

ADVENT LIGHTS UP CHRISTMAS

The Four Sundays of Advent

HOPE

PEACE

JOY

LOVE

When we observe Advent by lighting candles in the Christmas wreath, we are celebrating overarching biblical themes – reminding us that Christians, of all ages in time, live our lives within this framework: God has come and God will come again!

The Swiss theologian Karl Barth exclaimed: ***What other time or season can or will the Church ever have but that of Advent?!***

“This illuminates the *present* dimension of the season. It locates us correctly with relation to the first and second comings of Christ. Advent calls for a life lived on the edge, so to speak, all the time, shaped by the cross, not only on Good Friday, but wherever and whenever we are proclaiming his death to be the turn of the ages until he comes (Gal. 1:4), not in a faraway empyrean [heavenly realm] but in ‘the sufferings of this present time,’ which are endured because of the promise that they “are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” Rom 8:18).

In a very real sense, the Christian community lives in Advent **all the time**. It can well be called the Time Between, because the people of God live *in the time between* the first coming of Christ, incognito in the stable of Bethlehem, and his second coming, in glory, to judge the living and the dead. In the Time Between, ‘our lives are hidden with Christ in God; when Christ who is our life appears, then we will also appear with him in glory’ (Col. 3:3-4). The disappointment, brokenness, suffering, and pain that characterize life in this present world is held in dynamic tension with the promise of future glory to come.”