

ADVENT LITURGY  
+  
BIBLE READING PLAN

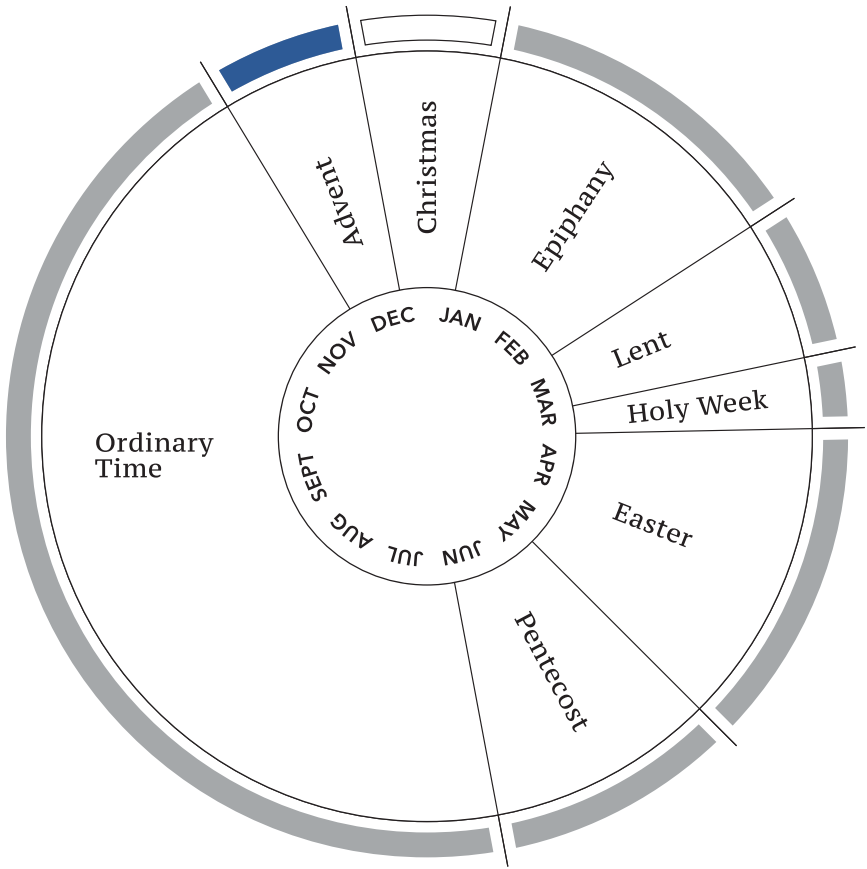
# God with Us



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# INTRODUCTION



## WHAT IS ADVENT?

Advent. For you, this might be one of those “churchy” words you’re familiar with only because you’ve heard it once a year after Thanksgiving. You know when you hear this word—“advent”—Christmas is right around the corner (the season of lights, decorations, gifts, and holiday dinners with Uncle Bob). But Advent is so much more than this. And it’s certainly more than the modern conception of Christmas you’ll find at Washington Square Mall...

Advent is the season that kicks off the cycle of the Christian liturgical calendar. *It's a time marked by yearning, longing, and anticipation for the Messiah who has come, and has yet to come again.*

“Advent” is English for the Latin *adventus*, which means “coming” or “arrival.” It takes place during the four weeks leading up to Christmas Day—the celebration that the darkness of our world has met the great light of our Savior.

Therefore, it's a season devoted to preparing the church for the coming of Christ into our world. We do this by *looking back* to meditate on the incarnation—when God himself stepped into the fragility of human existence to reclaim his world ravaged by the darkness of sin. However, Advent is also a time where the church *looks forward*, in hope, when Christ will return to cast out darkness forever and usher in the kingdom of the new heaven and new earth.

*Advent is a time marked by yearning, longing, and anticipation for the Messiah who has come, and has yet to come again.*

What if, this Advent, you welcomed the tension? That we, as Christians, sit between what *has happened* and what *has yet to take place*? How could this reignite Gospel hope within you and reinvigorate you toward faithfulness? During Advent we are reminded that we take seriously the brokenness of our world, yet we do not live without hope! Allow Advent to do its work welling up both gratitude and hope within you.

*Advent is a time marked by yearning, longing, and anticipation for the Messiah who has come, and has yet to come again.*

## **WHAT SHOULD OUR POSTURE BE?**

Christmas, in the modern American sense, can be confusing. On one hand, it's a jolly time, filled with singing and celebration! On the other hand, we are often anxious and stressed, moving at a frenetic pace to get all our holiday plans in order.

Every individual and family enters this season in their own way, with their own plans and traditions—for better or worse.

In the Christian calendar, Advent invites the believer to *slow down*: to rest in God, contemplate the reality of God become man, and celebrate the promise that Christ will return at his second advent.

If you move too quickly, you may miss the work the Lord is doing in you and around you. Therefore, the Christian posture during Advent is absolutely one of celebration! But it's also one of contemplation, slowing down, and even confession. May this Advent recalibrate your soul and the pace at which you find yourself moving.

## **WHAT ARE BEST PRACTICES IN ADVENT?**

Throughout church history, Christians have engaged in many practices that help orient us to the season of Advent. Such practices include singing, confession, fasting, wreaths, prayer, candle lighting, and more. Below are three practices for us to engage in to help us slow down, live as witnesses, and welcome the season with intentionality.

**SUNDAY WORSHIP.** During Advent, let's make gathering with the community of saints a priority. Amid the holiday to-dos and social gatherings, church is often, unfortunately, the first thing to go. Each Sunday at River West, we'll read Scripture, light the Advent candles, and pray together to draw our attention to Advent.

**GENEROSITY.** Christmas in America is marked by consumerism, and it's easy to get caught up in it. But what if we acted as witnesses to a watching world and, instead of consuming, we gave away time, money, and ourselves? That instead of more, we went with less? That instead of being served, we served others? During Advent, find a non-profit or church to give to, and instead of buying more, donate clothes or furniture to one of our ministry partners in Portland.

**PRAYER, SCRIPTURE, AND ADVENT CANDLES.** Let's enter Advent with purpose and intentionality. Let's not miss the Lord's work! Find a time in your day when you can devote intentional time with the Lord, and focus on the themes of Advent. (The good news is much of the work is already done for you—that's what this guide is for!)

## **HOW TO USE THIS ADVENT GUIDE**

This guide is intended to aid you in your personal time with the Lord. Each week lists an order of practices to follow (liturgy). It includes prayers, sections of the Christmas Story, questions to contemplate, and a short reading for each day of the week. Christmas eve and day follow a different order and are intended to be a little shorter.

Use this guide as it best suits you! You can use it individually, with a friend or spouse, or with your whole family! There might be elements in this guide you aren't used to practicing, but we encourage you to lean in and give it a try. Lastly, start where you're at! Even if it means reading just one passage for the week, the point is simply to read Scripture this Advent.

We hope this guide gives you a helpful structure to navigate Advent with intentionality and a posture of worship!

**May we be a church family ready to receive our King.**

**Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Derrick**



# HOPE

DEC 2 - 7

## 60 SECONDS OF SILENCE

Begin your time in silence. “*Be still and know that I am God*” (Ps. 46:10).

## OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,  
I praise you and worship you! Turn my affections toward you as I seek your presence. Reawaken *HOPE* in me as your first advent renewed me and your second advent will renew all creation. Amen.

## CHRISTMAS STORY REFLECTION | JOHN 1:1-14

Read and reflect on the Christmas passage of the week.

## PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
Cause your Word to take root in the soil of my soul! May your Word pass from my eyes and ears to my heart, from my heart to my lips and conversation; that, as the rain does not return empty, so neither may your Word, but accomplish that for which it is given. Amen.

## READING PLAN

### MONDAY

Genesis 3:15, 22-24

### TUESDAY

2 Samuel 7:1-29

### WEDNESDAY

Isaiah 7:10-15

### THURSDAY

Isaiah 9:2-7, 11:1-10

### FRIDAY

Jeremiah 33:14-16

### SATURDAY

Matthew 1:1-17

After reading: “This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!”

## THE GLORIA

Glory be to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning, as it is now, and as it will be forevermore. Amen.





## **60 SECONDS OF SILENCE**

Begin your time in silence. “*Be still and know that I am God*” (Ps. 46:10).

## **OPENING PRAYER**

Lord Jesus Christ, God with Us,  
I praise you and worship you! Turn my affections toward you as I seek your presence. Today, may I encounter your *PEACE* once again and would I be a conduit of your *PEACE* to those around me. Amen.

## **CHRISTMAS STORY REFLECTION | LUKE 1:26-38**

Read and reflect on the Christmas passage of the week.

## **PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION**

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
Cause your Word to take root in the soil of my soul! May your Word pass from my eyes and ears to my heart, from my heart to my lips and conversation; that, as the rain does not return empty, so neither may your Word, but accomplish that for which it is given. Amen.

## **READING PLAN**

**MONDAY**

Malachi 3:1-4

**THURSDAY**

Psalm 85:8-13

**TUESDAY**

Zechariah 9:9-10

**FRIDAY**

Matthew 1:18-25

**WEDNESDAY**

Haggai 2:6-9

**SATURDAY**

Ephesians 2:14-18

After reading: “This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!”

## **THE GLORIA**

Glory be to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning, as it is now, and as it will be forevermore. Amen.





# JOY

DEC 16 - 21

## 60 SECONDS OF SILENCE

Begin your time in silence. “*Be still and know that I am God*” (Ps. 46:10).

## OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, God with Us,  
I praise you and worship you! Turn my affections toward you as I seek your presence. Today, may I encounter your *JOY* once again and would I be a conduit of your *JOY* to those around me. Amen.

## CHRISTMAS STORY REFLECTION | LUKE 1:39-56

Read and reflect on the Christmas passage of the week.

## PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
Cause your Word to take root in the soil of my soul! May your Word pass from my eyes and ears to my heart, from my heart to my lips and conversation; that, as the rain does not return empty, so neither may your Word, but accomplish that for which it is given. Amen.

## READING PLAN

### MONDAY

1 Samuel 2:1-10

### TUESDAY

Isaiah 35:1-10

### WEDNESDAY

Isaiah 52:7-10

### THURSDAY

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

### FRIDAY

Zephaniah 3:14-17

### SATURDAY

Matthew 2:1-23

After reading: “This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!”

## THE GLORIA

Glory be to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning, as it is now, and as it will be forevermore. Amen.





# LOVE

DEC 23

## 60 SECONDS OF SILENCE

Begin your time in silence. “*Be still and know that I am God*” (Ps. 46:10).

## OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, God with Us,  
I praise you and worship you! Turn my affections toward you as I seek your presence. Today, may I encounter your *LOVE* once again and would I be a conduit of your *LOVE* to those around me. Amen.

## CHRISTMAS STORY REFLECTION | LUKE 2:1-21

Read and reflect on the Christmas passage of the week.

## PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
Cause your Word to take root in the soil of my soul! May your Word pass from my eyes and ears to my heart, from my heart to my lips and conversation; that, as the rain does not return empty, so neither may your Word, but accomplish that for which it is given. Amen.

## READING PLAN

### ☐ MONDAY

Matthew 1:18 – 2:23

After reading: “This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!”

## THE GLORIA

Glory be to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning, as it is now, and as it will be forevermore. Amen.

## 60 SECONDS OF SILENCE

Spend another 60 seconds in silence, sitting with what you just read in Scripture.





# CHRIST THE LORD!

DEC 24 | CHRISTMAS EVE

## JOIN US AT RIVER WEST CHURCH!

Join us at River West Church for our candlelight Christmas Eve worship gatherings! Gathering times are 2pm, 4pm, and 11pm. A Children's Program will be available at 2pm and 4pm.

Either before or after our worship gatherings, feel free to work through the following liturgy—whether by yourself or with friends, family, or children.

## 60 SECONDS OF SILENCE

Begin your time in silence. *“Be still and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10).*

## CHRISTMAS STORY REFLECTION | LUKE 1 – 2:40

If reading with children, it's best to use an easy translation like NIV since it's a lot of text.

After reading: “This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!”

## THE GLORIA

Glory be to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning, as it is now, and as it will be forevermore. Amen.

## 60 SECONDS OF SILENCE

Spend another 60 seconds in silence, sitting with what you just read in Scripture.





# NOW AND FOREVER

DEC 25 | CHRISTMAS DAY

## 60 SECONDS OF SILENCE

Begin your time in silence. “*Be still and know that I am God*” (Ps. 46:10).

## OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,  
I praise you and worship you! Turn my affections toward you as I seek your presence. Today, may I experience afresh the peace you bring in a world filled with darkness and chaos. May I go forth from here, this Christmas Day, as a non-anxious presence bearing your name, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

## CHRISTMAS DAY READINGS

Read the following passages and see if you notice a pattern or theme. Feel free to take time throughout the day to read through all of them, or do so in one sitting.

- Matthew 1:18-23
- John 14:23
- Ephesians 1:13-14
- Titus 3:4-7
- Revelation 21:1-4

After reading: “This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!”

## THE GLORIA

Glory be to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning, as it is now, and as it will be forevermore. Amen.

## 60 SECONDS OF SILENCE

Spend another 60 seconds in silence, sitting with what you just read in Scripture.



## BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Of the many Bible passages listed throughout this Advent Guide, you may wish to revisit some passages for further study. You can use the following steps and questions for your own personal Bible Study time:

1. Read the passage.
2. What did the passage say? Summarize it in your own words.
3. What are some observations and things in the passage that stand out to you?
4. What does this passage say about God and his character?
5. What does this passage say about us and our need?
6. How does this passage point to Jesus Christ and find resolution in him?
7. How do you need to respond to this passage, and begin to live out what it says?

## ADVENT WORD STUDY SERIES | BIBLE PROJECT

To get a better understanding of each Advent theme and word, our friends at Bible Project put together a Bible word study series for Advent. Using the camera on your phone, scan the QR code to access each video, or enter the url in your web browser.



### HOPE

[bibleproject.com/explore/video/yakhal-hope](https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/yakhal-hope)



### PEACE

[bibleproject.com/explore/video/shalom-peace](https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/shalom-peace)



### JOY

[bibleproject.com/explore/video/chara-joy](https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/chara-joy)



### LOVE

[bibleproject.com/explore/video/agape-love](https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/agape-love)



