

2020



Advent Readings

The Season of Advent



Advent is a season of preparing and waiting. It's a time to reflect on the Old Testament promises of the one who is to come and who has already come. It's a reminder that we're part of a much bigger story. It's a season to anticipate the miracle that God wanted to be with us so much, that he came to us as a baby.

...“and they will call him Immanuel”
which means, “God with us.”

-Matthew 1:23

One of the ways that we, as a community, can celebrate Advent is by lighting candles around an Advent wreath. It's a good way for us to worship God, not just at church, but also in our homes. And the hope is that this booklet will give you some resources for making this practice a part of your family's worship.

-Pastor Tim & Pastor Josh

The Advent Wreath



Hopefully you have an Advent Wreath, but if not, you can simply use candles from home.

An Advent wreath has four outer candles which are often purple (but the color doesn't matter). Some Advent candles have one different color (example: one rose colored candle and three purple ones.) The "different" candle is traditionally lit on the Third Sunday of Advent: historically a day of joy amidst a very reverent and contemplative season. A candle in the center of the wreath, often called the "Christ Candle" is lit for the first time on Christmas Eve, and again each day through the Day of Epiphany. Traditionally this is a white candle.

The Advent Wreath



One way to practice this is to set up the Advent wreath in the center of your kitchen table. When you sit down to eat, begin by working through the liturgy and lighting the candles. Alternatively, since every family is different, you may want to find another time to worship together. Also, some families celebrate Advent only on Sunday nights, and others repeat the process throughout the week. (Maybe assign different parts to different people) Do what works for you and/or your family.

Lighting the Advent and Christ candles is a way of remembering – setting this season apart as a holy time of waiting and anticipation. We use this practice as an opportunity to remember that God makes promises to us and is always faithful to fulfill them.

The First Sunday



Reader: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness -- on them light has shined... For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:2, 6)

Reader: Why do we light the first candle?

Reader: On this first Sunday of Advent, we light this candle as a symbol of the prophets who renew our faith and remind us of the hope that may be.

(Light a purple candle.)

Reader: Today we remember that long before the birth of Jesus, the prophets spoke of how the Savior of the world would come. These same prophets

The First Sunday



spoke truths that needed to be heard, and they dared to speak of a child who would come and bring salvation and healing with him.

Prayer: Lord, today we give thanks for the prophets among us, who bring to us surprising new visions of hope, who challenge us to think outside the box, who show us a future we never anticipated. Help us to live lives like this.

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!
O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!*

The Second Sunday



(Note: Start with the candle from the previous Sunday already lit)

Reader: "And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name'" (Luke 1:46-49).

Reader: Why do we light the second candle?

Reader: On this second Sunday of Advent, we light this candle as a symbol of Mary, mother of God, bearer of the Prince of Peace.

(Light a 2nd purple candle.)

Reader: Today we remember Mary, innocent and powerful, sacred and scared, worried and waiting as

The Second Sunday



the Savior of all grows in her womb. She sings boldly when she might be meek; she bears her role in history with confidence; she is faithful even when she's frightened.

Prayer: Lord, today we give thanks for the Marys among us, who faithfully live out your calling, who find their peace in you, and who bring more wholeness and harmony to the world. Help us to live lives like this.

*Silent Night, Holy Night
Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.*

The Third Sunday



(Note: Start with the two candles from the previous Sundays already lit)

Reader: "In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see -I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people'" (Luke 2:8-10).

Reader: Why do we light the third candle?

Reader: On this third Sunday in Advent, we light this candle as a symbol of the shepherds, agents of the gospel for the redemption of the world, who experienced deep joy at the coming of Jesus.

(Light the 3rd purple candle or the pink candle.)

The Third Sunday



Reader: Today we remember the shepherds, faithfully working in the fields, faithfully receiving the message of the angels, and faithfully responding to the amazing news. These shepherds saw the baby Jesus and responded in joyful witness as they told people what they had seen and heard.

Prayer: Lord, today we give thanks for the shepherds among us, who witness and respond to your work and ways. We thank you for their joyful faithfulness. Help us to live lives like this.

*Angels We Have Heard on High
Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo*

The Fourth Sunday



*(Note: Start with three candles from the previous
Sundays already lit)*

Reader: "After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." (Matthew 2:1-2)

Reader: Why do we light the fourth candle?

Reader: On this fourth Sunday in Advent, we light this candle as a symbol of the magi, wisemen from the east who came to worship and love the new baby born a king.

(Light the fourth purple candle.)

Reader: Today we remember the magi, who

The Fourth Sunday



travelled far so that they could worship the newborn king. We remember how they brought valuable gifts so that they could offer themselves and their love to this gift to the world. These kings remind us how important it is to seek Jesus in our lives, and they remind us why we give gifts in this season.

Prayer: Lord, today we give thanks for the magi among us, who wisely sought the King of kings so that they could offer their love to him. Help us to live lives like this.

The First Nowell

*And by the light of that same star,
Three wisemen came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel*

Christmas Eve



(Note: Start with all four candles already lit)

Reader: "While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger" (Luke 2:6-7).

Reader: Why do we light the fifth candle?

Reader: On this Christmas Eve, we light the Christ candle for the child-King, the infant-Redeemer, the lowly-Lord. Because now we celebrate that Jesus is born!

(Light the white candle in the center of the wreath)

Reader: Tonight, we remember the baby Jesus, born in a stable, who is the light of the world. We remember that while he was born just like we were,

Christmas Eve



he is also God incarnate, God among us, God with us. And we know that his light can shine through us to everyone we meet.

Prayer: Lord, tonight we give you thanks for Jesus, the savior of the world. We pray that he continues to transform us, and that we might know that he is always with us. Help us follow him!!

Joy to the World!

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.



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