

ADVENT

INDEPENDENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Advent at Home

Advent is the period of four weeks preceding Christmas. Christians celebrate Advent as a time of preparation and anticipation of the coming of Jesus Christ. The Liturgical color for Advent is purple, the color of waiting and preparation. The four weeks of Advent are a good time to come together as a family to prepare our hearts to celebrate the coming of the baby Jesus in Bethlehem at the first Christmas, but it is also a time to look towards His second coming at the Parousia, when God will be all in all. This booklet can serve as a guide to worship and wondering on each of the four Sundays in Advent and on Christmas Day.



The Advent Wreath Tradition

Advent Wreaths are a tradition in Advent that are a visual reminder of the season and our journey towards Christmas. Making an Advent Wreath to use in your home is a perfect way to encourage and nurture faith practices at home. Every part of the Advent Wreath has significance. The wreath is round, reminding us of God's never-ending love. Evergreens are used to symbolize life. The four purple candles placed on the wreath represent each Sunday in Advent and the Liturgical Color of the season. One additional purple candle is lit on each Sunday of Advent, so that all four purple candles are illuminated by Christmas. There is a different focus of each week of Advent, so each candle has a special meaning: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. The white candle in the center is the Christ candle - reminding us that Jesus is the Light of the World! The Christ candle is lit on Christmas Day.

Advent Wreath Instructions

Materials in your kit

- Oasis ring
- Four purple candles
- One white candle
- Four candle holder picks

Items to gather on your own

- Greenery (Use Christmas tree or garland clippings, holly or other greenery from your yard, purchased greenery or even fresh herbs.)
- Candle holder for Christ candle
- Tray or plate to hold the wreath

Directions

1. Soak the oasis ring in water while you gather your materials.
2. Place the soaked oasis on a tray or plate.
3. Insert the four candle holder picks evenly around the oasis ring.
4. Insert greenery all round the oasis and candle holder picks.
5. Place the purple candles into the candle holder picks and place the white candle in a candle holder in the center of the wreath.
6. Add water to the oasis as necessary during Advent to keep the greenery fresh.

Light one candle for...

HOPE

Today we begin our journey through Advent towards Christmas. The first week in Advent we remember the hope we have in Christ. Light one purple candle on your Advent wreath and join in the reading, wondering, sharing, praying and singing below.

Read

Prophets are people who listened to God with their whole hearts and then shared God's message with others. During a very difficult, dark time in the history of the people of Israel, the prophets spoke messages of hope by giving clues about the Messiah, who was to be the savior of the people. As you read the scripture below, listen to the words of hope from Isaiah about the one who is coming and the gifts of the spirit He will bring.

Isaiah 11:1-3a (Prophecy of The Shoot of Jesse)

Wonder

What clues do these verses give us about the one who is coming? What could it mean that a shoot (or branch) will grow out of the stump of Jesse? Jesse was the father of David, the most beloved king of Israel. Who could this "branch" represent? What gifts will He bring?

Share

What is something that gives you hope?

Pray

Heavenly Father, during this season of Advent, open our hearts to your Word and fill us with Hope. Let us join in the watchful anticipation of the prophets as we await the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sing

Light one candle for Hope. One bright candle for Hope. He brings Hope to everyone. He comes. He comes.



“Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Romans 5:5

Light one candle for...

PEACE

The second week of Advent, we remember the gift of peace we have in Christ. Light two purple candles on your Advent wreath and join in the reading, wondering, sharing, praying and singing below.

Read

The prophets not only gave the people clues about who the Messiah would be, but also what his Kingdom would look like. As you read the scripture below, listen to the words of Isaiah about how things will be different.

Isaiah 11:6-9 (Prophecy of the Peaceable Kingdom)

Wonder

In these verses, the prophet helps us to understand what the world will be like when the Kingdom of God is fulfilled. What clues are we given about how things will be different? Who do you think the "little child" is?

Share

What does the word "peace" mean to you?

Pray

Holy God, grant us Peace. Let us help share your peace with this world by speaking words of compassion and caring and by acting with kindness and love. Lord, make us instruments of your Peace. Amen.

Sing

Light one candle for Hope. One bright candle for Hope. He brings Hope to all the world. He comes. He comes.

Light one candle for Peace. One bright candle for Peace. He brings Peace to all the world. He comes. He comes.



“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

John 14:27

Light one candle for...

JOY

The third week of Advent we remember the gift of Joy we have in Christ. Light three purple candles on your Advent wreath and join in the reading, wondering, sharing, praying and singing below. Rejoice! On this Sunday we celebrate that we are over halfway through our Advent journey to Christmas!

Read

Today we share in the joy that Mary felt to be a part of God's plan. Listen to the happy words of Mary and her cousin Elizabeth as they greeted one another.

Luke 1:39-56 (The Visitation)

Wonder

How can we tell what Mary and Elizabeth are feeling? Why are they so happy?

Share

What gives you joy?

Pray

Lord, we thank you for the joy you bring to our lives. May the hope and joyful anticipation of this season fill our hearts and make us living signs of your love in this world. Amen.

Sing

Light one candle for Hope. One bright candle for
Hope. He brings Hope to all the world. He comes.
He comes.

Light one candle for Peace. One bright candle for
Peace. He brings Peace to all the world. He comes.
He comes.

Light one candle for Joy. One bright candle for
Joy. He brings Joy to all the world. He comes. He
comes.



“Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a
joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come
into His presence with thanksgiving; let us make a
joyful noise to Him with songs of praise!”

Psalms 95:1-2

Light one candle for...

LOVE

The fourth week of Advent, we remember the gift of love we have in Christ. Light all four purple candles on your Advent wreath and join in the reading, wondering, sharing, praying and singing below.

Read

As you read the scripture, think about the great love that God had for all people of all time to send His son, Jesus, to Earth for our salvation. Think about how Jesus, the Son of God, came to us in a stable in the little town of Bethlehem.

Luke 2:1-20 (The Birth of Jesus and Adoration of the Shepherds)

Wonder

What did you hear? What is most surprising to you about the story of Jesus' birth? How do you think the shepherds felt when they saw the angels? What were the angels saying? What does this story tell us about God's love?

Share

How can you show love to others?

Pray

Loving God, we thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to be born on Earth. Thank you for your great love for us. Help us to love one another as you have loved us. Amen.

Sing

Light one candle for Hope. One bright candle for Hope. He brings Hope to all the world. He comes. He comes.

Light one candle for Peace. One bright candle for Peace. He brings Peace to all the world. He comes. He comes.

Light one candle for Joy. One bright candle for Joy. He brings Joy to all the world. He comes. He comes.

Light one candle for Love. One bright candle for Love. He brings Love to all the world. He comes. He comes.



“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
John 13:34-35

Light one candle for...

CHRISTMAS DAY

Joy to the World! Today we celebrate the great gift of Jesus to all people of all time! Light all four purple candles on your Advent wreath and the white Christ candle in the center. Celebrate the birth of Jesus by joining in the reading, wondering, sharing, praying and singing below. Merry Christmas!

Read

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, let us remember the words of hope and praise spoken by the prophets.

Isaiah 9:2 & 7 (The Prophecy of the Light and The Prophecy of the Names)

Wonder

Who is the "great light" that the people have seen? Think about the many names for Jesus given to us by Isaiah. Say them all again. Which one is your favorite?

Share

What are you most thankful for this Christmas?

Pray

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, we praise your name! Let us be filled with awe and wonder as we celebrate the miracle of your birth. Spark in us your light, so we might go out and share it with the world. Glory be to God in the highest! Amen.

Sing

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!



“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish,
but have eternal life.” John 3:16



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