

family advent devotional



redeemer west side

How to use this devotional guide

This past year we have begun to return to a new normal. Suddenly we find back to doing life “in-person” and not just on our computers. While this is wonderful and a blessing, it may be easy to let Christmas consume our lives to distract ourselves as we relive all that we have missed these past few years, or it may sneak up on us with unprepared hearts. This guide is intended to help all of us prepare, to consider the long-awaited coming of the promised Messiah and the joy when that promise was kept by God.

“Advent” merely means “the coming” or “the arrival.” We are preparing our hearts to celebrate the birth of Jesus, and to remember that he has promised to come again.

The Advent season begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas and continues up to Christmas Day or Christmas Eve. One way your family can help celebrate the Advent season is to come together for those four weeks and read God’s word together. During the week, you will have the opportunity to do a daily devotion together as a family. If you miss a day, don’t feel guilty or try to make it up — just pick up where you left off! It will be encouraging and exciting to do this together as one church family. Our desire is that your family will come together and celebrate the birth of our Savior!

We prepared this devotional to accompany an advent wreath. An advent wreath is one way you can mark the progression of the season. It is made up of five candles symbolizing that throughout scripture we see Jesus Christ as the light of the world. A new candle is lit each Sunday in anticipation of Christmas Eve/Day.

Advent is a time for believers to remember God’s promise to send us One who will overcome the world and defeat death.

Celebrating this season with Redeemer West Side

This year, the four weeks of Advent begin on Sunday, November 27. There are several other events that we invite you to join the Redeemer West Side family as we celebrate the Savior’s birth.

- December 6, 6 & 8 pm - WS Youth Christmas Party
- December 7, 10:00 am - Birthday Party for Jesus
- December 11, Belnord Christmas Toy Store Bash
- December 15, 9:30 & 11:30 am- Lessons & Carols
 - No Elementary or Club 56 programming. Children are invited to attend service with their families.
- December 24, 4 & 6 pm Christmas Eve Services
 - *Children’s programming will only be available at the 4 pm service for 0-4 years of age. No Elementary or Club 56 programming. Children are invited to attend service with their families.

The candles of the Advent Wreath

Every family is different with how they prepare their hearts for this season. We can prepare in many ways: we decorate our apartments, wrap gifts, watch our favorite movies, drink apple cider, etc. The point is that we prepare our hearts with things we see and hear and taste!

One of the visible ways we can prepare is with the Advent Wreath: five candles in the middle of an evergreen wreath. Each Sunday of Advent and then on Christmas Eve/Day, we light a different candle. As we approach the birth of our Saviour, there is more and more light. Jesus leads us from a world of darkness to a world of light. He is the Light of the World.

Meaning of the wreath

There is symbolism in the structure of the Advent wreath.

- The circle — it has no beginning and no end — just like God. This wheel represents eternal victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. It reminds us of God's love for all of us.
- The evergreen represents the faithfulness of the living God and the hope of eternal life that we have through Jesus.
- The candles represent the light of Christ which came into this world.

Sunday One: the first purple candle — the candle of Hope.

For centuries and throughout the Old Testament, God had told his people that he would fulfill the promise by sending the Savior that all humanity needs.

Sunday Two: the second purple candle — the candle of Peace.

One of Jesus' many titles is the Prince of Peace. He is the means for reconciliation between the Righteous God and his unrighteous people. He is also the means of peace between people, within families, across cultures, generations, classes and nations.

Sunday Three: the pink candle — the candle of Joy.

It is through Jesus Christ that we participate in eternal, abundant life. One of the fruits of his Spirit dwelling in us is joy. How could it be otherwise since nothing can separate us from the love of God through the Savior?

Sunday Four: the third purple candle — the candle of Love, God's love.

While we were yet sinners, his Son Jesus died for us. And now we have been redeemed and adopted into his family as his children. By experiencing God's love for us, we are now made free to love others.

Christmas: the white candle — the Christ candle.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world. In him, we find truth and purpose. He not only died to purchase us as a people for his own possession, he rose from the dead as the pledge that we also shall be raised to a new and everlasting life.

Daily Advent Reading Schedule:

Week 1: Hope	
Sunday, December 1	Isaiah 7:13-14
Monday, December 2	Psalms 8:1-9
Tuesday, December 3	Micah 5:2
Wednesday, December 4	Isaiah 9:6-7
Thursday, December 5	John 15:1-11
Friday, December 6	Luke 2:8-12
Saturday, December 7	Luke 2:13-14
Week 2: Peace	
Sunday, December 8	Colossians 3:12-17
Monday, December 9	John 16: 16-24
Tuesday, December 10	Ephesians 2:14-16
Wednesday, December 11	Matthew 11:28
Thursday, December 12	John 14:27
Friday, December 13	James 1:17
Saturday, December 14	Matthew 1:18-24
Week 3: Joy	
Sunday, December 15	Luke 1:26-38
Monday, December 16	Luke 1:39-45

Tuesday, December 17	Luke 1:46-56
Wednesday, December 18	Luke 1:57-66
Thursday, December 19	Luke 1:67-80
Friday, December 20	Matthew 2:1-12
Saturday, December 21	Matthew 2:19-23
Week 4: Love	
Sunday, December 22	1 John 4: 7-9
Monday, December 23	1 John 4: 10-18
Tuesday, December 24	Luke 2:1-20
Wednesday, December 25	John 3:16-21



Week 1: Hope

(Light the first purple candle)

We live in a world that, above all else, needs hope. A world where people feel hopeless, and it is really no wonder — just turn on the news — what do you hear? The last few years have been hard, different, and sometimes scary. It is no wonder we live in a world that desperately seeks hope.

Christmas reminds us that we do have hope. Since God first revealed himself to humankind, he has brought us a message of hope. Since the fall (when Adam and Eve ate the fruit in the Garden of Eden), God gave hope that one would come to save them.

As Moses led the people, he told of “The Great Prophet” that would come. He gave the people hope. King David foretold of the hope of a Great King that would come and rule and reign forever more. The prophets all pointed towards One:

- A Deliverer
- A Healer
- A Restorer
- A Messiah

We celebrate Christmas because that One has come. We have hope because we know that Jesus came to set us free. We have hope because we know that Jesus is coming again. Our world desperately needs hope, and our hope is found only in Jesus Christ.

Song: O' Come O'Come Emmanuel

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.

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
 Thine own from Satan's tyranny
 From depths of Hell Thy people save
 And give them victory o'er the grave
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
 Shall come to thee, O Israel.

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

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

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.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
In ancient times did'st give the Law,
In cloud, and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Week 1: Hope	
Sunday, December 1	Isaiah 7:13-14
Monday, December 2	Psalms 8:1-9
Tuesday, December 3	Micah 5:2
Wednesday, December 4	Isaiah 9:6-7
Thursday, December 5	John 15:1-11
Friday, December 6	Luke 2:8-12
Saturday, December 7	Luke 2:13-14

Week 2: Peace

(Light the first two purple candles of hope and peace)

This time of year is not one that is normally characterized as one of peace. In fact, between all the social obligations, church meetings, dinners to prepare, gifts to purchase, cookies to bake... it is safe to describe it as often chaotic! This year in particular, there seems to be added elements of more things to do. Last year Christmas looked very different for everyone and it feels like the world is trying to make up for what we missed out on last year. In the chaos of what is going on around us, we need to seek the peace that Jesus brings. We worship the God of peace! Don't get caught up in the chaos. Don't feel stressed, ashamed, embarrassed just trust him. Remember Jesus wants you to step away from the chaos and step into his peace.

In Genesis we see sin enter the world. We see darkness and chaos with disobedience in the Garden of Eden. This disobedience brought condemnation, misery and death as its final outcome. However, we have Jesus! Jesus was obedient. Because of what he did on the cross, there is forgiveness of sins and the end result is eternal life. This is the glorious conclusion we all have if we put our trust in him!

There is hope for peace in Christ because he alone brings righteousness and starves off the judgment from God. Jesus brought peace in the most unexpected ways when he arrived. The Prince of Peace came as a baby in a manger, wrapped in swaddling cloths. Because of his work on the cross, we have peace for our assurance in salvation, but also, we have the peace of mind knowing that God will heal this broken world and will come again. Despite the chaos all around us, despite the sometimes dark, scary and sad world around us, peace from God, true biblical peace, allows us to trust in God's promises.

Song: Hark the Herald Angels Sing

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 the angelic host proclaim:
 "Christ is born in Bethlehem"
 Hark! The herald angels sing
 "Glory to the newborn King!"

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 the incarnate Deity
 Pleas'd as man with man to dwell
 Jesus, our Emmanuel
 Hark! The herald angels sing
 "Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
 Hail the Son 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
 Hark! The herald angels sing
 "Glory to the newborn King!"

Week 2: Peace	
Sunday, December 8	Colossians 3:12:17
Monday, December 9	John 16:16-24
Tuesday, December 10	Ephesians 2:14-16
Wednesday, December 11	Matthew 11:28
Thursday, December 12	John 14:27
Friday, December 13	James 1:17
Saturday, December 14	Matthew 1:18-24

Week 3: Joy

(Light the first two purple candles of hope and peace and light the pink candle of joy)

During these last few years, it is really tempting to dwell exclusively on the challenges, sacrifices and pain we have all faced amongst this pandemic. We can easily become immersed in these negative, victim-like feelings and be completely oblivious to our many blessings.

It is not uncommon to get happiness confused with joy. Happiness is built around our circumstances. It is often fleeting, it does not last long. Joy, on the other hand, is a deep rooted blessedness that is present no matter what circumstances come your way. Joy comes only when we are in union with Jesus.

Remember that we belong to God. We are his sons. We are his daughters. We are loved beyond measure. We need to remember that the good news of Jesus' birth has the power to bring us great joy! We need to choose joy! Our joy isn't dependent on what is going on in our lives, what's going on in the world, or in the people we are with. It doesn't depend upon the gifts we may have under the tree or even the gifts we give to others. God can use hard things to ground you in the love of God. The joy outlasts pain, suffering, shame. Nothing can shake that joy. If you put your hope in Jesus, you get the peace of Christ. You get to live in joy in the knowledge that you are loved!

It has been over two thousand years since the birth of Jesus and yet, the story of his birth holds that same transforming power. Those who hear the message and believe can walk in joy and peace. Like the shepherds, we can choose to believe, worship and proclaim this good news as we celebrate this Christmas season.

Challenges, pain, sadness can be set aside when eyes are fixed on the eternal truth that there is reason to rejoice. In the end, light wins. Jesus overcame the darkness. Our joy is a gift. It is a gift our Father gave to us that first Christmas in the babe of Jesus.

Song: Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
 God of glory, Lord of love;
 Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee,
 Hail Thee as the sun above.
 Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
 Drive the dark of doubt away;
 Giver of immortal gladness,
 Fill us with the light of day!

All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
 Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays,
 Stars and angels sing around Thee,
 Center of unbroken praise;
 Field and forest, vale and mountain,
 Bloss'ming meadow, flashing sea,
 Chanting bird and flowing fountain
 Call us to rejoice in Thee.

Thou art giving and forgiving,
 Ever blessing, ever blest,
 Wellspring of the joy of living,
 Ocean depth of happy rest!
 Thou the father, Christ our Brother -
 All who live in love are Thine:
 Teach us how to love each other,
 Lift us to the joy divine.

Week 3: Joy	
Sunday, December 15	Luke 1:26-38
Monday, December 16	Luke 1:39-45
Tuesday, December 17	Luke 1:46-56
Wednesday, December 18	Luke 1:57-66
Thursday, December 19	Luke 1:67-80
Friday, December 20	Matthew 2:1-12
Saturday, December 21	Matthew 2:19-23

Week 4: Love

(Light the first two purple candles of hope and peace, the pink candle of joy and the third purple candle of love)

Advent is a beautiful time of year. It is definitely one of the most joyous holidays as we remember the birth of our savior. Christmas is a time to share blessings with one another. It is a time for giving and a time for forgiving. It is also a time to remember how much God loves us.

We know that God loves us because of the gift of Jesus that Christmas morning. It was love that stirred our Father's heart. It was love that caused him to send his son, Jesus, to earth, born in a lowly manger. At Christmas we often focus on this part of the story, babe of Jesus, the nativity. However, we must remember the lengths that God went to show us his love.

Jesus was sent to earth and born to rescue us by sacrificing himself. This is love! Love is shown through the suffering that Jesus endured to save us. Christ felt the physical pain on that cross. He suffered as he was beaten and mocked. He did all of this because of love. Love for you.

God sent his son so that we could spend eternity with him. We can receive God's gift of eternal life through faith, by believing that Jesus is who he says he is — a sinless man. The Son of God who paid the price for the entire world's sins by dying on that cross in our place. He died so that we may have life.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” John 3:16-17

This Christmas, let it be your prayer that you truly understand just how much you are loved. And now we have been redeemed and adopted into his family as his children. By experiencing God's love for us, we are now made free to love others.

Song: Silent Night

Silent night, Holy night
 All is calm, all is bright
 Round yon virgin, mother and child
 Holy infant, tender and mild
 Sleep in heavenly peace,
 Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, Holy night
 Son of God, love's pure light
 Radiant beams from thy holy face
 With the dawn of redeeming grace,
 Jesus, Lord at thy birth
 Jesus, Lord at thy birth.

Silent night, Holy night
 Shepherds quake, at the sight
 Glories stream from heaven above
 Heavenly hosts sing Hallelujah.
 Christ the Savior is born,
 Christ the Savior is born.

Week 4: Love	
Sunday, December 22	1 John 4: 7-9
Monday, December 23	1 John 4: 10-18
Tuesday, December 24	Luke 2:1-20
Wednesday, December 25	John 3:16-21

Christmas Eve/Christmas Day: The Christ Candle

(Light the first two purple candles of hope and peace, the pink candle of joy, the third purple candle of love and the white Christ candle)

Isaiah 9:1-7

For to us a child is born,
 to us a son is given;
 and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
 and his name shall be called
 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
 Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace
 there will be no end,
 on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
 to establish it and to uphold it
 with justice and with righteousness
 from this time forth and forevermore.

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

John 3:16-17

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

Song: Joy to the World

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.

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.

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.

Advent Wreath Craft

[HERE](#) is the link to the craft video!

Materials:

- Paper plate
- Construction paper or colored paper
- Coloring supplies
- Tape or glue
- Scissors

Directions

1. Cut out the middle circle from your paper plate.
2. Color your paper plate ring green, or trace your family members' hands on green paper. Then, cut them out and tape or glue them to the paper plate ring.
3. For your candles, cut out three purple rectangles, one pink rectangle, and one longer white rectangle.
4. Tape or glue your rectangles to the wreath, with the white candle in the middle.
5. During our wreath lighting services, "light" your candles by taping or gluing a small piece of orange paper to each candle.

