Spiritual Formation: Season of Advent 2026

Advent invites us to pause and prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. Consider this page your companion for the journey ahead. Here, you will find daily devotions to nurture your prayer life at home, reading recommendations for adults and families alike, and historical reflections on St. John traditions. You can also immerse yourself in our rich Lutheran musical heritage as we journey through the luminous Advent cantatas of J. S. Bach. Whether for daily prayer, family traditions, or deeper reflection, may these resources nourish your faith and bring the light, peace, and hope of Christ into your heart and home as we await His coming

Advent: Waiting in Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love

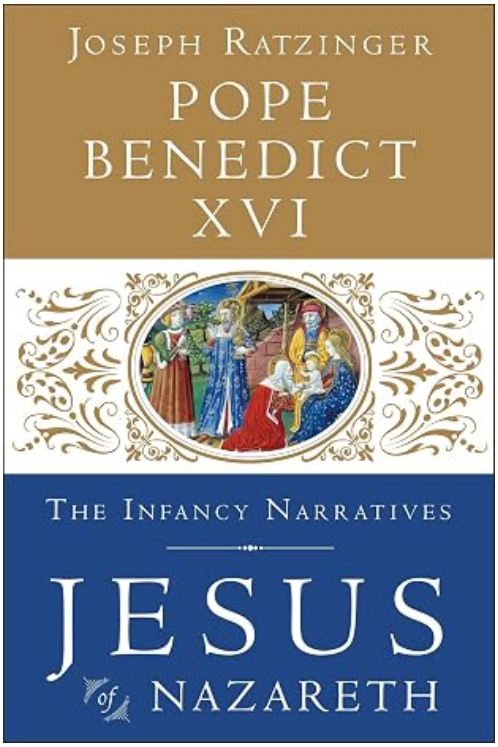
As we enter the season of Advent, we meditate on the dual promise of Christ's coming, both as the humble child of Bethlehem and as the returning King who will make all things new. Throughout these four weeks, Scripture directs our reflection through four key biblical witnesses who guide our preparation: **Isaiah**, the prophet who foretold a light shining in darkness and the child named Emmanuel; **John the Baptist**, the voice crying in the wilderness calling us to repentance and a cleared path for the Lord; **Mary**, the faithful servant whose willing *"yes"* to God brought the Savior into the world; and **Joseph**, the quiet guardian whose trust and obedience protected the Holy Family. Together, these figures invite us to slow down, clear away distractions, and cultivate a spirit of expectation so that we may welcome Christ afresh into our hearts and homes this season.



Recommendation for Daily Devotions

As we enter the season of Advent, we invite you to carve out a few quiet moments each day to reflect, pray, and prepare your heart for the coming of Christ. Using the winter edition of ***Christ in Our Home***, these short daily devotionals offer Scripture readings, thoughtful reflections, and simple prayers grounded in our Lutheran heritage.

Pick up your free copy in the church narthex.

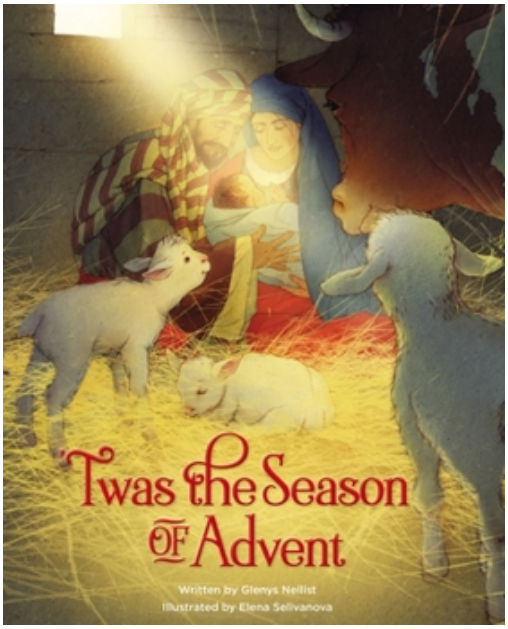


Recommended Spiritual Reading

Pope Benedict XVI's ***Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*** offers a rich source of meditation for the Advent season. His insights into the Nativity stories invite us to contemplate the awe-inspiring mystery of the Incarnation and focus on the true meaning of Christmas.

Get your copy at the link below or check your local library:

Purchase a Copy Here



Recommended Daily Readings for Families with Children ages 4-8

Celebrate Advent as a Family!

Count down to Christmas with your family using *'**Twas the Season of Advent*** by Glenys Nellist. Designed for children ages 4–8, this beautiful resource features 25 daily stories, Scripture readings, and simple prayers that highlight the true joy, hope, and peace of Christ's coming.

Get your copy at the link below or check your local library: Purchase a copy here



Recommended Daily for Families with children ages 3-7

My Advent Nativity Press-Out-and-Play Book (Ages 3–7)

This charming Advent book offers a fun, hands-on way to help your children count down to Christmas as it brings the nativity story to life with 25 sturdy pop-out pieces that kids can press out and set up day by day. It's a wonderful tool for family prayer time that helps even the youngest children build their own Nativity scene while keeping Jesus at the heart of the season.

Get your copy at the link below or check your local library:

My Advent Nativity Press-Out-And-Play Book

Advent Traditions of Saint John.

From our church historian, Dianne Hultstrom

Advent Wreath and Christ Candle

Advent Banners and Parments

Music for the Season: Bach's Advent Cantatas

Johann Sebastian Bach composed cantatas for the Sundays of Advent, providing beautiful meditations on the themes of the season. During his tenure as Thomaskantor in Leipzig, no elaborate church music was performed on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of Advent due to the observance of *Tempus Clausum*—a "silent period" of fasting and penitence leading up to Christmas. The single exception was the 1st Sunday of Advent, which was celebrated as a joyful festive day marking the start of the liturgical year. Bach composed his cantatas for the 2nd

and 3rd Sundays during his earlier appointment at Weimar, before Leipzig's strict *Tempus Clausum* rules applied). Click the links below to watch and listen to these cantatas:

Bach	
1st Sunday of Advent (*Dominica 1 Adventus*) *Theme: The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and the arrival of the King.*	**BWV 61 – *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* I** (1714, Weimar) Note: Opens with a French Overture framing the famous Luther hymn melody. Features a dramatic recitative for bass ("Siehe, ich stehe vor der Tür") where pizzicato strings imitate Jesus knocking at the door.
2nd Sunday of Advent (*Dominica 2 Adventus*) *Theme:* Focuses on the Second Coming, judgment, and watchfulness.	**BWV 70a: *Wachet! betet! betet! wachet!*** *(Weimar, 1716)* *Note:* Because of Leipzig's *tempus clausum*, Bach could not perform BWV 70a during Advent in Leipzig. Instead, he expanded it in 1723 by adding new recitatives and chorales for the **26th Sunday after Trinity** (as **BWV 70**). .
3rd Sunday of Advent (*Dominica 3 Adventus*) *Theme: John the Baptist and preparing the way.*	**BWV 186a – *Ärgre dich, o Seele, nicht*** (1716, Weimar) Note**:** Written in Weimar for Advent 3. Bach later expanded and re-purposed this piece in Leipzig as **BWV 186** for the 7th Sunday after Trinity due to the silent period.
4th Sunday of Advent (*Dominica 4 Adventus*)	**BWV 147a – *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben***

Theme: The testimony of John the Baptist and the proximity of the Nativity.	(1716, Weimar) Note: Written for Advent 4 in Weimar. Bach adapted and expanded it in Leipzig for the Feast of the Visitation (July 2) as **BWV 147**. This expanded version contains the world-famous chorale setting known in English as *"Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"* (*Wohl mir, daß ich Jesum habe*).