

ADVENT AT PACIFIC CROSSROADS - 2021



ABOUT ADVENT

*In the wilderness prepare
the way for the Lord;
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.
And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
and all people will see it together.*

-Isaiah 40:3-5

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple...

-Luke 2:25-27

The word advent means “coming” or “arrival”, so the church has traditionally embraced this season as a time of intentional, hope-filled waiting. The righteous man, Simeon, believed the Isaiah promise: that “the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together.” Simeon wholly believed the promises of God, and he longed for his people to see God’s glory.

So he went to the temple to wait...

His story is a beautiful example of what this season of advent means to us. If the promises of God are so true, and the hope of the gospel is so deep, let’s trust and hope together over these next several weeks. Let us go to the temple, as Simeon did, and express our longing for the Messiah’s arrival. For us, this will mean repentance, prayer, reading, reflection, and worship – all with a longing that his glory will be revealed to us and to all people.

... and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he [Simeon] took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

*“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation
that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.”*

-Luke 2:27-32

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide contains sermon themes and scriptures, a daily scripture reading plan, and an at-home worship guide. The worship guide offers content for a once-per-week time around advent candles. While the advent wreath is a relatively new tradition, it can be an engaging way to organize the many themes of advent. This may be especially true if you have younger children in your home or community groups. You may consider having a simple wreath in your home, along with the candles.

The candles associated with the wreath symbolize the light of God coming into the world through the birth of his Son. The four outer candles represent the period of waiting during the four Sundays of Advent. The fifth candle, placed in the center of the wreath and lit on Christmas Eve, is the Christ candle, reminding us that he really did come and he really will come again. The white Christ candle in the center reminds us that Christ is at the center of all things and in him all things hold together.

The first candle is traditionally the candle of Prophecy. This draws attention to the anticipation of the coming of a Messiah that weaves its way like a golden thread through Old Testament history. God's people longed for a true king: great David's Son who would be greater than David himself, who would shepherd them as his flock and who would have the healing and renewing power of God in his hands. The three remaining candles of Advent may be associated with different characters or themes of the Christmas story. For this year's PCC guide, we will use the Bethlehem, Shepherds, and Angels for our second, third and fourth candles.

SERMON THEMES AND SCRIPTURES

Waiting for Jesus: Advent with Isaiah

Advent Week 1: <i>The Mountain of Christ</i> - Isaiah 2:1-5	November 28
Advent Week 2: <i>The Sign of Christ</i> - Isaiah 7:1-17	December 5
Advent Week 3: <i>The Names of Christ</i> - Isaiah 9:1-7	December 12
Advent Week 4: <i>Christ the Branch</i> - Isaiah 11:1-16	December 19
Christmas Eve: <i>Christ Our Salvation</i> - Isaiah 12:1-6; Luke 2:1-20	December 24

Our hope is that these Advent materials will help you as individuals, roommates, community groups, or families to enter into the hope of Christ's arrival, remembering his faithfulness, clinging to his promises, turning to him in repentance, and yearning for his return.

May we proclaim, in the words of Simeon above: "my eyes have seen your salvation..."

And may all the peace and joy of Christ be yours in this season.

With Love,

The PCC Team

ADVENT WEEK ONE

THE PROPHETS CANDLE

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Why do we light the Advent candles?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the Light of Life."

What is the meaning of the first lighted candle?

The first lighted candle is a reminder of the Light of Hope of the Prophets.

What do the Prophets say concerning this light?

Isaiah prophesied: "The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwell in a land of deep darkness, on them the light has shined. For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given. And the government will be upon His shoulders, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST CANDLE

HYMN

O COME, O COME EMMANUEL

Neale/Helmore

-
1. 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.

2. O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory over the grave.

Refrain

3. O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.

Refrain

4. O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

Refrain

PRAYER

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Day 1:	Psalm 96	Luke 1:1-25
Day 2:	Psalm 97	Luke 1:26-38
Day 3:	Psalm 98	Luke 1:39-45
Day 4:	Psalm 99	Luke 1:46-56
Day 5:	Psalm 100	Luke 1:57-66

ADVENT WEEK TWO

THE BETHLEHEM CANDLE

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Why do we light the Advent candles?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the Light of Life."

What is the meaning of the second lighted candle?

The second candle is the Bethlehem candle whose light bears witness to the Savior who was born in Bethlehem.

What do the gospels say concerning Bethlehem?

Luke writes: "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST & SECOND CANDLES HYMN

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Brooks/Redner

1. O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.
2. For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together,

Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth!

3. How silently, how silently,
The wondrous Gift is giv'n;
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His Heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still,
The dear Christ enters in.
4. O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

PRAYER

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Day 1:	Psalm 102	Luke 1:67-80
Day 2:	Psalm 103	Mark 1:1-8
Day 3:	Psalm 107	Mark 1:9-11
Day 4:	Psalm 110	John 1:6-8, 14-15
Day 5:	Psalm 118	Luke 1:19-34

ADVENT WEEK THREE

THE SHEPHERDS CANDLE

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Why do we light the Advent candles?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the Light of Life."

What is the meaning of the third lighted candle?

The third lighted candle is the shepherds' candle signifying the Light of Joy that unexpectedly brightened the hearts of a humble band of shepherds at the announcement of Christ's birth.

What do the gospels say concerning the shepherds?

Luke says: "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST, SECOND & THIRD CANDLES

HYMN

WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED THEIR FLOCKS Tate

1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.
2. "Fear not!" said he, for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind.
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind.

3. "To you, in David's town, this day
Is born of David's line
A Savior, who is Christ the Lord,
And this shall be the sign.
4. "The heavenly Babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
And in a manger laid."
5. Thus spake the seraph and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus,
Addressed their joyful song:
6. "All glory be to God on high,
And to the Earth be peace;
Good will henceforth from heav'n to men
Begin and never cease!"

PRAYER

O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Day 1:	Psalm 121	Luke 3:1-6
Day 2:	Psalm 130	Luke 3:7-20
Day 3:	Psalm 51	Luke 3:21-22
Day 4:	Psalm 139	Luke 3:23-38
Day 5:	Micah 5:1-5a	Matthew 1:1-17

ADVENT WEEK FOUR

THE ANGELS CANDLE

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Why do we light the Advent candles?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the Light of Life."

What is the meaning of the fourth lighted candle?

The fourth lighted candle represents the Angels who heralded the Good News of Light to a darkened world.

Who were the Angels?

The Angels were created by God to fill His heavenly court with the praise of His name. They devote themselves to serving God in heaven by delighting to do His will. God also uses them as messengers of his Good News to men and women on earth.

What do the gospels say concerning the angels?

Luke writes: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

LIGHTING OF THE FOUR ADVENT CANDLES

HYMN

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING Wesley/Mendelsohn

1. Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

**Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

2. Christ, by highest Heav'n adored;
Christ the everlasting Lord;
Late in time, behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.

Refrain

3. Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die.
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.

Refrain

PRAYER

Almighty God, you have given your Only-Begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the same Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Day 1:	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:18-25
Day 2:	Isaiah 9:1-7	John 1:1-18
Day 3:	Isaiah 11:1-9	Luke 2:1-20
Day 4:	Isaiah 52:13-53:12	Luke 2:21
Day 5:	Isaiah 61:1-7	Luke 2:22-35

CHRISTMAS EVE

THE CHRIST CANDLE

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Why do we light the Advent candles?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the Light of Life."

What is the meaning of the lighted Christ candle?

The lighted candle is a reminder that Christ, the true Light, has come into the world as promised by the prophets.

What do the gospels say concerning Christ?

The Gospels assure us that "the true Light that gives light to every man has already come into the world, though the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him. Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God."

LIGHTING OF THE FOUR ADVENT CANDLES & THE CHRIST CANDLE

CHRISTMAS SCRIPTURE READING

LUKE 2:1-20

1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. 8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. 12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. 17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. 18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

HYMN

JOY TO THE WORLD

Watts/Mason

1. 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.
2. Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.
3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found.
4. He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

PRAYER

O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness with the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.