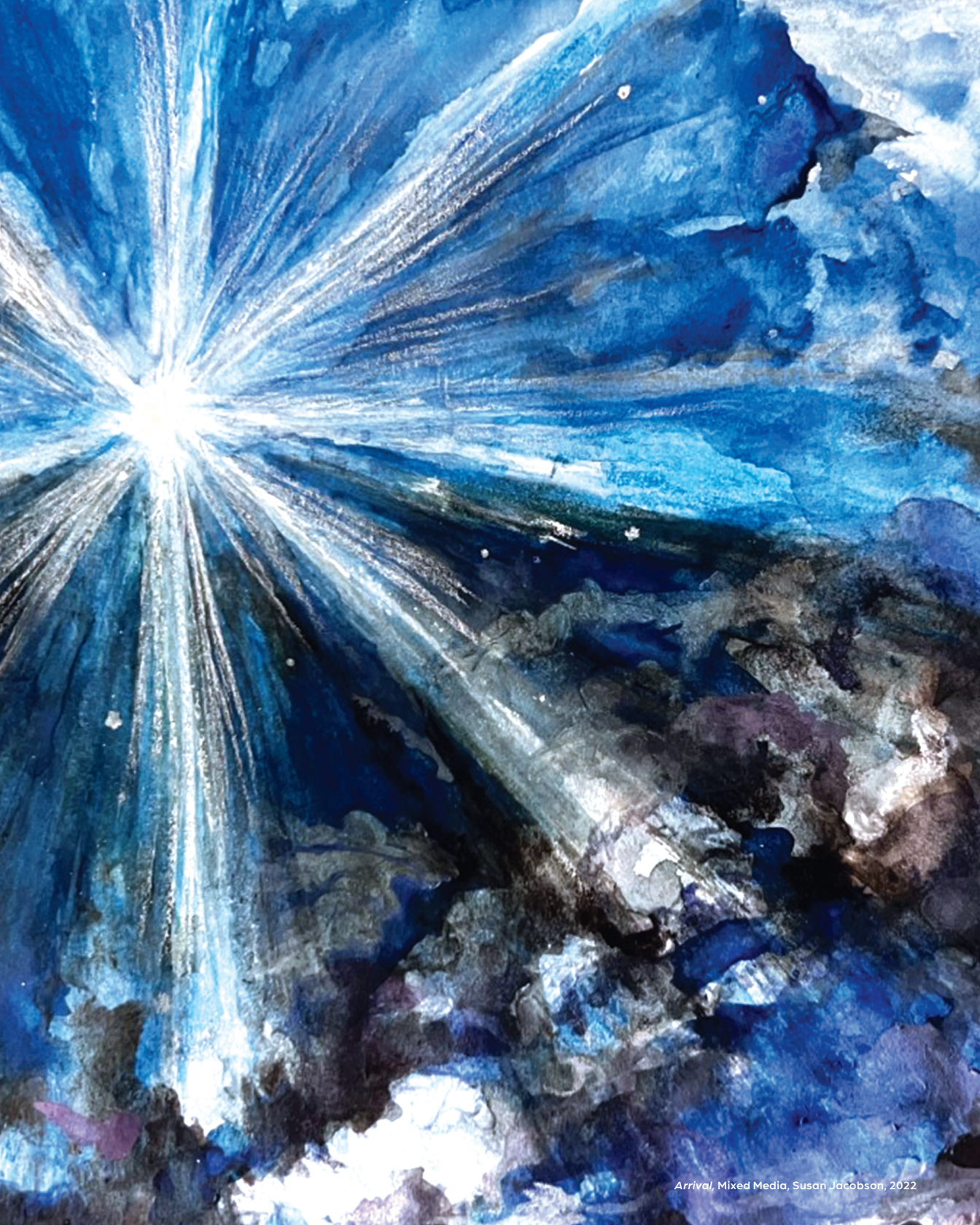
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*Arrival*, Mixed Media, Susan Jacobson, 2022

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



The *Word* became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His *glory*, the glory of the one and only Son, Who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.—John 1:14 (NIV)

L O R Y

God made His dwelling place among us. Jesus took His place on earth to grow, walk, learn, teach, and save. The heavens celebrated and heralded His coming, its anticipation joyously released in songs of adoration from an angelic host.

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests.”—Luke 2:9–14 (NIV)



This Gift, our Savior, lay wrapped in linen just as He would a little more than 30 years later when He laid in a grave. But He wouldn't be there long. His mission was to glorify God and model what God desires for each of us—to fully open our hearts to accept His will, to share His love with others, and to wholeheartedly love Him. Jesus defined Heaven and defied death. **He gave shape to the immensity of God—His glory personified.**

The words shining, stunning, overwhelming, magnificent, holy, and so many others come to mind when true glory is considered. It has a weight and enormity that truly befits God's majesty. Allow awe to rest upon your heart this week as we celebrate the good news that Jesus, full of grace and truth, was born.

## WEEK 3: CONSIDER

- God is the King of Glory.
- God made His dwelling place among us.
- The heavens proclaimed the birth of Jesus.
- God is to be exalted above all else.
- God's glory will outshine any problem.
- He is a Light in a dark world.
- His glory is a beacon of hope, not a source of fear.

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11

- God is the King of Glory.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the *King of glory* may come in. Who is He, this King of glory? The Lord Almighty—He is the King of glory.  
—Psalm 24:8–10 (NIV)

From references to the mercy seat in the Old Testament to the throne of our Messiah in the New Testament, our Lord is recognized as the rightful King to rule all. Mighty Warrior, great Defender, Conqueror and Savior, God is sovereign above all.

#### PRAYER

Father, prompt me throughout each day to continually call out to You. Remind me You are listening and eager to help me in all situations. Thank You, my King, for all the ways You care for me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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- How are others in your life aware that you personally know the King of Glory?

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- God made His dwelling place among us.

“Shout and be glad, Daughter Zion. For I am coming, and I will live *among* you,” declares the Lord. “Many nations will be joined with the Lord in that day and will become my people. I will live among you and you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you.”  
—Zechariah 2:10 (NIV)

Through Jesus, all nations were given the opportunity to become God’s people. Status, wealth, nationality, gender, age—all are equal in the eyes of God. On that blessed night, Jesus came for you and me to unite us in God’s Kingdom so that we might dwell with Him forever.

PRAYER

Lord, how grateful I am that You have invited all people to be reconciled to God through Christ Jesus. Thank You that I can know You, talk to You, and have a personal relationship with You, my Lord who is Sovereign Creator of all things. I praise Your holy name, Amen.

- What thoughts come to mind as you think about dwelling with the Lord forever?

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- The heavens proclaimed the birth of Jesus.

Let the heavens *rejoice*, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it. Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy. Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, for He comes, He comes to judge the earth.—Psalm 96:11 (NIV)

Angelic hosts celebrated in song when God reached down to live among us, and all of creation will rejoice when He returns. Each step of our glorious King should be gazed upon with wonder and awe. If the fields and trees sing to Him (1 Chronicles 16:33), how much more worshipful should we be?

## PRAYER

Lord, I can't believe the maker of the Heavens and earth knows me, cares for me, and loves me as You do. I pray my heart would be grateful and worshipful in all things because of what You have done for me. Thank You that You have provided a way for me to know and serve You. In the name of Jesus I pray, Amen.

- How are you rejoicing in and worshipping the Lord each day?

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- God is to be exalted above all else.

The Lord is exalted over all the nations, His glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, the One Who sits enthroned on high, Who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth?—Psalm 113:4–6 (NIV)

Nothing is greater than our God. How can anything in creation be exalted above He who created it? There is no power on earth or in Heaven greater than Him. Is there anything in your life right now that is taking more importance than your relationship with God?

### PRAYER

Forgive me for needing the reminder that Your name should be exalted over all things. You are mighty and worthy of all praise and worship, and I pray my life reflects that from here on out. I worship You alone with all that I am, Amen.

- If you are honest, can you say that God is exalted above all things in your life as He should be?

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- God's glory will outshine any problem.

"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have *overcome* the world."—John 16:33 (NIV)

Heartache is inevitable in this life. But Jesus is our Sustainer. Through Him there is peace beyond understanding. He overcame death itself, and asks us to give our burdens to Him so that we may find rest. (Matthew 11:30) Whatever you are facing today, turn upon God's glory to strengthen and help you.

## PRAYER

Lord, You graciously carry my burdens while offering me perfect peace that only is found in You. Help me to willingly lay all things at Your feet. Thank You for Your sustaining strength and provision as I depend on You, Amen.

- What burdens do you need to give to the Lord?

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- He is a Light in a dark world.

For God, Who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made His light *shine* in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.  
—2 Corinthians 4:6 (NIV)

Through Jesus we can come to know God and the full power of His glory. It is so magnificent, we will even reflect it into the darkness of the world if we seek to follow Him.

### PRAYER

Lord, I'm so thankful that Jesus came to earth knowing He would give His life up for me. Help me to live in gratitude for all You have done for me. Help me to shine the light of Christ to the world around me. In the name of Jesus I ask, Amen.

- How have you seen His glory displayed in your life?

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## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17

- His glory is a beacon of hope, not a source of fear.

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to *save* the world through Him.—John 3:17 (NIV)

In the darkness, God has shone a Light. Despite our fallen nature, Jesus came to save us—to offer us a chance to reclaim a place in our Father’s presence. In the bleakest of situations, He gives us a chance at life that shines so brilliantly others will be drawn to it for their salvation as well. Don’t let anything keep you from taking His hand today.

### PRAYER

Lord, I am humbled at the thought that the God of the universe loved me so much that You sent Your Son to die for me. Thank You that You are willing to forgive me of all my sin. Help me not to take that forgiveness for granted. Make me bold to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus to others so that they can know Your forgiveness too. In my Savior Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

- How can you point others to the hope found in the light of the Lord?

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*Sacrifice*, Mixed Media, Susan Jacobson, 2022









Even before He made the world, God loved us and *chose* us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes.—Ephesians 1:4 (NLT)

# H O S E N

Before it all, before we even drew breath, God loved us. Despite the shortcomings He knew we would have, the mistakes He knew we would make . . . the imperfections He knew would tarnish our entire being—He still loved us. And through Jesus, God gave us the possibility to be holy in His eyes. Through Jesus, we would be made clean and without fault.

The word “chosen” isn’t a loose term. It’s concise path with direction and purpose. So think about this: God *chose Jesus* to be our Savior, and He *chose us* as those to receive salvation. He knew there was only one way for us to be redeemed—through the sacrifice of Jesus and our faith in Him.

As for us, we can’t help but thank God for you, dear brothers and sisters loved by the Lord. We are always thankful that God chose you to be among the first to experience salvation—a salvation that came through the Spirit who makes you holy and through your belief in the truth. He called you to salvation when we told you the Good News; now you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. —2 Thessalonians 2:14



**As He chose us, we must also choose God.** To be followers of Christ as we are called to do. To share the Good News of Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection with others. Jesus chose to come to earth. He chose to live a sinless life as only He could. He chose to accept His Father's will—and to suffer for us so that we could rejoin Him in Heaven. Each choice held clear direction and purpose. A path toward the promised deliverance of His chosen people. The best news of all.

"We know, dear brothers and sisters, that God loves you and has chosen you to be His own people." —1 Thessalonians 1:4 (NIV)

## WEEK 4: CONSIDER

- Those redeemed through Jesus are God's chosen people.
- God chose us before creation.
- We are loved by the Lord.
- We are only faultless through the sacrifice of Jesus.
- God calls us His.
- We are made holy through the Spirit.
- We are called to share the Good News.

- Those redeemed through Jesus are God's chosen people.

"However, those the Father has given Me will come to Me, and I will never reject them . . . And this is the will of *God*, that I should not lose even one of all those He has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. For it is My Father's will that all who see His Son and believe in Him should have eternal life . . ."—John 6:37–40 (NIV)

God's will is that we have eternal life through His Son. It's amazing that our Almighty Father, Creator of all things, cares about us so much that we can receive eternal life—given into the steadfast protection and guidance of Jesus.

### PRAYER

Lord, thank You that You have provided a way for me to have eternal life with You. I pray my life reflects Your glory so that others will come to know You and have eternal life too. Amen.

- What does your security in Christ mean to you?

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- God chose us before creation.

“For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was His plan from *before the beginning* of time—to show us His grace through Christ Jesus.—2 Timothy 1:9 (NLT)

God does not need us to shine His glory before creation, yet, He chose His believers as witnesses to His unfathomable and boundless grace. We can never earn our way into God’s love and forgiveness—it is freely given. You must simply believe in Christ.

PRAYER

Father, I’m grateful that before the creation of the world, You had a plan to redeem mankind through Jesus. Help me not to take that for granted. In the name of my Savior I pray, Amen.

- What are ways you can glorify God daily?

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- We are loved by the Lord.

We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in His *Love*. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.—1 John 4:16 (NLT)

One of the most important things to teach a child is that they are loved by God. But as we grow, that simple yet crucial concept is oftentimes forgotten or overshadowed by everyday concerns. Be encouraged today and remember that if you love God, He is with you and lives within you. He will never abandon you or forget you. He loves you so much He sent His Son just for you. He *is* love.

## PRAYER

Dear Father, thank You for knowing me, loving me, and preparing a place for me in Heaven. Thank You for including me in Your magnificent plan. Amen.

- If God loves you with a perfect love, how can you show His love to others?

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- We are only faultless through the sacrifice of Jesus.

For He has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of His dear Son, Who *purchased* our freedom and *forgave* our sins.  
—Colossians 1:13–14 (NLT)

There is only one path to God—the salvation that comes solely through Jesus. He bought us from death with His own life. He restores our connection to God the Father when we acknowledge Him as our Savior. Never look back to the darkness. Only go forward in Christ’s light.

## PRAYER

Father, as the psalmist asked, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Show me where I am reflecting the world rather than imitating You. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

- What emotions come to mind as you consider God sees you as faultless because of your belief in Jesus?

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- God calls us His.

See how very much our Father loves us, for He calls us *His children*, and that is what we are! . . . —1 John 3:1 (NLT)

Our God is the perfect Father. One of love and forgiveness, of honesty and protection, of truth and might. If we know Him, He envelops us in the warmth and majesty of His royal family. He calls us His own—we are His children.

## PRAYER

Lord Almighty, how beautiful is Your Word. How beautiful is the story of redemption You have written. Thank You for making Your dwelling among us, unworthy as we are, because of Your great love for us. Lord, give us eyes to see and ears to hear all the wonders You have for us in Your Word and in Your world. In Jesus' precious name we pray, Amen.

- With all that God has done for you, how can you demonstrate love for Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?

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- We are made holy through the Spirit.

Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the *Holy Spirit*. This promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away—all who have been called by the Lord our God.”—Acts 2:38 (NLT)

The power of the Holy Spirit never rests. He works to refine us, to help us identify what is of the world and what is of God. The “right thing” can be confusing at times, but with the guidance of the Spirit, we will not be led astray, but called to where God leads us.

PRAYER

Lord, please give me a discerning heart so that I will always know where You are leading me. I desire to always follow Your will and not my own. Thank you for the Holy Spirit residing in me. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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- In what ways is the Holy Spirit refining and convicting you?

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- We are called to share the Good News.

... Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you *good news* that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!" —Luke 2:10 (NLT)

... "And then He told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone."  
—Mark 16:15 (NLT)

... you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for He called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light.—1 Peter 2:9 (NLT)

Jesus has always been the Word of God. And His life from birth to death and beyond is the Good News. Angels heralded His arrival—the trumpets will once again sound upon His return. Until then, we are called by God as His chosen to share the Good News of the Gospel. We know our Savior has been born. We know of His message and sacrifice. We understand grace and how we have received it, and it is our charge to now share it with those around us with every opportunity we are given.

**May we always hold the wonder in our hearts of the miracle of Jesus' birth.** Of what He knowingly came to do—to die for our sins. Of what He accomplished with His life—freeing us from the bondage of sin. And of His imminent reign—ultimately defeating evil and establishing His kingdom as our Forever King.

If you have not yet accepted the gift of salvation Jesus' sacrifice offers, take this moment to do so. It will be the best gift you will ever receive.

Merry Christmas to you and yours.



## PRAYER

Dear Lord, I thank You for the hope of Heaven. I long to be with You in Your presence forevermore. Would You remind me to live expectantly for Christ and share with others the hope I have in Him? Lord, hasten the day when my faith will be sight. In the name of Christ alone I pray, Amen.

- How is the birth and life of Christ impacting you in new ways this year?

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## WEEK 4: NOTES

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For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious *hope* for the future.—Ephesians 4:4 (NLT)

## O P E

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Hope is a feeling of anticipation and longing for a positive outcome. It is a means to battle any darkness in our lives. In life there are times where no physical or mental effort will exact change. And it is within those moments when the true need for hope arises.

**Christ, our Sovereign King, is our Divine Hope.** He's our hope for the future. Our hope for a life of meaning. When He came to earth, all creation rejoiced, and all creation groans for His return. We are left secure in His promise that He's coming back to banish all darkness, and that we will have a place in Heaven by His side.

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."—John 14:1–4 (NIV)

“You know the way to the place where I am going.” Jesus leaves no room for misunderstanding later in verse six. “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” This simple statement offers so much. Jesus is the Way to restoration with God. Jesus is the Truth by which to live. And Jesus is Life itself. Our eternal Hope.

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.—Romans 15:13 (NLT)

If we are to hope for only one thing today—let it be Jesus.

## WEEK 5: CONSIDER

- Jesus is the Way.
- Jesus is the Truth.
- Jesus is the Life.
- If you believe in God, believe in Jesus.
- Jesus is coming back.
- We are to hold hope in our hearts.
- Jesus is our Hope.

## WEEK 5

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25

- Jesus is the Way.

There is salvation in no one else! God has given *no other* name under heaven by which we must be saved.—Acts 4:12 (NLT)

To reach God, we must go through Jesus. He is the only Path to salvation and the only Light that will illuminate the way. The only One capable of living a perfect life, He died for us so that we wouldn't have to experience eternal separation from God.

God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.—Ephesians 2:8–9 (NLT)

No matter how hard you and I try, we will always fall short of the glory of God—we must fully rely on the grace of Jesus.

#### PRAYER

Lord, on this day I celebrate not just the birth of Christ, but the whole reason He came to earth in the first place. Thank You for sending Your Son to die for us all. Remind me in this Christmas season that the story doesn't end in Bethlehem. The manger is simply the beginning of my own beautiful redemption story through Christ. It's in His name I pray, Amen.

- How are you relying on God's grace and not your own works for salvation?

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MONDAY, DECEMBER 26

● Jesus is the Truth.

Jesus said to the people who believed in Him, “You are truly My disciples if you remain faithful to My teachings. And you will know the *Truth*, and the truth will set you free.”  
—John 8:31–32 (NLT)

God is the embodiment of truth. No lies exist within Him. For those who know and trust in the Word of Jesus, they will not be misled by the world and will receive what was promised by God—eternal life with Him. (Titus 1:2)

PRAYER

Lord, help me to always seek Your truth. I pray You would guard my heart and mind so that I am not deceived by what this world offers. Help me to always remain faithful to You. In the name of Jesus I ask, Amen.

- How can you focus on God’s truth and protect yourself from being misled and deceived by the world?

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- Jesus is the Life.

God created everything through Him, and nothing was created except through Him. The Word gave *Life* to everything that was created, and His life brought light to everyone.  
—John 1:3–4 (NLT)

All things were created through Jesus, and through His life, we are given life as well. He is the Light of the world and our loving Shepherd who finds the lost and saves them.

### PRAYER

Lord, You are my good and faithful Shepherd who lovingly guides and protects me. Help me to surrender my whole heart to follow You in all areas of my life. Thank You for the comfort You bless me with. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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- How have you seen Jesus our Shepherd protect you?

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- If you believe in God, believe in Jesus.

... And now in these final days, He has spoken to us through His *Son*. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son He created the universe. The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and He sustains everything by the mighty power of His command. When He had cleansed us from our sins, He sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven. This shows that the Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave Him is greater than their names. —Hebrews 1:1–4 (NLT)

Jesus is coeternal with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. He is the Inheritor of all things—one cannot believe in the Father without recognizing the sovereignty of the Son, and the indwelling of His Spirit.

### PRAYER

Lord, Your sovereignty and authority over all things is hard for me to fully comprehend. Thank You that each member of the Trinity loves and cares for me in unique ways. Help me to see Your hand of protection, sovereignty, and care in every detail of my day. In the name of Jesus I ask, Amen.

- What does it mean to you that Christ's work is finished and He is seated at the right hand of God?

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- Jesus is coming back.

For the Son of Man will come with His angels in the glory of His Father and will judge all people according to their deeds.—Matthew 16:27 (NLT)

Jesus promises He is preparing a place for those who follow Him, and that He will return to carry them home. No matter our social station, our gender, our ethnicity—we all will be called into account for the lives we have led—and if we have lived through Him. When Jesus returns in His full glory, how wonderful it will be to know Him and love Him.

### PRAYER

Lord, I long for You to return. My heart yearns to be in Your presence and away from this sinful and broken world. Would you encourage me as I continue to patiently wait on You? In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

- How does the expectation of Christ's return encourage you?

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- We are to hold hope in our hearts.

So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our *gaze* on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.—2 Corinthians 4:18 (NLT)

Pain doesn't understand time. Our grief, worries, sorrows, and ailments can seem unending. In the depths of pain it is hard to gauge when it began and if it will ever stop. We can place our hope in the Lord. Hold onto it tightly. Though not seen, it carries infinite promise to deliver us through these temporary trials. They will pass. God is eternal.

## PRAYER

Father, help me not to be distracted by the hurts in this world. My faith is in You and the eternity You have promised, so please remind me of this when I am discouraged. Give me an eternal perspective so that I can focus on You in all things. In Christ's name I ask, Amen.

- How are you encouraged knowing the pain and suffering of this world is temporary?

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● Jesus is our Hope.

For this is how God loved the world: He gave His one and only *Son*, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.—John 3:16 (NIV)

God loves you. He knew you before time and loves you so much that He gave His own Son for you. So that you could have hope. So that you could have eternal life. Only Jesus can offer that. So here at the cusp of a new year—embrace a new beginning with Jesus. If you have not done so before, accept Jesus as your Savior. If you have a relationship with Him, take this opportunity to grow closer to Him.

PRAYER

Lord, You are my only hope. I pray that as the expectations and desires of a new year approach, You will make me want more of You above all else. Please increase my love, trust, and faith in You. I pray I grow closer to You in this next year more than I ever have before. I love You. In the name of my Savior I pray, Amen.

● What spiritual resolutions and goals would you like to make for this next year?

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## YEAR-END THOUGHTS

As we wrap up the holiday season and set our sights on the new year ahead, let's focus on Jesus—on His life, teachings, and all the hope a life following Him offers. To help you do that, we will be providing a Scripture engagement guide that will lead you through the life and qualities of our King in part two.

Then, as we near Easter, we will supply the third and final piece of our study—another devotional guide to set our hearts and minds upon His sacrifice for each of us. Be watching for the release of these resources in the days ahead, and join us for parts two and three of *Our King Has Come*.

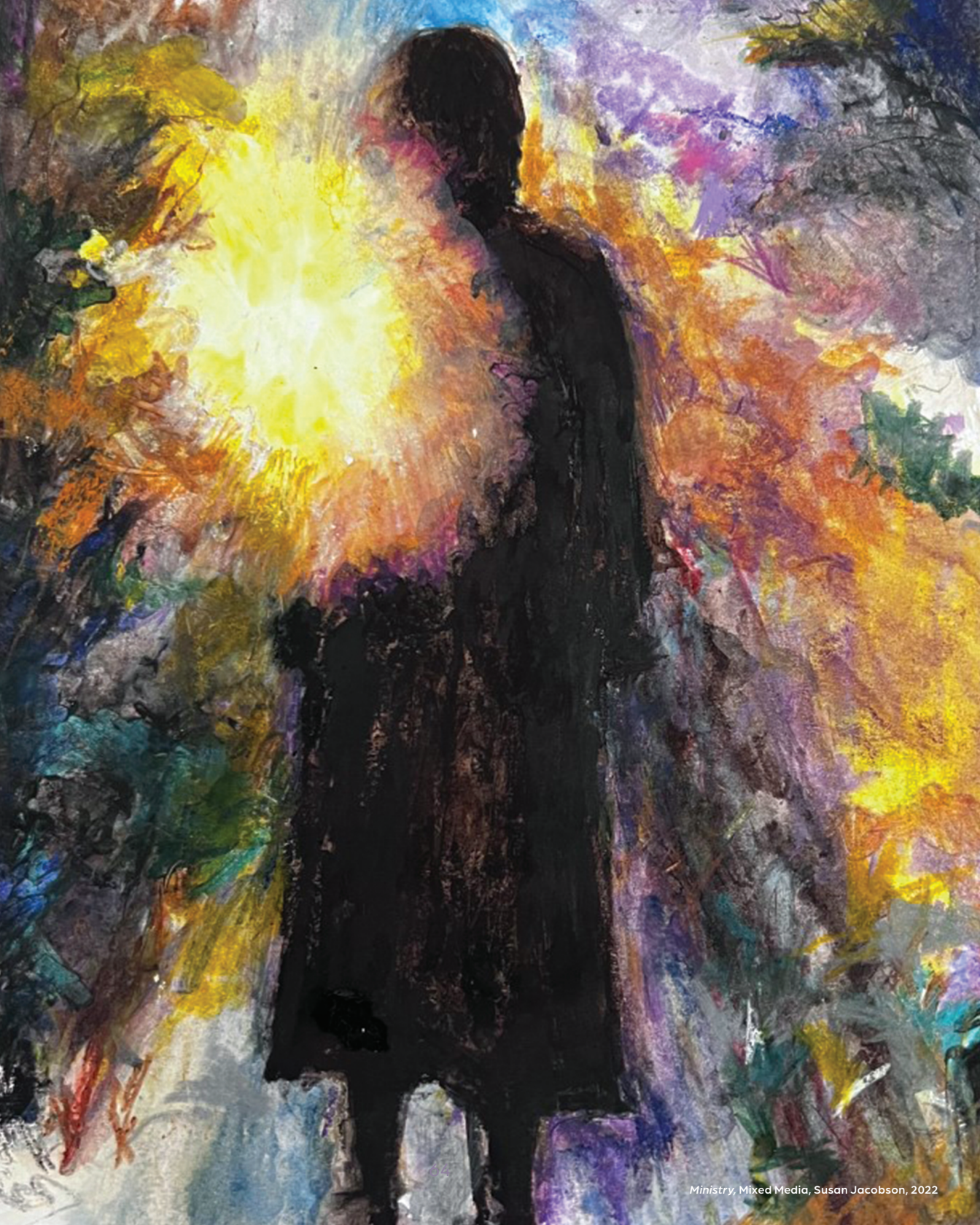
"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You."  
—Isaiah 26:3 (NIV)

May this next year be filled with peace as you focus upon our King of Hope. Happy New Year.



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## CONCLUSION

# DO YOU KNOW HIM?

Do you know this baby who died to be your Savior, or do you just know of Him? Have you placed your trust in Jesus to be forgiven and redeemed, and have a glorious eternal life in Heaven?

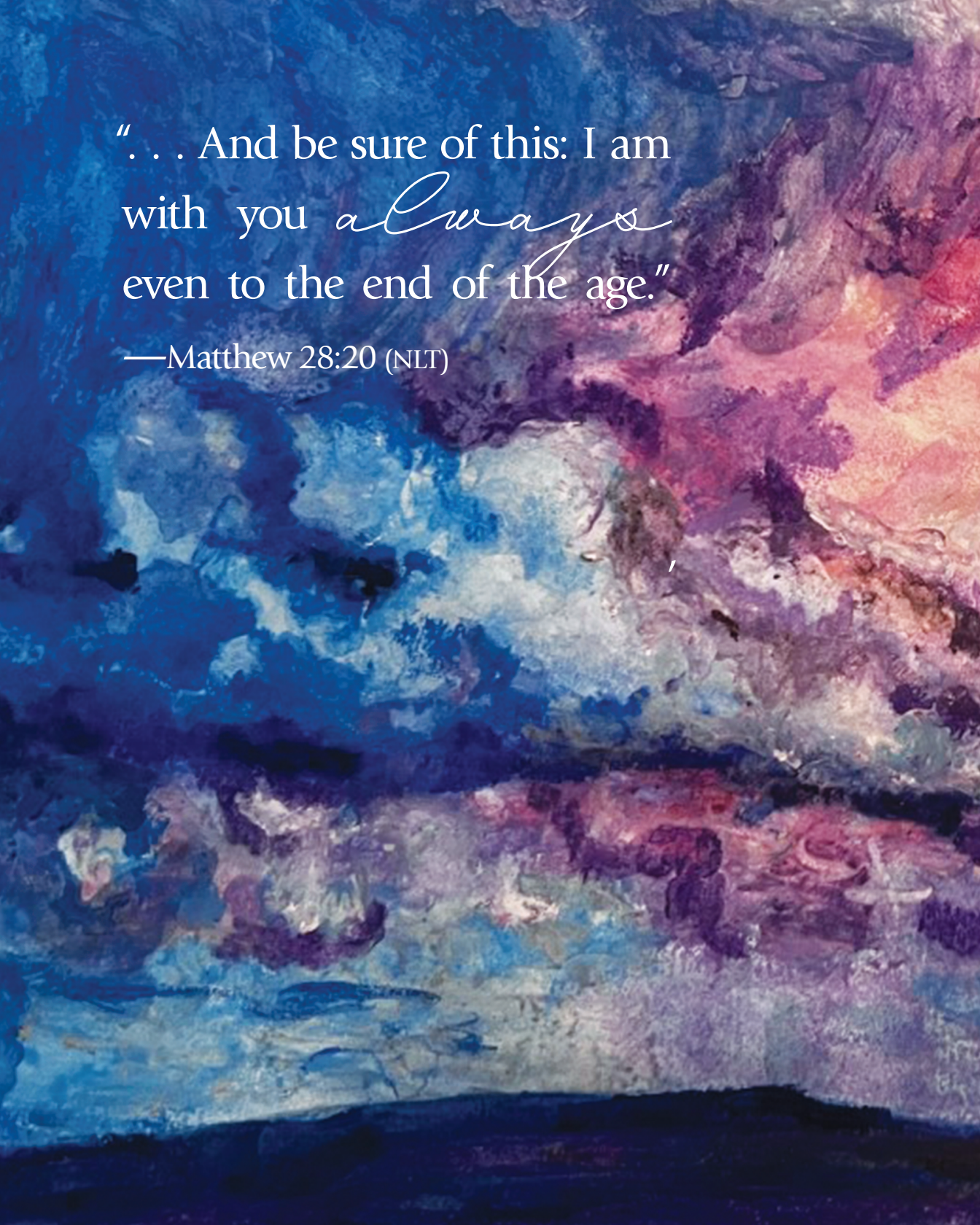
Sin leads to death. Just one sin separates us from God and causes us to deserve eternal punishment. But in His love, God made a way for us to be forgiven. Jesus humbly came to earth knowing He would pay the price for our sin. But the grave is not the end of His story. He forever defeated sin and death by raising from the dead. Through His resurrection, Christ offers us the opportunity to be forgiven by Him—the only rightful Judge and Redeemer. Once you place your trust in Jesus, God sees you as righteous—as though you have never sinned at all. Believers in Christ are also given the promise of Heaven. We will spend eternity in praise and worship, living fully and unhindered by sin forevermore.

The death of Jesus on the cross changed everything. Colossians 2:13–14 says “You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for He forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.” (NLT) Have your sins been nailed to the cross? If not, what is keeping you from trusting in Christ?

The Lord knows every sin you have ever committed and ever will commit. He extends His offer of forgiveness and salvation to you anyway. Would you believe in Him now? Make this Christmas season the most important one of your life—and eternity—by trusting in Jesus.

If you have further questions, please reach out to [melissar@stonebriar.org](mailto:melissar@stonebriar.org). This is the most important decision you will ever make, and our staff wants to help you take this step. If you have chosen to receive Christ as your Savior, we want to know that too! Our staff would love to celebrate with you and help you in your journey as a believer in Christ.

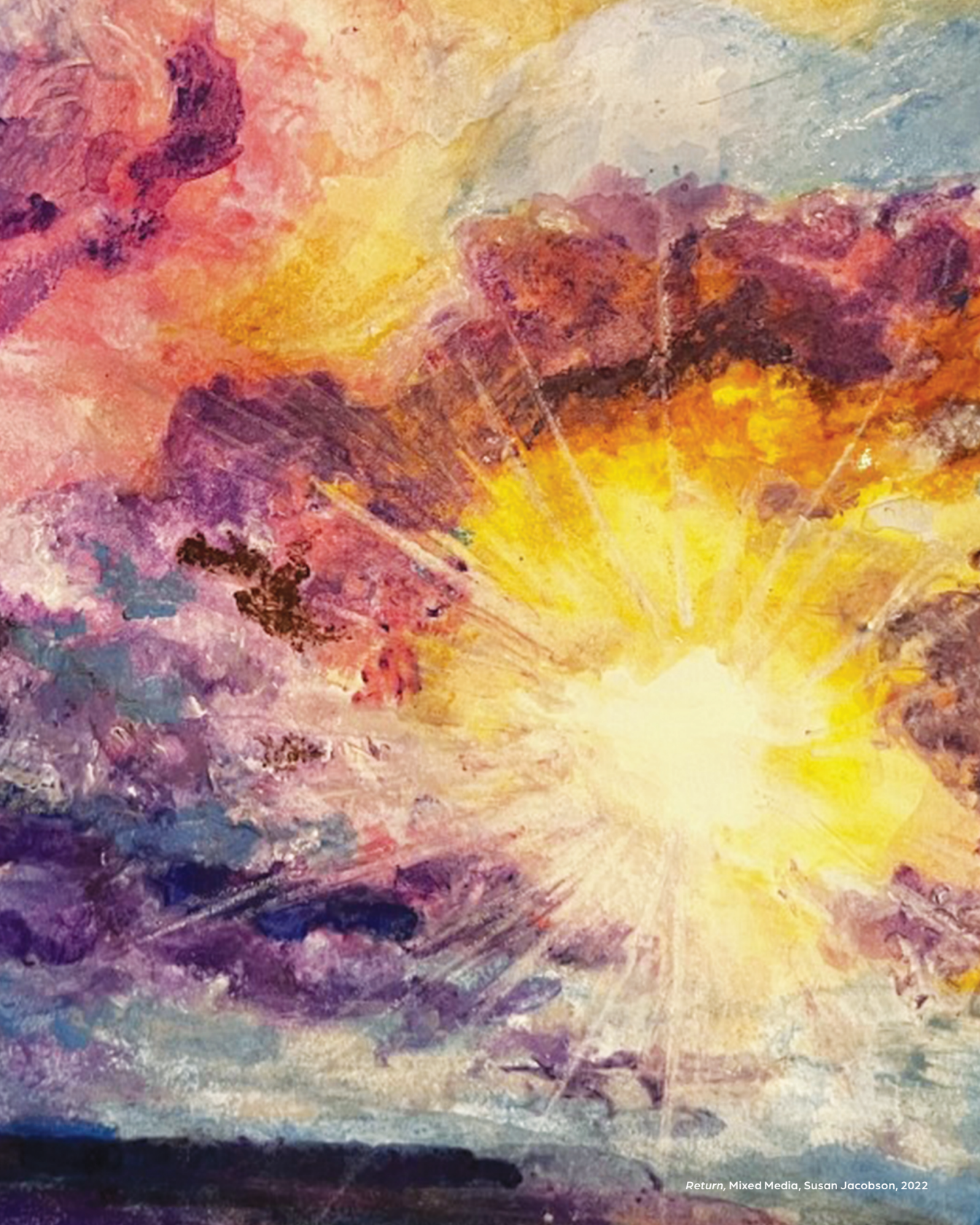
May you know the true peace of Christ because of your belief in Him in this Christmas season!



“... And be sure of this: I am  
with you *always*  
even to the end of the age.”

—Matthew 28:20 (NLT)





*Return*, Mixed Media, Susan Jacobson, 2022



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