



“O Come O Come Emmanuel”  
Advent Guide Of Prayer & Reflection

2021

OneLife Community Church

## **THE CHURCH YEAR**

As another calendar year draws to a close, a new church year is just beginning. The church, or liturgical, year was developed during the first centuries of the early church as a tool to help the people of God remember and celebrate the full mystery of the Gospel. Each season of the liturgical year calls us to focus on different aspects of the Gospel, from Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, as well as his ascension, the day of Pentecost and his promised return. To that end, each season has its own colors, prayers, rituals and moods to aid in our remembrance and celebration. By marking the passage of time redemptively, the liturgical year reminds us that God has acted and continues to act in history, redeeming for himself his people. Taken altogether, we see that the liturgical year acts in concert with Scripture and our weekly and daily worship, amplifying the invitation to lose ourselves in the good news of Jesus so that we might truly find ourselves and live.

## **ADVENT**

The four-week season of Advent starts the new church year, preparing the people of God for the celebrations of Christmas and Epiphany. Advent means "coming" and its mood is that of longing, expectation and waiting. The color purple is used because of its association with repentance, preparation and sacrifice.

Appropriately during this time, the church remembers Jesus' first coming and anticipates his coming again. This world is broken, and so we yearn for Jesus to come back as our King and to make all things new. The cry of Advent is the cry of those who have experienced the tyranny of injustice in a world under the curse of sin. It is the cry from those who still have hope of deliverance because they believe in a God who hears the cries of the oppressed and delivers them.

Of course, Scripture teaches us that we need redemption from our broken world because we broke it! Advent calls us to wait and prepare for Jesus' return by repenting and believing. We are to turn away from the false hopes and desires that twist our hearts and destroy our relationships. Instead, we are to turn toward Jesus, who frees us so that we may serve one another in grace and truth. Just as John the Baptist was born to prepare the way for Jesus' first coming, so we are given to each other in the community of the church to encourage each other and challenge the world around us to prepare for his coming again.

So, what do we exactly do during Advent? We wait and prepare by re-committing ourselves to the Christian practices: weekly worship, daily prayer, gathering with brothers and sisters in Christ for mutual encouragement, hospitality and sacrificial giving, and the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ. We re-commit to experiencing God anew and to praying with new hope the final prayer of the Bible: "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20)

## **CHRISTMAS**

At Christmas, we remember the birth of Jesus. Derived from "Christ Mass," Christmas is a feast of fulfillment and future fulfillment. The mood is that of celebration. The colors white and gold are used because of its association with the glory, royalty, joy, holiness and light of God.

With all of our past, present and future waiting answered in Jesus, we continue the song sung by the chorus of angels present at Jesus' birth: "Glory to God in the highest!" (Luke 2:14). And it's not a one-day affair. It's actually a 12-day celebration beginning at sunset on Christmas Eve! How could it not be a multi-day, extravagant and joyous feast when the King of Kings, the Prince of Peace, Creator and Redeemer has come to make the world and us new and is coming again?

So what do we do during Christmas? We rejoice, celebrate and give gifts.

In some traditions, gift giving occurs on each of the 12-days of Christmas. Regardless of your gift giving practice, it is one that emulates and points to God's great sacrificial generosity towards us. Thus, celebrating Christmas is an exercise in humility and care of others. As Paul says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit...In your relationships with one another, have the same attitude of mind Christ Jesus had: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness" (Philippians 2).

So while we celebrate, we also look for ways to be united with Jesus in his humiliation so that others in our lives can know the joy of the Incarnation, God with us. In other words, we continue to cultivate the Christian practices to be shaped into the people of God.

## **THE ADVENT WREATH & THE PRAYER GUIDE**

Many celebrations of Advent include the use of an Advent wreath. The Advent wreath is a relatively new tradition (19th century), but an increasingly popular one. The wreath consists of evergreen boughs encircling five candles. Four candles represent each week of Advent and the fifth represents Christmas. One candle is lit on the first Sunday of Advent. Two are lit on the second Sunday, and so on. All four candles and the remaining fifth candle are lit either on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

It's worth noting that in some traditions, the candles also represent different themes of the seasons:

### **THE 1<sup>st</sup> CANDLE // Hope.**

Throughout the Old Testament, God tells his people that He will fulfill his promise to conquer sin and all its effects by sending a Savior.

### **THE 2<sup>nd</sup> CANDLE // Peace.**

One of Jesus' many titles is the Prince of Peace. He is the means for reconciliation between the Righteous God and His unrighteous people. He is also the means of peace between people, within families, across cultures, generations, classes, and nations.

### **THE 3<sup>rd</sup> CANDLE // Joy.**

It is through Jesus Christ that we participate in eternal, abundant life. One of the fruits of His Spirit dwelling in us is joy. How could it be otherwise since nothing can separate us from the love of God through the Savior? A pink candle is sometimes used to help us mark the midpoint of Advent.

### **THE 4<sup>th</sup> CANDLE // Love.**

God's love is shown by this—while we were yet sinners, His Son Jesus died for us. And now we have been redeemed and adopted into His family as His children. Experiencing God's love for us, we are now made free to love others.

### **THE 5<sup>th</sup> & CENTER CANDLE // Jesus Christ, The Light Of The World.**

In Him we find truth and purpose. He not only died to purchase us as a people for His own possession, He rose from the dead as the pledge that we also shall be raised to a new and everlasting life.

We recommend using the wreath because it offers a visual way to mark our Advent waiting and the fulfillment of our expectations in Jesus Christ. Lighting the candles also offers a moment in our busy days, whether we are alone or with others, to pause and to reflect on our longings and to offer them to the one who created us, knows us and comes to us.

This daily guide offers daily prayers, readings and hymns for Advent and Christmas. Many of the prayers and scripture readings reflect the Advent theme of the week. We believe this guide, along with the wreath, will help you as individuals, roommates, groups, and families to enter into the story of the gospel in new and deeper ways. Our goal is not to load you down with more tasks in an already busy life, but rather to provide you with tools to help you experience God's goodness more fully this season and beyond.

It is a great joy for us to be your pastors. We are so thankful that God has brought us together and we are honored to be able to worship and serve our Lord together with you. May Christ grant us all a blessed Advent and Christmas!

With great love for you all,

*Greg, Rich, Erin, Christel, Brian, & Ben*

The Staff @ OneLife Community Church

## O COME, THOU DAYSPRING

### ADVENT WEEK.01 / Hope

Unexpected God, your advent alarms us. Wake us from drowsy worship, from the sleep that neglects love, and the sedative of misdirected frenzy. Awaken us now to your coming, and extinguish our fears with your hope. Amen.



### LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE 1

**Q.** Why do we light the Advent candle?

**A.** To remember this truth: Jesus is the Light of the World and we who follow Him do not walk in darkness but have the Light of Life. In him the nations will put their hope. (based on John 8:12 & Matthew 12:21)

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We are captive and exiled, O God, because we have, each in our own way, chosen to walk away from you. We confess that we have placed our hope in lesser things. We are lost and in need of your help. Come, Lord Jesus. Forgive and restore us. Guide and deliver us. Renew our hope. Amen.

### READINGS FOR WEEK 1

- Sunday: Isaiah 2:1-5
- Monday: Mark 13:35-37
- Tuesday: Isaiah 11:1-5
- Wednesday: Isaiah 11:6-10
- Thursday: Matthew 7:24-27
- Friday: Matthew 9:27-31
- Saturday: Isaiah 40:1-5

### PRAYER OF FAITH & RESPONSE (See Appendix)

The Lord's Prayer or The Apostles' Creed

### SONG FOR THE WEEK

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

### CLOSING PRAYER

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## AND BE THYSELF OUR KING OF PEACE

### ADVENT WEEK.02 / Peace

Our gracious God, in this season of waiting, draw your people together in renewed peace and unity, that our praise and worship might echo through our lives. In this season of expectation, draw us together in renewed mission, that we may be peacemakers as you have commanded. Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the true Prince of Peace. Amen.



### LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLES 1-2

**Q.** Why do we light the Advent candle?

**A.** To remember this truth: Jesus is the Lord our God who lights our candle and lightens our darkness. For Jesus himself is our peace, the one who has broken down the dividing wall of hostility. (based on Psalm 18:28 & Ephesians 2:14)

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We have, O God, each in our own way, forgotten your Law and your love for us. We have, too often, given ourselves to powers and practices that would destroy peace. We are lost, in need of your help. Come, Lord Jesus. Forgive and restore us. Guide and deliver us. Renew our peace. Amen.

### READINGS FOR WEEK 2

- Sunday: Isaiah 11:1-10
- Monday: Isaiah 60:19-22
- Tuesday: Matthew 18:12-14
- Wednesday: Matthew 11:25-30
- Thursday: Psalm 24:7-10
- Friday: 2 Peter 3:8-13
- Saturday: Isaiah 61:1-4

### PRAYER OF FAITH & RESPONSE (See Appendix)

The Lord's Prayer or The Apostles' Creed

### SONG FOR THE WEEK

Come, Thou Fount

### CLOSING PRAYER

Merciful God, you sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation. Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## DISPERSE THE GLOOMY CLOUDS OF NIGHT

### ADVENT WEEK.03 /Joy

God of timeless grace, you fill us with joyful expectation. Make us ready for the message that prepares the way, that with uprightness of heart and holy joy we may eagerly await the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ, who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.



### LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLES 1-3

**Q.** Why do we light the Advent candle?

**A.** To remember this truth: Jesus is the Word through whom all things were made. In him is life and his life is the light of all people. If we receive his light, our joy is made complete. (based on John 1:1-3 & John 15:11)

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord, we have neglected Advent disciplines. We've crowded them out with Christmas celebrations that arrive too early and with our anxieties, selfishness and lack of trust. Because of this, we have forgotten you and we are joyless. We are lost, in need of your help. Come, Lord Jesus. Forgive and restore us. Guide and deliver us. Renew our joy. Amen.

### READINGS FOR WEEK 3

- Sunday: Isaiah 35:1-10
- Monday: Luke 1:5-17
- Tuesday: Luke 1:18-25
- Wednesday: Luke 1:26-38
- Thursday: Luke 1:39-45
- Friday: Luke 1:46-56
- Saturday: Luke 1:57-66

### PRAYER OF FAITH & RESPONSE (See Appendix)

The Lord's Prayer or The Apostles' Creed

### SONG FOR THE WEEK

Hail To The Lord's Anointed

### CLOSING PRAYER

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

## OUR SPIRITS BY THINE ADVENT HERE

### ADVENT WEEK.04 / Love

Loving God, strengthen our hearts to believe your advent promise that one day we will walk in the way of Christ in the new heaven and new earth, where sorrow and sighing will be no more and all will be renewed by your all-consuming love. Amen.



### LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLES 1-4

**Q.** Why do we light the Advent candle?

**A.** We welcome God's light into our lives and we welcome the full revelation of God's unfailing love for us and for all of creation. For Jesus is the Word of God, the lamp to our feet and the light to our path. (based on Psalm 119:105)

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We have wrought discord, O God. Each of us, in our own way, has locked ourselves out of relationships and we have filled our lives and world with darkness because we lack love. All too often, we have put our own judgment and desires before yours. Come, Lord Jesus. Forgive and restore us. Guide and deliver us. Renew our love. Amen.

### READINGS FOR WEEK 4

- Sunday: Isaiah 7:10-16
- Monday: John 1:1-7
- Tuesday: John 1:8-14
- Wednesday: Mark 1:1-7
- Thursday: Matthew 1:18-25
- Friday: Luke 2:1-7
- Christmas Eve: Luke 2:8-21

### PRAYER OF FAITH & RESPONSE (See Appendix)

The Lord's Prayer or The Apostles' Creed

### SONG FOR THE WEEK

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

### CLOSING PRAYER

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

Shout for joy the whole earth, and everything within. Rejoice! For Light has come into the world! The mountains sing, the seas resound to the praise of your name. Salvation once promised is here on earth! The angels' song rings in the air, a child has been born. Hallelujah! The Savior of the world is here and he is coming again to complete his work of redemption!

### LIGHTING OF ALL ADVENT CANDLES + THE CHRIST CANDLE

**Q.** Why do we light the Christ Candle?

**A.** With joy we remember Christ's coming and with joy we look forward to his coming again when night will be no more and lamp and sun will no longer be needed because he will be our light forever and ever. (based on Revelation 22:5)

### CHRISTMAS PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of love, all year long we pursue power and money, yet you come in weakness. All season long we covet great material gifts, when you alone offer what is lasting. Through the work of this Lord Jesus, who comes among us full of grace and truth, forgive us, heal us, correct us. Then open our lips, that we may sing your praise with the angels, and remake our lives, that we may witness to your transforming love. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### READINGS & PRAYERS FOR THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS / Jesus Christ, The Light Of The World

#### **On the 1st day of Christmas,**

Give thanks to God for sending his Son and ask for a deeper experience of his love. Isaiah 9:2-7; 13:34

#### **On the 2nd Day of Christmas,**

Give thanks for the great story of God's love and ask for a deeper hunger for God's word. 2 Timothy 3:12-17

#### **On the 3rd Day of Christmas,**

Thank God for all those who model the virtues of faith, hope, & love and ask God to help you grow in them as well. 1 Corinthians 13:13

#### **On the 4th Day of Christmas,**

Thanks be to God! Praise God for all that he has done for us and pray that our congregation would be bold in our proclamation of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. John 20:31

#### **On the 5th Day of Christmas,**

Thank God for his Word and pray to become like a tree rooted by streams of living water. Psalm 1

#### **On the 6th day of Christmas,**

Thank God for our beautiful world, and pray for the wisdom to be good stewards of this world. Genesis 1:31

#### **On the 7th Day of Christmas,**

Ask the Holy Spirit to draw out and hone your spiritual gifts for the flourishing of God's church and world. 1 Corinthians 12:8-11

**On the 8th Day of Christmas,**

Thank God for the people in your life who embody “the challenges of the beatitudes” and ask the Holy Spirit to form and mold you more and more in the likeness of Christ as well. Matthew 5:3-10

**On the 9th Day of Christmas,**

Ask the Holy Spirit to bear more and more fruit in you for the flourishing of your relationships, home, workplace, and neighborhood. Galatians 5:22

**On the 10th Day of Christmas,**

Take some time to read the 10 commandments. As you read the Commandments, ask God for the strength to respond with joyful obedience and faith to rely on the righteousness of Christ alone. Exodus 20:1-17

**On the 11th Day of Christmas,**

Thank God for the Church universal and for OneLife and pray that our congregation would grow in love, unity and outward boldness. Luke 6:14-16; Ephesians 2:20

**On the 12th Day of Christmas,**

Today, prayerfully recite the Apostles’ Creed, giving thanks for this historic profession and asking God: (1) to help you embody the truths of the Creed more and more, and (2) that all who profess it may be one as Jesus prayed.

**PRAYER OF FAITH & RESPONSE (See Appendix)**

The Lord’s Prayer or the Apostles’ Creed

**SONGS FOR CHRISTMAS**

Joy to the World

O Come All Ye Faithful

Go Tell it on the Mountain

Angels We Have Heard on High

**CLOSING PRAYER**

God, we are as confounded as Joseph and Mary, as busy as the innkeepers, as lonely as the shepherds, as frightened as Herod, as wayfaring as the Magi. Turn us again to the place where, with quietness, you wrap up your truth and promise, your love and salvation in the child born in a crude barn. We ponder these things as the noise and clamor of the world are stilled for a time, and there is a peace that settles deep within us. Bring us to Bethlehem, to the place where Jesus was homeless, but where we are truly at home. Amen.

## APPENDIX

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil;  
for thine is the kingdom  
and the power and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.

### THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.