

2021 Advent Guide

What is Advent

The word Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus* which means “coming.” The season of Advent begins with the fourth Sunday before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. During the Advent season we look back with joy and are reminded of Christ’s first coming. It was at His first coming He lived a perfect life and was the sacrifice for our sin. We rejoice that Christ came and died for us and was raised to life again because now we have salvation and eternal life. Also during Advent, we look forward to Christ’s second coming. During Advent we should examine our lives, repent of sin, and live holy lives in anticipation of Christ’s return.



So, Advent is a time to look back to Christ’s first coming and a time to look forward to His second. It’s a time of joy, but also a time of sorrow as we confess and repent of our sins.

History of Advent

The beginnings of Advent go back to northern and western Europe near the end of the fourth century. At that time churches had a time of personal repentance, and preparation in anticipation of the baptismal festival taking place on Epiphany, January 6. In the sixth century, the focus was moved from preparing for Epiphany to preparing for Christmas. People would fast and spiritually prepare themselves for Christmas from November 11 to Christmas Eve. Furthermore, the emphasis of the preparation was preparing oneself for the second coming of Christ.

In Rome the development of Advent was different. From its beginning in the sixth century it was always a preparation for the celebration of Jesus’ birth. Furthermore, the focus of preparation was the first coming of Christ in the flesh at Bethlehem. Therefore, the mood during Advent was joyous and festive.

The two themes, (the first coming of Christ and the second coming of Christ), and the two moods, (penitential and joyful) began to converge in the eighth century, and today we observe them both.

The Advent Wreath

The origins of the Advent wreath began centuries ago in what is now eastern Germany and was then associated with the Yule tradition of burning lights. By the sixteenth century these lights became Advent symbols in Christian homes. The wreath is a circle symbolizing the eternity of God. The evergreen wreath symbolizes eternal life.

There are five candles corresponding to the four Sundays of Advent and Christmas Eve. The candles for the first, second, and fourth Sundays are purple to symbolize our preparation for Christ’s coming. The candle for the third Sunday is pink which symbolizes the joy of anticipation of Christ’s coming. The candle for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day is the Christ Candle and is white symbolizing the purity of Christ and symbolizing festivity because Christ has come.

In recent years names have been given to the candles to remind us of the Christmas story. The first candle is called the Prophecy candle, the second the Bethlehem, the third the Shepherds' and the fourth the Angels'. However, the Advent season is more a preparation for Christ's coming than a retelling of the Christmas story. Therefore, others don't name the candles, but give each Sunday a preparation theme. The first Sunday's theme is watchfully waiting for Christ's coming. The second is personal preparation for Christ's coming. The third is the joy of our waiting. And the fourth is the announcement of Jesus' birth.

What to Do Each Day

Set aside a special time each day for lighting the Advent candles, reading the selected Scripture, and singing and praying together as a family. During the first week, light the first candle each day, during the second week the first two candles, and so on for the succeeding weeks.

First Sunday in Advent – November 28, 2021

Watchful Waiting for Christ's Coming

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|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Sunday - Isaiah 9:1-7 | Thursday - Jeremiah 33:14-25 |
| Monday - Isaiah 11:1-10 | Friday - Micah 5:2-5a |
| Tuesday - Isaiah 7:10-16 | Saturday - Isaiah 61:1-11 |
| Wednesday - 2 Samuel 7:1-17 | |

Second Sunday in Advent – December 5, 2021

Personal Preparation for Christ's Coming

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|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Sunday - Isaiah 40:1-11 | Thursday - Matthew 3:1-11 |
| Monday - Malachi 3:1-4 | Friday - John 1:14-34 |
| Tuesday - Luke 1:57-80 | Saturday - 2 Peter 3:11-18 |
| Wednesday - Luke 3:1-20 | |

Third Sunday in Advent – December 12, 2021

The Joy of Our Waiting

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|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Sunday - Philippians 4:4-9 | Thursday - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 |
| Monday - Psalm 100 | Friday - Psalm 103 |
| Tuesday - Romans 15:4-13 | Saturday - Titus 2:11-14 |
| Wednesday - Psalm 150 | |

Fourth Sunday in Advent – December 19, 2021

Announcement of the Birth of Christ

Sunday - Matthew 1:18-25
Monday - Luke 1:5-25
Tuesday – Luke 1:26-56
Wednesday - Luke 1:57-80
Thursday – John 1:1-18

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Luke 2:1-20 and Matthew 2:1-23