



# **THE SEASON OF WAITING**

(AND WAITING... AND WAITING...)

**A 4-Week Advent  
Devotional**



# **WEEK 04**

Peace Amid  
Absurdity

“

**I am not alone at all,  
I thought. I was never  
alone at all. And that, of  
course, is the message  
of Christmas. We are  
never alone. Not when  
the night is darkest, the  
wind coldest, the world  
seemingly most indifferent.  
For this is still the time  
God chooses.”**

— Taylor Caldwell

# SURPRISED BY PEACE

READ

LUKE 1:46-55

Who and what are the mighty influences in your world today, and what wrongs and injustices cry out to be righted?

While we were doing something else, God came. While the Roman world was intent on domination and conquest, entertainment and excess, God chose to arrive as a baby born in dire circumstances in a backwater town. Quietly, inexorably, comes God's self-revelation. It resists categorization, and everything about it is a surprise. Mary is a surprise. Jesus is a surprise. It breaks prevailing social paradigms, and shatters forever the logic of empire. An angel tells a girl she will be a part of a great reversal, and suddenly, she recognizes the huge truth of it and can't contain her joy. Mary overflows with praise that God "has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty" (Luke 1:52-53).

Let us read with fresh eyes Luke's account of Jesus' birth, and see the wondrous absurdity of what unfolded, in the time of God's choosing:

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee whose name was Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, and the virgin's name was Mary. And going in to her and said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." And she was greatly distressed at his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And see: you will conceive in your womb and will bear a son, and you shall declare his name to be Jesus. This man will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob throughout the ages, and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, as I have intimacy with no man?" And in reply the angel told her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; hence the offspring will be called holy also; he will be called Son of God. And look at your relative Elizabeth: she also conceived a son, in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who had been called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let happen to me as you have said." And the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:46-55)

This is the theophanic unveiling, the presence that brings peace and calm. Truth is like that. It comes with the blessing of peace. What at first seems confusing and wrong, suddenly makes sense. Then comes the sigh. The body knows truth when it appears.

This is the wonder of Advent. We learn to see in the new light of God's absurd self-revelation in Jesus, which the world can't recognize or comprehend. It turns the world completely upside-down from everything we once thought or knew. But as we read the story, it reads us. We realize that our lives were upside down before, and now we've finally found our feet. We were living inverted, curved inward lives, and then God shows up and invites us into something more. Peace in a world of uncertainty. Joy that breaks forth. Love that prepares the way. And hope that waits. Above all else, God offers a communion where we need not be alone.

It doesn't make moving through the world any easier—quite the opposite is true—but the wily wisdom that comes in Advent provides a way to live... and be... and love in an absurd and beautiful world.

We are never alone, and we can bring this presence to others this Christmas. Reach out to someone who might believe they have no one. This is still the time God chooses.

## REFLECT

**Who and what are the mighty influences in your world today, and what wrongs and injustices cry out to be righted?**

## BONUS ACTIVITY

### A LESSON IN BELONGING

US Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy embarked on a listening tour to determine what was ailing Americans. The answer surprised him. People were lonely. I spoke with Vivek about loneliness as a public health crisis and how the experience of disconnection affects our ability to weather life's most difficult storms.

**Listen to my conversation with Vivek on "The Loneliness Epidemic" at [KateBowler.com/podcasts](https://katebowler.com/podcasts) or wherever you download podcasts.**

We begin and end with so much fragility—like little jelly beans. And yet the great irony is that the thing that affords us the greatest ability to connect—our fragility—is the thing we're most afraid to share. What's something small that helps you overcome this fear when you're struggling to connect with others?

# LAS POSADAS

## READ

MATTHEW 25:35

We often skip over the minute details around Jesus' birth to get to the grand reveal. But there is a moment I wanted us to slow down over today. About the innkeeper who made room for a waddly-pregnant Mary and her husband Joseph. Not in an open bed. But in hay, surrounded by his pets. Two strangers, clearly in need, knocked on the door and heart of a person who didn't realize they were sheltering the God of the Universe. A small yes that changed everything.

There's actually a tradition in Mexico that embodies the freedom and celebration we humans crave—the ability to walk to a neighbor's house, to have our needs met, perhaps even to enjoy music and food and drink together. And it's all done as a ritual to recognize and remember that Mary and Joseph needed the welcome that would meet their needs in dire circumstances. And Jesus too, as the almost born.

The tradition started in sixteenth-century Mexico, when missionary friars wanted to give their followers a Christian alternative to midwinter celebrations. In 1586, Augustinian Prior Diego de Soria began the custom of the posadas ("lodgings"), a nine-day ritual beginning on December 16, re-enacting the search of Joseph and Mary for a place to stay in Bethlehem.

It begins with a procession assembling after dark. Led by a child dressed as an angel and two more children carrying images of Mary and Joseph, folk march through the streets singing songs and playing musical instruments to a house chosen for the night's ceremony. There they knock and beg entrance for two weary travelers; they are ritually rebuffed from those within playing the cruel innkeepers of Bethlehem. The dialogue may go like this:

Joseph: Heaven, I beg you for lodging, for my beloved wife cannot walk.

Innkeeper: This is not an inn, so keep going. I cannot open—you may be a rogue.

Joseph: Don't be inhumane: Have mercy on us. The God of the heavens will reward you for it.

Innkeeper: Go on now and don't bother us, because if I get angry I'll give you a thrashing.

Joseph: We are worn out coming from Nazareth. I am a carpenter, Joseph by name.

Innkeeper: I don't care what your name is; let me sleep. I already told you we shall not open up.

Joseph: I'm asking you for lodging, dear man of the house, just for one night for the Queen of Heaven.

Innkeeper: Well, if it is a queen who is asking for it, why is she travelling at night and so alone?

Joseph: My wife is Mary the Queen of Heaven and she's

going to be the mother of the Divine Word.

Innkeeper: Are you Joseph? Your wife is Mary?  
Enter pilgrims, I did not recognize you.

Joseph: May God repay your charity, gentle  
people, and thus heaven heap happiness  
upon you.

Innkeeper: Blessed is the house that shelters  
this day the pure Virgin, the beautiful Mary.

After this exchange of traditional phrases, the procession is invited inside where they will gather in front of the family Nativity scene and sing carols, followed by refreshments. On December 24, the posadas conclude with a big party for the families who have participated in the processions or played the innkeepers. Piñatas are smashed by the children, hospitality flows, and then all may go off to the midnight mass. This custom has spread throughout the American southwest and Central America.

It's an unusual thing to have an actual ritual that gets at the discomfort, the rejection that is at the heart of the events that led up to Jesus' birth. What if we too could name and welcome our needs in this Advent season? What if we could lament our losses together, express our

longing, and find community safely somehow, through our shared experience of vulnerability?

As I think about this, the darkest time of the year, I realize we are people of traditions and rituals. And they can keep us stuck, or help us grow into what we long to become.

See how you might adapt one of your most cherished Christmas practices, and sense God's welcome and presence and comfort, just exactly where you are right now.

## **REFLECT**

**Think of a time  
someone's hospitality  
went above and  
beyond. What made it  
so memorable?**

# ENCOUNTERING LOVE

READ

MATTHEW 10:8

No Christmas could be complete without attention to those who are less fortunate than we. Thomas was one of the original apostles of Jesus, known especially in the gospel of John for doubting the resurrection, until he could see for himself that Jesus who was truly dead, was now truly alive.



Tomorrow, we will explore the gift of the Doubting Thomas whose Feast Day is December 21. But in today's reflection we consider another important aspect of the apostle Thomas—his irrepressible and generous spirit that has inspired nations all over the world.

It is said of Saint Thomas that it was he who traveled all the way to India and converted the Magi who followed the star to Bethlehem. It was Thomas whose devotion to Jesus as truly God compelled him to take a place lower than his master, even in the manner in which he was put to death for his faith. And it was Thomas who inspired the notion that at Christmas, we pay special attention to those less fortunate than we. This urge to give and share is deep within us, even when we don't have an overabundance. Giving ennobles us. It reminds us of who we are as humans.

That's why in England, for example, December

21st was set aside traditionally as a day of licensed begging. Why licenced? Because it has always been the case that beggars could receive rough treatment for "harassing" those they importune. In our day, it would be the homeless person on the street corner holding up a sign saying "Anything helps" who causes discomfort to the drivers going by. So historically on December 21, poor women for example, were permitted to go door-to-door and safely ask for alms. This annual custom was called "Thomasing," "mumping," or "a-gooding"—for it was considered good for one's soul to give. Thus, this song sung by the indigent women as they went door-to-door, announcing their presence:

Well a day, well a day,

St. Thomas goes too soon away,

Then your gooding we do pray

For a good time will not stay.

St. Thomas gray, St Thomas gray, The longest night and shortest day. Please to remember St. Thomas's Day.

The custom died out in the early 20th century as charity became more institutionalized and attitudes to begging hardened. Many registered

charities in Britain, however, observe Saint Thomas Day by choosing to make their payments then.

“Thomasing,” or considering the poor and taking care of their needs in practical ways is very close to Jesus’ heart. Of all the customs associated with Christmas, at their core is charity, charity, charity—the kind that gives, but not ostentatiously. Giving in the Spirit of Christ always preserves the dignity of the other. It’s the response of a heart that is grateful, a heart that keeps itself soft because, like Saint Thomas, it has encountered the Lord of love.

Perhaps we need to set aside and reinstate an official day of giving. Not that we only give that day, but that at least once a year we truly dedicate ourselves to seeing Jesus in the faces of the poor, for “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40).

## **REFLECT**

**Reflect for a moment on all you have that is pure gift, no strings attached. What would it be like to give to others so freely?**

# DOUBTS

READ

JOHN 14:1-5



December 21 is the Feast of Saint Thomas the Apostle, who was known as Doubting Thomas. If you've read yesterday's reflection you know that Thomas was known for more than just being a champion contrarian, but today we delve into that most iconic attribute.

Thomas had been with the other disciples all along. He was there, when Jesus had taught and traveled with them all over the region. There, when Jesus told them that he would be killed, and then rise again from the dead. But Thomas was not there after the resurrection when Jesus came and showed himself to be alive (John 20)—first to the women, and then to the apostles, saying “Peace be with you.” But Thomas was not at all at peace with what he was told when his fellow apostles said, “We have seen the Lord.” Thomas responded, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe” (John 20:25).

Sometimes I am absolutely positive I am the doubter. I feel completely convinced I am defined by questions instead of answers. But in other moments, it can be easy to be annoyed by doubt. Can't we all just agree? Especially to whatever I just said?

Thomas was the one who felt comfortable voicing his doubts openly and directly to Jesus. There's a painting by the 16th century Italian painter Caravaggio that reveals their intimacy. It shows Thomas and Jesus together, their heads inclined toward each other, and with one hand Jesus adjusts his garment so that with the other, he can guide Thomas's finger into the open wound in his side. So that Thomas might believe. Jesus knows us in our doubts and can meet us there.

Saint Gregory the Pope said, “The doubts of Thomas have done us more good than the faith of all the disciples that believed.” Yes, Jesus came in the form of a baby to welcome and bless little children, but he also came to bless us in our grown-up doubts and fears. Christmas doesn't have to be perpetual sparkly lights and sugar plums dancing in our heads. At Christmas, we can so easily get caught up in the pressure to keep things upbeat, always perfect, always (four-letter word coming) NICE. It might feel safer, but it will be less real.

The truth is that this beautiful baby boy was born into an imperfect world with suffering that is unmanageable, to take it all into himself. And it

is in Advent that we prepare ourselves to receive him. We need the coming of this Savior who will meet us precisely in the apocalypse of our undoing, in the inevitability that in the story of our lives, the hero dies. But in Christ's upside-down kingdom, all that is reversed, and Thomas was the first to really get it.

Thomas, with all his doubting, was in fact the first disciple to call Jesus Lord, and "Adonai" was the name he used. It is a name that has such connotations of holiness to the Jews that what Thomas actually said was: "My Lord and My God!" making it absolutely clear that Thomas saw and knew that Jesus was fully human and fully God. And Jesus' response left a blessing for us: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed!"

Saint Gregory the Pope unfolds to us how this blessing comes to us:

"It was a wonderful provision of divine mercy, that this incredulous disciple, by thrusting his fingers into the bodily wounds of his Master, should apply a remedy to the spiritual wounds of unbelief in our souls. While he felt his way to faith by touching, our minds are freed from doubt, and settled in faith."

In our darkening days, an apocalyptic Advent meets us in our need, for it is the revealing of life everlasting. This is comfort indeed.

## REFLECT

In John 14:5, Thomas the Apostle asks Jesus the awkward question that many other disciples may have been thinking, but not saying. What awkward questions do you have for God?

# AN INTENTIONAL ADVENT

READ

LUKE 10:38-41

What if a holiday could be invented that really was a lot like Christmas, but without the added pressure like Martha felt, trying to get everything done? (I can feel the intense interest growing...) Christmas puts a lot of pressure on women who bear the brunt of Christmas labor. Instead, let us ask ourselves, what are some ways you can add intentionality to your Advent practices and Christmas planning without the stress? Too late, you say? Well, what about changing up the big meal last minute, so it is something differently delicious, without 'all the things.' All the things that have always been done, because they have always been done, but does anyone actually *\*like\** Grandpa's turnip recipe? Can it still be Christmas without it? Maybe instead, try to support local businesses by ordering in.

And let us not forget that living through a pandemic has already caused us to have a reset of huge proportions. Now that we are in a different place, it's a good time to consider, what has changed as a result? What are we doing now that we didn't do before? Here are some more old Christmas traditions that could spark a sense of renewed life in your Advent and your Christmas to come:

## **Remember the dead**

In northern and eastern Europe, the Christmas season is the time to remember family and friends who have passed on. Rekindle their memories by visiting the cemetery and decorating the graves. In Kenora, Ontario, citizens set out thousands of ice candles on Christmas Eve in the local cemetery. Some bring extra lights and seek out old graves or ones not visited by family to light them. Some cultures set an extra place at the table for their ancestors, or put their pictures on display. Community is here and now, and with those who have left us.

## **The Jesse Tree**

A popular motif in medieval art, particularly in stained glass, was the depiction of the earthly ancestry of Jesus as a tree growing from Jesse, the father of David. So a Jesse Tree figuratively stands for Jesus, the Messiah, the root of Jesse which you may remember from our reflection on the O Antiphons (Isaiah 11:10). A spectacular example of this is the twelfth-century Jesse Tree window from the Benedictine Abbey of Saint Denis in France. In the 20th century, the notion of a Jesse tree as a symbol of Advent attracted a number of American artists and craftspeople. Many churches and homes now contain a tree, tree branch or banner decorated with Bible verses prophesying the coming of Jesus or ornaments symbolic of Messianic prophecies.

Sometimes the Jesse Tree is decorated piece by piece in the fashion of an Advent calendar and in some churches a Jesse tree is used to collect winter clothing for the poor with members attaching hats, scarves or mittens.

## **Christingle**

Also known as a “Christ-light” service, this is a ceremony popular in English Protestant churches, often involving children. Originating with the Moravian church in the eighteenth century, these services are held during the Advent season and combine collecting money for charity with the image of Christ as the light of the world. A feature of the service is the Christingle or Christ-light, a candle placed in the top of an orange decorated with a red ribbon and four sticks on which are placed fruit or candy, symbolic of the blood shed

by Christ for all the peoples of the world.

## **White Christmas**

In 1914, a new type of service was introduced into some North American Protestant Sunday Schools for Advent—the “White Christmas” service, in which children were encouraged to bring gifts to be distributed to the needy. This grew to be a popular tradition in many churches and it continues to this day, collecting both canned food, toys, and monetary donations to make Christmas for the poor a little easier. In some churches, this is called “White Gift Sunday” from the custom of wrapping the offerings in white paper.

## **Any keepers here?**

So let us consider, in order for wisdom and prudence to lead us to the one thing that is needed this year. Are there any Advent and Christmas traditions you definitely want to keep? Which do you want to let go of? And what do you want to try for the first time?

## **REFLECT**

**Jesus said, “Few things are needed, and indeed only one.” (Luke 10:42)**

**What does your heart tell you about the one big thing that is needed just now?**

# HEAVENLY PEACE

READ

LUKE 2:1-14

Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and child! Holy infant,  
so tender and mild, Sleep in heavenly peace!  
Sleep in heavenly peace!

On Christmas Eve, these are the words we sing in hushed and reverent tones, as we approach the manger. With Mary and Joseph, we will gently bend over the infant Jesus and sing our adoration that is actually a lullaby, sung with loving and protective intent: “sleep in heavenly peace!”

And sometime during a Christmas service, we may have heard the words spoken that describe the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem: “In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world...” (Luke 2:1) The name Augustus had been given to Octavian through his military might and ascendancy over his rivals, and the peace he won was called the Pax Romana. This “Roman peace” lasted over 200 years—from about 31 B.C.E.—and spread throughout a vast empire. Its culture and achievements are still evidenced today in the Roman roads and walls that still stand. But this peace was won at a cost: through absolute dominance and brutal enforcement. We already know too much about such methods—

capital punishment in the arena by wild beasts, the practice of decimation, and the public torture called crucifixion. It is into this world to this form of peace, that Jesus comes with his kingdom. The Pax Christi.

**Silent night! Holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight! Glories stream from heaven afar, Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia! Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!**

The words speak peace to the world, but so does the music. Its rhythm is a specific style called a “Siciliana,” a slow lilting, rocking rhythm that in Baroque music evoked pastoral scenes and images of shepherds and sheep safely grazing, as on the hillsides of Sicily. The Siciliana rhythm is famously used in Handel’s Messiah in the aria “He shall feed His flock like a shepherd.” Again, the words and music evoke the comfort and freedom of sheep who can roam freely and eat their fill, and the tenderness and vigilance of a Good Shepherd, who watches over his sheep and guards them from harm.

The song “Silent Night” was famously written in the midst of an impending Christmas Eve calamity. The church organ broke down. The

priest Joseph Mohr needed a solution. So he brought his lyrics to Franz Gruber who wrote the music for a guitar accompaniment. Surely, the song is itself a kind of Christmas miracle.

**Silent night! Holy night! Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth! Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!**

Sleep little one, on this, the night most charged with promise and holy joy:

“For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the increase of his government and of peace  
there will be no end.”

—Isaiah 9:6–7

## **REFLECT**

**As you prepare for Christmas Eve when we will celebrate the coming of our infant king in the singular glory of that holy birth, go somewhere uncomfortable, dark and cramped, and read aloud the familiar story in Luke 2. What stands out to you?**



**READ**

ISAIAH 54:10

**A  
BLESSING  
FOR THE  
ADVENT  
OF PEACE**

**DAY 28**

---

Oh God, we are waiting,  
we are longing for You,  
oh Prince of Peace.

Come and reign in our hearts.  
Settle us in quiet expectancy  
that as sure as day follows night,  
you will come  
and be for us the wonder  
the world cannot give,  
the light that shows us how to see,  
the wisdom that teaches us  
how to move with you,  
how to keep pace with you.  
And when we are troubled,  
  
how to still ourselves in the certainty  
that you are and ever will be  
our peace.

God have mercy.  
Christ have mercy.  
Spirit have mercy.

Alleluia, Christ has come! And will  
come again in glory!

## **REFLECT**

Where in your life, in  
the life of your loved  
ones, and in that of  
your community needs  
God's compassion  
just now? Hold it in  
your heart as you read  
today's blessing aloud.



# **CHRIST- MASTIDE**

The 12 Days of  
Christmas

# HELLO MY DEAR,

It has been a strange season. Advent is over, and Christmas is here. But for many, it may not feel like Christmas at all. We are still waiting for miracles. We still long for life to feel normal again.

Christmastide (December 25 - January 5) is about the gradual departure of darkness and the gentle dawning of light at Epiphany. We don't have to cram all of Christmas into one day. At Christmastide, we shed the pressure of "the holidays" and how we always do things, and take on a new, relaxed rhythm of celebration. Kinder. Quirkier. Gentler.

I didn't want to leave you in the Advent season without walking us through Christmas as well. So this year I bring you this Christmastide Calendar for us to practice together.

If you have a Christmas manger scene, or crèche, put the baby Jesus in his manger. Find some wise men (or make them out of Legos!) and put them far away. Each day of Christmastide move the wise men closer and closer to the manger, to

Jesus, the light of the world. On January 6, they arrive, and the season of light begins, Epiphany. Otherwise, each day of Christmastide, do one thing less. Make space. Make it a holiday. Feel free to make them your own.

And I've added a suggested Christmas carol to listen to, some of them traditional just to stir memories, and some not so well-known or widely heard at this time of year. Sit under your tree. Let the words wash over you.

We have not been exactly here before, and again it is time to take hold of some fierce hope. Take courage! If you have had a hectic Advent or Christmas Day this year, this Christmastide Calendar is a gentle way for you to release the grip of anticipation and walk toward joy.

Onward together,

*Kate*

## **December 25: Christmas Day**

**IDEAS:** Order in food. Save a present to open on the evening of January 5th, Twelfth Night, to mark the end of Christmastide.

**TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CAROL:**  
O Come, All Ye Faithful!

## **December 26: St. Stephen's Day (Boxing Day)**

**IDEAS:** Eat leftovers. Go for a walk or have a rest. The heart of love is in the small things, so do some random act of giving today.

**TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CAROL:**  
Good King Wenceslas

## **December 27: St. John the Evangelist's Day**

**IDEAS:** Spread the Gospel by being the "good news" for someone else in a small way. The good news is the light, so set aside time to light a candle, take a glass of wine or cider, and relax in the glow.

**TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CAROL:**  
The Wexford Carol

## **December 28: Feast of the Innocents**

**IDEAS:** Pray specifically for world leaders, and unobtrusively make a gesture of peace toward someone you

know, in the spirit of loving those you don't find easy to love.

**TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CAROL:**  
Sweet Little Jesus Boy

## **December 29: Feast of Thomas Beckett**

**IDEAS:** Send an email of thanks to someone who has been a spiritual inspiration to you. Your priest, pastor, teacher, or mentor.

**TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CAROL:**  
The Cherry Tree Carol

## **December 30: Feast of The Holy Family**

**IDEAS:** Call up someone you haven't talked to forever. Or declare it a quiet day and read a good book.

**TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CAROL:**  
Still! Still! Still!

## **December 31: New Year's Eve**

**IDEAS:** Instead of making New Year's resolutions, write a card to your family members or friends, telling them what your good wishes or blessings are for them in the coming year.

**TRADITIONAL NEW YEAR'S SONG:**  
Auld Lang Syne!

**January 1:**  
**New Year's Day**

**IDEAS:** Set aside time to come together with family or friends virtually or in person, bless the year and each other, sharing your blessings or cards or messages you wrote. Then, write a blessing for yourself.

**TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CAROL:**  
Jesus Christ the Apple Tree

**January 2:**  
**St. Basil's Day**

**IDEAS:** Think ahead to the year and write in your calendar reminders of the blessings you have been given. Write yourself a little thank you note for something you did this year that makes you glad you did it.

**TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CAROL:**  
Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

**January 3:**  
**Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus**

**IDEAS:** Say the name of Jesus reverently throughout the day as an internal "Yes" to the light coming into the world, or pray the Jesus prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

**TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CAROL:**  
Huron Carol

**January 4:**  
**Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus**

**IDEAS:** Preferably do something fun that involves delicious food or a yummy cocktail.

**TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CAROL:**  
Children, Go where I send thee

**January 5:**  
**Eve of the Epiphany  
(Twelfth Night)**

**IDEAS:** Open your saved gifts!

**TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CAROL:**  
We Three Kings of Orient Are!

**January 6:**  
**Epiphany**

**IDEAS:** Light all the candles in the house. Bring the Wise Men into the manger. Enjoy the Christmas lights one more time. Rest.

**TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CAROL:** As with gladness Men of Old

**January 7:**  
**Season of Light**

**IDEAS:** Take down the tree! Reflect on what it means to enter the season of light.