

Advent Week 2025



During the upcoming four weeks preceding Christmas many churches around the world will celebrate Advent. Though there are a variety of specific practices, the heart of Advent is broadly recognized now as it has been for approximately 1900 years. It is a season of humility commemorating incarnation (coming of God as a man) of the one called Jesus the Messiah. Many have recognized the Advent season with a month of solemn reflection and marked it in their churches with the lighting of five candles. The first four are lit one per week and the last one is traditionally lit on Christmas Eve.

Advent comes from the Latin, *adventus*, meaning “coming.” Christians began celebrating an Advent month of fasting and prayer sometime in the 300s, the period of early church history when Constantine made Christianity legal. Teddy Colbert writes in his book, *The Living Wreath* that Christians in the German Lutheran church started making advent wreaths of various kinds in the 1600s. However, the advent wreath we know today was popularized by pastor Johann Hinrich Wichern in 1839, taking an old cartwheel and putting 20 red candles and 4 white candles on it. With 24 days leading up to Christmas Day, Wichern lit a new red candle on each weekday of December and a new white candle on each Sunday service, finally lighting the last white candle on Christmas Eve. Eventually, people began making evergreen wreaths to circle the candles. There are several variations of colored candles and themes that came into practice over the many years.

The colors and themes presented for our use this year are very commonly used. There is no specific way it is universally celebrated. The details are less important than the concept of a concentrated month to prepare our hearts and minds for the celebration of the incarnation of Christ. Note that there is a progress through the themes of Advent.

Hope, Faith, Joy, Peace, Christ.

Each one is moving us closer to the fulfillment of the long ago foretold prophecy of the Messiah. Even though you may not have grown up lighting an Advent candle or previously known what the word “Advent” meant, you can still take part in this centuries-old tradition that teaches us about the central themes of Christmas. The first week of Advent is the first

Sunday after Thanksgiving and is a beautiful way to reflect during this busy season.

Advent Season Candle Lighting:

- **Candle 1 (“The Prophets’ Candle”)** symbolizes **Hope** and is called the "The Prophet’s Candle." The prophets of the Old Testament waited in hope for the Messiah’s arrival. The purple color symbolizes royalty, repentance, and fasting.



- **Candle 2 (“The Bethlehem Candle”)** represents **Faith** and is called "The Bethlehem Candle." Micah foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, which is also the birthplace of King David. The second candle is also purple to symbolism preparation for the coming king.

- **Candle 3 (“The Shepherds’ Candle”)** symbolizes **Joy** and is called the "Shepherds’ Candle." To the shepherds’ great joy, the angels announced that Jesus came for humble, unimportant people like them. In many church traditions, the color pink signifies joy. This candle is colored pink to represent joyfulness and rejoicing.

- **Candle 4 (“The Angels’ Candle”)** represents **Love** and is called the "The Angels’ Candle." The angels announced that Jesus came to bring peace—He came to bring people close to God and to each other. This color is also purple to represent the culmination of love through the Messiah.

- **Candle 5 (“The Christ Candle”)** represents **Salvation and Light** and is called "The Christ Candle." It is placed in the middle and is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. This candle is white to represent pure light and victory.

In Hope We Rejoice

Week 1 - November 30st



Public Reading:

The first Sunday of Advent is the lighting of The Hope Candle. This event is an opportunity to center our thoughts on the hope we have in Christ. The Hope Candle is also known as the “The Prophets’ Candle” which symbolizes God’s promise to send a savior to save His people.

The prophets of the Old Testament waited in hope for the Messiah’s arrival. The Prophets’ Candle reminds us that the God who predicted Jesus’ first coming is the same God who promised Jesus will return again. We rejoice because we have hope that God will fulfill all the prophecies declared in the Old Testament and all the future promises of the New Testament about Jesus. Hope doesn’t disappoint us (Rom. 5:5).

In this day and age, where evil abounds and despair surrounds us, we can trust completely in the Lord our God. This first Sunday of Advent we read, pray, and reflect on the hope God’s plan gives us and we meditate on the promises of Christ’s coming glorious return.

Scripture Reading:

But when the set me had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. - Gal. 4:4-5

Please listen, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph’s descendants like a flock. O God, enthroned above the cherubim, display your radiant glory to Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh. Show us your mighty power. Come to rescue us! Turn us again to yourself, O God. Make your face shine down upon us. Only then will we be saved. - Ps. 80:1-7

The Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us'). - Is. 7:14

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me, for the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. - Is. 61:1-2

Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds. - Ps. 72:18

Light the Candle (light the 1st purple candle)

Prayer:

Father, let your hope arise in our hearts! Lift our eyes up to see that you alone are where our hope comes from. Help us to shake off the anxiety, discouragements, and distractions that have filled this year. May we pause to remember that we have hope in you. We invite your Spirit into this beautiful Advent season. Renew our sense of holy anticipation! Let us be those who are waiting eagerly for Jesus to come again. More than anything, we ask that you be glorified in this season of expectation in Christ's name, Amen.

By Faith We Wait

Week 2 – December 7th



Public Reading:

This second Sunday of Advent we light the “Faith Candle” which is also known as the “Bethlehem Candle” as a reminder of Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem. By faith Mary

and Joseph trusted God and listened to God's angelic messengers. God promised them a child that would be the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament, and they followed His will. The Roman census and the stress of travel were difficult for them as Mary was great with child. They were living by faith and so should we live.

Every year at Advent, there is comfort for us when we pause to read, pray, and reflect over the coming of Christ. It is a month when believers eagerly anticipate the celebration of Christ's birth. This week, we pause to remember who God is and what He has done for us. When our lives are hurried, we tend to focus on our to-do lists. Making space in our schedules for prayer and quiet helps us to better see God at work in our lives and in our world. May God's spirit transform the days leading up to Christmas into a month of holy anticipation preparing our hearts as we faithfully await the opportunity to celebrate the arrival of our King.

Scripture Reading: *And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the moment came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. – Luke 2:4-7*

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. – Matthew 2:9-12

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." – Micah 5:2

Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds. – Ps. 2:18

Light the Candle (light the 2nd purple candle)

Prayer:

Father, prepare our hearts to celebrate Jesus' birth joyfully! We thank you for faithfully doing what you promised long ago when you sent your Son to earth so that we might become part of your family. Let the promise of Christ's second coming inspire us to live with hope, faith and purpose. As we wait for your plan to unfold, give us the patience we need. Remind us of the peace we can access when we take time to still ourselves before you and remember that you are our God. We thank you that you are both sovereign and gracious. Increase our faith God that we might know you more and walk with you today and every day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

With Joy We Praise

Week 3 – December 14th



Reading:

The third candle is pink and symbolizes joy. It is Otherwise known as the “Shepherds’ Candle.” This third candle of Advent reflects the joy the shepherds experienced when they received the good news about Christ’s birth. During the middle of the night, the darkest me, the shepherds encountered angels who revealed to them the greatest event in human history up to that time—the birth of the Messiah. The shepherds and wise men believed the angels and they experienced the great gladness of worshipping their Messiah.

Those who knew him and recognized him were overjoyed at the coming of Jesus. They saw the prophecies fulfilled and their fear was replaced with happiness as they gazed on the face of the one who would be their Savior. They trusted in God’s promises and their hearts were filled with gladness as they watched His loving-kindness manifested in the face of a tiny baby in a lowly manger.

We should all believe the Word of God about Christ so that we can also experience the joy of

God's grace given to us through His Son.

Scripture Reading:

"And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.'" And suddenly there was with the angel and a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. - Luke 2:8-20

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. – Phil. 4:4

Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds. – Ps. 72:18

Light the Candle (the 3rd candle which is pink)

Prayer:

Heavenly Father,

This third week of Advent, let us remember that the good news of Jesus' birth has the power to bring us great joy this Christmas season. Our joy isn't dependent on what is going on in life, in our world, or the people that we are with. It doesn't depend on the gifts we give or the gifts we find under the tree. No earthly thing can ever give us complete joy. Our joy comes from you, and the joy that flooded the hearts of the shepherds, the angels, the wise men, the hosts of heaven, and Mary and Joseph is the same joy that has the power to fill our hearts with rejoicing.

Flood our hearts with joy this Advent season as we reflect on the good news of Jesus' birth. In His precious name we pray. Amen

In Peace We Rest

Week 4 – December 21



Public Reading:

This fourth Sunday of Advent, we light the last purple candle to mark the final week of prayer and contemplation as we consider the birth of our Savior. This is the “Angels’ Candle,” symbolizing peace. It reminds us of the message of the angels: “Peace on earth, good will toward men.”

Jesus brought about peace, in a most unexpected way. The Jews, particularly the zealots, wanted a rebellion. They wanted their Messiah to overturn the rule of the Romans and bring about peace in a political and even a violent way. But Jesus had something else in mind.

He came to seek and save the lost. He came to live a sinless life. He came to die a criminal's death to take our just punishment. He came to be just as we are—fully human. He came first as the humble Lamb of God. He came as a gentle shepherd and a manger born baby. What kind of king is this? He was the king prophesied from of old, humble and lowly. This was the Messiah that God sent. He identified with us because He was one of us. He connected us to God because He was God. The manger was the next act of a cosmic drama determined before the foundation of the world. The Scriptures promise that the next time Christ comes he will come as a lion not a lamb. He will come again as the reigning King of the universe. With history and prophecy in view, we gladly say that our peace is tied to His promises. May God help us to rest in the peace that comes to us through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Scripture Reading:

Because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. – Luke 2:78-78

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” – Luke 2:14

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. – Rom. 15:13

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. – Isaiah 9:6

Light the Candle (light the 4th candle which is purple)

Prayer

Lord God, heavenly Father, we give thanks that in your great mercy and compassion you allowed your Son to become incarnate and through him redeemed us from sin. Open our hearts by your Holy Spirit that we may always be thankful for such grace and be comforted in all trouble and temptation, and at last, obtain eternal salvation; through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. Amen.

In Christ We Are Blessed

Christmas Eve – December 24th



Tonight we light the Christ Candle. It reminds us that Jesus is the reason for the season. It is Christ himself who connects all the Advent candles. Through him, we can have hope, faith, joy, peace and salvation. Christ stepped down into darkness and He is the light of the world (John 8:12). Jesus brought light into the world through his arrival on earth as a baby. His journey to the cross began on earth in the manger. God's plan for our salvation began in eternity past. Because of him, we can be a light to others, showing them the true meaning of Christmas.

The greatest gift of all came that first Christmas. It wasn't wrapped in a beautiful package and set under a decorated tree. The greatest gift came wrapped in the flesh of baby Jesus and laid in the rough wood of a manger. Our perfect gift would later be rewrapped in the scars of our sin and nailed to the cross on Calvary, all because of love.

The whole meaning of Christmas can be explained in one little four-letter word...LOVE. God proved His love for us when Jesus came to live, die and rise from the grave for our salvation. This reflection on Advent helps us to take to heart the magnitude of love offered to us through Jesus.

Scripture Reading:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. – Isaiah 9:6

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. – John 3:16

Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds. Ps.72:18

Light the Candle (light the 5th candle which is white)

Prayer:

Heavenly Father,

Your Son Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Messiah, and Ruler of All, yet He came not as a lion but as a lamb. He came as an innocent baby whose purpose was to walk this earth in complete love and then to sacrificially give His life to pay the penalty for the sins of your children. He is truly Immanuel -- God with us.

There is no greater gift than this that a man should lay down his life for his friends. Jesus willingly gave His life for us.

Father, this evening of Advent, fill our hearts and minds with the significance of what Christ did for us. Thank you, Lord, for loving us. In Jesus' precious name we pray. Amen