



## 2009 Advent Devotional Guide

### What is Advent?

The word *advent* means “coming.” As Christians we know and celebrate this season of the church year as a time to prepare, reflect and acknowledge our gift of salvation through God’s Son, Jesus.

In addition, during the advent season Christians anticipate the promised second coming of Christ. Today the season is observed for four weeks and is considered the beginning of the church year. The dates change from year to year, the first Sunday in advent falling on the Sunday nearest November 30th.

To mark this time and to reflect on the coming of Christ, it is a tradition to set aside time each Sunday of Advent and on Christmas Eve, to read passages of scripture that tell of Christ’s coming and to light a candle representing His light coming into the world. The passages selected here are the same as those which our preachers will be sharing in worship on the Sundays of Advent. Our hope is that you will hear the morning’s message and some time that afternoon/evening you will follow it up with this advent devotional practice.



## Advent ritual

To prepare your home for Advent, create a centerpiece for your table. Place five candles (three purple, one pink, one white) within a wreath of greenery. On the side have the purple devotion sheet titled, "A New World is Coming!" and a pen/pencil to answer questions each week as well as matches to light the candle(s). Each week you light the candle(s) that has already been lit, plus the candle added that week.

**Week one** (purple candle): What are we expecting?

**Week two** (purple candle): For what are we getting ready?

**Week three:** (pink candle): What are we looking forward to?

**Week four** (purple candle): What are we singing about?

## Prayer

Read this prayer before lighting the candle(s):

Companion God, during our Advent journey illuminate for us a shining path to you.

[Light the candle(s).]

Holy One, we light this candle/these candles, a flicker of starlight, a sign of belonging, of growth, of possibility, of awe and wonder.

May it/they be a reminder of your divine spark, kindling new beginnings within us. We wait with all your people through the ages and into tomorrow. Amen.



**November 29, 2009**

## The first week of Advent

**Sign of Things to Come: Expecting  
Luke 21:25–36**

Jeremiah 33:14–16; Psalm 25:1–10;  
1 Thessalonians 3:9–13

## Bringing the story home

When storm clouds roll over the horizon, we can feel amazed or even afraid and know a storm is coming. When we notice the trees around us budding, leafing, bearing fruit, and shedding, we see the seasons of time changing. In the midst of all these signs in nature, the writer of Luke invites us to look for signs of God's presence with us. Just as a budding tree tells us it is spring and summer is on its way, so we can see signs of God's presence that tell us God's realm is growing among us.

## Exploring the story together

If you are decorating your house this season, you might ask how the decorations relate to what you are expecting. For example, lights can say you expect God's love to shine. Drums or horns might say you are expecting to sing songs of joy. Find or make some decorations that reflect a hope you have this season such as a world globe for world peace.

## Advent ritual

Turn to the purple sheet and your responses to the question, "What are you/we expecting?" You can add to this throughout the upcoming week. Light a purple candle and read the Advent prayer (p. 2, col. 1).

*Adapted from Congregational Life Worship Resources/Seasons of the Spirit.*



**December 6, 2009**

**The second week of Advent**

**Make Ready: Preparing**

**Luke 3:1–6**

Malachi 3:1–4; Luke 1:68–79; Philippians 1:3–11

### **Bringing the story home**

In ancient times, when someone special was coming to visit a village, the villagers would prepare the roadways. They would make the mountain places less steep by removing rocks, and they would fill in the low places in the valley to make the path smooth. John the Baptizer speaks about making the way smooth for God's special child, Jesus, by living out justice and kindness.

### **Exploring the story together**

Cut out paper hearts, at least three per person. You may want to use purple or blue paper (or use your insert). Print the words, "We are preparing for God's love" on each heart. On the other side of the hearts, write ideas for how you can live out justice and kindness. Leave each heart in a special place. For example, you might set the table without being asked and hide your heart in a napkin. You might create a present from recycled materials or purchase a fair trade gift and include the heart in the wrapping paper. You can bake a loaf of bread or tray of sweets and put the heart on the plate.

### **Advent ritual (see pg. 2)**

Turn to the purple insert and respond to the question, "For what are we getting ready?" Light the two purple candles and read the Advent prayer (p. 2, col. 1).

**December 13, 2009**

**The third week of Advent**

**Forward: Looking**

**Luke 3:7–18**

Zeph. 3:14–20; Isaiah 12:2–6; Philippians 4:4–7

### **Bringing the story home**

In this reading from the gospel of Luke, John the Baptizer looks forward to a time when everyone will have enough food and clothing, and people will live in peace. John invites the crowd gathered around him to live into this time by sharing their extra clothing and food, by treating others fairly, and by avoiding violent words and actions. John invites people to live in a way that reflects the peace they are looking forward to.

### **Exploring the story together**

Make a collage with old or recently received Christmas cards. Christmas cards often contain words and pictures of John the Baptizer's vision for the world. Use the cards to imagine this vision. Display the collage in a place where it will help you join in making God's dream a reality.

### **Advent ritual (see p. 2)**

Turn to the purple insert and respond to the question, "What are we looking forward to?"

Light the two purple candles and one pink candle and read the Advent prayer (p. 2, col. 1).



**December 20, 2009**

### **The fourth week of Advent**

**Moving with Mary's Song; Singing**

**Luke 1:39–45, (46–55)**

Micah 5:2–5a; Luke 1:47–55 or Psalm 80:1–7;  
Hebrews 10:5–10

### **Bringing the story home**

Mary rejoices when she finds out that God's promised saviour will be born and she is to be the mother. Mary sings a song about God turning the world upside down. The poor will become rich and the rich will know poverty. The hungry will be fed and the over-fed will know hunger. The humble will be raised up and the high and mighty will be brought low.

### **Exploring the story together**

Where do you see evidence that God is turning the world upside down? In other words, when have you experienced God's love changing things? Celebrate God's work in our world by moving with Mary's song. Sing carols together. Try making up your own verse to a carol. Put on some Christmas music and dance around the room.

### **Advent ritual (see p. 2)**

Turn to the purple insert and respond to the question, "What are we singing about?"

Light the three purple candles and one pink candle and read the Advent prayer (p. 2, col. 1).

**December 24/25, 2009**

### **Christmas Eve/Christmas Day**

**Receiving**

**Luke 2:1–14, (15–20)**

Isaiah 9:2–7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11–14

### **Bringing the story home**

Light all four Advent candles and the Christ (white) candle as a reminder of God's presence among us. Wonder about the best news you've ever had to share. Did people know you had heard good news just by looking at you? Read the story of Jesus' birth in Luke 2:1-20. Or use a nativity set to tell the story of Jesus' birth.

### **Exploring the story together**

Imagine what it would have been like to be Mary and Joseph. What part of this story would you want to remember? On your purple insert write down 3-4 things that you believe we all need to remember.

### **Family prayer**

God of hope, peace, joy, and love,  
thank you for the wonder of your presence with us.  
Help us to be people of good news  
as we celebrate the birth of Jesus this day.  
Amen.

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## **Christmas: Season of God's Presence**

The Season of Christmas is twelve days long. It begins on Christmas Day, December 25, and lasts until the Day of the Epiphany, January 6. During the Season of Christmas, we remember that God is with us always and everywhere and God was in Jesus in a special way. Where do you see signs of God's presence around you? Celebrate these signs.



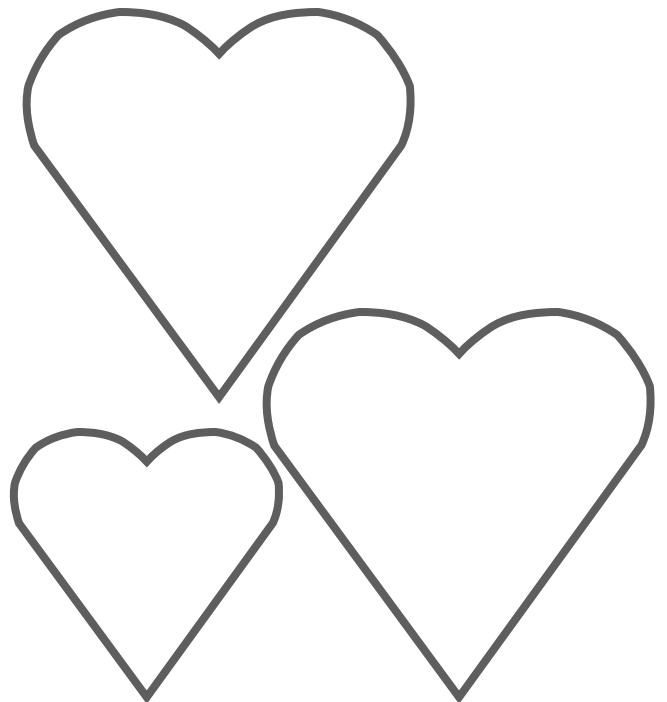
Christmas Eve Services: 5pm Church Family Service ✦ 11pm Candlelight & Communion Service  
Oakland Avenue Presbyterian Church ✦ 421 Oakland Avenue ✦ Rock Hill, S C 29730

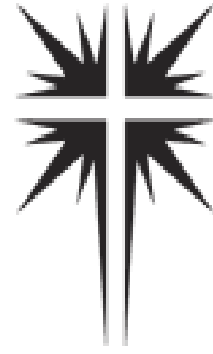
# Advent: A New World is Coming!



Week 1 (purple candle): What are we expecting?

Week 2 (purple candle): For what are we getting ready?





**Week 3** (pink candle): What are we looking forward to?

**Week 4** (purple candle): What are we singing about?

**Christmas Eve/Day** (white candle): What do you want to remember about the birth of Christ?

