



# ADVENT

It is the beautiful task of Advent  
to awaken in all of us memories  
of goodness and thus to open  
doors of hope  
-Henri Nouwen

## Seasonal Overview

Advent, as a season is hard to trace historically. We don't know when it started exactly, we can only say that it was being observed by the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Advent comes from the Latin *adventus* which means "coming."

Advent is a season of preparation for Christ's advent into the world. We live out the longing and angst of the world as the promised Messiah felt delayed. Advent helps us approach Christmas in a proper state of mind. We are not allowed to rush from Thanksgiving to Christmas, from feast to feast.

You will often hear Advent described as a season that is about 3 advents, not just one.



### Colors

Purple, Dark Blue, Pink

### Themes

Hope, Peace, Joy, Love, Anticipation

### Decorations

Wreaths, Candles, Poinsettias, Banners



### In History

The Word became flesh and dwelt  
among us.

**John 1:14**

Christ's First Advent was as a baby.

### In Mystery

All who obey his commandments  
abide in him, and he abides in them.  
And by this we know that he abides in  
us, by the Spirit that he has given us

**1 John 3:24**

Christ's Second Advent was into our  
lives.

### In Majesty

See, the home of God is among  
mortals. He will dwell with them; they  
will be his peoples, and God himself  
will be with them and be their God;

**Revelation 21:3**

Christ's Third Advent will come at the  
end, when the Kingdom is fulfilled.

We do not only recall those  
who waited for Christ; we join  
with them each year to tell of  
the one who answers the  
yearning of every human heart  
and the desire of every nation.

- Tish Harrison Warren

# Disciplines of Advent



## **PRAY & REFLECT**

Prayer is a foundational Christian habit, so it fits in every season of the year, but we often find its focus shifts. In Advent, a helpful prayer to make habit is called an “examen” prayer. Examen seeks to become aware of God’s presence by reviewing the day. If you’ve never prayed the examen, we have a “missional examen” you can find on our Advent webpage. This helps us become aware of the places of our lives in which God has already advented.



One way that we can prepare is to re-acquaint ourselves with God, through Scripture and devotional readings. One of the things we do every year at Westwood is invite our church to bless us with devotional thoughts. Pick up one of the devotional booklets and read each day’s thought. You can also purchase other advent devotionals for your family and read them at a meal together. Our kids love to light a candle while we read and discuss!



## **DAILY READING**



## **BENEVOLENCE**

December has a way to really make obvious who are the haves and who are the have-lesses. The third Sunday of Advent is called *Gaudete* Sunday, which is Latin for rejoice. It is marked by a pink candle rather than a purple one. One way that we can bring joy to our neighbor is by serving the neighbor. We rejoice that Jesus is coming into the world. Perhaps we can be the face of Jesus to our neighbors by serving at a soup kitchen, gift drive, or donating to the organizations serving those among our community in need. May we not only rejoice, but bring joy.



We don’t often think of Advent or Christmas as times of repentance, but we would do well to remember that God’s love coming in a baby is because of our brokenness. If there was no need to repent, Jesus would never have been born. The Holy Spirit came into our hearts when we repented of our sin and were baptized. Even today, “we have not loved him with our whole hearts.” Advent is a reminder that God comes when we don’t deserve it, and that inspires us to repent.



## **REPENTANCE**

**[westwoodchristian.com/Advent](http://westwoodchristian.com/Advent)**