

PREPARE HIM ROOM

ADVENT

2023



ADVENT

“Advent is the time of waiting and preparing for Christmas. From the Latin adventus, meaning “coming”, Advent proclaims the coming of Christ in two ways: it celebrates His long-awaited arrival as Messiah, and it anticipates His return as King of kings and Lord of lords.”

-A.W. TOZER, FROM HEAVEN

In a season that is often marked more by hurry, activities, stress of a to-do list, and financial strain from gift buying, rather than it is by presence, slowness, and patience; we wanted to provide a guide that would help reorient our minds, our calendars, and hopefully the posture of our hearts this Advent season.

The hope for these next few weeks is to cultivate ways to delight in the hope, joy, peace, and love of Christ through daily reading, weekly reflection, prayers and practices that reorient our hearts and shift the rhythms of our days to meditate on the coming of Christ . . . to prepare Him room.

Before we begin, consider what these next 4 weeks might be like in your home, your calendar, and in your heart.

- In what ways can you refrain from busyness and hurry during Advent?
- What are some things that can help cultivate patience and slowness in your daily and weekly rhythms?
- How can you remove the things in your life currently distracting you from abiding in Christ?
- Are there daily rhythms in your life that you can redeem small moments? (Consider a social media fast, turning your phone off during dinner time, waking early to read, going for a walk after lunch to pray, etc.)
- Practically, how can you prepare your home to live unhurried during Advent? Finish Christmas shopping early, buy less, clean out closets and cabinets to prepare your home before decorating? What can you remove from your mind or your home early to prepare for a slower season?

As you consider preparing Him room, our prayer is that this Advent season leads to rest and refreshment. Only through Jesus the Messiah, can we experience true hope, joy, peace, and love today and in the days ahead.

PRAYER

Father in Heaven, help us to practice slowness, patience, and presence this season. Would you reorient our hearts and minds to celebrate the coming of the King once, and to anticipate in joy His coming once again.

HOPE

WEEK ONE

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good.”

The first words God speaks into existence . . . he creates and calls forth the light. The plan from creation was for the Light of the World to reign. To break into the brokenness, to heal, to bind up, to shine bright. The Bright Morning Star (Rev. 22:16) would lead the way and become the Way to redemption. His word would become “a lamp to our feet and a light to our path” (Psalm 119:5). The path that would lead to the darkest night, the Cross, which would take His breath away only to breathe new life into ours. The Light of the World would overcome the darkness and bring forth God’s glory. We would behold the Light of the world through the baby born in a manger, the new life that would bring Life and Light to all.

Behold the lamb of God, the Light of the world, who takes away the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29). The Light becomes the Hope for us all.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

JOHN 1:1-5

DAILY READING

| Day of Advent | Passage |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1 (1st Sunday) | Romans 13:11-14 |
| 2 | Isaiah 9:1-7 |
| 3 | Isaiah 11:1-9 |
| 4 | Isaiah 11:10-16 |
| 5 | Isaiah 39:5-40:11 |
| 6 | Isaiah 52:1-12 |
| 7 | Isaiah 61:1-4 |

THE FIRST NOEL

The First Noel the Angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep

Noel Noel Noel Noel

Born is the King of Israel!

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the East beyond them far
And to the earth it gave great light
And so it continued both day and night

Noel Noel Noel Noel

Born is the King of Israel!

And by the light of that same star
Three Wise men came from country far
To seek for a King was their intent
And to follow the star wherever it went

Noel Noel Noel Noel

Born is the King of Israel!

This star drew nigh to the northwest
O'er Bethlehem it took it's rest
And there it did both Pause and stay
Right o'er the place where Jesus lay

Noel Noel Noel Noel

Born is the King of Israel!

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord
That hath made Heaven and earth of nought
And with his blood mankind hath bought

Noel Noel Noel Noel

Born is the King of Israel!

Noel Noel Noel Noel

Born is the King

Born is the King

Born is the King of Israel

DWELL & ABIDE

READ

Pick one of the daily passages from this week to reread, slowly, 3 times.

REFLECT

Use the space below to answer some of the following questions.

What from this passage stood out to you?

What did this passage teach you about God?

How did this passage increase your faith? Lead you to worship? Make you curious?

What from this passage might apply to your life currently?

PRAY

Write out a prayer for your week. What from this week's reading do you need to pray for?

ACTIVITY & PRACTICE

(From Sacred Seasons by Danielle Hitchen)

ACTIVITY: ADVENT WREATH & CANDLES

Advent wreaths are of German origin and officially date back to the sixteenth century. The original practice of the Advent wreath was simply focused on the coming light of Christ. The idea is that each week, we add a little more light to our homes and hearts, building anticipation for Jesus's birth. The wreath makes a wonderful centerpiece for your dining table, and lighting the candles can be a special part of your family's tradition each Sunday—perhaps a time to pray or reflect together on Advent. Notice how much brighter your home gets each week as you keep watch for the inbreaking Light of the World.

There are a number of ways to assemble and light your wreath. Traditionally, Advent wreaths consist of four candles: three violet candles and a rose candle. One candle is lit each Sunday in Advent, saving the rose candle for *Guadete* Sunday on the third week. All white candles can also be used. There is an “expanded” version of the tradition that includes a fifth candle (a white one, also called the Christ candle), which is lit on Christmas Eve.

FOUNDATIONAL PRACTICE: EMBRACING THE GOSPEL THROUGH SILENCE

Perhaps when you light your advent candle each week, take a few minutes for reflective silence. Remind each other that the people of God waited a long time for Jesus and that we are still waiting for him to return. Quietly wait for him together for a few minutes. Talk about what was hard about the waiting—and perhaps enjoy a treat afterward, a reminder that good things come to those who wait!

PEACE

WEEK TWO

“On earth as it is in heaven...” 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.

ISAIAH 9:6

We celebrate the birth of Jesus, remembering the baby in the manger. But the true celebration is not in merely the baby born to a virgin, but that God came to us, in the flesh. Immanuel, God with us. The incarnation. The Prince of Peace left his heavenly dwelling to bend down into humanity and be with us. Peace moved towards us, into the chaos, the brokenness, the hostility, not away. He enters in and bends low so that we would know peace and exalt the Prince of Peace. He moves into humanity so we would receive peace for eternity. He reaches down from on high so we would lift His name high. The God most High descends to the depths of humanity, entering brokenness, becoming broken, so that we experience Shalom. Peace, born as a baby, comes to us as the Word made flesh (Jn.1:14), to be with us. God incarnate, Immanuel, becomes our everlasting peace.

DAILY READING

| Day of Advent | Passage |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 8 (2nd Sunday) | Romans 15:4-13 |
| 9 | 1 Thess 4:13-18 |
| 10 | 1 Thess 5:1-11 |
| 11 | 1 Cor 15:20-28 |
| 12 | Col 1:15-20 |
| 13 | 2 Peter 3:3-13 |
| 14 | Mark 14:60-65 |

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

What Child is this who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

Why lies He in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come peasant, king to own Him;
The King of kings salvation brings,
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
Raise, raise a song on high,
The virgin sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy for Christ is born,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

DWELL & ABIDE

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ACTIVITY & PRACTICE

SERVING FAITHFULLY

Just as Jesus our peace put on flesh to dwell among us, this week consider what it might be for you to be with others. To move into the lives of others, perhaps those among us that are most vulnerable, in despair, and in need. To move into the neighborhood and be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Reach out Fresno Mission or other non-profits to see the tangible needs those in our community may have.

WAYS TO BRING PEACE INTO THE COMMUNITY:

Warm Clothing Drive

Hats, gloves, and socks coats

Care kits & blessing bags

Put together baggies with toiletries and snacks. Keep them in your car

Book Drive

Collect and give away books to students to read over Christmas break

Food Drive

Collect non-perishables or partner with local non-profit/food banks

Toy Drive

Collect new/gently used toys to give to those in need

Prayer Cards

Another way to bring peace, pray for those you know are hurting this season. Write out a prayer card for 5 people and pray one each day during advent.

Calls and Written Notes

Think of those on the margins (Widows, single moms, senior living) and write cards or make calls.

JOY

WEEK THREE

“Out of His fullness we have received. There is no way that it can mean that any of us have received all of His fullness. It means that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son, is the only medium through which God dispenses His benefits to His creation. Because Jesus Christ is the eternal Son, because He is of the eternal generation and equal with the Father as pertaining to His substance, His eternity, His love, His power, His grace, His goodness, and all of the attributes of deity, He is the channel through which God dispenses all His blessing.”

-A.W. TOZER, FROM HEAVEN

He is the fullness of Joy. In Christ we receive “every spiritual blessing” (Eph. 1:3) and He came so that our joy would be found in Him and our joy would be made full (Jn.15:11). Our prince of peace, Immanuel, Jesus Messiah comes to bring not only healing from pain, payment for sin, but joy and joy to the full.

DAILY READING

| Day of Advent | Passage |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 15 (3rd Sunday) | Matthew 11:2-10 |
| 16 | Micah 5:2-5 |
| 17 | Ezekiel 34:11-31 |
| 18 | Zechariah 8:1-8 |
| 19 | Zeph 3:14-17 |
| 20 | Luke 1:26-38 |
| 21 | Luke 1:39-56 |

O HOLY NIGHT

O Holy night! The stars are brightly shining
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
'Til He appears and the soul felt its worth
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn
Fall on your knees; O hear the Angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born
O night, O Holy night, O night divine!

Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming
Here come the Wise Men from Orient land
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger
In all our trials born to be our friend
He knows our need, to our weakness is no stranger
Behold your King; before Him lowly bend
Behold your King; before Him lowly bend

Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His Gospel is Peace
Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother
And in His name, all oppression shall cease
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we
Let all within us Praise His Holy name
Christ is the Lord; O praise His name forever!
His power and glory evermore proclaim
His power and glory evermore proclaim

DWELL & ABIDE

READ

Pick one of the daily passages from this week to reread, slowly, 3 times.

REFLECT

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ACTIVITY & PRACTICE

INTENTIONALLY PURSUE COMMUNITY BY SPREADING THE JOY!

Baking Day: This week consider spreading JOY to your friends, family, and neighbors with a baking day. Invite loved ones over to bake, swap recipes, and enjoy time together. Wrap up baked goods and deliver them to friends, coworkers, and neighbors throughout the week.

Recipes to try: Divinity Candy (From Taste of Home)

What Is Divinity Candy? Divinity gets its name because it tastes, well, divine. The nougat-like candy is made with egg whites, sugar, and corn syrup. Divinity is famous for being finicky: Experienced home cooks know you can't make it on a day with high humidity, as it needs dry air to set properly.

Divinity Candy Ingredients

You'll need just six ingredients to make this old-fashioned divinity recipe: · Sugar: This traditional divinity recipe starts with 2 cups white sugar.·

Corn syrup: Make sure you use light, not dark, corn syrup.·

Water: Use ½ cup cold water.·

Egg whites: Beaten egg whites are key in light, airy divinity.·

Vanilla: A teaspoon of vanilla extract enhances the overall flavor.·

Walnuts: Walnuts are optional, but they add a welcome crunch. You can also use pecans.

You'll also need waxed paper and a candy thermometer.

How to Make Divinity Candy

It's actually quite easy to make divinity at home — you just need a good recipe (that's where we come in!). You'll find the step-by-step recipe below.

1. Heat the sugar, corn syrup, and water until the sugar dissolves. Bring to a boil.
2. Cook without stirring until the syrup reaches 250 degrees.
3. Beat the egg whites until stiff peaks form. Slowly pour in the hot syrup.
4. Add the vanilla until the mixture holds its shape. Fold in the nuts, if using.
5. Dollop onto waxed paper and let sit until firm. Tips: ·

On humid days, use 1 tablespoon less water.· If the mixture becomes too stiff for an electric mixer, add a few drops of hot water.

How to Store Divinity

Store the divinity at room temperature in an airtight container for up to two weeks. Make sure the environment is not humid, as excess moisture in the air will make the candy sticky.

Or if you're not a baker:

Go Christmas Caroling! Invite friends and family members over to go Christmas caroling through the neighborhood.

LOVE

WEEK FOUR

*It was a time like this,
War & tumult of war,
A horror in the air.
Hungry yawned the abyss—
And yet there came the star
And the child was most wonderfully there.*

*It was a time like this
Of fear and lust for power,
License & greed and blight—
And yet the Prince of bliss
Came into the darkest hour
In quiet & silent light.*

*And in a tie like this
How celebrate his birth
When all things fall apart?
Ah! Wonderful it is
With no room on the earth
The stable in our heart.*

-MADELEINE L'ENGLE • "INTO THE DARKEST HOUR"

DAILY READING

| Day of Advent | Passage |
|--------------------|--------------|
| 22 (4th Sunday) | Psalm 24 |
| 23 (Christmas Day) | Matt 1:18-25 |

SILENT NIGHT

Silent night, holy night
All is calm, and all is bright
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace
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

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ACTIVITY & PRACTICE

ENJOY CANDLELIGHT SERVICE AT THE WELL COMMUNITY CHURCH

CLOVIS THURSDAY

Clovis Campus • Dec 21 • 6pm

325 Nees Ave

Candle Lighting Following

OR CHRISTMAS EVE SUNDAY GATHERING

CLOVIS SUNDAY

Clovis Campus • Dec 24

8:30am • 10am • 11:30am

325 Nees Ave

FIG GARDEN SUNDAY

Fig Garden Campus • Dec 24

8:30am • 10am • 11:30am

4545 N Palm Ave

The Well En Español 11:30am

OTHER RESOURCES

[The Gospel Coalition](#) (Free Advent E-Book)

[LifeWay Advent](#)

[Sacred Seasons](#) by Danielle Hitchen

[Hidden Christmas](#) by Timothy Keller

[From Heaven: A 28-Day Advent Devotional](#) by A.W. Tozer