

Advent 2020 Toolkit

General Preparation

Find a space in your home that is central, focal, but not “in the way”— coffee table, kitchen table, on top of the piano, etc. Ideally this is a space you can easily access from where you do church on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings, because we will light our wreaths as part of worship.

- 1) Gather **five candles** – they don’t have to match.
- 2) Find a **blue cloth** – even a dish towel or wash cloth will do.
- 3) If you have any **greenery** in your home – real or faux plants – pick some out to join the fun.
- 4) Gather other **small objects or decorations** that are blue.
- 5) Gather five small **objects that have special meaning** for you, or that symbolize dreams, hopes, goals you have, or that remind you of a time when you felt something deeply – love, joy, loss, healing.

Assemble an altar space and “wreath.” On top of the blue cloth, set four candles in a circle, choosing the best one for the center. These candles will mark our passage of time through the four weeks, and the center one will be the Christ light at Christmas. Amidst the candles, set any greenery how you’d like. We adorn our homes with greenery especially at this time of year to extol the hidden life that still dwells in nature despite the frozen cold. Place your chosen objects around, inviting your memories, dreams, and symbols of meaning into this space.

Add or subtract from these instructions in any way that suits you. The goal is to create a devotional space that is authentic to you. There is no wrong way to do this.

As the season progresses, add things to your devotional space as you feel inspired. Choose a day of the week apart from our normal worship times to spend 10 minutes in your devotional space with your household. Use this pattern as a guide:

- 1) **Read** scripture – one or more of the readings printed for the week or day. Use your bible or look up excerpts using Oremus Bible Browser - <https://bible.oremus.org/>
- 2) During the reading, **light** the candle(s) appropriate for the week. One Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, be sure to light the center candle.
- 3) Observe a bit of **silence** around the Advent wreath.
- 4) **Talk and tell** about anything that the key word(s), scripture, or prayer brings up for you. Stories, images, ideas.
- 5) Speak the **prayer** printed for the week or day.



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Weekly Guide

Week 1 – November 29 and following

Scripture

Isaiah 64:1-9

Prayer that God would come with power and compassion

Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19

Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. (Ps. 80:7)

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Gifts of grace sustain those who wait for the end

Mark 13:24-37

The sudden coming of the Son of Man

Key word: Awake

Prayer: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Creator and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Worship opportunities: Sunday at 10:30am on Zoom or YouTube, Wednesday at 7pm on Zoom

Week 2 – December 6 and following

Scripture

Isaiah 40:1-11

Good news of God's coming to a people in exile

Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13

Righteousness shall prepare a pathway for God. (Ps. 85:13)

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Waiting for and hastening the day of God

Mark 1:1-8

John appears from the wilderness

Key word: Prepare

Prayer: Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Worship opportunities: Sunday at 10:30am on Zoom or YouTube, Wednesday at 7pm on Zoom

Week 3 – December 13 and following

Scripture

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Righteousness and praise flourish like a garden

Psalms 126

The Lord has done great things for us. (Ps. 126:3)

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Kept in faith until the coming of Christ

John 1:6-8, 19-28

A witness to the light

Key words: Testify, Rejoice

Prayer: Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Worship opportunities: Sunday at 10:30am on Zoom or YouTube, Wednesday at 7pm on Zoom

Week 4 - December 20-24

Scripture

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

The Lord's promise to David

Luke 1:46b-55

You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (Lk. 1:52)

Romans 16:25-27

The mystery of God revealed in Jesus Christ

Luke 1:26-38

The angel appears to Mary

Key word: Promise, "let it be with me"

Prayer: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Worship opportunities: Sunday at 10:30am on Zoom or YouTube, Wednesday at 7pm on Zoom

Christmas Eve - December 24 after sundown

Scripture

Isaiah 9:2-7

Light shines: a child is born for us

Psalm 96

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad. (Ps. 96:11)

Titus 2:11-14

The grace of God has appeared

Luke 2:1-20]

God with us

Key words: Joy, illumination, welcome

Prayer: Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Worship opportunity: 4pm on Zoom or YouTube.

Christmas Day - December 25

Scripture

Isaiah 62:6-12

God comes to restore the people

Psalm 97

Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the honest of heart. (Ps. 97:11)

Titus 3:4-7

Saved through water and the Spirit

Luke 2:1-20

The birth of the Messiah revealed to shepherds

Key words: Dawning, salvation

Prayer: All-powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness, and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Worship opportunity: With your household, sing "O Come All Ye Faithful" - text is on p. 4.

O Come, All Ye Faithful

If you need accompaniment, use this track:

<https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=T5rMQ6P12WY&feature=share>

1 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:

Refrain

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

2 The highest, most holy,
light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father
now in flesh appearing! Refrain

3 Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
in the highest: Refrain

4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing: Refrain

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr. unknown, st. 2