

ADVENT

Formed from a Latin word meaning "coming" or "arrival," Advent is the celebration of the first Advent or coming of Jesus in humility. This season is a time for remembering and rejoicing, watching and waiting.

The purpose of Advent is to spend four weeks preparing our hearts for Christmas. It's about reflecting on our shortcomings and our need for a Savior. And, once we get to Christmas Day, the celebration of Jesus' birth becomes that much more meaningful to us.

The Advent season begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas and continues up to Christmas Eve. An Advent wreath made up of five candles leads our time together. This symbol is borrowed from the emphasis throughout Scripture of Jesus Christ being the Light of the World.

John 8:12 Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness because you will have the light that leads to life." Each week a candle leads our progression.

Week 1 - The Prophet Candle - Hope
Week 2 - The Bethlehem Candle - Faith
Week 3 - The Shepherd Candle - Joy
Week 4 - The Magi Candle - Peace

The last candle, called the Christ Candle, is lit on Christmas Eve to represent Jesus' first Advent. Through this theme of ever-increasing light penetrating the darkness, we see a picture of the gospel. Advent is a significant time in the life of the Church, as an opportunity for us to remember God's promise to send One who would overcome sin and death forever. God promised a Savior.



HOW IT WORKS

The Advent wreath consists of a wreath and 5 candles. 3 purple, 1 pink, and 1 white. The purple reminds us of repentance, the royalty of the Christ child, the tabernacle of God, pink is the color joy, and white reminds us of the purity of the Savior.

The order of the candles is

Week 1 - The Prophet Candle - Hope (Purple)
Week 2 - The Bethlehem Candle - Faith (Purple)
Week 3 - The Shepherd Candle - Joy (Pink)
Week 4 - The Magi Candle - Peace (Purple)
Christmas Eve - Christ Candle - Love (White)



1. Watch the devotional video on our Instagram or Facebook. Use q/r code to find us. (simply scan with a phone camera)
2. Read the devotion for the day.
3. Light the candles.
4. Meditate on scripture and light.



CHRISTMAS EVE
ON CHRISTMAS EVE WE LIGHT THE CHRIST CANDLE
THE CHRIST CANDLE REMINDS US OF GOD'S LOVE
TODAY WE LOOK AT EMMANUEL, GOD DWELLING WITH MAN.
NO GREATER LOVE HAVE WE SEEN.

WATCH VIDEO FOR CHRISTMAS EVE
LIGHT ALL FOUR CANDLES & WHITE CHRIST CANDLE AS WELL

When we look at creation and go back to Genesis, we see God as a relational being. He wants to be in fellowship with man.

When man betrayed God and chose their empire over His kingdom, God stepped into the garden and did not come seeking revenge. HE came in with mercy and grace. At the darkest time of mankind, the light of God shines with a promise.

Genesis 3:15 And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will strike your head, and you will strike His heel.

This is the promise that Messiah would come and restore what was lost. God and man could dwell in communion again one day.

Throughout the scripture page after page, year after year, we see a God who is intentionally going after a relationship.

He calls a man friend, promises to make him a father of a nation. Then a nation grows from this man, God comes down and rescues them from Egypt. He promises once again to dwell with them.

Exodus 13:22 "Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people."

God led His people, His shekinah glory, then rested on the tabernacle and eventually the temple. Advent reminds us that Jesus is the ultimate picture of God's Shekinah glory.

John 1:14 So the Word became human and made His home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

He is the ultimate dwelling of God among men. The Word, God, came down and took on flesh. Those who lived with Him tell us how HE was real. He was fully God and also fully man. John 1:1-3 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

They saw and handled—what an incredible thing for God to be among His people. The angels proclaimed the news to the shepherds – HE is here!!

The thought of God yet, man? Spurgeon tells this, "Infinite, and an infant. Eternal and yet born of a woman. Almighty, and yet hanging on a woman's breast. Supporting a universe, and yet needing to be carried in a mother's arms. King of angels, and yet the reputed son of Joseph. Heir of all things, and yet the carpenter's despised son."— Charles H. Spurgeon

That is what Advent is truly about – God with us, Emmanuel, Jesus Christ.

Take time this week and meditate on the scriptures we read. Genesis 3:15, Exodus 13:22, and John 1:14 Listen to the Song – O Holy Night

Discuss/Journal

What God is promising in His Word to us and how has Jesus fulfilled it. Write down what does this song reveals about the miracle of Christmas.



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ADVENT

EMMANUEL GOD WITH US



WEEK 1 – SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28
THE PROPHET CANDLE

WEEK 1 REMINDS US OF HOPE
THE COLOR PURPLE REMINDS US OF THE ROYALTY OF THE CHRIST CHILD,
HE IS MESSIAH KING THE HOPE OF GLORY.

WATCH VIDEO FOR WEEK 1
LIGHT THE FIRST PURPLE CANDLE

From the fall in the Garden of Eden to the fields of Israel and Judah in the time of Malachi, the promise of a King. One who would come and restore what was once lost. On week one of Advent, we light the Prophet Candle, which symbolizes hope.

Through the words of the prophets, the people maintained their hope that Messiah would come. That God would not forget them, and He would be the Savior. Let's take a look at one of these promises.

Isaiah 9:6-7 For a child is born to us; a son is given to us. The government will rest on His shoulders. And He will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of His ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the Lord of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!

This child is unique. He is more than just a king. He is God-made flesh come down to earth. First, a child is born – speaking of the incarnation of Jesus. Then, a son is given – revealing His deity. The Son was promised, and the Son has come.

Luke 1: 30 – 35 "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name Him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His ancestor David. And He will reign over Israel forever; His Kingdom will never end!" Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin." The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and He will be called the Son of God.

The Lord will give Him the throne of His ancestor David, and His kingdom, there will be no end. We go back to the prophecy. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of His ancestor David for all eternity.

This child has been given, This Son has come, and not only has He ransomed captive Israel but all who would believe in His sacrifice. So may we take advantage of this season and prepare our hearts in the hope only found in Christ Jesus.

Take time this week and meditate on the scriptures we read. Isaiah 9:6-7 and Luke 1:30 - 35 Listen to the Song – O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Discuss/Journal
What is God promising in His word to us, and how has Jesus fulfilled it? Write down what does this song reveals about the miracle of Christmas.



WEEK 2 – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5
THE BETHLEHEM CANDLE

WEEK 2 REMINDS US OF FAITH

THE PURPLE CANDLE THIS WEEK REMINDS US OF THE TABERNACLE OF GOD,
THE PLACE WHERE ATONEMENT FOR SIN WAS MADE, OUR FINAL ATONEMENT
HAS BEEN MADE BY CHRIST ON CALVARY.

WATCH VIDEO FOR WEEK 2
LIGHT THE FIRST & SECOND PURPLE CANDLES

It takes faith. Imagine being a young girl in your mid-teens engaged and being told you will be pregnant and give birth to Messiah. It takes dedication to be a young man, ready to marry your bride, and then she tells you she is pregnant with Messiah. The Holy Spirit has come upon. Yet we see just as the angel spoke to Mary. He came in a dream to Joseph. It takes faith to then embark on a journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem with your pregnant wife.

This is the God we serve. Advent reminds us it takes faith to walk with Him. It takes dedication to call Him Lord. In Ephesians 2, Paul tells us that it is through faith we are saved. In their obedience to travel to Bethlehem, this young couple and faith that God would protect would be fulfilling the prophecy of the birth of Messiah.

Micah 5:2 But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf.

Bethlehem Ephrathah is more than just two names for a city. Ephrathah was where the ancestral land of David was, and it is the land he set aside for the breeding of the temple lambs to be sacrificed.

Luke 2: 6 – 7 And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped Him snugly in strips of cloth and laid Him in a manger because there was no lodging available for them.

You see, going back to these lambs that were born in these fields. The High Priest would inspect a lamb, and the chosen one would be placed in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes so he wouldn't get injured. This lamb would be sacrificed for the sins of the city. In the same way, Christ, our Passover Lamb, the baby in the manger, takes away our sin.

It takes faith to walk in this truth and accept this as the answer to what ails mankind. The author of Hebrews tells us faith is the confidence of hope – that is why this Advent season is so important. It reminds us that Christ is our only hope, and we place complete faith in Him.

Take time this week and meditate on the scriptures we read. Micah 5:2 and Luke 2:6 – 7 Listen to the Song – O Come All Ye Faithful.

Discuss/Journal
What God is promising in His word to us and how has Jesus fulfilled it. Write down what does this song reveals about the miracle of Christmas.



WEEK 3 – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12
THE SHEPHERD'S CANDLE
WEEK 3 REMINDS US OF JOY
PINK IS THE COLOR OF REJOICING

WATCH VIDEO FOR WEEK 3
LIGHT THE FIRST & SECOND PURPLE CANDLES & THE THIRD PINK CANDLE

When was the last time we truly rejoiced over something? Do you remember the feeling? We discover something that we deem as good – maybe a new restaurant or new project we are excited about doing. When we find joy, it sparks this feeling inside us that awakes and motivates us. It gets us excited to tell others.

Advent prepares our hearts for the greatest joy of all – Messiah has been born. Imagine being one of the first to hear this news and the joy it brings to your very soul. Everything you hoped for, everything your faith is anchored in – has been born to you tonight.

Isaiah tells us here is the sign of His birth.

Isaiah 7:14 All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and call Him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us').

Years later, in the land of Bethlehem, in the fields of Ephrathah. Shepherds, regular blue-collar workers, hard at work breeding the sheep for the temple sacrifices would hear the joyful news.

Luke 2:9 - 12 Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize Him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

Do not be afraid – fear is the only thing that can rob us of the joy of our souls. But heaven comes and tells us – mankind does not need to be afraid – rejoice for Messiah is born. This is the Good News the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world has been born in the land of Ephrathah of Bethlehem. We are all searching for joy. It is what makes social media so popular these days. It fuels the marketing of these mega-companies; if you wear this or own that, you will find joy.

Advent reminds us that the joy for our souls has come. True Joy can and will only be found in Messiah. The greatest joy for all to experience is Emmanuel, God with us.

Take time this week and meditate on the scriptures we read. Isaiah 7:14 and Luke 2:9 – 12 Listen the Song – Hark the Herald Angels Sing.

Discuss/Journal
What God is promising in His word to us and how has Jesus fulfilled it. Write down what does this song reveals about the miracle of Christmas.



WEEK 4 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19
THE MAGI CANDLE

WEEK 4 REMINDS US OF PEACE

THE COLOR PURPLE AGAIN SPEAKS OF REPENTANCE – ONLY THROUGH
REPENTANCE OF OUR SIN WILL WE FIND TRUE PEACE WITH GOD

WATCH VIDEO FOR WEEK 4
LIGHT THE FIRST, SECOND PURPLE CANDLES & THE THIRD PINK CANDLE &
FOURTH PURPLE CANDLE

The Hebrew word for peace is Shalom. Shalom means more than peace, as we understand it. Shalom speaks of well-being, and harmony, perfection, safety, and completeness. Isaiah tells us Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

He alone brings peace between mankind and God. When we began our journey through Advent, we spoke about how mankind betrayed God, but now through Christ, we have been redeemed. We find peace with God through the sacrifice of Christ.

The Jews had been waiting for Messiah for thousands of years, but the promise is for all mankind, not just them.

Isaiah 49:6 He says, "You will do more than restore the people of Israel to me. I will make you a light to the Gentiles, and you will bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

We light these candles to remind us that THE LIGHT that brings peace to all mankind has come.

The Shekinah Glory was the manifestation of God's presence with His people. We see at the time of the birth of Jesus, the Shekinah Glory of God shown in the skies of Israel – the book of Numbers tells us a star will rise from Jacob. Isaiah just revealed He would be a light to the Gentiles, and we see that in the Christmas story. Gentiles from the lands of the east come to worship Him.

Matthew 2: 10 - 11 When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with His mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

These Gentile men come and adore Him bringing Him gifts.
Gold – Speaks of Him being a King
Frankincense – Speaks of Him being a Priest
Myrrh – Speaks of His sacrifice

We are living in times where the world is screaming for peace. Division, Disease, and Destruction plague mankind. In the darkest time of man, the light of Christ shines the brightest. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, and it is only through His light that we truly encounter peace in this world.

Take time this week and meditate on the scriptures we read. Isaiah 49:6 and Matthew 2: 10 - 11 Listen the Song – We three Kings

Discuss/Journal
What God is promising in His word to us and how Jesus has fulfilled it. Write down what does this song reveals about the miracle of Christmas.