

Home Advent Guidebook 2020



Grace Ev Lutheran Church

435 NW 21 Street

Corvallis, OR 97330

Home Advent Guide 2020

Advent begins the new cycle of the Church year, and is one of two penitential seasons, Lent being the other season. Advent is a time of repentance and preparation. We are preparing to celebrate the birth of the Savior as well as Jesus' second coming.

Stores and shops have already decked their halls and are wanting to hurrying us quickly toward Christmas. However, the Church needs to slow things down. There is much to hear, to see, to experience to be rushing through Advent. So, during this time of being apart, this Advent Guide is meant to help us to slow down, and encourage the people of Grace to find ways to hold Advent in our homes. To prepare ourselves, because God is with us. This guide book is meant to help you plan your Advent time at home. Be creative; live into Advent.

Advent begins

Sunday, November 29th !

Advent Wreath

One of the best-known customs for the season is the Advent wreath. The wreath and winter candle-lighting in the midst of growing darkness strengthen some of the Advent images found in the Bible. The unbroken circle of greens is an image of everlasting life, a victory wreath, the crown of Christ, or the wheel of time itself. Christians use the wreath as a sign that Christ reaches into our time to lead us to...everlasting life. The four candles mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent and the growth of light... In many homes, the family gathers for prayers around the wreath on a table.

As you gather for dinner each night, light the candles on the wreath, pray a blessing, talk about one of the themes of the week, and/or read aloud from a devotional for each day, or from the Bible readings from the previous Sunday.

First Week of Advent **Sun, Nov 29**

(Themes: Prophets/Hope)

Use this blessing when lighting the first candle.

We praise you, O God, for this evergreen crown that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the first candle on this wreath, rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes with all the saints and angels. Enlighten us with your grace, and prepare our hearts to welcome him with joy. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. Amen

Second Week of Advent **Sun, Dec 6**

(Themes: Bethlehem/Faith)

Use this blessing when lighting the first two candles.

We praise you, O God, for this circle of light that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, kindle within us the fire of your Spirit, that we may be light shining in the darkness. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may welcome others as you have welcomed us. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. Amen

Third Week of Advent **Sun, Dec 13**

(Themes: Shepherds/Joy)

Use this blessing when lighting three candles.

We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. Amen



Fourth Week of Advent **Sun, Dec 20**

(Themes: Angels/Peace)

Use this blessing when lighting all four candles.

We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, open our eyes to see your presence in the lowly ones of this earth. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may sing of your advent among us in the Word made flesh. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

Amen

From SundaysandSeasons.com

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Christmas Eve **Thurs, Dec 24**

(Themes: God-with-us/love)

Place a fifth candle (pillar-size) in the center of the wreath. Light this candle at the same time as during Christmas Eve worship. It is called the Christ Candle. You can keep lighting it each night until January 6th, Epiphany, or even until Shrove Tuesday.

Christmas Tree

Christmas trees, whether real or artificial, bring joy and excitement to our homes. Consider praying this blessing when you have set up your tree, before or after decorating it.

God our Creator, we praise you for this Christmas tree. It is a sign of your everlasting, evergreen presence. It is a sign of the reign of heaven, sheltering the creatures of the earth under its open arms. It is a sign of the cross, shining with the light of your grace and mercy. Amen

or

God our creator, we praise you for this Christmas tree, gift of the earth and sign of your evergreen presence. As we illumine this tree, let your blessing come upon us. Send us your Son, the tender branch of Jesse, who brings us light and life. May we who stand in its light eagerly welcome the true Light that never fades. All glory be yours now and forever. Amen

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Nativity Creche

Consider setting up your Creche-scene during Advent, in 4-5 parts. Begin with the stable and an animal or two. Each week add a few more figures. The last figures to be set out before Christmas Eve would be Mary and Joseph, adding Baby Jesus on Christmas Eve.

You could also, if you have enough pieces, use it as an Advent calendar, putting out one figure a day. Maybe place the Magi farther away, moving closer during the last few days, or wait for their arrival on Epiphany, January 6.

Here are some prayers you can use:

O God, bless us who gather around this stable. As we celebrate Christ's birth into the world, may we receive the Christ child into our hearts with gratitude and song. Amen

Or

Bless us, O God, as we remember a humble birth. With each angel and shepherd we place here before you, show us the wonder found in a stable. In song and prayer, silence and awe, we adore your gift of love, Christ Jesus our Savior. Amen

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Creative Ideas for Advent

With the winter weather keeping most of us indoors, it is time to connect with our creativity and customize Advent and Christmas.

Chrismons

Consider making some new ornaments to add to your tree. Some churches use Chrismons, white and gold ornaments that point to Jesus, using monograms and symbols. You can find patterns online to help you with this project. You could even make some to tuck into Christmas cards you send to family and friends. Include an explanation of the Chrismon you send.

<http://www.chrismon.org/chrismons-ministry.html>

Paper Wreaths and Candles

Make your own wreath out of construction paper or card stock. Use battery-operated candles or

make non-burning candles, adding a "flame" each Sunday, for the week. Lots of ideas online! Or make one for someone you love, and send to them.

Around the World Decorations

Search online for ornaments from places you have never been, and make some of them. Hang them in your home or give them away.

Illustrated Advent Devotions

Our Director of Discipling Ministries, Donna King, is sending out a special Advent devotional, that is very creative. Be looking for that one!

Other ideas

Send a box of homemade Christmas Cookies to surprise someone you know who lives alone. Let them know they are loved.

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Use or Make Advent Calendars

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String popcorn to hang on an outdoor tree for the birds & squirrels. Flash mob decorate someone's outdoor tree for fun!

Commemorations & Prayers

St Nicholas—Dec 6

God of joy and cheer, we thank you for your servant, the good Bishop Nicholas. In loving the poor, he showed us your kindness; in caring for your children, he revealed your love. Make us thoughtful without need of reward so that we, too, may be good followers of Jesus. Amen

From All Through the Day, All Through the Year: Family Prayers and Celebrations, by David B. Batchelder, Illustrated by Barbara Knutson, copyright © 2000 Augsburg Fortress.

8 Days of Hannukkah begins — Dec 10

God of all people, as our Jewish siblings kindle the lights of Hanukkah, remembering your saving presence long ago, may your blessing be upon them.

Sancta Lucia — Dec 13

Gracious God, you call us to see the need around us. Like Lucia, give us a vision of your kingdom here on earth. May we be the light of Christ that shines in the deepest nights, to offer hope and your grace. In the name of the One

who is the light of the world, Jesus our Savior.
Amen

Las Posadas — Dec 16-24

In Mexico, the Christmas festivities begin on December 16 with the feast of Las Posadas (“Lodgings”), a Latin American Christmas festival that dramatizes the search of Joseph and Mary for lodging. The tradition...started in the sixteenth century with St. Ignatius of Loyola...The activity starts with participants gathering at the church, where they depart in procession... toward one of the church members’ homes. There may be singing hymns and carols. They also bring a crèche- nativity set...

Once at the...selected home the assembly sings...All enter the home and the nativity set is placed under the Christmas tree. It remains there for the rest of the night, where the procession will resume the following night toward the next home...and travels night after night, from home to home.

After placing the nativity set...the fiesta may continue with singing...The breaking of a piñata is also a part of the celebrations.

On the ninth and last night the procession may either depart from the home with the nativity set to the church for the celebration of a traditional Christmas Eve service, or the nativity set may remain at the last home, where they will celebrate the end of the festivity with a traditional Christmas meal. The nativity set will stay either at the church or the last home until January 6.

From *Libro de Liturgia y Cántico* (Augsburg Fortress, 1998), p. 150; trans. Sara Calderon.

Winter Solstice —Dec 21 longest night

Festivus for the rest of us — Dec 23

Oh, look it up! Thanks to Cosmo Kramer.

Kwanzaa — Dec 26 to Jan 1

Kwanzaa is an African American and pan-African holiday which celebrates family, community, and culture. It was created in 1966 by Dr Maulana Karenga, a professor of Africana Studies. Kwanzaa, a seven-day cultural festival, begins December 26 and ends January 2. It joins communitarian values and practices of Continental African and African American culture.

During the holiday, families and communities organize activities around the *Nguzo Saba* (The Seven Principles): *Umoja* (Unity), *Kujichangulia* (Self-Determination), *Ujima* (Collective Work and Responsibility), *Ukamaa* (Cooperative Economics), *Nia* (Purpose), *Juumba* (Creativity), and *Imani* (Faith). Participants celebrate with feasts (*karamu*), music, dance, poetry, narratives and end the holiday with a day dedicated to reflection and recommitment to The Seven Principles and other central cultural values.

from www.officialkwamzaawebsite.org

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Dear Beloved of God,
May your Advent observance deepen your faith, as we prepare to celebrate the Lord Jesus’ birth and await his coming again.

In Christ, hope and joy,
Pr Dorthy+

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“I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us, and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, “Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely”; and he became their savior in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his very presence that saved them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.”

Isaiah 63:7-9

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