

Shine Brighter

AN ADVENT GUIDE
FOR INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND GROUPS

"ARISE, SHINE, FOR YOUR LIGHT HAS COME,
AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD RISES UPON YOU."
ISAIAH 60:1

EASTSIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Welcome

Dear Eastside family,

Welcome to Advent! Every December our neighborhoods light up, and every year we're reminded of what Jesus said His church is meant to be: a light so bright it can't be missed. This season is a special one for us. On December 5–6, the two of us will stand together as the baton passes and a new chapter begins for Eastside, and we can't think of a better time to look to the Light that came into the world. This guide will walk you through Advent week by week, from Hope to Love to Joy to Peace, and finally to Jesus Himself, the Light of the World. Whether you're exploring faith, coming back after time away, or have followed Jesus for years, we invite you to set aside a few minutes each day, light a candle with your family or group each week, and ask God how He wants you to shine brighter. Thanks for being a light.

Together for Him,

Gene and Dave

What Is Advent?

Advent is a four-week season of preparation that leads to Christmas. The word comes from the Latin *adventus*, meaning "coming" or "arrival." For centuries Christians have used these weeks to slow down, remember that Jesus came, and look forward to the day He will come again.

In a season that often feels rushed, Advent makes room. Through Scripture, reflection, and prayer, it invites us to notice what God is doing, whether we're exploring faith for the first time or have followed Jesus for years.

THE ADVENT WREATH: A CIRCLE OF LIGHT

Churches and families celebrate Advent in different ways, but one practice is shared almost everywhere: lighting candles arranged on an evergreen wreath.

The circle, with no beginning and no end, represents God's unending love and the eternal life we have in Jesus. The evergreen branches remind us that His love stays constant through every season. The candles tell the story of a world lost in darkness and the Light that broke through.

> *"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned."*
>
> ISAIAH 9:2

Each Sunday we light one more candle, and the wreath shines a little brighter. It's a simple picture of what Jesus does in us and through us: the light grows, and darkness cannot overcome it (John 1:5).

THE FIVE CANDLES

HOPE THE FIRST CANDLE · PURPLE	Often called the Prophecy Candle, it remembers the prophets who promised a coming Messiah. Hope holds on to God's promises when the waiting is long.
LOVE THE SECOND CANDLE · PURPLE	Known as the Bethlehem Candle, it reminds us that God's love showed up in a real place and time. His love doesn't wait for us to be worthy; it comes to us where we are.
JOY THE THIRD CANDLE · PINK	Called the Shepherd Candle, it's often pink or rose to mark a turning point in the season. It recalls the shepherds' joy at the angel's announcement, a joy rooted in God's presence rather than our circumstances.

PEACE

THE FOURTH CANDLE · PURPLE

The Angel Candle recalls the heavenly host proclaiming "peace on earth." This peace is more than the absence of conflict. It's the presence of Christ, making us whole.

JESUS

THE CHRIST CANDLE · WHITE, CENTER

Lit on Christmas Eve. Every other candle points to this one: God with us, hope fulfilled, love in person, joy complete, and peace embodied. Jesus is the Light of the World.

How to Use This Guide

Each week opens with a candle lighting for Sunday, a Shine Brighter Spotlight, and questions for discussion, followed by short daily readings for Monday through Friday. Use it in whatever way fits your life.

On your own. Set aside 10–15 minutes a day to read the Scripture, reflect, and pray. Use the writing space to capture what you're noticing, including your questions. Honest questions are welcome here.

As a family. Gather once a week, ideally Sunday, to light the candles and read the Scripture together. Let kids take turns lighting the candle or reading aloud, and keep it short and simple. Ten minutes around the table is enough to build a tradition they'll remember.

With your small group. Open each week by lighting the candles, then use the Talk About It questions. They're written so everyone can join in, whether they're exploring faith or have followed Jesus for years.

Don't have a wreath? Any five candles will do: three purple, one pink, and one white is traditional, but whatever you have at home works just as well.

Begin with a Fast · Tuesday, December 1

We're starting Advent together as a church with a 24-hour fast. Fasting is setting something good aside for a time to seek God with our whole heart. We say a little "no" so we can say a bigger "yes" to Him. Jesus fasted, and He taught His followers, "When you fast…" (Matthew 6:16). It isn't about earning anything. It's about hunger for God: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). As we ask God to make Eastside shine brighter in a new chapter, we want to begin on our knees.

Choose your fast. Pick one "no" for 24 hours, something that will truly cost you, and pair it with a "yes" to God.

- **Food:** Skip meals from dinner to dinner and drink water. Spend mealtimes in Scripture and prayer.
- **Social media:** Log out for the day, and pray for the people you'd have seen while scrolling.
- **Phone and screens:** No TV, streaming, games, or news. Read, take a prayer walk, or call a friend.
- **Something else:** Sweets, caffeine, shopping, or a habit that pulls at you. Let each craving turn you to God.

Fasting is feasting on God. Before you start, write down one or two things to pray for: your heart, your family, our church. Then fill the time you free up with Scripture and prayer. When hunger or the urge to check your phone hits, turn it into a short prayer: *"Jesus, You are the Bread of Life."* Expect it to be hard, and keep it between you and God (Matthew 6:17–18). Afterward, ease back in gently, write down what God showed you, and consider giving what you saved on meals to someone in need (Isaiah 58:7).

A note on your health: This is spiritual encouragement, not medical advice. Talk with your doctor before fasting from food if you are pregnant or nursing; have diabetes, low blood sugar, or heart, kidney, or other medical conditions; take prescription medication; have a history of an eating disorder; are under 18; or are unsure. Stop if you feel faint, dizzy, or unwell. If you can't safely fast from food, a non-food fast is a full and faithful way to take part.

IMPORTANT DATES

NOV 28–29	Advent begins and Shine Brighter launches
DEC 1	Church-wide day of fasting: choose your fast and seek God together
DEC 4–6	A historic weekend: Gene passes the baton and Dave becomes Eastside's senior pastor
DEC 19–24	Christmas at Eastside. Who's your ONE? Invite them at eastside.com/christmas-at-eastside
DEC 24	Christmas Eve: light the Christ Candle
DEC 26–27	Eastside at Home: online services only
DEC 31	Last day to give to Shine Brighter
JANUARY 2027	Mental Health Matters begins

HOPE

The Light Is Coming

> *"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned."*
>
> **ISAIAH 9:2**

Isaiah wrote these words to people who knew darkness well: war, exile, and centuries of silence. Yet God promised that a light was coming, and that promise came true in Bethlehem. Hope isn't wishful thinking. It's trusting that the God who kept His word then will keep it now.

Maybe you're walking through a dark season, or maybe you're simply curious what all this means. Either way, this week is an invitation to believe that light is on its way.

SUNDAY · LIGHTING THE FIRST CANDLE

Light the first purple candle, the candle of HOPE.

Read together: "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)

Pray together: Have each person name one place they need hope this season. Then pray for God's light to shine into each of those places.

SHINE BRIGHTER SPOTLIGHT · MORE KIDS AT CAMP

Over 500 kids and students went to camp this year, the most in Eastside's history, and more life change happens at camp than anywhere else we do ministry with them. Shine Brighter covers the leaders and buses that get them there, so even more can go next summer.

Shine this week: Think of the ONE person in your life who needs hope this Christmas. Write their name here and start praying for them daily.

My ONE:

TALK ABOUT IT

1 What does the word "hope" mean to you? Is it closer to wishing or to trusting?

2 When has light, literal or not, made a difference in a dark moment for you?

3 What is one promise of God you find easy to believe, and one you find hard?

WEEKEND REFLECTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY, NOV 30

Light in the Darkness

Read: *Isaiah 9:2–7*

Isaiah promised a child who would carry names no ordinary king could: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. God's answer to darkness wasn't a program or a plan. It was a person.

Reflect Where in your life does it feel darkest right now?

Pray *God, You see the dark places I don't talk about. Shine Your light there, and help me trust that You are coming. Amen.*

TUESDAY, DEC 1 - Church-wide day of fasting

Hungry for God

David wrote this psalm in the wilderness, thirsty and far from home, yet his deepest longing wasn't for water. It was for God. Today, as our whole church fasts, we join him. Every hunger pang or reach for your phone is an invitation to say, "My soul thirsts for You." Hope grows when we stop filling every empty space and let God fill it instead.

Reflect: What are you asking God for today, for yourself, your family, and Eastside?

Pray *God, I'm hungrier for You than I know. Fill the empty places today with Your presence. As we begin this season together, make our church shine brighter for You. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY, DEC 2

Waiting for Morning

Read: *Psalm 130:5–6*

The psalmist waits for God like a night watchman waits for sunrise: not wondering if it will come, but watching for when. Waiting with hope is active. It keeps looking.

Reflect What are you waiting on God for, and how are you waiting?

Pray *Lord, I'm tired of waiting sometimes. Give me the kind of hope that keeps watching for the morning. Amen.*

THURSDAY, DEC 3

Hope That Holds

Read: *Romans 5:1–5*

Paul says suffering can produce perseverance, character, and hope, and that this hope doesn't put us to shame. God doesn't waste our hard seasons. He uses them to build something in us that lasts.

Reflect How has a difficult season shaped who you are today?

Pray *God, I don't always understand what I'm going through. Use it to grow a hope in me that won't let go. Amen.*

FRIDAY, DEC 4

Hope Has a Name

Read: *Luke 2:25–32*

Simeon waited his whole life to see God's promise. When he finally held baby Jesus, he called Him "a light for revelation to the Gentiles." Hope isn't just an idea. It has a name and a face.

Reflect What would change if you believed Jesus is the answer to what you're hoping for?

Pray *Jesus, You are the hope I've been looking for. Help me see You clearly this Advent. Amen.*

LOVE

Love Passes It On

> *"The darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light."*
>
> **1 JOHN 2:8, 10**

Love is how light spreads. God's love came to us in Jesus, and the people who received it passed it on: from shepherds to neighbors, from apostles to churches, from one generation to the next. Every one of us knows Jesus today because someone loved us enough to share Him.

This weekend, Eastside lives out that picture. Gene passes the baton to Dave, and a light that has burned for years is handed on to burn even brighter. We celebrate God's faithfulness in the chapter behind us and trust His love for the chapter ahead.

SUNDAY · LIGHTING THE SECOND CANDLE

Light the candle of HOPE. Then use its flame to light the second purple candle, the candle of LOVE. Notice that the first flame loses nothing when it shares its light.

Read together: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." (John 13:34)

Pray together: Name someone who passed their faith on to you, and thank God for them. Then pray for Gene, Dave and his family, and Eastside as a new chapter begins.

SHINE BRIGHTER SPOTLIGHT · MORE LEADERS

As Dave comes on, Eastside is identifying two to three strategic staff positions that will give him the team he needs to lead well from day one. Your generosity helps the next chapter start strong.

Shine this week: Write a note of encouragement to someone who has invested in your faith, or send a word of welcome and prayer to Dave and his family.

TALK ABOUT IT

1 Who first showed you what love looks like? How did they do it?

2 Why do you think love is the thing Jesus said would mark His followers (John 13:35)?

3 Who is someone you could pass something good on to this season?

WEEKEND REFLECTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY, DEC 7

Love Came Down

Read: *John 3:16–17*

God's love isn't a feeling He has from a distance. It's love that moved, that gave, that came all the way down to us. Jesus came not to condemn the world but to save it.

Reflect Do you more often picture God as distant and disappointed, or near and loving? Why?

Pray *God, thank You for loving me enough to come for me. Help me believe that Your love is meant for me, too. Amen.*

TUESDAY, DEC 8

Walking in the Light

Read: *1 John 2:7–11*

John says the way we treat people shows whether we're walking in the light or stumbling in the dark. Love isn't an add-on to faith. It's the evidence of it.

Reflect Is there a relationship where you're stuck in resentment instead of walking in love?

Pray *Lord, show me where I'm holding on to bitterness. Give me the courage to choose love and walk in Your light. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY, DEC 9

Passing It On

Read: *2 Timothy 2:1–2*

Paul tells Timothy to entrust what he's received to faithful people who will teach others. Faith was always meant to be handed on, from one person to the next, and it shines brighter with every handoff.

Reflect Who has God placed in your life to pass your faith on to?

Pray *God, thank You for the people who invested in me. Make me someone who passes Your love on to others. Amen.*

THURSDAY, DEC 10

Love Makes Room

Read: *Luke 2:1–7*

There was no room for Mary and Joseph in the guest room, so Jesus was born where the animals slept. Love makes room. It notices who's left out and opens the door.

Reflect Who in your world needs someone to make room for them this Christmas?

Pray *Jesus, You know what it's like to have no room. Open my eyes and my home to the people who need a place to belong. Amen.*

FRIDAY, DEC 11

Love in Action

Read: *1 John 3:16–18*

"Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth." Love that stays in our heads never warms anyone. Love becomes real when it moves our hands, our time, and our resources.

Reflect What is one practical way you can show love to someone this weekend?

Pray *Lord, turn my good intentions into real action. Help me love the way You love: generously and in truth. Amen.*

JOY

Follow the Light

> *"When they saw the star, they were overjoyed."*
>
> MATTHEW 2:10

The Magi traveled hundreds of miles, following a light they didn't fully understand. When it finally led them to Jesus, Matthew says they were overjoyed. Their joy didn't come from an easy journey. It came from finding what they had been searching for.

Joy is different from happiness. Happiness depends on what's happening; joy grows from who is with us. This week we light the pink candle, a bright turn in the season, and remember that the light leads somewhere: to Jesus.

SUNDAY · LIGHTING THE THIRD CANDLE

Light the candles of HOPE and LOVE, then light the pink candle, the candle of JOY.

Read together: "You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence." (Psalm 16:11)

Pray together: Have each person share one thing that brought them joy this year. Thank God for each one, and ask Him to fill your home with His joy.

SHINE BRIGHTER SPOTLIGHT · MORE BAPTISMS

Eastside baptized more people this year than ever before. Improved baptistries at several locations will make it possible for anyone, any weekend, at any Eastside location, to go public with their faith. Baptisms, every week, everywhere.

Shine this week: Pray for the people who will be baptized at Eastside in 2027. If you've been thinking about baptism yourself, talk to someone at your campus this week.

TALK ABOUT IT

1 What's the difference between happiness and joy in your experience?

2 The Magi gave their best gifts when they found Jesus. Why do you think joy and generosity so often go together?

3 What has God been leading you toward this year, even if you haven't seen where it ends?

WEEKEND REFLECTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY, DEC 14

The Journey to Joy

Read: *Matthew 2:1–12*

The Magi kept following the light even when the path led through a jealous king's palace and an unexpected town. Joy often waits at the end of a journey we're tempted to quit.

Reflect Where are you tempted to stop following God right now?

Pray *God, help me keep following You when the road is long and the destination is unclear. Lead me to joy. Amen.*

TUESDAY, DEC 15

Worth Everything

Read: *Matthew 13:44*

Jesus describes someone who finds a hidden treasure and, "in his joy," sells everything to have it. When we see how valuable Jesus is, giving up lesser things stops feeling like loss. It feels like gain.

Reflect What are you holding on to that might be keeping you from the greater treasure?

Pray *Jesus, You are worth more than anything I own. Give me the kind of joy that makes letting go feel easy. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY, DEC 16

The Joy of Giving

Read: *2 Corinthians 8:1–5*

The Macedonian churches were poor, yet Paul says their "overflowing joy" welled up in rich generosity. They gave beyond their ability because they first gave themselves to the Lord. Generosity starts in the heart before it reaches the wallet.

Reflect What would over-and-above generosity look like for you this Christmas?

Pray *Lord, I give myself to You first. Let my generosity overflow from joy, not obligation, as I pray about Shine Brighter. Amen.*

THURSDAY, DEC 17

Joy in Heaven

Read: *Luke 15:1–10*

Jesus says heaven throws a party over one person who turns back to God. Every baptism, every story of life change, every person who takes a step toward Jesus is a reason for heaven to celebrate.

Reflect Whose story of coming to faith brings you the most joy? Who are you praying for?

Pray *God, thank You that heaven celebrates every person who comes home. Bring my ONE closer to You this Christmas. Amen.*

FRIDAY, DEC 18

Joy in the Morning

Read: *Psalm 30:4–12*

"Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning." For anyone carrying grief this season, God doesn't ask you to pretend. He promises that sorrow won't have the last word.

Reflect Where do you need God to turn your mourning into dancing?

Pray *Lord, You see my sorrow and You don't rush me. Hold me in the night, and bring joy in the morning. Amen.*

PEACE

Light in the Night

> *"The glory of the Lord shone around them... 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.'"*
>
> **LUKE 2:9, 14**

The first Christmas announcement came at night, to shepherds doing an ordinary job in an ordinary field. Suddenly the darkness lit up with God's glory, and the message was peace. Not peace because the world had calmed down, but peace because God had come near.

Whatever is unsettled in your life this Christmas, the invitation is the same. The Prince of Peace has come, and His light reaches the night shift, too.

SUNDAY · LIGHTING THE FOURTH CANDLE

Light the candles of HOPE, LOVE, and JOY, then light the final purple candle, the candle of PEACE. All four outer candles are now burning, and only the center remains.

Read together: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27)

Pray together: Have each person name something that's stealing their peace right now. Hand each one to God in prayer, and ask Him to guard your hearts this week.

SHINE BRIGHTER SPOTLIGHT · MORE SERVICES & FINISHED CAMPUSES

As our locations grow, they're planning to add worship services, which takes technology and staff support. And the Bellflower parking lot and Redlands campus improvements you funded are ready to finish. More room means more people can find peace with God at Eastside.

Shine this week: This is the week to invite your ONE to Christmas at Eastside, December 19–24 (eastside.com/christmas-at-eastside). Send the text, make the call, or offer a ride. Then save them a seat.

I invited:

TALK ABOUT IT

1 Why do you think God announced Jesus' birth to shepherds first?

2 What's the difference between the peace the world offers and the peace Jesus gives?

3 What would it look like to bring peace into one relationship this Christmas?

WEEKEND REFLECTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY, DEC 21

Peace in the Night

Read: *Luke 2:8–14*

The angel's first words to the shepherds were "Do not be afraid." God's peace often begins right where our fear is loudest. It meets us in the dark and speaks good news.

Reflect What fear would you most like to hear God say "Do not be afraid" about?

Pray *God, speak peace over my fears tonight. Let Your light shine into the places where I'm most afraid. Amen.*

TUESDAY, DEC 22

Peace with God

Read: *Romans 5:1–2*

Before we can have the peace of God, we need peace with God. Through Jesus, the distance between us and God is closed, not by our effort but by His grace. That's the deepest peace there is.

Reflect Do you feel at peace with God? What might be standing in the way?

Pray *Jesus, thank You for making peace between me and God. Help me stop striving and rest in Your grace. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY, DEC 23

Peace in a Troubled World

Read: *John 16:33*

Jesus never promised a life without trouble. He promised His presence in the middle of it: "Take heart! I have overcome the world." Peace doesn't wait for everything to be fixed. It rests in the One who has already won.

Reflect What trouble do you need to bring to Jesus before Christmas?

Pray *Lord, the world is loud and troubled, and so am I sometimes. Give me Your peace, because You have overcome. Amen.*

JESUS

The Light Has Come

> *"In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."*
>
> **JOHN 1:4–5**

Four weeks of waiting lead to this moment. Hope, love, joy, and peace were never just ideas. They were always pointing to a person. Tonight we light the center candle and celebrate that the Light of the World has come.

CHRISTMAS EVE · LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

Light all four outer candles. Then light the white candle in the center, the Christ Candle. Pause for a moment and take in how much brighter the room is now.

Read together: "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)

Pray together: Thank God for the gift of Jesus. Let each person finish this sentence in prayer: "Jesus, thank You for coming to..."

SHINE BRIGHTER SPOTLIGHT · BRIGHTER LIGHT

New house lights for the Anaheim auditorium will help the room, and our broadcast to every campus, shine brighter for everyone who walks in looking for the Light of the World.

CHRISTMAS AT EASTSIDE REFLECTIONS

Who I brought or invited:

What God showed me:

Daily Readings

THURSDAY, DEC 24 · CHRISTMAS EVE

The Wait Is Over

Read: *John 1:1–14*

John tells the Christmas story without a manger or a star. He goes back before the beginning to show us who that baby really is: the Word who made everything, stepping into His own creation. The true light that gives light to everyone has come into the world.

Reflect What would it mean for you to receive the Light tonight?

Pray *Jesus, Light of the World, thank You for leaving heaven to come for me. Shine in my heart tonight, and make my life new. Amen.*

FRIDAY, DEC 25 · CHRISTMAS DAY

Go and Tell

Read: *Luke 2:15–20*

The shepherds hurried to see Jesus, then went out spreading the word about everything they had seen. Mary treasured it all in her heart. Christmas invites both responses: hold this good news close, and share it with everyone you know.

Reflect What will you treasure from this Advent, and who will you tell?

Pray *Father, thank You for the gift of Jesus: hope fulfilled, love in person, joy complete, peace embodied. Help me treasure Him and share Him. Merry Christmas. Amen.*

SHINE

Arise, Shine

> *"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you."*
>
> **ISAIAH 60:1**

Christmas isn't the end of the story. The Light that came into the world now shines through the people who follow Him. Jesus said it plainly: "You are the light of the world." This final week is about carrying the light of Christmas into everyday life and into the new year.

WEEKEND · GATHER AND WATCH TOGETHER

This weekend, Eastside worships online only. Make it a moment rather than a missed week: invite your family, your group, or a few friends to watch together, and relight all five candles before the service begins.

Read together: "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden... Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:14, 16)

Pray together: Have each person name one way they want to shine brighter in 2027. Pray for one another by name.

SHINE BRIGHTER · FINISH THE YEAR STRONG

Together, our six Shine Brighter projects come to $1.6 million: more services, more kids at camp, finished campuses, more baptisms, more leaders, and brighter light. Gifts are received through **December 31**. If you haven't yet, prayerfully consider your over-and-above gift this week through the Eastside App, the QR code, or any of the ways listed at the front of this guide.

TALK ABOUT IT

1 What did God show you during this Advent season?

2 Where is one place in your everyday life (work, school, home, neighborhood) where your light could shine brighter?

3 What's one step you want to take toward Jesus in 2027?

WEEKEND REFLECTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY, DEC 28

You Are the Light

Read: *Matthew 5:14–16*

Jesus doesn't say "try to be a light." He says "you are" one. Nobody lights a lamp and hides it. Your light isn't meant to stay inside the church; it's meant for your street, your office, and your group chat.

Reflect Where are you tempted to keep your light hidden?

Pray *Jesus, You've made me a light. Give me courage to shine where You've placed me, so others see You. Amen.*

TUESDAY, DEC 29

Shine Like Stars

Read: *Philippians 2:14–16*

Paul says believers shine "like stars in the sky" in a crooked and divided world. Often the brightest light isn't something dramatic. It's a life without grumbling, marked by kindness, honesty, and grace.

Reflect What everyday habit could help your light shine more clearly?

Pray *Lord, make my ordinary days shine. Let my words and attitudes point people to You. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY, DEC 30

Reflecting His Glory

Read: *2 Corinthians 4:6–7*

The God who said "Let light shine out of darkness" has made His light shine in our hearts. We're like clay jars, fragile and ordinary, holding a treasure that is anything but. The light we carry is His, not ours.

Reflect How does knowing the light is God's, not yours, take pressure off?

Pray *God, thank You for putting Your light in an ordinary life like mine. Shine through my weakness, not just my strengths. Amen.*

THURSDAY, DEC 31 · NEW YEAR'S EVE

Arise, Shine

Read: *Isaiah 60:1–3*

Isaiah's call is for people who have been through darkness: get up, because your light has come. As one year ends and another begins, God's invitation isn't to try harder. It's to rise and reflect the glory that has already dawned on you.

Reflect What would make 2027 your brightest year spiritually?

Pray *Lord, as this year ends, I give You thanks. As a new year begins, I want to rise and shine for You. Lead me into 2027. Amen.*

Shine Brighter: The Vision

> *"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you."*
>
> **ISAIAH 60:1**

Shine Brighter is our year-end invitation to hand Dave a church with more momentum than at any point in its history. This fall our staff team answered one question: *What projects, if funded, would give Eastside the greatest ministry momentum in 2027?* In a year when we sent more kids to camp and baptized more people than in any year in Eastside's history, the answers were clear.

SHINE BRIGHTER IN 2027 MEANS:

- **More services.** As our locations grow, they're making plans to add worship services, which takes technology and staff support.
- **More kids at camp.** Over 500 kids and students went to camp this year, the most ever. Your giving covers the leaders and buses that get them there, and we want even more there next summer.
- **Finished campuses.** You gave $1.5 million for the Bellflower parking lot and Redlands campus improvements. Permits took time and building costs rose, so we want to finish what you started.
- **More baptisms.** Improved baptistries at several locations mean anyone, any weekend, at any Eastside location, can go public with their faith. Baptisms, every week, everywhere.
- **More leaders.** Two to three strategic staff positions will give Dave the team he needs to lead well from day one.
- **Brighter light.** New house lights for the Anaheim auditorium, for everyone in the room and our broadcast to every campus.

$1.6 MILLION

Together, these projects come to $1.6 million. Every time Eastside has taken a major step forward, it has been fueled by over-and-above generosity from people who believe that THIS IS FOR EVERYONE.

WAYS TO GIVE

Gifts to Shine Brighter are received through **December 31, 2026**.

- Scan the QR code to give digitally.
- Open the Eastside App and select the Give tab.
- Write a check to Eastside.
- Give stock: email accounting@eastside.com for details.

- Give from your IRA: if you're 70½ or older, an IRA gift can count toward your Required Minimum Distribution.

MY SHINE BRIGHTER COMMITMENT

As you pray through this season, ask God what over-and-above generosity looks like for you or your family this year.

I/we will pray about and give:

One way I/we want to shine brighter this Advent:

Your Next Step: Shine Brighter in 2027

The candles will go back in the box, but the light doesn't have to fade. A new year and a new chapter at Eastside are a fresh invitation to keep growing. Here are a few ways to keep shining:

1. **Join us in January.** Our new series, Mental Health Matters, begins in January 2027. Make it the first step of your brightest year yet.
2. **Get baptized.** If you've decided to follow Jesus, go public with your faith. Baptisms happen every week, everywhere.
3. **Join a group.** Faith grows best in community. Find a group that fits your life and season.
4. **Serve on a team.** Use your gifts to help someone else find the Light.
5. **Keep inviting.** Your ONE could become someone's turning point. Keep praying and keep inviting.

Thanks for being a light.