
An historical sketch of Advent

Since the 4th century, the Church has prepared to celebrate Christmas with the tradition of Advent. Beginning four Sundays before Christmas Day, the Advent Season (meaning “arriving” or “coming” in Latin, which specifically speaks to *something new arriving*) builds our anticipation for Christ’s coming. We remember his arrival at Bethlehem, praying that he would continually arrive now in our lives as we look forward to his promised return.

Our hope for you this Advent

May you grow in your love for the Lord and his glorious gospel. In this season may you join Mary in her song and wait in hope, peace, joy and love as our Lord overwhelms us with the weight of His coming:

Mary’s Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55)

“Oh, how my soul praises the Lord.

How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!
For he took notice of his lowly servant girl,
and from now on all generations will call me
blessed.

For the Mighty One is holy,
and he has done great things for me.

He shows mercy from generation to generation
to all who fear him.

His mighty arm has done tremendous things!
He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.
He has brought down princes from their thrones
and exalted the humble.

He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away with empty hands.

He has helped his servant Israel
and remembered to be merciful.

For he made this promise to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his children forever.”

Advent Prayer for WCC

Come make Yourself known to us, long-expected
King Jesus.

Excite in us a wonder at the wisdom and power
of Your Father and ours. Receive our prayer as
part of our service to You.

Come make Yourself known to us, long-expected
King Jesus.

You are the Hope of the world. Provoke in us a
strength to wait in Hope: open the eyes of our
hearts to see the abundant life offered to us
through Your Gospel, and as citizens of Your
eternal Kingdom, for Your birth, death and
resurrection invites us in God's own work for
redemption, restoration and justice. For in our
baptism we have accepted Your invitation, and in
your grace we will proclaim your gospel of Hope.

Come make Yourself known to us, long-expected
King Jesus.

You are the Prince of Peace.

Provoke in us a hunger for peace: peace in the
world, peace in Your Church, peace in our
homes, peace in ourselves.

Come make Yourself known to us, long-expected
King Jesus.

Provoke in us a joy that reflects our Father's joy.
Our desire is to seek His will so we may join You
in your mission to restore all of creation and
make disciples of all nations, with joy,
thanksgiving and love.

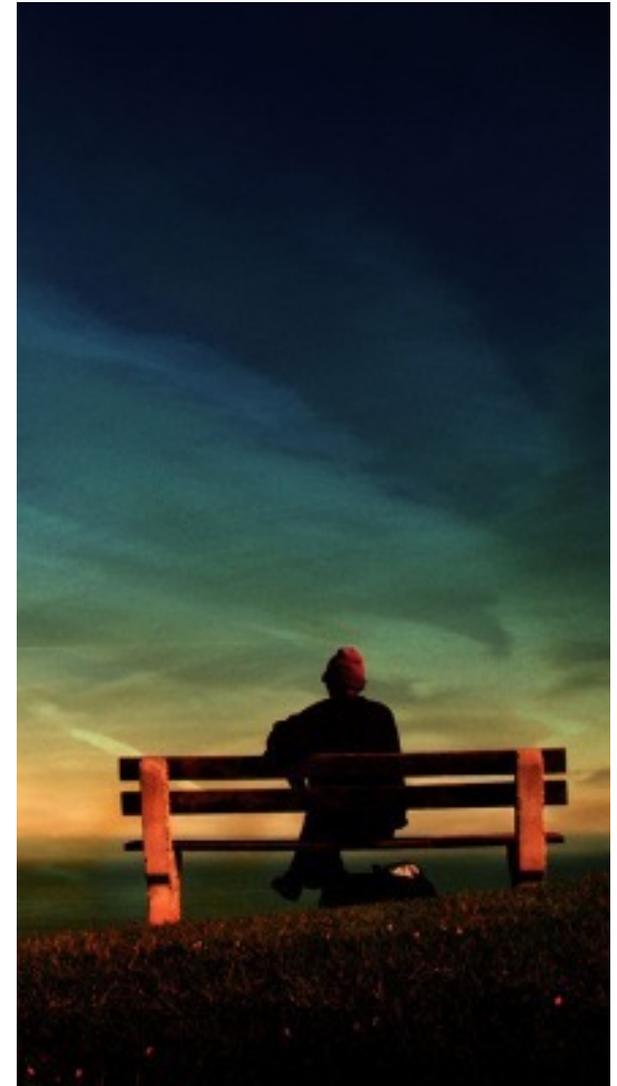
Come make Yourself known to us, long-expected
King Jesus.

Provoke in us the joy, love and peace that is
proper to bring to the manger of our Lord. Raise
in us sober reverence for you oh Holy God, as it
was You who lay in the manger.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, whose
advent we praise and celebrate. Amen.

Advent

The Story of a Divine Proposal



www.williamsburgchristianchurch.com/advent

The Focus of Advent

Advent is the story of God as the Coming One who disorders the world as we know it for the sake of an alternative world in line with the realities of the coming future of God. It is the story of a divine proposal: Jesus, as Israel's Messiah, proclaimed the coming Kingdom of God as good news and demonstrated the nature of that reign by proclaiming the forgiveness of sins, healing the sick, casting out demons, eating with tax collectors and sinners, and inviting all hearers to leave the realities of the old way of doing things behind to serve the coming future of God. This is the advent story. This is the gospel! God has come and is coming, offering us the hope of a world the principalities and powers of the age are incapable of giving us—a restored world where self-giving love, abiding peace and unending joy flow from the fullness of God's presence. It is a world that through His in-breaking kingdom, has come into the present through the Resurrected Lord, yet is a world that will fully come in His Return in the consummation of His kingdom—the final Advent.

For those of us who have accepted God's proposal this is the world for which we wait, but we do so in hope, peace, joy and love.

Before Christ's incarnate arrival at Bethlehem, the people of Israel were earnestly longing for the Messiah who would rescue and restore them as had been promised by the Old Testament prophets. During Advent, we meditate and hope in God's promise spoken through Isaiah, *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

While remembering the anticipation of those awaiting Christ's coming, we give thanks during Advent that we have experienced his coming already and long to experience his coming each day in our lives.



We celebrate the gospel, that God the Son humbled himself to being born in a barn, putting on flesh, dwelling among us, rescuing us in his death and resurrection and welcoming us into His presence as we live freely as citizens of His eternal kingdom. The Advent Season gives thanks for the miracle of God's arrival in the Person of Jesus the Christ.

Finally, we look forward to Christ's promised return. Just as Jesus tells his followers to be dressed with lamps kept burning (Matt. 25:1-13), so are we to await his coming with expectancy. Our hope, peace, joy and love should burn brightly by the constant fuel of knowing his return will bring all things to full redemption. All that was broken by the reign of sin and death will finally be set right by the triumphant reign of God in King Jesus.

We ask that God move among us as Jesus encouraged us to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." We ask that the Holy Spirit open our eyes to see and ears to hear.

The Candles of Advent

Five candles in a circle of evergreens. Three candles are purple and the fourth is pink. There is a candle for each week before we celebrate Christ's coming into the world on Christmas. We light the candles, adding light each week to show that Jesus' light continues to grow in our world, especially in the dark days of winter. The four candles standing symbolize the four centuries (400 years) of waiting between the prophet Malachi and the birth of Christ.

The three purple candles represent the Hope, Peace, and Love that Jesus brings. Purple is a symbol of royalty, because Jesus is our King. The one pink candle represents Joy. Pink is a symbol of celebration, because we rejoice that King Jesus comes into our lives and into our world. And the one white candle represents Christ. White is a symbol of purity and holiness, because Jesus is our holy God and sinless Savior. In Jesus, our Lord and Savior, we also become holy and pure from our sins.

In the first week of Advent, light one purple candle-- Hope. In the second week of Advent, light two purple candles--Hope & Peace. In the third week of Advent, light two purple candles and one rose candle--Hope, Peace and Joy. In the fourth week, light all four candles--Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. There is also a white candle in the center that is lit on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

The wreath is a circle, which represents "forever" or "eternity." Just as a circle goes round and round and never ends, so God is always there and forever with us. And the evergreen tree branches represent eternity, too. Just as an evergreen never browns like most trees, so it is a beautiful symbol of the new life we receive in Jesus that lasts forever.