

December 21, 2025

**God's Good News Story: The Church Alive & Growing
Advent Sunday 3**

The Candle of Love Shining Forth the Light of Grace

Advent is a season we combine Looking Back and Looking Forward and let that reflection guide us in our Living in the Present. We join in recounting of history past where true followers of God waited in anticipation and arrival of Christ's 1st Coming or Advent. We share in their feelings of hope, peace, joy and love, while at the same time we look forward to Christ's 2nd

Coming/Advent with the same Hope. Peace, Joy and Love. The last three Sundays we have let the Advent Candles reveal to us the Grace-Fueled Light of Hope, Hope, Peace and Joy. Today we focus on the Advent Candle of LOVE – Shining Forth the Light of Grace. The candle of Love, shines forth light of God's unmerited favor, or grace, upon a world in darkness. You might could say that Grace is the Illuminated Face of Love. The Advent season reminds us that God's love is the source of all hope, peace, and joy; and this love is expressed in its fullness through the radical grace of Jesus Christ's arrival.

1 John 4:9-10: *"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*

The Word Became Flesh (John 1:1-18).....

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive him. Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testifies concerning Him. He cries out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because He was before me.'" From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known.

The theme of Light is consistent throughout the Bible. Light represents God's Power, Presence, Truth, Guidance & Purity, and Salvation. It is one of the most powerful symbols used to describe His nature and relationship with humanity, often contrasted with darkness which symbolizes sin, ignorance, and separation from Him.

POWER: Creation & Order

The very first divine act: *"Let there be light"* (Genesis 1:3). Light here symbolizes **life, order, and divine power** breaking into chaos. Light is **life-giving**: without it, nothing grows. Light is **separating**: it distinguishes day from night, good from evil.

Application: God's light still brings clarity to our confusion and hope to our darkness.

PRESENCE: God's Presence & Salvation

Psalm 27:1: *"The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?"*

Light here conveys deliverance, protection, and fearlessness in God's presence.

Application: Trust God's light when facing uncertainty or spiritual battles.

TRUTH: Truth & Revelation

Light is often paired with truth (Psalm 43:3). *Send out Your light and Your truth, they shall lead me; They shall bring me to Your holy hill. And to Your dwelling places.*

Christ is the **ultimate revelation of God's truth and salvation**. It represents God's self-revelation and the clarity that dispels deception. Darkness represents sin, ignorance, and death; light represents forgiveness, knowledge, and life.

Application: Following Jesus means walking in clarity, not confusion; in freedom, not bondage.

GUIDANCE & PURITY

Psalm 119:105: *"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."*

John 8:12 quotes Jesus saying, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life,"*

Light is a metaphor for direction, wisdom, and moral clarity.

Application: Let the Light of God's Word guide you in love to live a life of purity.

SALVATION: Jesus as the Light of Salvation

Christ embodies divine truth, salvation, and eternal life.

Christ is the ultimate revelation of God's truth and salvation. Darkness represents sin, ignorance, and death; light represents forgiveness, knowledge, and life.

1 John 1:5 declares, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all," establishing God's perfect holiness.

John 8:12: Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness."*

Application: Following Jesus means walking in clarity, not confusion; in freedom, not bondage.

CONCLUSION:

How Should We Respond Then As Bearers of Light?

Ephesians 5:8 urges believers, "*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light,*" encouraging them to reflect God's goodness and truth.

Matthew 5:14: "*You are the light of the world.*"

Christians are called to reflect God's light through righteous living and believers are reflections of Christ's light. Light is not meant to be hidden—it's meant to illuminate.

Application: Our words, actions, and love should shine in workplaces, homes, and communities.

- **Practice Empathy and Listen:** Be present and actively listen to others without interruption or judgment. Ask people about their holiday memories or challenges; this genuine care communicates that they are valued and loved.
- **Engage in Acts of Kindness:** Small, thoughtful gestures can have a big impact.
- **Give Generously:** This can include time, money, or resources.
- **Serve Selflessly:** Look for opportunities to serve others, even in small ways, as Jesus came to serve.

This can include helping with dishes after a family meal or picking up trash at a local park.

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- **Share the Good News Faithfully**

God's unconditional love is the foundation and motivation (fuel) for experiencing and living a life of grace. This grace, in turn, empowers believers to love others and live a transformed life, not out of striving or obligation, but as a natural outflow of the love they have received.

Our Response: Reflecting Love Through Grace

This message today on love and grace calls for a response, encouraging believers to move from receiving to reflecting this love and grace in the world.

- **Receive It:** We are invited to pause during the busyness of Advent, reflect on the magnitude of God's love, and open our hearts to receive this free gift.
- **Reflect It:** The transformative love we receive compels us to love one another. This involves acts of kindness, forgiveness, compassion, and generosity towards others.
- **Rejoice in It:** Ultimately, the Advent season is a celebration and a call to be filled with gratitude and joy that love has come and that God is with us.