



KA PULE MUA O KA HIKINA

THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

“Preparing our Hearts and Minds for this Holy Season”
By KS Maui Kahu Kalani Wong

An Introduction to the Devotional Series

Luka 1:26-33

²⁶A i ke ono o ka malama, ua ho’ouna ‘ia mai ‘o Gaberi’ela, mai ke Akua mai, i kekahi kūlanakauhale i Galilaia, ‘o Nazareta ka inoa, ²⁷I ka wahine pu’upa’a i ho’opalau ‘ia na kekahi kanaka, ‘o Iosepa ka inoa, no ka ‘ohana a Dāvida; a ‘o Maria ka inoa o ua wahine pu’upa’a lā. ²⁸A komo ka ‘ānela i ona lā, ‘ī maila ia, Aloha ‘oe, e ka mea i aloha nui ‘ia, ‘o ka Haku pū me ‘oe. Pōmaika’i loa ‘oe i waena o nā wāhine.

²⁹A ‘ike akula, hopohopo iholā ‘o ia i kāna ‘ōlelo, a nalu iholā i ke ‘ano o kēia aloha ‘ana. ³⁰‘ī maila ka ‘ānela iā ia, Mai maka’u ‘oe, e Maria; no ka mea, ua loa’a iā ‘oe ka lokomaika’i ‘ia mai e ke Akua. ³¹Eia ho’i, e hāpai auane’i ‘oe, a e hānau i ke keiki kāne, a e kapa iho ‘oe i kona inoa, ‘o IESŪ. ³²E nui auane’i ‘o ia, a e kapa ‘ia aku, ‘O ke Keiki a ka Mea ki’eki’e loa; a e hā’awi ho’i nona ‘o lēhova ke Akua i ka noho ali’i o Dāvida ‘o kona makua kāne. ³³E mau loa nō ho’i kona ali’i ‘ana ma luna o ka ‘ohana a lakoba; a ‘o kona aupuni ‘a’ole ia e pau.-

Luke 1:26-33

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

One of the challenges of life for a young child is waiting, waiting for something to come that may seem so far away. My granddaughter, who is rapidly approaching three years-old, will be making her first trip to Disneyland next summer and every so often she'll tell my wife and me, "I'm going to Disneyland." This excitement brings out that same response every time she sees a Disney character on a store shelf or a Disney commercial on TV.

This same excitement is ours as we look forward with great anticipation for the arrival of our Messiah, to celebrate his birth on Christmas Day. Soon, we will see all the markings of the Christmas season with decorations popping up in store windows, on city streets or even in our own home. These images will bring excitement to you much like Minnie Mouse brings to my mo'opuna.

We pray that these devotionals will build and guide that excitement for the Advent season and prepare our hearts and minds for the arrival of the Christ child. As we share our mana'o with you, may you find a way to bring back that simple joy of a child for this wondrous time of the year.

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

Ho'omākaukau

Heluhelu Baibala / Scripture Reading

'Oihana 14:23

"... pule akula a me ka ho'okē 'ai, a hā'awi akula iā lākou i ka Haku, i ka mea a lākou i mana'o'i'o aku ai."

Acts 14:23

"...with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust."

Mana'o / Thoughts

Do you feel like you're always in the season of preparing? We've just finished preparing for Thanksgiving with all of the menu planning, multiple runs to market, food prep, and cooking. But when we sat down to enjoy that bounty of food with family and friends, there was nothing better.

Then it's quickly on to the next preparation – Black Friday shopping, making gift lists, pouring over ads of all the stores, and strategizing where to go first.

As you shift to preparing for Christmas, before you take out the decorations or head to the mall or your computer to shop, take some time to prepare your heart for this Holy season.

Too often, preparation is focused on you...all the shopping you need to do, all the parties you need to go to, all the check lists to complete before Christmas. This causes us to get stressed out and miss the real focus of Christmas – the Christ child.

Yes, there are things to do but if we see the point of Christmas as celebrating the birth of Christ, our hearts and minds will be in the right place.

It's a lot like preparing for a baby's first birthday lū'au. Family members come from all over to kōkua. The men jump in to dig the imu, an uncle donates the pua'a, the garage is turned into an assembly line for the laulau, and laughter rings out as the tomato and onions are being diced for the lomi salmon.

There's a lot of work to do but the work is light because it's about this keiki hiwahiwa, celebrating this keiki's growth and development. Everyone's heart is set on the joy that this day marks. All that aloha comes out through their efforts and their manawale'a. In like manner, let your focus for Christmas be on Christ.

For part of your preparations, take a moment to pause. To prepare myself for different things, I'll take a moment to pause so I might clear my mind and heart. I'll use that time to pray and let God speak to me so I am clear that it is His words that I'm saying as I share His message. Wake up a little earlier each day to spend a couple minutes in prayer so that you might turn the day over to Ke Akua.

Another way to prepare for Christmas is to fast. For some, fasting is the abstaining from food. When Jesus prepared for the start of his ministry, he went into the desert and fasted. Yes, it was a withholding of food but it was also fasting from other things that would distract him from being with God.

We can fast from those things that occupy our time unnecessarily such as TV, social media, extracurricular activities and spend that time reading the Baibala or in pule, strengthening our bonds with the Almighty.

While you journey through the Advent season, may you prepare your hearts and minds. Take your eyes off of the tasks before you and set your eyes on Jesus. Pause for prayer and step away from the distractions. As you do so, may you find a sense of refreshment and hope for the real reason of this Christmas season.

Questions to Ponder

- Before you begin to get into the Christmas rush, stop and pause to set your eyes on Jesus, the reason why we have a Christmas.
- When in your day, can you set aside time to pray? Wake up earlier? On the drive to work? In the quiet before going to bed? Dedicate some time to prayer.
- What is distracting you from spending time with God? Work out a plan to fast from those things during the season of Advent.
- What are other things you can do to prepare your hearts and minds to joyfully await the coming of the Christ Child during this Advent season?

Pule / Prayer

E ke Akua Mana loa, ho'omaika'i iā 'Oe no ke Keiki Hiwahiwa a no kēia kau Hikina. We give thanks that we are able to prepare ourselves for this time by setting our sights on Iesū Kristo and the life that he brings to this world. Help us to spend time with you to center ourselves so we focus on this special time of the year. Ma ka inoa o ke Keiki Hiwahiwa 'o Iesū Kristo ko mākou Ho'ōla, 'Āmene.

Keiki Activities

Advent is a great time to put away those things that you normally do and get busy on activities that will get you ready for Christmas. Here are a couple of things that will help guide you on that journey.

Advent calendar – You can find a number of ways to make an advent calendar [here](#). Use one of these as countdown to Christmas.

Prayer walk in your neighborhood – Take your parent for a walk around your neighborhood and pause every 50 steps to say a prayer for something special about that location where you stopped. Look around. How do you see God in that space?

Mele / Song

“What Child is This”

Christmas music brings with it a feeling of peace and calm. [Use this piano instrumental](#) as played by KS alumnus **Clarke Tuitele**, Kamehameha Schools Maui Elementary Music Teacher and Technology Specialist, as background for a time of prayer each day this week.