



ADVENT 2020

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

## ADVENT WEEK BY WEEK DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

This guide takes a simple approach to family devotional time during the month of December. We provide a familiar carol that focuses on the theme of the week along with a prayer that could be used with each day's reading.

Our hope is that these Advent materials will help you as individuals or families to enter into the story of the gospel in new and deep ways, remembering Christ's faithfulness, clinging to his promises, turning from sin and yearning for his return.

We hope that you will have great joy in the Lord over Jesus' first coming and great hope in his coming again. We are so thankful that God has brought us together as a congregation, and we are honored to worship together each week in this special way.

## THE SEASON OF ADVENT

Advent means “coming” or “arrival”. It is a time for the church to yearn for Jesus to return, to hope that even this will be the year our Messiah comes again. Advent begins with a note of penitence, an admission that we do not live as those awaiting properly (consider Jesus' parable of the ten virgins, Matthew 25:1-13).

So, at the beginning of the season, we turn away from our false hopes — the idols that capture our hearts, distort our lives, and twist us so much that we end up using and oppressing others — and turn toward Jesus, who frees us from slavery to our idols, in order that we may serve one another in hope and love as we await his return.

The further you move into the four Sundays in Advent, the more it feels like Christmas, for we know that Christ came once, as promised, in humility, and that he will certainly come again in glory. “Therefore stay awake - for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning — lest he come suddenly and find you asleep” (Mark 13:35-36).

## THE ADVENT WREATH AND CANDLES

The Advent wreath is a tradition that prepares us for the celebration of Christmas. The Advent wreath and candles are a great way to pull different generations into the season and make it come alive for people of all ages.

The candles associated with the wreath symbolize the light of God coming into the world through the birth of his Son. The four outer candles represent the period of waiting during the four Sundays of Advent. The fifth candle, placed in the center of the wreath and lit on Christmas Eve, is the Christ candle, reminding us that all is not preparation; he really did come and he really will come again.

The colors of the candles vary with different traditions, but there are usually three purple candles (symbolizing royalty, but also suffering, connecting Jesus' birth with his death), and one pink candle around the wreath, with the white Christ candle in the center, reminding us that Christ is at the center of all things and in him all things hold together.

The first candle is traditionally the candle of Prophecy. This draws attention to the anticipation of the coming of a Messiah that weaves its way like a golden thread through Old Testament history. As God's people were abused by

power-hungry kings, they longed for a true king: great David's Son who would be greater than David himself, who would shepherd them as his flock and who would have the healing and renewing power of God in his hands.

The three remaining candles of Advent may be associated with different characters or themes of the Christmas story. So, the sequence for the remaining three Sundays might be Bethlehem, Shepherds, and Angels; or Peace, Joy, and Love; or John the Baptist, Mary and the Magi; or the Annunciation, the Proclamation, and the Fulfillment.

We will use the pattern of Bethlehem, Shepherds, and Angels for our second, third and fourth candles, respectively. The third candle is traditionally pink, symbolizing our joy at the coming of Christ. The pink Shepherds' Candle brings to mind the joy of the proclamation made to them in the fields and the joy they felt as they knelt before the Child in the manger.

## WEEK 1 DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

*Hymn: COME, THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS (C. Wesley)*

1. Come, thou long expected Jesus,  
born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us,  
let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,  
hope of all the earth thou art;  
dear desire of every nation,  
joy of every longing heart.

2. Born thy people to deliver,  
born a child and yet a King,  
born to reign in us forever,  
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal spirit  
rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all sufficient merit,  
raise us to thy glorious throne.

## **WEEK 1 PRAYER**

Merciful God, who 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.

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR WEEK 1**

Day 1: Psalm 96, Luke 1:1-25

Day 2: Psalm 97, Luke 1:26-38

Day 3: Psalm 98, Luke 1:39-45

Day 4: Psalm 99, Luke 1:46-56

Day 5: Psalm 100, Luke 1:57-66

## WEEK 2 DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

*Hymn: WHAT CHILD IS THIS (Dix)*

1. What Child is this who, laid to rest  
On Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom Angels greet with anthems sweet,  
While shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and Angels sing;  
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

2. Why lies He in such mean estate,  
Where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here  
The silent Word is pleading.  
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,  
The cross be borne for me, for you.  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

3. So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh,  
Come peasant, king to own Him;  
The King of kings salvation brings,  
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.  
Raise, raise a song on high,  
The Virgin sings her lullaby.  
Joy, joy for Christ is born,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

## **WEEK 2 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 for ever. Amen.

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR WEEK 2**

Day 1: Psalm 102, Luke 1:67-80

Day 2: Psalm 103, Mark 1:1-8

Day 3: Psalm 107, Mark 1:9-11

Day 4: Psalm 110, John 1:6-8, 14-15

Day 5: Psalm 118, Luke 1:19-34

## WEEK 3 DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

*Hymn: GOOD CHRISTIAN MEN, REJOICE (Neale)*

1. Good Christian men, rejoice

With heart, and soul, and voice;

Give ye heed to what we say:

News! News! Jesus Christ was born to-day:

Ox and ass before Him bow,

And He is in the manger now.

Christ is born today! Christ is born today.

2. Good Christian men, rejoice,

With heart, and soul, and voice;

Now ye hear of endless bliss:

Joy! Joy! Jesus Christ was born for this!

He hath open'd the heav'nly door,

And man is blessed evermore.

Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

3. Good Christian men, rejoice

With heart, and soul, and voice;

Now ye need not fear the grave:

Peace! Peace! Jesus Christ was born to save!

Calls you one, and calls you all,

To gain His everlasting hall:

Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

## **WEEK 3 PRAYER**

O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR WEEK 3**

Day 1: Psalm 121, Luke 3:1-6

Day 2: Psalm 130, Luke 3:7-20

Day 3: Psalm 51, Luke 3:21-22

Day 4: Psalm 139, Luke 3:23-38

Day 5: Micah 5:1-50, Matthew 1:17

## WEEK 4 DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

*Hymn: JOY TO THE WORLD! (Watts)*

1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come;  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare him room,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

2. Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;  
Let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

4. He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

## **WEEK 4 PRAYER**

Almighty God, you have given your Only-Begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the same Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR WEEK 4**

Day 1: Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18-25

Day 2: John 1:1-5, John 8:12

Day 3: Luke 2:1-20

Day 4: Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Luke 2:21

Day 5: Isaiah 61:1-7, Luke 2:22-35