



# Christmas

AT CC

2023 Advent



*Do not yield to your fear, Mary, for  
the Lord has found delight in you and  
has chosen to surprise you with a  
wonderful gift.*

Luke 1:30 (PT)

# *What is Advent?*

The word “Advent” is derived from the Latin *adventus*, which means “arrival” or “coming.” In the Christian Church, the season of Advent is a time of preparation and expectation, not just for the remembrance and celebration of the birth of Christ, but also as we look for the second coming of Christ. Like the Israelites of the Old Testament awaiting the arrival of Messiah, today’s church awaits Christ’s return. Consider the lyrics to the Advent hymn, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.”

*O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appears.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*





*The celebration of Advent is possible only to those who are troubled in soul, who know themselves to be poor and imperfect, and who look forward to something greater to come.*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer



# *Advent Candle Tradition*

Jesus is the light of the world. The tradition of lighting Advent candles is a symbol of that light. Each week a new candle is lit, along with the one from the previous week, and the light brightens as we draw closer to Christmas. Let the candles burn while you read the daily scripture and pray. The symbolism of each candle is explained within the calendar as you follow along.

*Visit  
Christ's.Church/advent  
or scan code for more  
Advent Resources:*



# YOU'RE INVITED TO CHRISTMAS AT CHRIST'S CHURCH!

JOIN US FOR AN EXPERIENCE FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY. WE'LL HAVE GREAT WORSHIP,  
CANDLE LIGHTING, AND MORE AS WE GATHER TO CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

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DEC 23RD 4PM  
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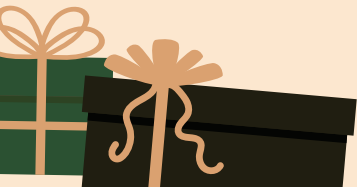


# *WEEK 1 - HOPE*

## *DAY 1* *SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26TH*

Light the first purple candle.  
This week's candle  
represents the HOPE and  
anticipation of the coming  
Messiah.

**Read Matthew 12:21**



*Read*  
**1 CORINTHIANS 1:4-9**

There are many things to be thankful for in our lives. The bad things seem to occupy so much of our emotional and mental bandwidth, and they rob us our ability to see the good in our life. We just celebrated THANKSgiving. Why are you thankful? If you had to answer that question every day, how would it shape your attitude? My guess is you would begin to see how all the good in life far outweighs the bad and how God is moving in your life to bless you. Jesus is the greatest blessing God has given to us. As we move into the Christmas season, develop an attitude of gratitude and reflect on the greatest gift we have been given, Jesus Christ.

*Day 2 - November 27th*



*Read*

# *1 CORINTHIANS 10:31-33*

We live in a very self-centered culture. It's all about what we want and what we think and what we have. Our culture's first thought is rarely about the needs of others but about what will advance the individual's wants. Me...me...me. The two most selfless acts in human history center around the Christmas story... God sending His Son from Heaven to Earth and Jesus living out God's plan to redeem His creation. How can we put others first this season?

*Day 3 - November 28th*

*Read*  
**JOHN 3:1-21**

Nicodemus was an 'insider,' a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews. He knew the scriptures and the prophecies about Messiah. While others were hostile towards the Gospel, Nicodemus was curious and wanted answers. Under the cover of darkness, Nicodemus sought answers from The Light of the World! Jesus explained many things to Nicodemus, including the HOPE of eternal life that Jesus promised in John 3:16.

*Day 4 - November 29th*

*Read*  
**LUKE 2:11-14**

It may sound cliché but Jesus IS the reason for this season! There would be no Christmas if it were not for Christ. While we may not be able to change the commercialism, we CAN make sure our heart is right as we move toward this sacred day. We CAN make sure we do not lose sight of Jesus. We CAN focus less on what we want and more on what we give. Take a moment today to slow down this season and remind yourself what Christmas is all about; Jesus, God's perfect plan to save you.

*Day 5 - November 30th*

*Read*  
***MATTHEW 12: 8-21***

Again, Jesus fulfills prophecy from the Old Testament as he refers to the book of Isaiah, verse 42:4. Many were following Jesus, looking for healing and He did heal many physical ailments; However, the ultimate healing will occur when Christ returns. Jesus came to earth to give us hope; hope for eternal life when He will make all things new.

*Day 6 - December 1st*

*Read*

# ***MATTHEW 11:28-29***

Quit trying to do life by your own power and your own strength and fall into the ever-capable hands of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is our source of peace. He is our source of rest. He is our source for relief. Jesus said these amazing words in the Sermon on the Mount...Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. To get the rest you are looking for, surrender to the giver of rest. We find true rest only in a relationship with God.

***Day 7 - December 2nd***

## *WEEK 2 - FAITH*

### *DAY 8*

# *SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3RD*



Light the first and second purple candles. This week's candle represents faith. Prophecies written in the Old Testament were fulfilled when Jesus was born. We can have faith that He will return.

**Read Micah 5:1-5**

*Read*  
**PSALM 142**

David pleads with God to come to his rescue and not waste any time in doing so. He's at the end of his rope so he prays this expectant prayer, asking God for rescue from his enemies.

David exhales trouble and inhales peace.

Sometimes that is all we need to do. In our seasons of distress, it is OK to let God know how we feel. He truly cares. 1 Peter 5:7 says to "Cast all your cares on Him because He cares for you." Do not think you have to hold everything together and never wonder where God is in your current situation. It is natural to not want to endure change and refinement. So, lift your cares to Him and feel peace enter your situation as you wait for God to make things right in your life.

*Day 9 - December 4th*

*Read*

## *EPHESIANS 6:10-17*

Satan's schemes against us are ongoing. Although we are assured victory, we must engage in the struggle until Christ returns, because he is constantly battling against all who are on the Lord's side. We need supernatural power to defeat Satan, and God has provided this by giving us His Holy Spirit within us and His armor around us. If you feel discouraged today, remember Jesus' words to Peter: "On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not overcome it." (Matthew 16:18)

*Day 10 - December 5th*



*Read*  
**PSALM 132:11-18**

Life can be hard. That is an understatement, right? Just know that God loves you so much that He refused to rush the process and miss the opportunity to make you into the masterpiece that He intended for you to be. Where you see pain and problems, God sees the brushstrokes that will create peace and faith in your life.

When you feel off track or wonder if you are heading in the right direction, stop and ask The One who already sees you at the finish line. You can trust His direction.

*Day 11 - December 6th*

*Read*

# *ISAIAH 7:14; 9:6-7*

It is unbelievable to think that God became Immanuel, God with us, taking on flesh and bone so that He could make us Holy. If you ever doubt God's power or His plan just spend a few minutes reading His names in these verses. It will not take long to realize that we don't need to know everything. We just need the One who does.

*Day 12 - December 7th*

*Read*  
**ISAIAH 29:13-16**

Do those verses sound familiar? Have you heard someone else in the Bible quote those words? Jesus used them to confront the religious leaders who were continuously missing the point, drawing attention to his “rule breaking” (see Mark 7). It is sad how we lose sight of what’s right, thinking we’re close to God, only to be disobedient and realize we are merely going through the motions. God never intended to begin a religion; He sought to create a relationship. All too often we settle for routine and slip into rigid patterns, neglecting to give God our love and devotion. As God’s children, we are to be obedient and worship Him honestly and sincerely. Besides, we cannot hide anything from God.

*Day 13 - December 8th*

*Read*  
**PSALM 32:1-5**

In many of the Psalms, we see the writers following a pattern of steps that we can also implement, especially if feeling disconnected from Christ.

1. Recognize the tendency to sin and that sin is rebellion against God.
2. Confess sin to God.
3. Trust God's willingness to forgive.
4. Accept His forgiveness.

Reading scripture daily, actively praying, being in community with other believers are all critical in our daily walk with Christ. When we neglect our relationship with Christ, it gives the enemy a foothold and cause us to drift away from God. Use this pattern of steps above to re-establish the connection with your Heavenly Father and remember, you are totally forgiven because of Jesus Christ.

*Day 14 - December 9th*

# *WEEK 3 - JOY*

## *DAY 15* *SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10TH*

Light the first two purple candles and the pink candle.

This week's candle represents the JOY that the world experienced with the birth of our Lord Jesus, The Messiah, and the joy that will come when He returns.

**Read Zechariah 9:9**



*Read*

# *LUKE 1:26-35*

The pages of the Bible are filled with story after story of God using the common or unlikely to bring about His plan for our world. God used an unlikely candidate in a miraculous way. Pick any of those stories and substitute your name. That is how God sees you. When you start to doubt whether you are worthy enough to be used by God, look no further than the cross. Because of Jesus Christ you are made worthy.

*Day 16 - December 11th*

*Read*

# *1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7*

Most of us are longing for this kind of love. Those who could or should have loved you did not. You were left at the altar. You were left at the hospital. Left with no answers. Left with a broken heart. Left with questions, wondering, “Does anyone really love me?”

1 Corinthians 13 is God’s answer! God loves you personally, powerfully, passionately. While others promised and failed, God promised and delivered. He loves you with an unfailing, unselfish love that if will not only fill you but spill out of you onto others. Have you accepted His gift of this love?

*Day 17 - December 12th*

*Read*  
**1 JOHN 1:5-7**

In the dark it can be hard to recognize what is in front of us. We have all reached for something in the dark expecting one thing only to find it is something far different. In the dark, good and evil look alike. In the light it is easy to tell the difference. Light exposes truth, whether it is good or bad.

If we want to have a relationship with God, we must put aside our sinful ways of living and walk in the light. To claim that we belong to Him but go on living for ourselves is hypocrisy. Christ, the Light of the World, will expose and judge our hearts.

*Day 18 - December 13th*



*Read*

# *MATHEW 25:35-40*

C. S. Lewis said, “The rule for all of us is fairly simple: do not waste time bothering whether you love your neighbor; act as if you did.

Jesus laid out practical acts of kindness and mercy for us to follow. These acts do not depend on wealth, ability, or intelligence; they are simple acts freely given and freely received. No special “talent” is necessary. No age requirement is assigned. This list is not exhaustive, but it reflects all types of good deeds. It is simple. We serve where serving is needed.

As you are out and about, look for ways you can be used by God to shine a light on His generosity. The reason there is “peace on Earth and goodwill toward men” is because God was first generous with us.

*Day 19 - December 14th*

*Read*

## *JOHN 20:24-29*

Look at this compassionate interaction between Thomas and Jesus. It shows us that having doubts is OK. Jesus was not hard on Thomas for doubting. Despite his skepticism, Thomas was still loyal to the believers and to Jesus Himself. Some people need to doubt before they believe. If doubt leads to questions, questions lead to answers and the answers are accepted, then doubt has done good work. It is when doubt becomes stubbornness and stubbornness becomes a lifestyle that doubt harms faith.

When you doubt, do not stop there. Let your doubt deepen your faith as you continue to search for the answers.

*Day 20 - December 15th*

*Read*  
**MATTHEW 8:5-13**

The Bible says that this man is a Centurion, which is not a run-of-the-mill soldier. He was a Special Forces guy. To even earn the title of Centurion, a soldier must be experienced in battle (that's the polite way of saying he killed a few people). This weathered soldier was stationed in Capernaum and had no less than one hundred Roman soldiers under his direction. He was there to keep the peace and exact Roman law. Many things could have prevented him from approaching Jesus: pride, doubt, money, language, distance, time, self-sufficiency, power, race, or religion. Yet he did not let any of those barriers stop him. Of all the people to ask Jesus for help, this may be the last person anyone would expect, but Jesus was amazed by his faith and healed the servant. Jesus is for all people who are humble enough to seek Him.

*Day 21 - December 16th*

# *WEEK 4 - PEACE*

*DAY 22*

*SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH*



Light all four candles. Turn off other lights in the room and watch how these four little flames light the room. The light overcomes the darkness, and the 'LIGHT OF THE WORLD' is coming soon.

This week's candle represents Peace.

**Read Isaiah 9:1-7**

*Read*

## ***MATTHEW 1:18-25***

Joseph knew Jesus was someone special from the moment he heard the angel's words. His strong belief in that fact, and his willingness to follow God's leading, empowered him to be Jesus' chosen earthly father. When we are faced with a tough decision or an action that needs to be taken, Joseph provides a great example of how we can trust God, even when it's difficult, and God helps us figure out the best action to take.

*Day 23 - December 18th*

*Read*  
***LUKE 1:39-45***

I love when the Bible includes small little facts that show the beauty of God's story and the authenticity of the people He is using. In verse forty-one it says that John leapt for joy Elizabeth's belly when Mary walked in with Jesus in her belly. Even in the womb John was announcing the entrance of Jesus! This is an amazing little anecdote. It says Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. This filling of the Spirit captures the emotions with a God-centered joy and creates in the heart an exciting sense of God's loving purpose. This type of filling makes you want to sing, pray, shout and dance. When God moves your heart this way, let it show!

*Day 24 - December 19th*

*Read*  
**JOHN 3:16-19**

So many people think of God as a bully with a magnifying glass, looking down on us like an ant hill, but God did not send Jesus into our world to condemn it. He sent Jesus to save us. That is important for us to understand. God's great love for us has always been at the heart of His plan; not condemnation or punishment, but love.

Take some time and rest in the greatness of God's love for you. He does not want to punish or condemn you. He loves you and wants you to save you through His Son, Jesus.

*Day 25 - December 20th*

*Read*  
**LUKE 2:22-40**

Jesus' parents took Him to the temple, and they offered a sacrifice to God because of Jesus. There was a man there at the temple named Simeon. Simeon was very old. As soon as he saw baby Jesus, he knew who he was looking at. Look at verses 29-32. "For my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all your peoples..." Simeon recognized that Jesus was and is the salvation for all people. Not only for the Jews, but everyone.

May you know that Jesus is your salvation. There is nothing in this life, no present, gift, moment, or experience, which will be better than Jesus. Our hope is in Him and Him alone.

*Day 26 - December 21st*



*Read*  
**LUKE 22:1-23:46**

Turn your attention to Jesus last moments. The crowd that just days before had welcomed him as a king, now viciously calling for his death. Turned in by Judas, denied by Peter and abandoned by those that claimed to follow Him. Beaten, tortured, and killed in the most horrific and barbaric way imaginable. Separated from His Father because of our sin, causing Him to cry and sweat blood. Jesus endured much pain for us. He put Himself in the crosshairs so we could experience a pain-free eternal existence. It is hard to imagine what a pain-free existence will be like, but that is the promise and the gift for those who believe. Remember why Jesus was born and that God loved us so much that He was willing to come to earth in the flesh and endure all that pain for us.

*Day 27 - December 22nd*

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# *CHRISTMAS EVE - CHRIST*

*DAY 28*  
*SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23RD*

The final candle represents Christ. The color white is for purity - because Jesus is the pure sacrificial lamb, without blemish. Because He was without sin, He is the only one that could save us.

Join us for one of our Christmas Eve candlelight services on December 23/24 as we light the Christ candle together as a family.

**Read Luke 2:1-14**



# BREAKING FREE



21 DAYS OF PRAYER  
AND FASTING

We will kick-off the new year with our annual 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting beginning January 7th themed "Breaking Free."

[www.Christs.Church/Fast](http://www.Christs.Church/Fast)

NEW SERIES BEGINNING JANUARY 28TH



# *BUT GOD*

GENESIS VOL 3  
CHAPTERS 37-50

**Mandarin Campus**

Sundays 9:30am/11am  
Monday Night 6:00pm

**BUT GOD.** There's something powerful about these two words! A simple conjunction combined with a powerful noun highlights the worst and the best of God's redemptive story. On one side of that phrase is sin, rebellion, disobedience, the worst of the human spirit, hopelessness, darkness, and death. On the other side is grace, worship, obedience, purpose, hope, light and life. From Noah to Paul and everywhere in between the phrase **BUT God** is used by human authors to describe God's activity in nearly every salvation story in scripture. **BUT God** is a signal to lean in closer and pay attention because God is about to move.

[www.Christs.Church/ButGod](http://www.Christs.Church/ButGod)