

# Reflections for Advent

## ADVENT

Advent is the season that begins the liturgical year. It consists of four Sundays starting with the Sunday closest to November 30th. The word "advent" is derived from the Latin *adventus*, which means "coming" or "arrival."

## THE CHURCH'S FOCUS DURING ADVENT

The focus of the church during the Advent season is Christ's threefold coming - past, present, and future.

- First, we remember the Lord's humble first coming in Bethlehem two thousand years ago.
- Second, we give thanks for His present and continual coming into our hearts through the Word and Sacraments.
- Finally, we look forward with hope and patience to His victorious second coming as Judge and King at the end of time.

Advent is the first part of a larger liturgical season that includes Christmas and Epiphany and continues until the beginning of Lent. Viewed as a whole, this time celebrates God the Father's wonderful gift to the world of His only-begotten Son, sent to save us from sin and death.

## THE LITURGICAL COLOUR

Purple is the traditional colour for the season of Advent. Purple was the most costly dye in ancient times and was therefore used by kings to indicate their royal status. Purple also signifies the repentance and patience of God's people as they await the arrival of their Lord.

## THE IMPORTANTANCE OF ADVENT IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

While the rest of society is caught up in the frantic rush of shopping, decorations, parties, and other distractions, the church takes pause during Advent to contemplate the wonder of God's undeserved mercy and love in Jesus Christ.

Christians approach the Advent season much as expectant parents approach the months before a child is born. There are feelings of exhilaration, uneasiness, longing, and awe as the day of arrival approaches.

God's people prepare themselves at home and at church for the coming of the Lord by exercising the disciplines of Advent: confession and repentance, fervent prayer, immersion in Scripture, fasting, and the singing of seasonal hymns and anthems.

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Advent is almost upon us and in our Fellowship meeting this month we retrace events leading up to the birth of Jesus, how it affected the people involved and what it means for us today.

## SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

1. A sign to the house of David. [Isaiah 7:10-14](#)
2. A divine child Israel's only hope. [Isaiah 9:6-7](#)
3. The angel Gabriel appears to Mary. [Luke 1:26-35](#)
4. The angel of the LORD appears to Joseph in a dream. [Matthew 1:18-25](#)
5. The angel of the Lord appears to shepherds. [Luke 2:8-14](#)

## GOOD NEWS!

Advent is synonymous with Good News. Good News is the translation of the word Gospel (from the Greek *euaggelion*) which in one of our texts is rendered "good tidings of great joy".

To aid our discussions let us reflect on the following:

1. What was the Good News? [Luke 2:11](#)
2. Why was Good News needed? [Matthew 1:21](#)
3. Who was the Good News meant for? [Luke 2:10](#)
4. What did the "Good News" mean for Mary?
  - Who was Mary? [Luke 1:27](#)
  - What were Mary's reactions? [Luke 1:29](#), [Luke 1:34](#), [Luke 1:38](#)
  - What did Mary do? [Luke 1:39-40](#), [Luke 1:56](#)
  - If you were Mary how would you react and what would you do?
5. Was this Good News for Joseph?
  - How did Joseph initially react? [Matthew 1:19](#)
  - What did Joseph do? [Matthew 1:24](#)
  - If you were Joseph how would you react and what would you do?
6. Why was the Good News announced to shepherds?
  - How did the shepherds react? [Luke 2:9](#)
  - What did they do? [Luke 2:15-17](#)
7. Who were the "wise men"? [Matthew 2:1](#)
  - How did they know about Jesus? [Matthew 2:2](#)
  - Where did they find Jesus?
8. Is Jesus' birth over two thousand years ago still "Good News" today?
  - How do we react to God's calling and plan for our lives?

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## Concluding Thoughts

The call and plan of God for our lives.

### Are we like Mary?

- Perplexed, even troubled, when we hear the call of God.
- Seek clarification and answers.
- and, after receiving, trust in God and His promises whatever the cost, and in obedience and faith look to those things which are from above.

OR

### Are we like the shepherds?

- On hearing, with haste, look to confirm what has been reveal.
- and, having been confirmed, spread the word abroad.

OR

### Are we like the wise men?

- Who go and worship the King.
- and present our treasure, not gold, frankincense and myrrh, but our lives and souls for the service of our Lord and Saviour.

OR

### Are we like Isaiah?

- Who when the Lord said “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me”. Isaiah 6:8

How do we respond to the call and plan of God for our lives?