

Palestine Lutheran Church 2020

Advent Sundays – 9:30 a.m.

Blessing of Advent Wreath (Nov 29) - Make Wreath Kits
Blessing of the Nativity (Nov 29) – Deconstruct Nativity
Blessing of Christmas Trees (Dec 6) – Bring Family Ornament
Christmas Children's Program Virtual (Dec 20)

Advent Mid-Week Services – Wed (Dec 2,9,16,23) at 7:30pm – Deconstruction (30 min worship/devotion)

God With Us – Zoom Bible Study – Tuesdays @ 6:30pm – ELCA World Hunger Advent Study

Christmas Celebrations

ROCK Christmas Extravaganza (Dec) – 9am-12pm

Blue Christmas Service (Dec 9) – 7:00pm

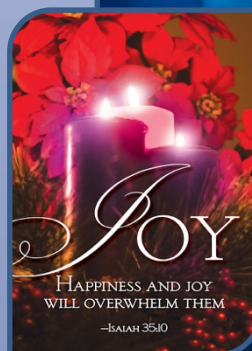
Christmas Program (Dec 20) – 9:30am and posted "Favorite Christmas Family Traditions" virtual

Christmas Eve Family Service (Dec 24) – 3:00pm, 5:00pm, 7:00pm – Make reservations

Christmas Day (Dec 25) – Digital Posted Service by 1:00pm

New Dawn Worship (Dec 27) – 9:30 a.m.
Affirmation of Baptism and New Year's Blessing
Christmas Lessons and Carols 2019

Epiphany Celebration Sunday (Jan 10) – 9:30



Holiday Resources @ Palestine Lutheran

For Advent and Christmas Season



You can explore as a family the meaning, activities and prayers for the seasons of the spirit and soul



Most of us are accustomed to celebrating the New Year on January 1st. But the Christian church begins its New Year a little differently. For Christians, the church year begins four Sundays before Christmas (either on the last Sunday in November or the first Sunday in December). This year, December 02nd happens to be the first day of the new Church year, and therefore, the first day of the Advent season.

It might surprise some to know that the Church has its own tradition of keeping time – it uses a separate calendar than the rest of the secular world. This tradition grew from the Christian need of a calendar that would reflect a chronological chain of events of Christianity. The Church calendar gives Christians a more logical way to remember God’s gifts (Christ’s birth before his death and resurrection) and serves as a convenient reminder of all that God gave in His son, Jesus Christ and all He has done through Christ.

Historically speaking, Easter was the first special day assigned to the Christian calendar. Next, came Epiphany (which marks the baptism of Jesus and the coming of the Wise Men). Sometime later, December 25th was selected as the “official” birth date of Jesus. Eventually, Christians began to observe a special time of preparation for Easter, known as *Lent*. Before too long, a similar custom of preparing for Christmas evolved and was named *Advent*.

The name *Advent* simply means, “coming”, but there is nothing simple about this time of Preparation. Not only are we getting ready for the coming of the Christ Child as anticipated by the prophets, but also the coming of Jesus into our lives today, tomorrow and always, remembering that he will come again to judge and rule the world.

The Advent season is a time of getting ready to enter into the mystery of Christmas. This mystery is so great that it takes four weeks to get ready to enter. These treasured weeks are reserved for preparing us to grow closer to Christ through the glory of Christmas.

In a sense, Advent allows us an opportunity to become modern day innkeepers. We choose to make room for the Holy Family and journey with them again as they prepare for the arrival of Christ the King.

Let us use these four weeks of Advent wisely so that our hearts and minds will be worthily prepared to joyfully celebrate the birth of our Lord.

Colors of Advent

The primary color of Advent is Purple. Purple is a color that was reserved for royalty during Christ's lifetime. It was the color Kings and Queens. Another color associated with Advent is Blue. Blue is the color of repentance and hope. The color blue matches the color of the sky from where our Lord will come in the clouds on the Day of the Lord.

Jesus was a King, not the kind of King that people had ever met before. He didn't have an army – or, at least not the kind of army that people could understand. Nor did he have a great or majestic home – at least, not while he was on earth. And, as for riches, well, his riches were in the form of parable and miracles. They were a sort of treasure that no other King had ever possessed.

Yes, Jesus was a King who was coming then, is still coming today. And that is the mystery of Christmas. During the season of Advent, the Altar linens and vestments reflect the color purple to help us focus our attention on the special nature of Christ as King.

When we prepare for the coming of Christ, as Light of the World, we remember that through him God showed us His extraordinary presence. And as we prepare to enter the mystery of Christmas, we can also remember that the color purple represents another aspect of Christ's life. The color purple is used during Lent and Holy Week to symbolize both Christ's kingship and his suffering.

In remembering Christ's life, we cannot separate his birth from his death; the Nativity from the Atonement. Christ, God's Perfect Gift, was sacrificed for us, as Perfect Sacrifice, to take away the sins of the world. And because of this, in the early days of Christian worship, Advent, Christmas and Lent were seen as somber times. But over time, the focus of Advent and Christmas shifted to one of joyful anticipation.



Not all Christian churches use the color purple during Advent. Some churches choose to use the color blue to symbolize the Coming of Christ. Blue is associated with the Mother Mary and also with quiet, yet joyful anticipation. Royal blue may be used to represent royalty. Bright blue may be used to symbolize the night sky, in anticipation of the announcement of the coming of the King or to represent the waters of Genesis 1, the beginning of a new creation.



"The Glory of Lebanon shall come unto you, the fir tree, the pine tree and the box together, to beautify the place of your sanctuary." Isaiah 60:13

During the season of Advent, it is traditional for churches to engage in an event called "the hanging of the greens". This is a time when churches decorate their sanctuaries with evergreens as a symbol of God's ever presence and the everlasting life he has promised through Jesus Christ.

Evergreens are ancient symbols of immortality, life and growth. Ancient Romans considered evergreens a symbol of peace, joy and victory. Early Christians used evergreens a symbol of their faith, placing them in their windows to indicate that Christ was ever present.

Firs, cedar, juniper, holly, laurel, bayberry, ivy and pine are some of the greenery hung and are considered "evergreens" because they are ever, and always, green and full of life. Their color never, ever changes, not even during the winter months.

Holly has many symbolic meanings: the burning bush, the Mother Mary (who is said to glow with the Holy Spirit), and Jesus' crown of thorns. The red holly berries are also symbolic of the blood of Jesus. Ivy reminds us of the human spirit clinging to God's strength. Juniper and cedar represent life and hope. Laurel symbolizes triumph and victory.

Evergreens have long been symbolic of Christmas time and many people refer to the hanging of the greens as "Bringing home Christmas!" In addition to the evergreens, another familiar plant, the Christmas Poinsettia, is usually used during the season of Advent and Christmas as a symbolic representation of the star of Bethlehem (it resembles a flaming star) and is called the "Flower of the Holy Night". This tradition includes the placing of evergreen trees (Christmas Trees) in worship and fellowship areas with chrismon decorations.

The Advent Wreath



2020 Advent Wreath Kits will be available at Palestine from Nov 29 – Dec 6

The Advent Wreath, rich in symbolism, is a powerful visual aid used in moving through the four Sundays of Advent while remembering the reason for the season: Jesus Christ. With no beginning and no end, the circular nature of the wreath testifies to God himself. His eternity, and endless love and mercy for humanity have no beginning or end.

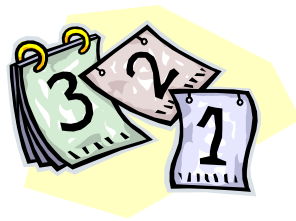
The wreath is primarily green and speaks to the hope of eternal life, recalling that our faith, hope and lives are always alive when they spring from God and his Son. Although the wreath is typically constructed of evergreens, many alternate media may be used to create an Advent Wreath. There are many “how to” ideas on the internet.

Four candles surround the Advent wreath; one for each week of Advent. These four candles symbolized the four centuries of waiting between the prophet Malachi’s telling of the coming day of the Lord and the birth of the Christ Child. The lighting of these candles symbolizes the light of God coming into the world through the birth of his son, Jesus, Light of the World.

The colors of the candles vary with different traditions. We use three blue candles, corresponding to the sanctuary colors of Advent, and one white (pink) candle. Beginning with the first Sunday of Advent, one blue candle is lit. This candle is lit again each remaining Sunday of Advent. On the second Sunday of Advent, a second blue candle is lit as well. This candle continues to be lit throughout Advent. The third and fourth candles follow suit, except that the white (pink) candle is lit on the third Sunday (symbolizing joy). A center candle is often used to denote the birth of Christ and is appropriately called the “*Christ Candle*”. It is lit either on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning.

Each candle symbolizes various aspects of our waiting period during Advent. A theme or focus is usually assigned to each week and its associated candle. Traditionally, the first candle is the candle of Hope, Expectation or Prophecy, drawing our attention to the anticipation of the coming of the King of Kings. The other three candles may be associated with many different aspects of the Advent story. Themes are varied and yet the traditional message of the third candle is one of joy for the coming of Christ. Regardless of the stories, scripture reading or prayers used with the lighting of each candle, the common theme is the story of redemption through God’s grace in the Incarnation.

The Advent Calendar



Another way to mark the passing of days during Advent is to use a traditional Advent calendar. Remember though that the number of days in Advent will vary from year to year. Most commercial Advent calendars typically consist of 24 to 25 panels or doors, one for each of the 24 days in December that proceeds Christmas Day. Sometimes a 25th panel will be included, representing Christmas Day. The idea being that behind each panel, there is a message revealing a piece of the Nativity story. Advent calendars can be very helpful in keeping children focused on the reason for the season. The calendars provide daily involvement through the season of Advent, and sometime through Epiphany. There are many variations to the traditional Advent Calendar and the Internet provides a host of information on them. Here are just a few suggestions:

Encourage daily reflection and prayer by handing out adult Advent calendars.

Bring the season home to your families in this convenient and attractive calendar. Scripture verses provide the basis for a brief spiritual reflection for every day of Advent. The blank back is ideal for adding a special message or the dates and times of Advent and Christmas services. This calendar brightens any bulletin board or refrigerator door!

2020 Adult Advent Calendar

Picked up at church (office)



Jesse Tree

This activity is centered on Isaiah 11, which suggest that: “A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots”.

Everyone has a family tree, including Jesus. He was a descendant of King David whose father was Jesse. The idea of the Jesse Tree is to show Jesus’ family tree back to his ancestor, Jesse. Place a tree branch in a stable container, safely anchored with rocks or dirt, and decorate it with symbols of the various members of Jesus’ family. As an Advent Calendar, one ornament can be added each day of Advent with a related scripture reference read.

Chrismon Tree



The word Chrismon comes from two words, “Christ” and Monogram”. Chrismon trees are decorated with symbols for Jesus. Making these symbolic ornaments and learning about their meaning can be a special Advent project. The ornaments can be added one day at a time (serving as an Advent calendar or all at once on Christmas Eve. They are elaborate ornaments of white and gold; often 3-dimensional beaded creations. Glitter and glue can work too if beading is not an option.

The Advent Chain



A variation of the Advent calendar is the Advent chain. These can be constructed at home by simply cutting strips of colorful construction paper and placing a special Advent reading, good deed or message on each strip. Each day, a strip is added and glued or taped into the link formation.

This variation of the Advent calendar allows for the complete coverage of all three seasons: Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. The links of the chain can even be color coordinated to the week of the season.

The Blessing Box



You will need a box to serve as a bank for this Advent activity. Decorate and place the box on the kitchen table for 36-38 days (from Advent through Epiphany). Each day, place a daily offering in the box, counting your own blessings and remembering those less fortunate. Explain to children that the money being banked will be given to someone who will be able to use it to provide themselves with the blessings they are in need of (socks, food, shelter, clothes, etc.). On Epiphany Sunday, give the box away to someone in need.

Recycled Christmas Cards

Using last year’s Christmas cards, create an Advent calendar of your own. Use your imagination. Hang them from a line, post them on a board or make them 3-dimensional. The options are endless

An Activity A Day

Figure out how many days are in Advent for that year and create a simple list of family activities that can be performed on each day. Look for the example located at the back of this booklet!

Ornament A-Day

Christmas Balls Using round Christmas balls to remind us that God’s power and love has no beginning or end, hang one round Christmas ball for each day of Advent. As each ball is hung, scripture can be recited that corresponds to the Advent lessons of that week. Choose Advent colors for the balls or create a color system that applies to a theme of your choice.

Stars Jesus is called the “*Bright Morning Star*”. For each day of Advent (and perhaps continuing through Epiphany), decorate star-shaped cutouts, placing a scripture message around its edges. Then, place the stars on a poster board or wall. Remember that the wild star, which the Magi followed, was a five-pointed star.

Mustard Seeds Jesus taught that if you have the faith the size of a mustard seed then you can move mountains, or uproot trees from the ground and cast them into the sea. During Advent we prepare with great anticipation for Jesus to come and forever change the world, and it begins with the little faith each of us has to act together to be a part of those changes and witness to those changes a little bit at a time.

Paper Clips The Holy Spirit calls, gathers and hold us together as a community of faith like a paper clip holds together paper. More pages can be added or shuffled as needed with a paper clip as the God adds and changes His community to teach and serve in the world. Paper clips represent the power of the Spirit to enlighten us in new and innovative ways to best communicate the love of God in Christ Jesus – right now there are over 400 ways to use a simple paper clip to accomplish tasks beyond its intended use.

Stocking Stuffers We hang stockings over the fire to dry them after our daily journeys in and about the world. The Bible tells us that beautiful are the feet that bear good news. We have an opportunity to bear good news over the season of Christmas that “God is with us.” Remember when you put on your stockings (socks) and go out the door that God goes with you to bring “joy, peace, faith and love” to others. Write down on a piece of paper the name of someone who is that “good news” bearer to you, and write the name of someone who you pray the Spirit will help you bring “good news” to.

The Gifts of Advent We give gift to people out of love. Some gifts are wrapped in boxes just waiting to be opened on Christmas morning with both joy and surprise. However, some gifts don’t come in a box. During Advent we recognize the gifts that keep on giving and have true meaning throughout our lives, such as time, family, shared interests, listening, patience, hope, trust, etc. Write down what gifts you want to share with your family that are

not “things” which show how much you love them (*Don't look at what each wrote*). Place the notes in your family box, seal the box and put a ribbon around it. Hang it on your tree, or put it in a stocking, or place it by your manger scene and open it on Christmas day.

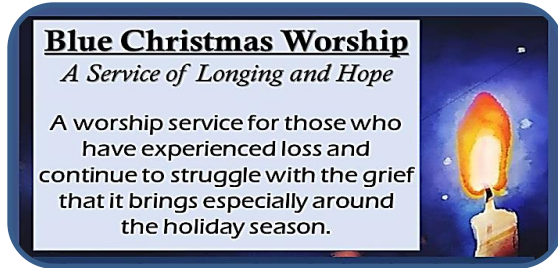
God With Us: Our Story We read in the newspapers, hear in the media and see in our communities the events of the day and wonder what is God up to? And why does God allow bad things to happen? Advent and Christmas celebrates God's promise to be with us in the world no matter what is happening? We may not understand the “why?” but we can trust in the “who” – God who comes to be with us because of God's love for each person. God redeems and reconciles the world in Jesus Christ.

Gazing Ornament The “gazing globe” are ornaments in gardens which would help servants see if their master was in trouble without looking directly at them. They could use the ‘gazing globe’ to see who was coming and going around the garden; thus providing a greater awareness of their surroundings. Our gazing globe helps us to be aware of the wonder around us, and remind us of God helping us when we might not always see God directly. Jesus is the gazing globe into which we see the very presence of God with us all the time!

Family Ornament During this year of uncertainty and physical separation due to the pandemic we thank God for the gifts that keep us and sustain us like that of family and friends. Each family represents the network of love and support that God provides whether in person or virtually. This Advent will honor the gift of family and the importance of connection with God and one another.

Blue Christmas

A service of longing and hope



We experience loss in many ways throughout our life. Some losses are small, and some are life-altering and call us to provide a time and place of solace during the frenetic days surrounding Christmas. Not everyone feels like celebrating. Grief, illness, aging, depression, loneliness, unemployment, and loss are magnified. Even those who are not struggling with losses may feel the stress of preparations and expectations around Christmas.

In the Northern Hemisphere, December 21 is the longest night, the winter solstice, which means literally "standing still." It marks the shortest day of the year, the official start of winter, when the sun traces its shortest, lowest path above the horizon in the northern hemisphere. Tradition says that nature and all her creatures stop and hold their breath to see if the sun will turn back from its wanderings, if the days will lengthen and the earth will once again feel the sun's warmth. We might feel like that in our circumstances as life seems to stop or take a detour and we wonder if we can go on. How will life be now?

In the gathering darkness of December, we anticipate the coming again of the Light of the world. It may only be the hope that marks Advent's waiting that keeps us looking toward the coming of Christ. It may also be that the blue of the Advent season (which symbolizes hope) is the very remedy we need for what makes us feel "blue" at Christmas.

We celebrate a time of remembrance and hope by making Christmas ornaments and hanging them with family and friends on our Christmas tree.

**Blue Christmas service will be online and in person @
Palestine Lutheran on Wednesday, December 09th at 7:00pm**

A Nativity Scene



St. Francis Assisi popularized the nativity when he created one using real people and animals with the backdrop of a cave. In doing so, he emphasized the significance of devotion to the Christ Child during the waiting period of Advent.

A nativity scene, also called a “*Crèche*”, can be very useful in preparing for the coming of Christmas. The nativity can be set out whole or can be introduced piece by piece, or group by group, during the four weeks of Advent. You may choose to present the figures in chronological order or in some other sequential order. For instance, present the empty manger scene for week one, the animals for week two, the Holy Family for week three, the shepherds on week four, the Christ Child on Christmas Eve and the three Kings on Epiphany.

Some nativity scenes depict a cave as Christ’s birthplace, while others show a stable or shed. Regardless, it is this humble beginning of our Savior’s life that is a mystery of God’s wisdom. We may not know why God chose such humble surroundings, but we do know that He reached out to all people. God reached out to the rich and poor, the rejected and accepted, the simple and wise, the powerful and powerless. And he continues to reach out to all. During Advent, we gather around the manger with the animals, the Shepherds, the Holy Family and the Wise Men. And, we bow down as we remember God’s expression of love through his son, Jesus Christ.

Build your own nativity scene. Say a prayer of blessing as you set the scene up.

Advent Table – Blessing materials

Build your own Nativity Scenes

Deconstruction Alternative for 2020 – We challenge you to examine and reflect on what it is at the center of our chaotic Christmas – the Christ – even when everything else falls apart Christ remains our foundation and hope for today and tomorrow. Begin with Jesus and the nativity complete and remove a piece each day during advent while leaving Jesus. You can leave Jesus and build around him as an alternative approach.

An Advent Liturgy

The First Week in Advent



Each day of this week, light the first candle and say together:

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life". Our King and Savior now draw near; Come let us adore him.

Let the first candle remind us of the prophets who hoped the Messiah would come and bring peace and love to the world.

Prayer: *Dear Lord, our world is in darkness. We need the light of peace and love to shine in our work. Help us to prepare our lives and our homes to receive the One who said, I am the light of the world. We pray this in Christ's name. AMEN*

The Second Week in Advent



Each day of this week, light the first and second candles and say together:

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life". Our King and Savior now draw near; Come let us adore him.

This week, let the first candle remind us of the prophets who hoped the Messiah would come and bring peace and love to the world. And, let the second candle remind us of John the Baptist, the great prophet, who pointed the way for the Messiah. "In the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our Lord." Isaiah 40:3

Prayer: *Dear Lord, as we remember the message of John the Baptist, help us to wait patiently for the good things you have prepared for us, and help us to prepare our hearts for the gift of your Son. AMEN*

The Third Week in Advent



Each day of this week, light the first, second and third candles and say together:

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life". Our King and Savior now draw near; Come let us adore him.

This week, let the first candle remind us of the prophets who hoped the Messiah would come and bring peace and love to the world. And, let the second candle remind us of John the Baptist, the great prophet, who pointed the way for the Messiah. The third candle reminds us of the Shepherds; let us also remember the Angels who were messengers of God; delivering the message to Mary and Joseph that they would give birth to Jesus, and to the Shepherds in the fields announcing Jesus' birth.

Prayer: Mary, for you this time before Jesus' birth was a quiet time, a growing time. As we wait, we prepare our hearts to receive the Christ Child. Lord, help us to be good Shepherds of your word. Come, Lord Jesus, the whole world is waiting for you. AMEN

The Fourth Week in Advent



Each day of this week, light all four candles and say together:

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life". Our King and Savior now draw near; Come let us adore him.

This week, let the first candle remind us of the prophets who hoped the Messiah would come and bring peace and love to the world. And, let the second candle remind us of John the Baptist, the great prophet, who pointed the way for the Messiah. And, let the third candle remind us of the Shepherds, who with Mary and Joseph were the first to hear the Good News of the birth of Jesus. And as we are reminded of the Shepherds, let us also remember the Angels who were messengers of God; delivering the message to Mary and Joseph that they would give birth to Jesus, and to the Shepherds in the fields announcing Jesus' birth. The fourth candle reminds us of God's love and glory through his Son, Jesus.

Prayer: Mary, for you this time before Jesus' birth was a quiet time, a growing time. As we wait, we prepare our hearts to receive the Christ Child. Lord, help us to be good Shepherds of your word. Come, Lord Jesus, the whole world is waiting for you. AMEN

An Activity A Day

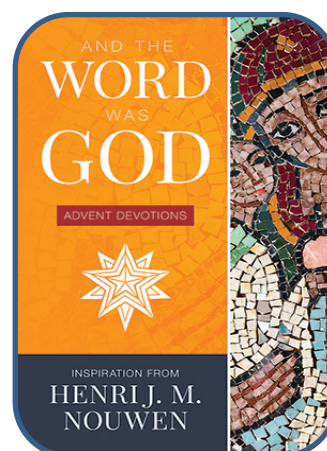
(You can alter this list to fit your situation)

November 29	Write a Christmas card to a friend
November 30	Pick a family ornament for the Church Tree (2020)
December 1	Zoom or call a family member to check on them
December 2	Do homework early. Read a favorite book.
December 3	Read the Christmas story from Luke 2:1-20.
December 4	Visit a shut-in friend.
December 5	Read John 3:19-21 and John 8:12 by candlelight.
December 6	Watch a Christmas movie.
December 7	Make a birthday card for Jesus.
December 8	Make Christmas cookies to take to church tomorrow.
December 9	Read a favorite Christmas book.
December 10	Reflect on how Jesus is the Light of the World.
December 11	Take an evening walk.
December 12	Make an ornament for the tree.
December 13	Make Christmas cookies.
December 14	Purchase gifts for a needy family.
December 15	Watch a Christmas movie.
December 16	After church, take a walk and admire the decorations
December 17	Visit a friend.
December 18	Read the Christmas story from Matthew 1:18-2:11.
December 19	Mom and dad read stories for one hour.
December 20	Invite friends over for hot chocolate and wassail.
December 21	Put out food for the birds.
December 22	Take an evening drive to see Christmas lights and talk about the lessons at church.
December 23	Read the Christmas story from Luke 1:26-38, 2-1:14.
December 24	Go to church on Christmas Eve.

Palestine Lutheran Church ***Advent & Christmas Daily Devotions 2020***

And the Word was God!

Family Reflections for Advent



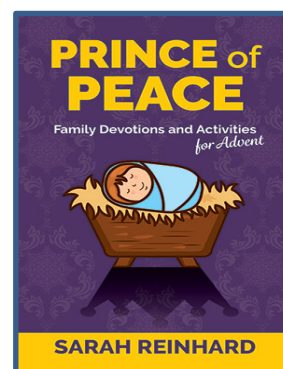
Practice a focused, prayerful and reflective Advent season with the wisdom of Henri J.M. Nouwen. Featuring daily Scriptural inspiration, accompanied by the writings of Henri J.M. Nouwen, a theological master, this gem of a spiritual resource guides you through Advent with hope, faith, joy and peace. Original reflections and prayers written by well-known Creative Communications author Christopher Klofft are also part of the daily inspiration provided on the pages within. With the help of this resource, may you come to know that the Word Incarnate is accompanying you every day of Advent and beyond.

Inspire church members, staff and volunteers with the wisdom of Henri J.M. Nouwen as a faith-enhancing seasonal gift.

Pick Up at Church with Calendars and Wreath Kit

Prince of Peace

Advent Reflections and Activities for Families



Engage and inspire all age groups with this charming devotional booklet designed especially for families. Think, pray, talk about, and anticipate the birth of our Savior together. Jesus is coming! With devotions and activities for each day of Advent, the whole family can celebrate the love that God has shown us by giving us his Son, the Prince of Peace. Creative Communications author Sarah Reinhard invites families to pray, learn about their faith and to live it out. Because he loves us so much, Jesus humbled himself to be born in a manger and live in poverty. Preparing to welcome Jesus together, families grow closer to Christ and one another through scripture, prayer and reflection. Jesus is inviting us beyond the busyness of the season and into the peace of the season. Support and inspire family prayer by sharing this booklet with church and school families as a seasonal gift. A great resource to send home with students to encourage family Advent reflection.

Also available on Kindle and Nook

Advent Mid-Week Worship 2020

Welcome to DECONSTRUCT: An Advent Devotional

THE THEME

This Advent we will be exploring the theme **DECONSTRUCT** during Advent. Let the voices of the prophets and the voices of four modern church leaders invite you to do some deconstructing of your own. Worship begins 7:30pm (Blue Christmas @ 7pm)



What are the layers of life that have made you who you are?

What do you need to claim again about the beautiful creation you are?

What do you need to let go of?

December 2 – Service of Lament & Hope

December 9 – Blue Christmas (7pm)

December 16 – Fear Not! A Service for Advent

December 23 – Service of Hope & Expectation

Online and limited In person

de-con-struct / .dēkən'strəkt/

verb

: to reduce (something) to its constituent parts in order to reinterpret it.

: to take apart or examine (something) in order to reveal the basis or composition often with the intention of exposing biases, flaws, or inconsistencies

: to adapt or separate the elements of for use in a radically new way

FROM THE DEVOTION LEADERS

We believe that the first step to DECONSTRUCT is to confess.

We confess of the ways that we have been complicit in keeping systems and structures in place that have brought about oppression.

We confess that we have not loved ourselves or our neighbors as ourselves.

We confess that we have not loved God.

We begin with examining who we are in this time in history, who our ancestors of faith were, and who God is as we embark on the journey to DECONSTRUCT.

We are excited to explore the texts provided by the Revised Common Lectionary for Advent 2020.

Weeks 1-3: *From the prophet Isaiah, these texts invite us into stories of struggle; stories that point to the cry of the people who were wandering and wondering about God's presence; stories that invite us to remember that which remains and that which stands the test of time.*

Week 4: *The Magnificat from the Gospel of Luke is a story that brings hope and light and love to a people in desperate need of relief. It is a story that reminds us who God is and how God cares for those who are oppressed.*

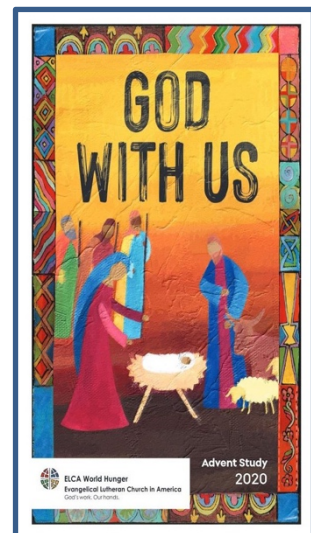
Advent Special Offerings support the Palestine Confirmation Class Youth for their confirmation trip. Due to COVID-19 restrictions fundraising for this trip has been depleted.
Thank You!

Advent Zoom Bible Study **Tuesdays in Lent @ 6:30pm**

Rejoice and reflect this Advent season through study, prayer and worship. ELCA World Hunger's 2020 Advent study is full of new weekly devotions. Use this resource during weekly worship or adult study, online or in person, or encourage members to read it each week during Advent.

Download Resource:

Download and print for free at [ELCA.org/hunger/resources](https://www.elca.org/hunger/resources) under the "Seasonal" tab, or order printed copies online at resources.ELCA.org.



Watch, Wait, Wonder, Worship

Sunday Advent Worship Experience

Sunday Series Overview



These contemplative Advent liturgies are used focus and reflect on the Sunday celebration to practice prayer in the moods and gestures evoked in this season.

In the spirit of “keeping vigil,” the first week centers upon watching for Christ’s coming again. The second week calls us to prayerful waiting in preparation for the coming of Jesus. Drawing upon the idea that “wisdom begins in wonder,” the third week invites us to embrace imaginative wonderment at the things of God.

This is God’s story. This is our story. Welcome to the season of Advent.

Advent 1: Watch! (November 29th)

Focus Questions: What word, image, or phrase stands out for you in this reading?
What will you watch and pray about this Advent?
What will help you stay awake?

Advent 2: Wait! (December 6th)

Focus Questions: What word, image, or phrase stands out for you in this reading?
What in your life requires patience?
What are you waiting for?
How might you prepare the way of Christ’s coming?

Advent 3: Wonder! (December 13th)

Focus Question: What word, image, or phrase stands out for you in this reading?
Where will you look for God’s glory?
Where do you engage in wonder at God’s creation; in wonder at the love, grace, and forgiveness of Christ; in wonder at the transforming work of the Holy Spirit?

Advent 4: Worship! (December 20th)

Focus Question: What word, image, or phrase stands out for you in this reading?
The angel said to Mary, “Do not be afraid, for you have found favor with God.” Where might you leave fear behind?
How does worship of God give you clarity of vision?
How will you magnify the Lord today?

ADVENT LITANY

Use this litany in your worship service or include it in newsletters as you celebrate the season:

Congregation's responses are sung, with accompaniment or a capella, to the tune of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

Leader: In this season of waiting, we remember those bound by hunger and thirst and those who long to taste freedom — from want, from fear and from isolation. To God, who frees us, we pray:

Community: **O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.**

Leader: In this season of anticipation, we groan with those who long for the banquet at which all will be fed. To God, who welcomes us, we pray:

Community: **O come, O Wisdom from on high, embracing all things far and nigh.**

Leader: In this season of watching, we walk with refugees and migrants, and remember our own long journey to the Promised Land. To God, who accompanies us, we pray:

Community: **O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on Sinai's height.**

Leader: In this season of winter, we hear the cries of a newborn babe echoing in a stable and are moved by the cries echoing from the streets and alleyways, the shelters and viaducts of our own communities. To God, who wanders with us, we pray:

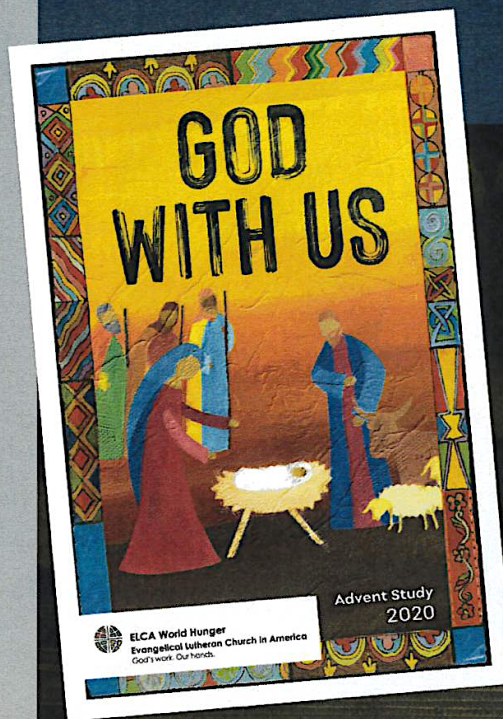
Community: **O come, O Key of David, come, and open wide our heav'nly home.**

Leader: In this season of hope, we work for peace, toward a world in which all lives have value. To God, who reconciles us, we pray:

Community: **O come, O King of nations, come, O Cornerstone that binds in one.**

Leader: In this season of expectation, we strive for justice, awaiting the One who brings good news to the poor and sets the captives free. To God, who calls us, we pray:

Community: **O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer, O Sun of justice, now draw near.**



ADVENT STUDY

Rejoice and reflect this Advent season through study, prayer and worship. ELCA World Hunger's 2020 Advent study is full of new weekly devotions. Use this resource during weekly worship or adult study, online or in person, or encourage members to read it each week during Advent.

Download and print for free at [ELCA.org/hunger/resources](https://www.elca.org/hunger/resources) under the "Seasonal" tab, or order printed copies online at resources.ELCA.org.



Encore Advent Devotional offered during the Holiday Season of COVID-19

REFLECTING ON OUR RELATIONSHIPS IN LIGHT OF GOD'S LOVE

Advent Resources for Congregations and Individuals



**Advent – the season of preparing for a relationship with Christ.
This year, we will focus on our relationships with neighbor, family,
self, and God.**

*May we love God, our neighbors, and ourselves
with all the creativity of our minds,
the strength of our hearts,
the power of our bodies,
and the resilience of the Spirit. Amen*

For a virtual daily devotion on this resource go to www.waytolead.org/advent-intentions-2019
Follow the directions on the page and spend time with God during Advent. Begin this
devotion on December 1 and choose one symbol a day during the work week (M-F) until
Christmas eve.