

THE KING IS COMING



ADVENT GUIDE

2022 Advent Guide

This year, Advent begins on November 27th and ends on Christmas Eve, December 24th. Advent comes from the Latin “adventus,” which means “arrival;coming.” During Advent, Christians across theological traditions adopt practices to help them remember why the birth of Jesus Christ was and continues to be an event worthy of great celebration.

In this guide, you will find a collection of weekly readings, prayers, reflection questions, practices, and activities that you can use to aid in preparing your heart and mind to celebrate Christmas. There is also a QR code below that you can scan to take you to FPC’s 2022 Spotify Advent playlist. We hope you are encouraged by the content in this guide and that it cultivates a deeper desire to love and worship the Lord.

An Introduction to Advent Waiting Candles:

- If you decide to light Advent candles of your own, feel free to reference the following section for an introduction to the practice.
- The tradition of lighting candles on the four Advent Sundays and Christmas Eve represents the spiritual preparation believers undergo to ready their hearts and minds for the arrival of Emmanuel, God-with-us.
- The first two Advent candles are purple and represent the themes of hope and peace. The “hope” candle is lit on the first Sunday of Advent, and the “peace” candle is lit the following week.
- On the third Sunday of Advent, after lighting the first two purple candles, it is customary to light a pink or rose-colored candle (the “joy” candle). Because this candle is a lighter color than the first two, it symbolizes a shift in the advent season from darkness to light and reminds believers that Christ’s coming is near.
- A third purple candle is lit on the Sunday before Christmas day. It represents the theme of “love.”

- Finally, in addition to lighting the first four candles, a single white candle is lit on Christmas Eve. The white candle is called the “Christ” candle because it symbolizes the arrival of the sinless, spotless lamb, Jesus Christ, who purifies all believers of their sin.
- When lighting your candles, you may use the Scripture passages provided under each week’s “candle lighting” sections, or you can choose alternative texts to read.

If you like, you can continue to light the candles at your evening meal or light them on Sundays.

Other Elements:

Four Advent weeks

Section for two weeks of Christmas through Epiphany

Weekly themes, scriptures, readings, reflection questions, prayers, liturgies, practices, activities

Below, you will also find a QR code for an Advent playlist on Spotify



open.spotify.com/playlist/5QBCzH9f3DbEgmtdbECTi8?

Week 1: "The Final Word"
November 27th- December 3rd

"Sometimes in our disbelief,
we need to let go of our own words,
and wrestle in silent waiting for His."¹
- Bette Dickinson

Themes

Prophecy, Waiting, Anticipation, Hope

Candle Lighting

- Read Isaiah 9:2
- Light the first purple candle of your wreath. This is the hope candle.

READ:

- Scriptures: Luke 24:13-32; 1 Peter 10-12; Hebrews 1:1-2a
- "A Liturgy to Mark the Start of the Christmas Season" by Douglas Kaine McKelvey:

As we prepare our house for the coming Christmas season,
we would also prepare our hearts for the returning Christ.
You came once for your people,
O Lord, and you will come for us again.

Though there was no room at the inn
to receive you upon your first arrival,
We would prepare you room
here in our hearts
and here in our home,
Lord Christ.

As we decorate and celebrate, we do so to mark
the memory of your redemptive movement into
our broken world, O God.

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the memory of your redemptive movement into
our broken world, O God.

Our glittering ornaments and Christmas trees,
Our festive carols, our sumptuous feasts—
By these small tokens we affirm
that something amazing has happened
in time and space—
that God, on a particular night,
in a particular place, so many years ago,
was born to us, an infant King, our Prince of Peace.

Our wreaths and ribbons and colored lights,
our giving of gifts, our parties with friends—
these have never been ends in themselves.
They are but small ways in which we repeat
that sounding joy first proclaimed by angels
in the skies near Bethlehem.

In view of such great tidings of love announced
to us, and to all people, how can we not be moved
to praise and celebration in this Christmas season?
As we decorate our tree, and as we
feast and laugh and sing together,
we are rehearsing our coming joy!

We are making ready to receive the one
who has already, with open arms, received us!
We would prepare you room
here in our hearts
and here in our home,
Lord Christ.

Now we celebrate your first coming, Immanuel,
even as we long for your return.
O Prince of Peace, our elder brother,
return soon. We miss you so!

Amen.²

REFLECT:

- What does it look like for you to prepare room for Christ this advent season?
- Reflect on practical ways you can attend to the voice of God amidst the busyness of the season.

PRAY:

- A breath prayer for waiting in the silence:

Inhale: You have spoken to me through your Son.
 Exhale: May I attend to His voice.

Inhale: In the silence, I wait for you.
 Exhale: Prepare my heart for your arrival.

RESPOND:

- Attached is a coloring page of the first four candles of Advent. Color in one candle per week.
- If you haven't yet decorated your house for Christmas, consider decorating progressively. Each day, you can add a few more ornaments to the tree and decorations in the house.
- Spend time praying for the following groups of people in need of God's hope:
 - * Those struggling with mental illness, particularly those facing depression
 - * Those doubting God's presence in their lives
 - * Those who have yet to accept God's gift of grace.

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Advent Week 2: "The First Word"
December 4th – December 10th

"In the beginning was the Word,
 and the Word was with God,
 and the Word was God.
 He was with God in the beginning."
 John 1:1-2

Themes

Creation, Christ's Sovereignty, Justice, Peace

Candle Lighting

Read: Isaiah 9:6-7; John 14:27

Light the first and second purple candles.

READ:

- Scriptures: Psalm 104; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:2
- An excerpt from the Nicene Creed:

“God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.”

REFLECT:

- How can trusting in Jesus' sovereignty bring you peace in times of struggle?
- How can you seek and pursue peace in the conversations you have this week?

PRAY:

- An excerpt from Cole Arthur Riley's liturgy, "For those whose anxiety is a menace."

“Steady us in your arms, God.
That your presence with us would be a mother's tenderness.
That we would be rocked and swayed, [...]
that it would be the kind of rocking that brings comfort to us
in the arms of our maker and sustainer.
Let us breathe deep, keeping rhythm with the chest of God.”³

- An Advent prayer from the Revised Common Lectionary:
Creator of the world,
you are the potter, we are the clay,
and you form us in your image.
Shape our spirits
by Christ's transforming power,
that as one people

we may live out your compassion and justice,
whole and sound
in the realm of your peace.
Amen.⁴

RESPOND:

Activities and Practices

- Go for a walk in nature. Observe and delight in God’s handiwork.
- Gather with your small group or household and name injustices, wrongs, sorrows, fears, or instances of violence that they long for Jesus to make right.
 - ◊ Pray together for the things mentioned along with the following groups:
 - * Those battling anxiety and constant worry.
 - * Those suffering displacement or homelessness.
 - * Those whose country is in conflict.

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**Advent Week 3: “The Powerful Word”
December 11th – December 17th**

“We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son.”
John 1:14b

Themes

Faith, Glory, Gratitude, Joy

Candle Lighting

Light the pink candle. This is the joy candle.

Scriptures to accompany candle lighting: Isaiah 65:18; Galatians 5:22-25

READ:

- Scriptures: John 1:14-18; Romans 8:14-17; Hebrews 1:3
- “First Coming,” a poem by Madeleine L’Engle.

He did not wait till the world was ready,
till men and nations were at peace
He came when the Heavens were unsteady
and prisoners cried out for release.
He did not wait for the perfect time.
He came when the need was deep and great.
He dined with sinners in all their grime,
turned water into wine. He did not wait
till hearts were pure. In joy he came
to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished shame
He came, and his Light would not go out.
He came to a world which did not mesh,
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh
the Maker of the stars was born.
We cannot wait till the world is sane
to raise our songs with joyful voice,
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!⁵

REFLECT: How has Jesus revealed his glory to you these past two advent weeks? What small moments brought you joy?

PRAY:

Excerpt of the Puritan prayer, "Show Me the Way From Your Word"
by Philip Doddridge

Father, may I have the most faithful and affectionate regard to
the blessed Jesus, your incarnate Son, the brightness of your
glory, and your exact image (Hebrews 1:3).

Though I have not seen him, may I love him; and in him,
though now I do not see him, yet believing, may I rejoice with
unspeakable joy, full of glory (1 Peter 1:8)⁶.

A breath prayer for faith and belief:

Inhale: Your Word sustains me.

Exhale: Give me faith to trust it.

Inhale: I believe

Exhale: Help my unbelief

RESPOND:

Activities and Practice

- Invite friends to bake/decorate Christmas cookies and take them to your neighbors. If you would like to try out a new recipe, below is a recipe for snickerdoodles.

This week, focus your prayers on the following groups:

- * Those grieving the loss of loved ones.
- * Those recovering from physical illnesses or dealing with chronic pain.
- * Those hurting from broken relationships.

Snickerdoodle Cookies Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 cup butter, room temperature
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of granulated sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of brown sugar
- 2 eggs room temperature
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp vanilla extract
- 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ c. flour
- 2 tsps. cream of tartar
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt

Cinnamon Sugar Mixture:

- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 3 teaspoons cinnamon

1.Preheat oven to 350°F.

2.Cream softened butter and sugars in a mixer until thoroughly combined.

3.Add eggs, one at a time, to the mixer until incorporated. Add vanilla and mix.

4.Combine flour, cream of tartar, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt in a separate bowl. Whisk dry ingredients together.

5.Add dry ingredients to the batter in the mixer. Blend until combined. Scrape sides and bottom of the bowl to ensure all ingredients are blended.

6.Chill dough for 20-30 minutes in the fridge. (Until the dough can be rolled without sticking to your hands).

7. Meanwhile, mix 3 tsps. sugar and 3 tsps. cinnamon in a small bowl.
8. Roll chilled dough into 1-inch balls, then coat in a cinnamon sugar mixture.
9. Place dough balls on a cookie sheet (lined with a silicone baking mat). Bake 9-11 minutes until the tops of cookies start to puff up. If the tops are still glossy, bake an extra minute at a time.
10. Remove from pan immediately and cool.

*Dough can also be made ahead, rolled, and frozen to be baked for later. When ready to bake, the dough balls will only need a few minutes to soften before they are ready to be put in the oven. Keep them from sitting out too long as they will spread too much in the oven.

Share and enjoy with neighbors and friends!

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**Advent Week 4: “The Relatable Word”
December 18th – December 24th**

“God is arriving from a distance,
looking how we’d not imagined,
loving greater than our wildest dreams.”⁷

Commoners Communion

Themes

Fulfillment, Redemption, Comfort, Love

Candle Lighting

Read: Deuteronomy 10:17-19a; John 13:34-35

After lighting the first two purple candles, light the pink candle, then light the third purple candle.

READ:

- Scriptures: Psalm 8; Hebrews 1:4; Revelation 5
- An excerpt from Ann Voskamp’s *The Greatest Gift*:
God, divine Light, tabernacles Himself in skin and lights the darkness of men.

Jesus left the starry heavens to save us from our sins.

This day, this night—this is the time of the awed silence.

Now, a thousand thousand trees dance with light.

Now, a thousand thousand gifts carry love.

Now, at the foot of every tree, we are all only recipients of grace.

Christ, who called all things into being, gives you sun and moon and stars, the earth under you and the sky over you, and this ocean of air for every breath that fills every lung of every living thing—to you, to you, to you! We live in an ocean of grace. Gifts are our air.

And when we sinned and weren't satisfied with what God gives, as if we refused to breathe air and died, when we longed for something different, something more, something better, He came and gave us Himself.

Am I enough?

Jesu, joy of man's desiring.

Love birthed Himself and births us life.

I'll take your broken heart and give you My warmed one; I'll take your broken body and give you My fresh Spirit; I'll take your burden-broken back and give you weightlessness.

Take Me? Let Me be your enough? Always now, no matter what—let Me be your enough.⁸

REFLECT: In what ways does God remind you that Jesus is “enough?”

PRAY:

* A breath prayer for loving like Christ:

Inhale: Your love knows no bounds!

Exhale: Teach me to love as you love.

RESPOND:

Activities and Practices

Demonstrate Jesus' abundant love to those in your community by handing out Christmas cards to the employees of local businesses.

Pray for the following groups to experience God's abundant love:

- The lonely and those who do not feel like they belong
- The marginalized and minorities facing systemic oppression

Christmas and Epiphany: “Making Room for God” December 25th – January 6th

“You make known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

Psalm 16:11

Themes

Wonder, God-with-us, Celebration, Assurance

Candle Lighting

After lighting the first four candles, light the white “Christ” candle.
Consider lighting the candles each night until the Epiphany (Jan. 6th)

READ:

- Scriptures: Isaiah 53; Luke 2:1-7; Revelation 3:17-21
- The advent reflection, “The Ever Dawning Advent,” by Corbin McKain:

We miss the point of Advent if we think we are celebrating events that once happened. We grasp, touch, speak, hear, taste, and put on Christ through searching the knowledgeable dimensions of the body of Scripture and of Creation; all declaring the mystery of Christ.⁹

- An excerpt of the reading, “Quietly Hidden,” by Tracey Gee:

What if we, as God’s people, stopped and slowed down enough to look closely and take in the beauty of the Incarnation? The Word becoming flesh and entering our world as an infant in order to live “among us” is joyful news for a weary world! But if we don’t make the intentional choice to stop and look intently, we too might miss truly seeing Jesus, quietly hidden but present in each moment of our lives. [...]

What if we chose to cultivate an awareness of God’s incarnate presence around us? And what if we helped each other to do that as community? May we long for the kind of lives that allow us to notice the Incarnation, to stop and see new life and hope, even when it appears in a manger.¹⁰

REFLECT: What practices will you adopt this year to make more room for Jesus in your daily life? Who in your life can encourage you to follow through with these practices?

PRAY:

- An excerpt of the puritan prayer, "The Gift of Gifts,":

O God, take me in spirit to the watchful shepherds,
and enlarge my mind;
let me hear good tidings of great joy,
and hearing, believe, rejoice, praise, adore,
my conscience bathed in an ocean of repose,
my eyes uplifted to a reconciled Father;
place me with ox, [donkey], camel, goat,
to look with them upon my Redeemer's face,
and in him account myself delivered from sin;
let me with Simeon clasp the new-born child to my heart,
embrace him with undying faith,
exulting that he is mine and I am his.
In him thou has given me so much that heaven can give no more.¹¹

RESPOND:

Activities and Practices

- In the church calendar, the "official" Christmas season begins Christmas day and ends on January 5th- the day before Epiphany/ Three Kings day. Thus, don't let your celebration cease the day after Christmas but continue the festivities throughout this two-week period.
- Keep your decorations up, delight in good food and continue singing songs that proclaim that Emmanuel has come!
- As you meet with other individuals this week, share what God has taught you in this advent season.
- Color in the nativity scene sheet.
- For the day of Epiphany/Three Kings Day (Jan 6th):
- Color in the Wisemen sheet
- On this day, in the Spirit of the Magi, give your final gifts of the Christmas season.
- Begin putting together a plan to make more room for Jesus in your life this year.

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*Breath prayers, reflection questions, and recipe by Sabrina Sherwood

**Titles by Pastor Eric Jacobsen



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