

# *The Advent Wreath*



*A celebration  
in preparation for  
Christmas*

## *Introduction to Advent*

Advent refers to the “coming” or “arrival” of Jesus Christ. Within the Church, the term has several meanings: the Advent of the Lord in the flesh at Christmas; His Advent in Word and Spirit; and the final Advent when our Lord will return bodily in glory. Each meaning stirs the joyful anticipation of what God has accomplished, is doing, and will yet bring to completion.

The observance of Advent is something of a late addition to history, as is the celebration of Christmas itself. When the church began to observe Christmas in the fourth century, a period of preparation was added. The length of time varied widely from three to seven weeks. Not until the tenth century was an agreement reached in the Western world that Advent should consist of four Sundays.

The first Sunday of Advent occurs near or upon November 30. While always including four Sundays, the season may vary in length from twenty-two to twenty-eight days, concluding on Christmas Eve.

A custom that many Christians find meaningful is the preparation of an advent wreath containing three purple candles, one pink candle, one white candle, and decorated with evergreens. The round wreath reminds us of the never-ending love of God. Evergreens remind us life comes from God. Purple is the liturgical color for Advent. The white candle in the center of the wreath is the Christ candle, with white representing purity.

During each Sunday’s observance of Advent, an additional candle is lit. Then on Christmas Eve, all candles, including the fifth in the center of the wreath, are lit. The light burns brightly, providing a fitting climax to the weeks of preparation and symbolically demonstrating the Light of the world that flashed forth centuries ago with the first cry of the Christ child.

Enjoy and celebrate Advent! By observing this tradition, the true significance of Christmas will not be missed in your home. May the Light of the world shine brightly in your family during the Advent season.



## *The First Sunday of Advent*

### *Promise*

Scripture: Isaiah 9:2, 6

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Introduction:

The first candle is the Candle of Promise—God's promise of the coming Messiah. Isaiah looked beyond his own time of pain and sorrow to a new day of truth and light, to a new age—Jesus the Christ. Isaiah gives us great expectations; his message is one of joy and anticipation. We today, because of God's promise of His word, prepare our hearts, homes, and churches in the celebration of His birth.

Lighting of the Advent Candle:

*Light the first purple candle.*

Response:

May we be reminded of God's promise to us on this first Advent Sunday.



## *The Second Sunday of Advent*

### *Preparation*

Scripture: Luke 1:26-33

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Introduction:

The second candle is the Candle of Preparation. The Angel Gabriel was sent to Mary to prepare her as a chosen vessel to be the mother of Jesus. Mary's fears of the angel were replaced by great joy and love when she understood the message. Her Son would be the Messiah. The Lord let His love shine upon her and filled her with light and happiness. Mary gave forth praise and thanksgiving, thanking God for the wondrous things He had given her. Let us also give thanks for God's wondrous gifts to us as we make preparations for the celebration of Christmas."

Lighting of the Advent Candles:

*Light the first and second purple candles.*

Response:

May the word of God's hope and the preparation of our lives be renewed this second Sunday in Advent.



## *The Third Sunday of Advent*

### *Peace*

Scripture: Luke 2:4, 6, 7

Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Introduction:

The third candle is the Candle of Peace. It is Rose-colored fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 35:1; "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." Regardless of the difficulties confronted, and Mary and Joseph met many, God searched through them till He found a place in a manger for the Prince of Peace to be born. We, too, must pass through many trials and difficulties on the way to inner peace and happiness. As Jesus came to bring peace, may that peace we love be seen in our lives.

Lighting of the Advent Candles:

*Light the first and second purple candles and the rose-colored or pink candle.*

Response:

May the lighted candles of Promise, Preparation, and Peace remind and fill us with God's presence as we celebrate in worship.



## *The Fourth Sunday of Advent*

*Love*

Scripture: Luke 2:8

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Introduction:

The fourth candle is the Candle of Love: "God so loved the world that He gave His only son." In John 3:16 His love was proclaimed by angelic hosts, the One who the world looked for was born. Shout with joy for this day the Savior has come.

Good News has the same power to drive away fear and renew the spirit of those who accept this Jesus and follow His teachings every day.

Lighting of the Advent Candles:

*Light the first and second purple candles, the rose-colored or pink candle, and the last purple candle..*

Response:

Let the light which symbolically shines from Advent Candles inspire us to trust God's promise and prepare us anew to receive the Prince of Peace through His love.



## *Christmas Eve*

### *The Christ Candle*

Scripture: John 1:1-4

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 came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

Introduction:

The fifth candle is the Christ Candle. We light it to remind us that He is the light of the world. If we are to find our way through the darkness of this world, it will be by following that light.

Lighting of the Advent Candle:

*Light the first and second purple candles, the rose-colored or pink candle, the fourth purple candle, and finally the white Christ candle.*

Response:

As we follow His light, let our light so shine that others would see His love in us.

