



AD VE NT



PERSONAL + FAMILY LITURGY



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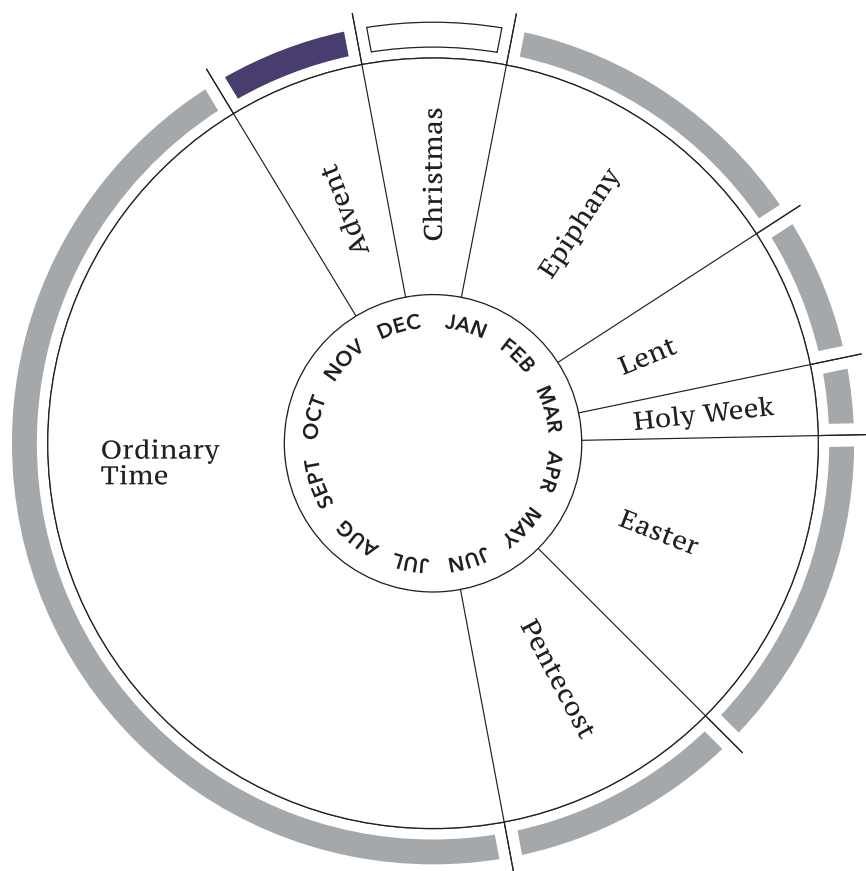
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INTRODUCTION



WHAT IS ADVENT?

Advent. For you, this might be one of those words you’re familiar with from a past church experience or simply because you hear it once a year sometime around Thanksgiving. Yet, hearing this mysterious word—“Advent”—somehow lights you up because you know Christmas Day is on the horizon.

Lights, decorations, gifts, and turkey dinner with “uncle” Bob!... Wait, that’s Advent?

Well, not really. As beautiful and meaningful as those things are, Advent is so much more. And it's certainly more than the modern conception of Christmas you'll find at Washington Square Mall...

Advent is the season that kicks off the Christian liturgical calendar. It dates back as early as the 4th century but its official, four-Sunday observance by western Christians lands around the 6th century. Advent is a Christ-centered tradition with ancient roots that we get to enter into today.

It's a time marked by yearning, longing, and anticipation for the Messiah who has come, and has yet to come again.

“Advent” is English for the Latin *adventus* which means “coming” or “arrival.” It takes place during the four weeks leading up to Christmas Day—the celebration that the darkness of our world has been met by the great light of our Savior.

Therefore, it's a season devoted to preparing the church for the coming of Christ into our world. We do this by *looking back* to meditate on the incarnation—when God himself stepped into the fragility of human existence to reclaim his world ravaged by the darkness of sin. However, Advent is also a time where the church *looks forward*, in hope, that Christ will return to cast out the darkness forever and usher in the kingdom of the new heavens and new earth.

Advent is a time marked by yearning, longing, and anticipation for the Messiah who has come, and has yet to come again.

What if, this Advent, you welcomed this tension? The tension that, as Christians, we sit between what *has happened* and what *has yet to take place*? How could this reignite Gospel hope within you and reinvigorate you towards faithfulness? During Advent we are reminded that we take seriously the brokenness of our world, yet we don't live without hope! Allow this season to do its work, welling up gratitude, longing, and hope within your soul.

Advent is a time marked by yearning, longing, and anticipation for the Messiah who has come, and has yet to come again.

WHAT SHOULD OUR POSTURE BE?

Christmas, in the modern American sense, can be confusing. On one hand, it's a jovial time, filled with singing and celebration! Yet, on the other hand, we are anxious and stressed—moving at a frenetic pace to get all our holiday plans in order.

Every individual and family enters this season their own way, with their own plans and traditions—for better or worse.

In the Christian calendar, Advent invites the believer to *slow down*: to rest in God and contemplate the reality of God becoming man, and the promise that Christ will return at his second advent. Therefore, the posture that the Christian takes is absolutely one of celebration! But it's also one of contemplation, slowing down, and even confession.

If you move too quickly, you may miss the work that the Lord is doing in you and around you. This is why Advent invites us to both contemplate the gospel—the mystery of the incarnation—and invites us to celebrate and feast together. May this Advent recalibrate your soul and the pace at which you find yourself moving.

WHAT ARE BEST PRACTICES IN ADVENT?

Throughout church history, Christians have engaged in many practices that help orient us to the season of Advent. Such practices include singing, confession, fasting, wreaths, prayer, candle lighting, and more. Below are three practices for us to engage in this Advent that will help us slow down and welcome the season with intentionality.

SUNDAY WORSHIP.

During this often busy time of year, let's make gathering with the community of saints a priority. During each Sunday gathering, we will have Scripture reading, candle lighting, and prayer as our way of calling attention to Advent.

GENEROSITY.

It's easy to get caught up in our culture's consumeristic tendencies during Christmas. During Advent, find a non-profit or church to give to, and instead of buying more that we won't use, donate clothes or furniture to one of our ministry partners in Portland.

DEVOTION + ADVENT CANDLES.

Find a time in your day (morning or evening) where you can devote intentional time with the Lord, focusing on the themes of Advent. That's what this guide is for! You can also make an Advent candle wreath, lighting one of the candles each Sunday with your family or roommates.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to aid you in your time with the Lord by providing a short liturgy to follow that is rooted in the themes and readings of Advent. You will contemplate one of the season's themes—hope, peace, love, joy—each of the four weeks in Advent. Each week provides prayer, Scripture reading, time of silence, and questions to reflect on. Christmas Eve and Christmas Day follow a different order and are intended to be shorter.

This year, our aim is to *slow down* and sit in the joy and tension that comes with the Christmas story. There will be only one Gospel reading for each week with six questions to meditate or journal on Monday–Saturday. Each question is intended to take you deeper into the text.

Use this guide as it best suits you! You can use it individually, with a friend or spouse, or with your whole family! There might be some new kinds of elements in this guide that you aren't used to practicing, but we encourage you to lean in and give it a try. There is a good amount of Scripture reading as well, so start where you're at! Lastly, it's not about *finishing* or getting through the guide for the sake of completion. The point is encountering the Lord Jesus, allowing him to transform us this Advent.

Have a great Advent! We hope that this guide gives you a helpful structure so you can enter this season with intentionality and a posture of worship!

May we be a church family ready to receive our King.

**Grace and Peace,
Pastor Derrick**



HOPE

NOV 30 – DEC 6

BEGIN WITH SILENCE

Set a timer for 60 seconds and pray: *Holy Spirit, come.*

OPENING PRAYER

Faithful God,

I wait for you to come. I know that you will because you already have, in Christ, and because you promised to return. While I wait, fill me afresh with your Spirit so that I may grow in grace. O Lord, prepare me for your coming. Amen.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

In this moment I believe you want to speak to me through your Word in a deep and personal way. May I be attentive to your loving and merciful voice. And may your Word take root in the soil of my soul—that I would not only read it but live it. Amen.

THIS WEEK'S READING | LUKE 1:26-38

For every day of the week, read and reflect on this passage.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Reflect on or journal your thoughts for each day's prompt:

Monday | What is one thing that stands out to you in this passage? Why do you think it stands out to you?

Tuesday | What new observation do you have about this passage? Why might God be highlighting this for you today?

Wednesday | What are 5 key words you see and how do they make the passage come alive?

Thursday | What might Mary have felt in this moment? When have these same emotions come up in your life and how can you direct these emotions back to God?

Saturday | In what ways does this passage spur you to worship God?

Spend another 60 seconds in silence, sitting with what you just read and reflected on. End your silence with the prayer of acclamation.

Christ has died.
Christ is Risen.
Christ will come again.
Amen.

Almighty God,
Empower me with your grace to leave behind the ways of darkness and to live in your light. As I remember how Jesus came to us in humility, help me follow His way in my life today. And when He comes again in glory to make all things right, may I anticipate the resurrection life to come! I ask this through Jesus Christ, my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



PEACE

DEC 7-13

BEGIN WITH SILENCE

Set a timer for 60 seconds and pray: *Holy Spirit, come.*

OPENING PRAYER

Faithful God,
I wait for you to come. I know that you will because you already have, in Christ, and because you promised to return. While I wait, fill me afresh with your Spirit so that I may grow in grace. O Lord, prepare me for your coming. Amen.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
In this moment I believe you want to speak to me through your Word in a deep and personal way. May I be attentive to your loving and merciful voice. And may your Word take root in the soil of my soul—that I would not only read it but live it. Amen.

THIS WEEK'S READING | LUKE 1:46-56

For every day of the week, read and reflect on this passage.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Reflect on or journal your thoughts for each day's prompt:

Monday | What is one thing that stands out to you in this passage? Why do you think it stands out to you?

Tuesday | What new observation do you have about this passage? Why might God be highlighting this for you today?

Wednesday | List out the things in Mary's song that God is doing or will do. Why is this still good news for you today?

Thursday | As you read Mary's song, what is your first emotion that rises to the surface? What might the Holy Spirit be saying to you through that emotion?

Friday | What new observation do you have about this passage? Why might God be highlighting this for you today?

Saturday | What is one way you can reflect Mary's gratitude and faithfulness to the Lord today?

SILENCE

Spend another 60 seconds in silence, sitting with what you just read and reflected on. End your silence with the prayer of acclamation.

PRAYER OF ACCLAMATION

Christ has died.

Christ is Risen.

Christ will come again.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Merciful God,

You sent your prophets to call us to repentance and to prepare the way for your salvation. Give me grace to listen to their message and turn from sin, that I may welcome with joy the coming of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. I pray this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



JOY

DEC 14–20

BEGIN WITH SILENCE

Set a timer for 60 seconds and pray: *Holy Spirit, come.*

OPENING PRAYER

Faithful God,

I wait for you to come. I know that you will because you already have, in Christ, and because you promised to return. While I wait, fill me afresh with your Spirit so that I may grow in grace. O Lord, prepare me for your coming. Amen.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

In this moment I believe you want to speak to me through your Word in a deep and personal way. May I be attentive to your loving and merciful voice. And may your Word take root in the soil of my soul—that I would not only read it but live it. Amen.

THIS WEEK'S READING | MATTHEW 1:18–2:12

For every day of the week, read and reflect on this passage.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Reflect on or journal your thoughts for each day's prompt:

Monday | What is one thing that stands out to you in this passage? Why do you think it stands out to you?

Tuesday | What new observation do you have about this passage? Why might God be highlighting this for you today?

Wednesday | After Joseph found out Mary was pregnant by the Holy Spirit, what kind of prayers do you think he prayed?

Thursday | In that time, Joseph took a risk in believing the angel and taking Mary as his wife. What is one risk you can take for the Lord today?

Friday | What new observation do you have about this passage? Why might God be highlighting this for you today?

Saturday | If you were one of the wise men and you saw the Messiah as a baby, what do you think would be going through your mind?

SILENCE

Spend another 60 seconds in silence, sitting with what you just read and reflected on. End your silence with the prayer of acclamation.

PRAYER OF ACCLAMATION

Christ has died.

Christ is Risen.

Christ will come again.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE WEEK

O Lord God,

Come among us with your great love and power. Because my sin so often holds me back, pour out your grace and mercy to help and empower me.

For you loved the world so much that you gave your only Son. Lord, I believe in your only begotten Son! I pray in His name, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.



LOVE

DEC 21-24

BEGIN WITH SILENCE

Set a timer for 60 seconds and pray: *Holy Spirit, come.*

OPENING PRAYER

Faithful God,

I wait for you to come. I know that you will because you already have, in Christ, and because you promised to return. While I wait, fill me afresh with your Spirit so that I may grow in grace. O Lord, prepare me for your coming. Amen.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

In this moment I believe you want to speak to me through your Word in a deep and personal way. May I be attentive to your loving and merciful voice. And may your Word take root in the soil of my soul—that I would not only read it but live it. Amen.

THIS WEEK'S READING | LUKE 2:1-7

For every day of the week, read and reflect on this passage.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Reflect on or journal your thoughts for each day's prompt:

Monday | What is one thing that stands out to you in this passage? Why do you think it stands out to you?

Tuesday | What new observation do you have about this passage? Why might God be highlighting this for you today?

Wednesday | Where do you see the power of the world versus the power of God at work in this short passage? What is the difference between the two? How can you follow the way of God's power today?

SILENCE

Spend another 60 seconds in silence, sitting with what you just read and reflected on. End your silence with the prayer of acclamation.

PRAYER OF ACCLAMATION

Christ has died.

Christ is Risen.

Christ will come again.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Heavenly Father,

Examine my heart today, Lord, and purify me by your love and forgiveness. At the coming of your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, may he find in me a mansion prepared for himself. In his Name—who lives and reigns with you, in unity with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



GOOD NEWS!

CHRISTMAS EVE

BEGIN WITH SILENCE

Set a timer for 60 seconds and pray: *Holy Spirit, come.*

OPENING PRAYER

Faithful God,

I have waited for you to come. On this Christmas Eve, I am reminded of your faithfulness once again, that Christ has come, he has died, risen, and will come again. While I await his glorious, second advent, fill me afresh with your Spirit, that I may grow in grace and be found prepared for your coming. Amen.

TONIGHT'S READING | LUKE 2:8-21

Read today's Christmas Eve passage.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Reflect on or journal your thoughts on the Christmas story:

Christmas Eve | Mary “treasured up all these things.” After all the waiting this Advent brought, what does it look like for you to treasure up this moment in your own heart?

A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EVE PRAYER

This prayer comes from page 7 of Ken Gire's book *Intimate Moments with the Savior: Learning to Love*.

Dear Jesus,

Though there was no room for you in the inn, grant this day that I might make abundant room for you in my heart. Though your own did not receive you, grant this hour that I may embrace you with open arms. Though Bethlehem overlooked you in the shuffle of the census, grant me the grace, this quiet moment, to be still and know that you are God. You, whose only palace was a stable, whose only throne was a feeding trough, whose only robes were swaddling clothes.

On my knees I confess that I am too conditioned to this world's pomp and pageantry to recognize God cooing in a manger.

Forgive me. Please. And help me understand at least some of what your birth has to teach—that divine power is not mediated through strength, but through weakness; that true greatness is not achieved through the assertion of rights, but through their release; and that even the most secular of things can be sacred when you are in their midst.

And for those times when you yearn for my fellowship and stand at the door and knock, grant me a special sensitivity to the sound of that knock so I may be quick to my feet. Keep me from letting you stand out in the cold or from ever sending you away to some stable. May my heart be warm and inviting, so that when you do knock, a worthy place will always be waiting ...

Amen.

AMEN.

CHRISTMAS DAY

BEGIN WITH SILENCE

Set a timer for 60 seconds and pray: *Holy Spirit, come.*

OPENING PRAYER

Faithful God,
I have waited for you to come. On this Christmas Day, I am reminded of your faithfulness once again, that Christ has come, he has died, risen, and will come again. While I await his glorious, second advent, fill me afresh with your Spirit, that I may grow in grace and be found prepared for your coming. Amen.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
In this moment I believe you want to speak to me through your Word in a deep and personal way. May I be attentive to your loving and merciful voice. And may your Word take root in the soil of my soul—that I would not only read it but live it. Amen.

TODAY'S READING | MATT 1:21-23 + REV 21:1-4, 22:20-21

Read today's Christmas Day passages.

SILENCE

Spend another 60 seconds in silence, sitting with what you just read and reflected on. End your silence with the prayer of acclamation.

PRAYER OF ACCLAMATION

Christ has died.
Christ is Risen.
Christ will come again.
Amen.

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Almighty God,

You gave your only Son to take on our human nature and to be born this day of a virgin. Grant that I, who has been made your child through adoption and grace, be renewed each day by your Holy Spirit. I pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

APPENDIX

BIBLE PROJECT | ADVENT WORD STUDY SERIES

To get a better understanding for each of our Advent themes and words, our friends at Bible Project put together a Bible word study series that covers each word used for Advent. Using the camera on your phone, scan the QR code to access each video, or enter the url in your web browser.



HOPE

bibleproject.com/explore/video/yakhal-hope



PEACE

bibleproject.com/explore/video/shalom-peace



JOY

bibleproject.com/explore/video/chara-joy



LOVE

bibleproject.com/explore/video/agape-love

