

Advent at Home



St. Francis
Episcopal
Church

What is Advent?

Advent is the season where we prepare for the coming of Jesus into the world.

“Advent” means “coming”, and there is always excitement when we know something special is coming.

Why do we use a wreath?

The wreath is used because it is a circle, a perfect shape, which represents God’s perfect love for us made known to the world through Jesus.

So, we celebrate this short, four-week season by thinking about and preparing for and giving thanks for the coming of the Christ child into the world.

How do we celebrate Advent?

We celebrate it with our families and in our church community.

Traditionally, an Advent wreath is made of three blue or purple candles, and one pink candle. The purple or blue candles represent our prayerful expectation of what is to come. The pink candle represents joy, the joy and excitement we feel while we wait. And the flame of the candle symbolizes the light of Christ that is coming into the world.



Week One: Help us to wait.

(Gathered together around the wreath, one person lights one candle)

Say together: We light this candle to say that we are waiting for you and to remind us of the joy that is to come.

Pray together: Gracious and loving God, help us to use this time of waiting by drawing closer to those we love and remembering together the many blessings you have given us.

Reading: **Isaiah 40:3-5**

A voice cries out: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;
The uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed
And all the people shall see it together for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Hymn:

O Come All Ye Faithful

O Come, All Ye faithful
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye,
To Bethlehem
Come and Behold him
Born the King of Angels

O come let us adore him
O come let us adore him
O come let us adore him
Christ the Lord.

Say together: Watch over us Lord as we wait for you. Amen.



Week Two: Help us to Prepare

(Gathered together around the wreath, light two candles)

Sat together: We light these candles to remind us that we must prepare our hearts for the coming of the Christ child.

Pray together: Gracious and loving God, help us to let this light shine to remove any shadows in our hearts so that we may be ready to receive the precious and saving gift of your son, Jesus Christ, who teaches us to love you and those with whom we live.

Reading:**Matthew 3:1-6**

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea,
Proclaiming “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”
This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,
“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”
Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist,
And his food was locusts and wild honey.
Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him,
And all the region along the Jordan,
And they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

Hymn:**The First Noel**

The first Noel, the angel 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.
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Say together: Watch over us Lord as we prepare for you. Amen.



Week Three: Help us to Love

(Gathered together around the wreath light two candles and one pink candle)

Say together: We light these candles to see the growing light of your love in the faces around us and to remind us of the joy love brings.

Pray together: Gracious and loving God, we give thanks to you for the blessings of family and the church with whom we celebrate the joy and expectation of the coming of the Christ Child.

Reading:**Luke 1:26-33, 38**

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 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.”
Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord;
Let it be with me according to your word.”
Then the angel departed from her.

Week three continued...

Hymn: 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.

Say Together: Watch over us Lord and fill our hearts with love as we await your coming in glory. Amen.



Week Four: Help us to Pray

(Gathered together around the wreath light the first three candles then add the fourth)

Say together: We light these candles as your arrival draws near. Help us to be ready, Lord, and we pray for humble and open hearts in receiving the light of Christ.

Pray together: Gracious and loving God, help us this week to honor your coming by bringing hope and love to those who most need it. Help us Lord to love you by loving one another and especially those who may be sad and alone during this time of joy.

Reading: **John 3:16-17**

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish
but may have eternal life.
Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world,
But in order that the world might be saved through him.

Hymn: **Silent Night**

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.

Say together: Watch over us Lord and help us to pray.

Shine your gracious light upon us as we reach out to others in love. Amen.

Scripture readings from the NRSV, The New Oxford Annotated Bible, 4th ed.
Music lyrics from A Wreath of Carols, selected and edited by
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Resource: ECF Vital Practices, www.ecfpv.org
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