

# The Season of Advent

## *A Time of Anticipation and Hope*



*According to the Christian worldview, humans need God to bring us life and salvation, and Christmas celebrates this coming of God in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Christians affirm that Christ comes not only in a past event but is also in our present life and the world's unfolding future. So it is that Advent is not about Mary's pregnancy but about the church's continual prayer that God will come (the root meaning of "advent") to us, bringing life to a dying world. Advent is a time to meditate on the meaning of life and what is in our*

*own hearts and to pray for God's salvation and wholeness for all. Advent is the only season in the church's year that does not have a distinct day to initiate it.*

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**The Advent Wreath:** In Advent, the first season of the church year, the light becomes brighter on Advent wreaths in our churches and in our homes as we anticipate and acknowledge the presence of the light that no darkness can overcome, Jesus Christ. The wreaths also symbolize expectant anticipation for the fullness of God's presence in Jesus Christ and the faithfulness of God in the gift of eternal life. Consider using all white candles or blue candles that coordinate with the vestments and paraments of the season. The older practice of using a pink candle on the Third Sunday of Advent as a symbol of joy is no longer consistent with the current lectionary.

**Proclamation:** The biblical readings for the Sundays in Advent give voice to a jarring reality: This violent, tragic, sin-filled world desperately needs the healing, reconciliation and peace of the presence of the Savior who is God-with-us, Jesus Christ. The proclamation of the word of God in Advent carefully balances the realistic confession of our human brokenness and longing for Christ's healing with the tangible presence of Christ's presence that is already at hand.

**Go in peace. Serve the Lord.** Advent is an ideal time to emphasize the places where the expectant hope of Christ's presence intersects with the needs of the local community and world. Try making the announcements that pertain to the church's participation in God's mission in the world just before the blessing and dismissal to emphasize the connection between worship and mission.

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