

2025

Advent Reflections

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." John 1:14



On Eagle's Wings

A few pictures from our 2025 TASTE Bible Camp programs.
To see more, check out our Soaring Newsletters online, or by mail!



“Thank you for coming all the way here.” - parent

“We know we are loved when you come to spend time with us and our precious children.” - parent

“Please come back again next year!” - child at Bible Camp



“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”

John 1:14a (NIV)

Dear Friends,

It is with great joy that I send you this year’s edition of our annual Advent Reflections booklet.

Every year, *On Eagle’s Wings* volunteers travel to remote communities in Northern Canada to share the news that Jesus has made his dwelling among us. This might be among a group of children, sitting wide-eyed and amazed as they hear stories of Jesus during Bible Camp, or perhaps a group of adults who are discovering how Jesus will lead them further on their healing journey today.

Time and time again, people who live in these remote and isolated places tell us that our presence makes a huge difference in their lives.

Presence is much more than simply being in the same physical space. It involves emotional availability. Deep listening. Connectedness. Journeying alongside and offering support in times of joy and laughter, sorrow and tears. The sense of comfort that comes from physical presence is often more significant than the words spoken.

As I think about it today, I am sure one of the reasons Jesus entered humanity is so we would become aware of his presence and know his ever-present comfort. As Sister Fay will remind us on Dec 1, Jesus offered great words of hope regarding his presence saying, *“...remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

Jesus chooses to dwell with us now. Emmanuel is here. Emotionally available, attuned to you, listening, journeying alongside, offering his comfort and support, no matter what situation you find yourself in.

As you read through the reflections written by our volunteer writers, you will see and hear evidence of this. Some live (or lived) in the North, and others shared the gift of their presence while serving on one of our teams. I encourage you to search for the insights into how they have experienced Christ’s incarnational presence being made known in our time.



I sincerely thank each writer, along with our editors and proof readers for making this year’s Advent Reflections a reality.

Robin Abrol, Executive Director

When Love Came Down

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

1 John 4:9 (NIV)

“I love you!” blurted a little girl to the volunteers as she ran out of the church after a day of Bible Camp. Her words were quick, and came straight from the heart.

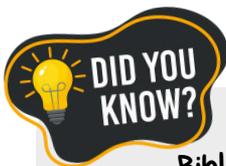
For many of us, saying those three words doesn't come easily. As we grow older, trust can be harder to give, and love may feel risky. Yet during Bible Camp in an Arctic community, love flowed freely from the children through endless hugs, big smiles, kind gestures and heartfelt pleas of, “Please don't leave!” Their love was pure, unfiltered by the world, and easily shared.

I often wonder if we, as adults, could love like these children without keeping score. Without weighing whether someone deserves it, and simply choosing just to love anyway. When God sent His Son to earth as a tiny baby, it was a decision of unconditional love. In a world dark with sin, his love conquered all.

As we enter this Advent season, may we be reminded of the hope and love that came into the world through Jesus. May we, too, learn to love more like a child. Freely, sincerely and without holding back.

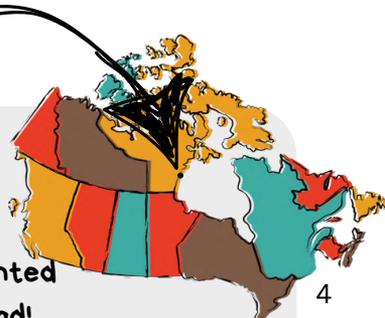
God, thank you for showing us true love by sending your Son to dwell among us. This Advent help us reflect on how we can love others with the same selfless love you have given us. Amen

Shauna Huber
Ministry Manager, *On Eagle's Wings*



We held our first ever Bible Camp in the wonderful community of Arviat, Nunavut. More than 70 children were delighted to TASTE and see the Lord is good!

Arviat



Hope and Waiting and Gratitude!

Hope. Waiting. Gratitude! It took centuries for God's plan to unfold.

What do we daily wait for in life? We wait for many things – justice, peace, end to war; we wait for graduation day; we wait for time. We also wait for forgiveness, for family unity, for God's Kingdom; we wait to see our loved ones again. In the season of Advent, we wait for a Redeemer, the Promised One, the Anointed One!

Here in Tuktoyaktuk, we wait for seasons of hunting and fishing. We wait for the ice bridge to come so we can use the ice road. We wait for our kids to get through their teen years with their struggles and challenges. And these things always come. The animals and fish come in abundance. The ice road becomes usable. The next generation eventually become mayors, teachers, labourers and even elders! And we smile! These are daily experiences of hoping.

As Christians, we wait with hope, with expectation, because God is faithful to his promises. So many scriptures are about our hope in God.

"I am with you always; yes, to the end of time." (Mt. 28:20)

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still and trust in me." (Jn 14:1)

"You alone are my hope, Lord ... I have relied on you since I was born." (Ps 71:5)

A few days ago, in an e-mail, I received a note:

"I see God is moving in peoples' lives ... healing is happening ...".

So many hopes! So much waiting! And now so much gratitude!

Loving God, in so many ways you lead us, guide us, slow us down and bless us. Thank you for the gift of your Word made flesh, who dwells among us and shows us the way. In Jesus' name we pray, AMEN.

Sister Fay Trombley
Community Partner, Tuktoyaktuk

Taste and See

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Psalm 34:9 (NIV)

In July, I returned to Behchokò, a First Nations community where we had held a Bible Camp two summers ago. The town, northwest of Yellowknife, had to evacuate ahead of the forest fire just as our children's program was ending.

This past summer, new trees were being planted. New houses were being built. The community is looking forward to a bright future for their young people.

As the boys and girls approached us the first day, a little girl raced towards me, calling out to me by name! As she welcomed me back, I felt surprised, humbled, encouraged.

A following day, this girl gave me a slice of bread. Not real bread, but a craft made from paper, and part of our TASTE curriculum.

"This is for you!" she said. Printed on the bread slice were the words: TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD. Words which I remember hearing when I was her age. A wonderful reminder that Creator wills goodness for his people.

In this Advent season, we look forward to the Christmas celebration of our loving Creator coming among us in the birth of Jesus. As we read through the Scriptures, we also look toward God's coming to us in the risen Jesus Christ at the close of history. We go forward in our daily living in the confidence that our Lord Jesus, the Bread of Life, wills good for us.

Let us reflect upon that little girl's slice of bread. Let us "Taste and see that the Lord is good."

Creator God, you call us to trust in your goodness for us and our people. Forgive us. Guide us to discover and to follow your ways in our daily lives. Amen.

Vessels of Light

We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.

2 Corinthians 4:7 (NIV)

We were an hour from beginning our day at Bible Camp, and the anticipation was growing. Although we were excited, we were starting to get nervous. It was our very first time leading a Bible Camp, and we were really hoping that everything would go smoothly.

I thought that my experience as an elementary school teacher would be enough to settle the anxiety, but it wasn't. We quickly realized that we needed to depend on God to calm our hearts, we couldn't do this on our own.

Turning to the Father, we began to pray and worship. Bringing our concerns to him, we worshipped in song, and thanked him for his character revealed to us in the Bible. He transformed our hearts.

The uncertainty didn't disappear, but God gave us a truly hopeful perspective. We went from thinking it all depended on us, to remembering that it was never about us in the first place. This camp wasn't ours - it was his. And he was right there, dwelling with us. We were simply vessels, called to reflect his light and truth to the children he brought there.

Jesus, you came to the earth to conquer sin and death, and transform our hearts to be a dwelling place for your presence. Break us free from sin and darkness so that we might be filled with your light. When we feel insufficient or uncertain, help us turn our focus back to you.

Fill us with hope this Advent by showing us the truth of who you are, and our identity in you.

God Has The Best Plans

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him and he will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

In late September, a group of nine from our church embarked on a car journey to Fort Smith, Northwest Territories to lead a Bible Camp for children aged 5 to 11. As a grandmother of five and someone who loves children, I looked forward to a wonderful week with the kids - perhaps up to 30 of them. I was eager to share stories, build connections, and meet a few more grandmothers too.

However, God's plan was different from what I had envisioned. The only grandmothers I encountered were two I introduced myself to at the grocery store, and not as many children as we had planned for attended our camp. When it became clear the week would not unfold as I had pictured in my mind, I prayed for guidance and wisdom so I could switch gears and adapt to the new circumstances.

Joseph and Mary had to trust in the Lord our God for their journey as well. Joseph wanted to release Mary from their engagement when he found out she was with child. After he heard from God, he had to switch gears. Together they had to trust when they were required to make a sudden and unexpected journey to Bethlehem. A trip that meant Jesus would be born far away from home.

Joseph and Mary submitted their ways to God and placed their total trust in the Lord even though their circumstances were vastly different from what they had imagined. Similarly, we can place our trust in God and his plan even when things don't go the way we expect them to. God's plan is always the best!

Heavenly Father, thank you for helping us find your plan for our lives. Thank you that through prayer, worship, and submission to you, we can adapt to the plans you have for us. Please lead and guide us this Advent and beyond. Amen.

Teach Me Lord To Wait

'Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Psalm 27:14 (NIV)

There are so many lessons to learn when deciding to move from life in southern BC to a life in a small village in the far north of Canada.

From a couple who had lived there previously, I received excellent advice about what clothes to take, what food supplies to have with me, and how to arrange transportation to get me and everything there. I was even warned about possible delays. Anyone who has travelled to, lived in, or worked in the North will know what I mean as a “delayed” memory flashes in your head!

Once well settled in my new home and making a heartfelt effort to learn Inuktitut, I was always asking questions of my new Inuit friends. One answer seemed to be repeated many times, depending on the question. That word was “IMAHA”. It translates as “maybe”.

Are you going hunting today? Imaha!
Will the plane land today? Imaha!

Their patience with my questions and my own eventual understanding of just how important learning the arts of “waiting” and “patience” are, became the bedrock of over 30 years living in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay.

We do know Jesus lived on earth with us. We don't know when He will return. Will it be today? Tomorrow? Next year? Imaha!

In the meantime we wait with great anticipation, being prepared and ready for that day. Life is full when God is in it.

Lord, we come to you with open hearts. Fill us, in these Advent days, with hope, peace and joy knowing you will renew our strength in every situation. Amen

Terry Jessudason
Former Board Member of *On Eagle's Wings*

5 Ways To Get Your Church Involved With On Eagle's Wings

Send a Team to Northern Canada

Help us meet the number of requests we receive for Bible Camps each year by sending and sponsoring a team from your congregation! Teams of 4 to 6 adults are ideal.



Make Bible Camp in a Bag Kits

Congregations can gather volunteers to create BCiaB kits either in our Edmonton office, or at their home church location. Ask for more details!

Pray for On Eagle's Wings

As an interdenominational ministry, a strong foundation of prayer underpins everything we do. Please remember us in prayer.



Organize a Fundraiser

On Eagle's Wings needs to raise around \$300,000 a year to run camps and offer pastoral support in remote and isolated communities of Northern Canada. Your congregation can help!



Invite Us to Share Updates

We have staff and volunteers who are excited to give presentations at small groups, congregational events, or even preach at Sunday services.



Hope in Jesus' Return

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 14:3-4 (NIV)

“You’re going away?” Evan’s smile disappeared as he looked down at his feet in sadness. It was our last day of Bible Camp in a Northwest Territories community, and he had just found out that we would be leaving the next day to return to Edmonton.

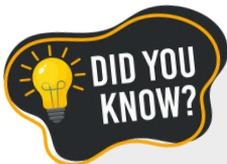
“Will you come back?” He didn’t look at me, as his voice quivered with tears. I sat beside him on the steps and put my arm around him. “I hope so,” I said. “I promise I will write to you, and I will put your picture on my fridge so I remember to pray for you every day.”

During Advent we anticipate the birth of Christ into our world as a baby. And though his time on earth was very short he left his disciples with a promise that he would come back. We also anticipate with great hope the day when Jesus will physically return.

No matter what is happening in our world, if we ground our faith in Jesus we can hold firmly to the hope that he is preparing a wonderful place for us to live in fellowship with him for all eternity! And that is a promise that he will surely keep!

Lord Jesus, thank You for coming into our world and revealing yourself to us so we could know you, and for the hopeful promise that one day you will return! Amen.

Darlene Koop
Bible Camp Volunteer



It costs approximately \$670 to host each child at Bible Camp for a week. This includes transporting a team of volunteers to a Northern community, and sending all the supplies for a fun week of spiritual and emotional enrichment!



The Healer

Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits— who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion.

Psalms 103:2-4 (NIV)

We had just finished our session “Taking Our Pain to the Cross” in one of the Northern communities. We asked the participants what we should do with the bowl of water containing the dissolved papers that we had written our pains on.

They thought for a minute and then suggested we all pile into one big van and drive out of the hamlet up the hill where there was a large cross overlooking the community.

It was there at the foot of that cross that they poured out the bowl of water containing the papers with their pains written on them and offered them to Jesus for healing. But they didn't stop there, they gathered and prayed for Jesus to heal their whole community. It was a sacred moment.

In this Advent season, may we remember Jesus came to reconcile us to the Father, forgive our sins, and to heal our brokenness. He is our wonderful counsellor and prince of peace in times of suffering.

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, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)

Lord thank you for your compassion, mercy, and desire to have a relationship with us. Thank you for sending Jesus to be the healer of our brokenness and our hearts. May we remember this Christmas that we have a wonderful counsellor who came to touch us with peace and healing.

A Blessed Advent Season

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13 (NIV)

The ministerial journey up north in Canada calls for dependence on God's leading, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and learning to trust God at all times.

The dark and extremely cold winter weather are some of the biggest challenges - among many others. Yet it calls us to hold firmly to the message of God's hope, peace, joy, and love.

We find ourselves now in yet another celebratory time of the year, the Advent Season. This is a wonderful spiritual season of preparation, engaging our hearts and minds in prayer, reflection, and deepening our spiritual life.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, St. Paul says:

"Rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

It is important to develop and maintain a consistent mindset of joy, making every effort to remain in constant connection with God through prayer and an intimate relationship with him.

A true Christian life is revealed in a life of thankfulness, even in difficult times, as a reflection of one's identity in Christ. A believer expresses a heart full of gratitude for God's presence, provision, and grace, even in the midst of dark days of suffering or grief.

I echo the words of the Apostle in my prayers for you this Advent.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Gifts

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations. Isaiah 42:1 (NIV)

At my church recently I had the opportunity to joyfully celebrate the installation of our new priest, Father Dave. Another priest, Chris, gave a wonderful sermon that day about sharing our gifts with others in God's family. His words really spoke to me.

How can I be sure that I am most effectively using the gifts that I have been given with my church community? For our *On Eagle's Wings* family? Wherever they might be best utilized? Moreover, are my priorities aligned with God's?

I have always enjoyed teaching and creativity. Thinking back on my experiences in Bible Camp many years ago, I remember how life-altering those weeks in the Northwest Territories were for me. I also remember asking the Holy Spirit to be with me and guide me so that I didn't fail in my role as a teacher for so many children in a culture that was entirely new to me. Fortunately, he was with me the whole time!

While I may not be able to travel for Bible Camp at this point in my life, I can share my gifts through participation on the Board of *On Eagle's Wings*. Another way is through teaching my grandchildren about God and Jesus. When is there a more opportune time to share with children our hope - and what it means - than in this special time of preparation for Jesus's birth?

Lord, just as your Holy Spirit has been with us since time began, may your wisdom and guidance continue to be with me as I seek assurance that I am utilizing the gifts that you have given me in accordance with your wishes. Amen

Jesus Knows!

Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?
John 4:29 (NIV)

The Bible Camp children were acting out the woman at the well, our Bible story for the day. They understood the gist of the story very well, but there was a lot of ad-libbing as the children took turns to be different characters.

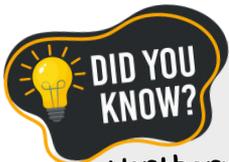
Our Jesus's grew especially creative in telling the woman all the bad things she had done – even stealing a car and robbing a bank! Sometimes their lists of wrong doings were long as well as humorous. One thing remained consistent, though, and that was the woman's joy and relief when she understood that Jesus loved her and forgave her sin.

The children's imaginative list of sins reminds me that, by the time we enter Advent, Jesus knows that we have usually accumulated a long list of sins and a heavy load of burdens over the course of the year. Just as with the woman at the well, they often isolate us from others.

The good news of Advent is that nothing we have done can deter Jesus from coming to us in the flesh, living among us and offering us new life. Therefore, let us prepare to accept Jesus' gift of living water, love and grace.

Loving God who knows everything about us, reveal to us the path from the isolation of sin to joyful acceptance into your presence and family. Renew us with living water that, at your birth, we may wholeheartedly rejoice. Amen.

Rev. Lesley Hand
Former Executive Director & Volunteer Bible Camp teacher



21 Bible Camp volunteers shared the gift of their presence with a

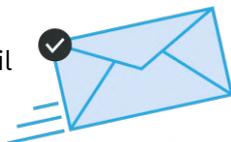
Northern community in 2025. Next year we will need even more to fulfil the requests coming in. You can help!



6 Ways to Make a Difference

1

Complete the attached return envelope and mail your cheque or credit card details to our office.



2

Set up a monthly recurring donation via your credit card. Please call our office for details. Our phone numbers are on the rear cover.



3

Make a one-time credit card donation online via our website or directly from your phone using the QR code here.



4

Use Interac e-transfer and set the recipient as **donate@oneagleswings.ca** (please include your name & address in the notes).



5

Donate Securities (shares, mutual funds, bonds), pay no tax on the capital gains in Canada, and receive a Canadian Tax Receipt for the fully appreciated value of your securities donation.

6

Leave a Legacy Gift. Remember *On Eagle's Wings* in your will. Be sure to use our legal name in your country. On Eagle's Wings Ecumenical Ministries Inc. in Canada. On Eagles Wings Ministries Incorporated in USA.



If you would like to visit our website simply visit <https://OnEaglesWings.ca> There is a blue Donate button in the top right corner of every page. Click the flag of your country, and scroll down to donate online.

Thank you for your support!

A Willing Heart

Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. Luke 2:3 (MSG)

Undertaking a journey requires advanced planning and preparation. Imagine planning a journey involving walking 113 km (70 miles), navigating hilly terrain while caring for a heavily pregnant woman.

Today it would be considered high risk to embark on such an arduous journey in the third trimester of pregnancy. I imagine the Roman census coinciding with Mary's due date was a major inconvenience.

The decision to journey to the Arctic community of Tuktoyaktuk was not easy. I was deeply fatigued from a busy season in life and still in the process of recovering from the flu. There was a part of me that didn't want to be inconvenienced by the trip and another part that really wanted to reconnect with the people in Tuk. I was genuinely concerned about my health, but as I began to pray about the opportunity I recognized a gentle nudging in my spirit to surrender my fears.

I often wonder about the inner conflict Mary might have experienced as she prepared to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Perhaps she was concerned about her health and the health of her newborn. Mary's act of compliance and surrender to the things outside of her control continues to be a source of inspiration to me.

As I sat around a craft table sharing my faith with the children in Tuk, I recognized the value of surrender, and the impact acceptance can make.

Father, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen.

Northern Hospitality

Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

Hebrews 13:1-2 (NIV)

My trip to the Northwest Territories to teach Bible Camp gave me a whole new perspective on what hospitality and loving one another means.

We spent our afternoons in Behchokò with a great group of students. While they didn't have much material wealth, they did have a tremendous amount of love for each other. In the evenings we were invited to attend the town's Spiritual Gathering, a week-long celebration in which the First Nations honored and celebrated their culture with ancestral activities and native food.

Due to the 2023 fires, which consumed most of their forests, a major reforestation project was taking place. The tree planters camp was next door to where the Spiritual Gathering was held. On the third day of the gathering tragedy struck when the tree planters' helicopter crashed, killing the pilot.

For the next two nights, the people of the Tłıchǫ First Nation went to the tree planter's camp to sing songs and offer prayers of healing. The workers were all invited to attend the Spiritual Gathering; an amazing display of hospitality and love for all in the name of Christ.

During this Advent season, I remember how a baby born in a stable grows into a man who teaches us through his words and actions the meaning of love and hospitality. He reminds us daily to live our lives just like our northern neighbors.

Thank you God for sending your son into the world. As we wait for his birth, teach us to be loving and show hospitality to all.

Part Of The Family

We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14b (NIV)

When I joined the Diocese of The Arctic in 1960 the term of service was five years without any vacation and it was made clear that the missionary's first task was to learn the language of the community in which they were serving. This was so that the people knew you came not just as a transient visitor, but like Jesus, as one who was coming to "dwell among" them. In this way you eventually were seen as a member of the community not as an outsider, who would be there for a time, short or longer, but eventually leave again. You became one of the family sharing in its joys and its sorrows, the joyful times and the tragedies.

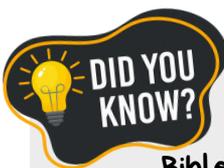
Advent is the season in which we look forward to the annual celebration of the coming of Jesus who came that we might have life, not just earthly life, but eternal life as one of God the Father's family.

During Advent we have a twofold task. We need to prepare ourselves to fully celebrate the Nativity, and remember that Jesus still dwells among us today. Then to share with those around us that we can all be members of the heavenly family through belief and trust in Jesus, the only Lord and Saviour.

Let us reach out to those amongst whom we dwell and share with them the Gospel of salvation.

Lord Jesus give us the will and courage to reach out to those around us with the gospel of the eternal love of God in Jesus.

Bishop Chris Williams (retired)
Northern Partner & Former Board Member



On Eagle's Wings also shares this gospel of eternal love through Bible Camps during spring and fall. If you are available to volunteer outside of the summer months, be sure to let us know!



Let Your Light Shine

The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

Matthew 4:16 (NIV)

The summer of 2023 we traveled to Tuktoyaktuk and Ft. McPherson. We were hosting two Bible Camps on behalf of *On Eagles Wings*.

Daylight in June is twenty-four hours a day. Despite the full-time sunlight however, we saw darkness. The day after we arrived a young man took his life.

Darkness lives in our minds, it takes our hope and joy. As we gathered in a baseball field, the community shared their understanding of the sorrow. Too many had lost their children to suicide. Darkness is not only on the outside, it grows inside.

We need the light of Christ in our hearts and minds showing us the truth that we are never alone, and always unconditionally loved.

My seat partner on the flight home was going to Edmonton to meet Pope Francis. Five of her friends were invited, but she alone had the courage to get on the plane. As she shared her past struggles and heartbreak, she gave thanks for her daughters. She was grateful that they had a good life with their father.

Light can, and does, fill our lives as we draw close to the never ending love of God. The joy of opening to receive that light becomes the miracle. This lady had no bitterness, just a grateful heart that her loved ones were happy. I could feel the light shining in her and gave thanks that I was blessed to share with her.

Gracious, loving and merciful Creator, may we remain steadfast in your love. May we be strong and courageous embracing the light of Christ, letting go of the fear that becomes our darkness. Fill us with the light and faith to do the impossible.

Pitched A Tent

By faith [Abraham] stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.

Hebrews 11:9 (NRSV)

The week was special. It was the annual Tłıchq Assembly combined with the Dene Assembly in Behchokq, Northwest Territories. These gatherings are integral for decisions and resolutions across the different First Nations tribes, and a cultural celebration.

Many people had traveled long distances by plane, truck, and canoe to participate. There were tents throughout the community that families had brought to share and live in with extended family members. For thousands of years, the native peoples of northern Canada lived in tents as they followed caribou herds for food and skins.

Abraham was also a tent-dweller. He and his people moved with their tents from place to place longing and reaching for the Promised Land. Even the Ark of the Covenant was closely and carefully housed in a tent during those journeys. To the Israelites, beholding the glory of God, or even uttering the name of God, was forbidden.

John writes that God “made his dwelling among us.” The closest translation for dwell is “to pitch a tent”. At just the right time, Almighty God burst into our lives as a newborn baby! Jesus, Savior, God incarnate lived among us, preached, taught, healed, fed, loved, died, and is resurrected. Through Jesus we witness God’s great love for all people.

Almighty Lord, Blessed Jesus, Holy Spirit, thank you for dwelling with us. Make your home in our hearts, feed us with your word and guide us to seek your will. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen

The 6:15 AM Revelation

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." John 1:5 (NIV)

Every morning my alarm goes off at 6:15 am. On those bright summer mornings in Fort Smith, I jump out of bed full of energy and ready to go. But as the days grow shorter and our hours of sunlight pass by almost as quickly as the blink of an eye, each morning becomes harder and harder. Yet no matter the day, no matter the season, the sun rises slowly and steadily, shifting the whole perspective of the day.

As hard as those days are - as much as I'd rather stay in my warm bed and close my eyes for just one minute longer - I force myself up into the cold bathroom, splash cold water on my face, and walk into the dark living room. Not ready, but willing to start the new day God has given me.

When the sun shines bright, life is easy. But when darkness seems to linger on and on, we must turn our face toward the light that shines in the darkness - the light that overcomes the darkness.

St. John of the Cross, in his great poem "Dark Night of the Soul," teaches that it is precisely in the darkness that we are united with God. If there is no darkness, there is no light to overcome it.

And so the beauty of Advent isn't premature joy - it's the darkness that precedes the light. If today you stand in the dark, rejoice, because it is in the darkness that we are transformed into the light.

Heavenly Father, help us to embrace our darkness with the same anticipation and excitement we bring to Advent - waiting for the light of Christmas. And when that light shines strong upon our dark night of the soul, equip us to carry it forward and share it with those whose darkness seems impenetrable. In Jesus' name, Amen.

He Who Was, Is, and Is to Come

'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,' who was, and is, and is to come. Rev 4:8b (NIV)

Advent is a time of waiting. Waiting is an act of faith. Faith is what Jesus saw when people from Capernaum dug through the roof of a crowded building and lowered their friend in front of him. For those of us whose individual faith is not so strong, we can wait in company with the Church. Advent is, for us, a time of special blessing as it was for the paralytic man whose individual faith seemed to have been unimportant.

Waiting is an act of faith when a fisherman sitting on the ice believes there are fish below him. Or as an expectant mother waits for her child, believing in her body and her community.

At Advent we wait for Jesus, our Messiah, Son of the Living God. We do so with faith that he was, he is, and is to come.

From the distant past, where 'he was', we are blessed by the words of Isaiah, prophesying that those who walk in darkness will see a great light.

We wait for Jesus, our Messiah, with faith that 'he is', like the roof people of Capernaum. Because of their faith, the sins of their friend were forgiven and he was healed. As we keep company with such people, pray as they do, and immerse ourselves in Scripture, we learn to wait on Jesus 'who is'.

We wait for Jesus, Son of the Living God, with faith that 'he is to come'. Like the man fishing through a hole in the ice as his forefathers taught him. He waits for the fish that he seems to know will come.

God who was, is, and is to come, help us to recognize your presence this year as we walk through another Advent season together. Amen.

Jesus' Math

'Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. Luke 15:4-7 (NIV)

The church building had been closed for two years following a devastating flood. Now I sat in the basement, looking over a group of eager and excited children as they enjoyed a lesson from the carefully prepared curriculum. But why hadn't more children attended our Bible Camp?

I ventured outside, slowly inhaling the crisp fresh northern air. It was there I noticed my friend and teammate. I listened as he shared his concerns and explained some of the faith struggles experienced by the community. My mind was drawn right back to the children enjoying camp in the church basement. Despite the faith struggles others had experienced, these precious little ones were downstairs learning about the loving and restorative nature of Jesus.

It struck me that we serve a God who doesn't work through numbers in the way we do. He sees things differently. He would leave ninety-nine to go after one who is lost to restore them because he loves them. He always has and always will.

In that moment, I realised future leaders were downstairs in that church basement being found by Jesus. Being lifted up on his shoulders and celebrated. Even though the numbers may not have made sense to me, Jesus was in control and taking care of the math.

Thank you Jesus for loving and pursuing us. Thank you for leaving the realm of heaven to enter our world that you might find us and lead us home. Amen.

Your Special Gift

Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are different ministries, but the same Lord. And there are different results, but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (NET)

When you prepare for an event and things don't quite go as planned, it is easy to become discouraged. But as part of the church – the family of God – no one is more important than another, and every gift is both helpful and necessary. I saw this in action during a recent *On Eagle's Wings* ministry trip.

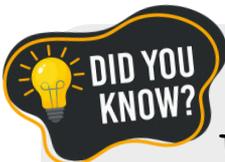
Each person brought something unique to the team – preparing snacks, listening, telling a story, playing silly games, comforting others, the ability to laugh at mistakes, or speaking words of encouragement. And even when things did not go as planned, we were able to see God at work and remind each other of his good purposes.

Jesus came for us, and it is his Spirit within us that give us places and opportunities where we can use our unique gifts to minister to and encourage other people. You might think your part is small, but we all have a particular gift from God and he is at work in and through us to accomplish his good will.

This Christmas season, take a few moments to ponder and ask God to show you the special gift or gifts he has given you and how you might use them to bless someone else.

Jesus, thank you for the way you have gifted each one of us. Please help us to see where you want us to use our gifts and to recognize you at work in our world. Amen.

Darlene Koop
Bible Camp Volunteer



There are 12 languages spoken throughout the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Thankfully English is commonly spoken in both territories!



Abundant Joy

When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. Matthew 2:10 (NIV)

The Magi travelled a long distance to find what a star had promised. While not on the backs of camels, our multi-day truck journey to the Northwest Territories felt like a long distance as well.

I had never been to the North before, so there were many surprises. We saw new landscapes of short trees and flat land, hiked down to the only salt flats in Canada, and experienced gorgeous sunrises over the river. Yet our time in the community was full of surprises, changed plans and revised expectations.

The Magi experienced surprise when they arrived in Jerusalem. They expected to find a celebration – but King Herod knew nothing! He had to consult his experts to even find out the meaning of the star. The Magi left Jerusalem and continued their search for the Messiah.

When they found the star had stopped over Bethlehem they were overjoyed! They offered gifts of great value to Jesus celebrating who he was. They met the God of Creation in human form because they had followed the star.

In the same way we were led by the Spirit to travel North with *On Eagle's Wings*, but the reality was different from our expectations. We had to be sensitive to the leading of the Spirit in each moment as we engaged with both children and adults, remaining open to what God wanted to do while we were there. In this we experienced the gifts of God's grace with, and through our Northern hosts.

God of Creation, help us to see the signs of your coming and to seek you. May we be filled with abundant joy as we seek and find you this Advent season. Amen.

Love Is Not Insignificant

He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.'

Luke 21.1-4 (NRSVUE)

The story of the Widow's Mite has lots of messages. The one that hits me right now is that something may look insignificant, but is actually very big.

In the summer of 2016, tens of thousands of people had been evacuated from Fort McMurray because of one of the biggest wildfires in Canadian history. Now they were trickling back. In some places, there'd been total devastation. In others there was no damage at all.

I'd been contacted to go and "help out". I arrived and was picked up by the priest of one of the local churches. It turned out I was to help with a Bible Camp - something I'd never done before. Fortunately, I was teamed with two others who knew exactly what they were doing!

I spent a week playing with kids. Honestly, I'd been expecting to do something "more demanding." And that's where I was wrong. Playing productively with kids is very demanding, and by "productive" I mean telling them the story of Jesus.

The whole camp was bathed in an atmosphere of love; the volunteers worked together in love, loved the kids, and the kids loved the volunteers. Something little – "insignificant" – became something very big and very good.

Lord, thank you that amidst the complexities and challenges of life, your transcendent love permeates the world with transformative power through seemingly insignificant acts. Meet us this season as we reflect on the ultimate expression of your love shown in Jesus.

Doug Woods
On Eagle's Wings Board Member

Sojourner

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'Out of Egypt I called my son.'
Matthew 2:14-15 (NIV)

As travelers bustled through the Edmonton airport one cold morning, they passed by Tim Horton's iconically long line. I was on my way up to Aklavik with Robin to lead a Healing Group. As we waited in line, he told me of the Anglican priest Reverend Victor and his wife Nalini who had invited us to come and would host us. They had left their home in India a decade prior and had since been serving in the Arctic.

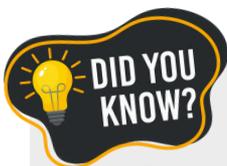
Breakfast in hand we found a table and exchanged stories while we waited for our flight. Robin shared of his upbringing in Ireland and his call to serve in Canada, while I shared of my missional upbringing in Africa and recent ministry engagements in Canada.

The older I am, the more costly I realize travel, moving, and leaving family behind is. When Christ came, he counted the cost. Creator himself stepped into creation. Leaving the Father's side, Christ took on human flesh and lived among us, as a refugee, a wanderer, a wanted and dying man. He meets us where we are at, inviting all to be reconciled to the One who made them.

Emmanuel, we remember you gave up comfort to dwell as a sojourner among us, having no place to lay your head. Let us remember the cost of love as we lift up all who have sacrificed to bring the message of peace on earth to those who are far away and to those who are near. Let us count the cost and follow you. In Jesus' Name, amen.

Tabea Kunz

Caring for the Wounded Heart Apprentice Facilitator



**We have a group of volunteers
dedicated to facilitating
Caring for the Wounded Heart Healing Groups.**



Holy Ground

“Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.”
Exodus 3:5b (NIV)

“I’m ticklish!” squealed a girl in Baker Lake one Sunday morning during Sunday school.

We had all taken off our boots and socks, carefully tracing each other’s feet onto colouring paper. Later, we filled our footsteps with bright colours – even a bit of glitter.

That day’s lesson was about holy ground. We discovered that holiness isn’t only found in a church building, but everywhere God’s presence dwells – in our Sunday school room, our homes, the land around us, even the ice rink.

Why? Because God is in all of us. He is with us, in us, and around us. He is revealed in nature, in the people we meet, and in every corner of creation.

Jesus came eating and drinking, loved the birds and the flowers, blessed little children, and sat at the table with tax collectors, sinners, and the poor – as well as the rich. With Jesus, we rejoice in this world, its beauty, and all living creatures, for he called nothing common or unclean.

As a joyful reminder, our colourful footsteps were taped above the doorway, right under the sign that read, “You are standing on holy ground.”

Dear Lord, Creator of all, you are revealed in the bold aurora above us, the ground below us, and the Spirit within us. As we walk this earth, help us remember that every step we take is upon holy ground. Amen.

He Pitched His Tent Among Us

Creator's Word became a flesh-and-blood human being and pitched his sacred tent among us, living as one of us. John 1:14a (FNV)

It was early January in a small Arctic community. A group of adults shuffled outside in the darkness, making their way through the snow and bitter cold to the Catholic Mission House. It was the second day of a Caring for the Wounded Heart Healing Group.

Stepping out of the biting wind, they pulled off mittens, hung up parkas, and slipped off their sealskin winter boots. Their faces began to thaw, meaning words could be formed again. One of the group posed a question to the Facilitators.

"These 2.5 hour workshops are too short. Can we do 5 hours a day instead? We really want to know all that Creator wants us to know about our trauma and our healing."

Throughout the remaining sessions, the group shared deeply together. They composed poems, wrote songs, acted in skits, and took part in other exercises that helped identify, then express, the pain of their hearts.

A closing prayer was offered as the Healing Group concluded on the final day, and people were free to leave. No one budged. For twenty minutes, no one even uttered a sound. Finally, an Elder tentatively whispered, *"There is such a special presence here. We do not want to leave."*

Creator's Word – Jesus himself – had pitched his sacred tent right there in the room. And everyone knew it.

This group was reminded that Jesus is with us now, right here in our midst. Perhaps you can sense him in this very moment. As you celebrate his coming to dwell with us, may the eyes of your heart be opened to his powerful presence - not just today - but throughout this next year. Merry Christmas.

Jesus, thank you that you are genuinely present with us every day. May we come to know the fullness of your presence like this small group in the Arctic. May we experience Emmanuel, God with us, this special day and throughout the year ahead. Amen.

COMMUNITIES SERVED

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

- Aklavik
- Behchokq
- Colville Lake
- Délı̨nę
- Fort Good Hope
- Fort Liard
- Fort McPherson
- Fort Providence
- Fort Simpson
- Fort Smith
- Gameti
- Inuvik
- Jean Marie River
- Lutselk'e
- Norman Wells
- Paulatuk
- Sachs Harbour
- Sambaa K'ie
- Tsiigehtchic

YUKON

- Dawson City
- Mayo
- Old Crow

ALBERTA

- Fort Chipewyan
- Fox Lake
- Garden Creek
- John D'Or Prairie
- Peace River
- Wabasca

SASKATCHEWAN

- Ocean Man
- Pine Channel

ONTARIO

- Moose Factory
- Moosonee

NUNAVUT

- Arviat
- Baker Lake
- Cambridge Bay
- Grise Fiord
- Iqaluit
- Kugluktuk
- Resolute

NUNAVIK, QC

- Salluit

where roads *end*

We

begin



10072 164 St NW
Edmonton, AB
T5P 4Y3

780-440-6594

<https://OnEaglesWings.ca>



On
Eagle's
Wings

1000 West Main St
Lansdale, PA
19466

1-866-441-6594

office@OnEaglesWings.ca





*Those who hope in the Lord will
renew their strength. They will
soar on wings like eagles.
Isaiah 40:31*

On Eagle's Wings is an interdenominational Christian ministry that proclaims Jesus and serves the Church and individuals in remote and isolated areas of northern Canada

On Eagle's Wings



<https://OnEaglesWings.ca>



3303 37 St NW
Edmonton, AB, T6L 5P9
Tel : 780-440-6594



1000 W Main St
Lansdale, PA, 19446
Tel : 1-866-441-6594