

Life is Advent



Angel with an Olive Branch (Hans Memling, 1480), public domain

**Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace,
good will toward humankind.**

Angels appearing to shepherds
the night Jesus was born

Gospel of Luke 2:14

The Lord is coming, always coming. When you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you will recognize him at any moment of your life. **Life is Advent;** life is recognizing the coming of the Lord.

Henri Nouwen

Only the humble believe him and rejoice that God is so free and so marvelous that he does wonders where people despair, that he takes what is little and lowly and makes it marvelous. And that is the wonder of all wonders, that God loves the lowly... God is not ashamed of the lowliness of human beings. God marches right in. He chooses people as his instruments and performs his wonders where one would least expect them. God is near to lowliness; he loves the lost, the neglected, the unseemly, the excluded, the weak and broken.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart?

Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving the others with God's own love and concern.

Mother Teresa

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Luke 1:78-79

When our Advent journey ends, and we reach the place where Jesus resides in Bethlehem, may we, like the Wise Men, fall on our knees and adore him as our true and only King.

Mark Zimmermann



Image: Astrid Schubert

Celebrating Advent

Every year we expectantly celebrate the four weeks leading up to Christmas as the season of Advent (from the Latin word 'adventus', meaning 'arrival'). We look forward to Christmas and the celebration of the arrival of God's long-promised child.

What does my own Advent journey tend to look like? There sure is a lot of running during the busy month of December. But am I ever truly arriving anywhere?

The weekly lighting of candles on an Advent wreath is an invitation to pause and ponder. Christ did arrive, and His arrival invites me to allow more of God's love and care into my life.

Celebrating Advent is choosing the gift of slowing down by lighting a candle and being present. Immanuel, God with us. It is an encouragement to hold space for what I crave most: more hope, more peace, more joy, more love.



As I light a candle on the First Sunday of Advent, I ask for the grace of hope.

"But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, God's mercies never come to an end."

(Lamentations 3:21-22)

Christmas Carol suggestion: 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'

Where are the places in my life that feel withered and long for hope? Where do I experience hopefulness?

As I light two candles on the Second Sunday of Advent, I ask for the grace of peace.

"The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace." (Psalm 29:11)

Christmas Carol suggestion: 'Silent Night'

Where are the places in my life that feel peace-full? Where do I long for more peace?

As I light three candles on the Third Sunday of Advent, I ask for the grace of joy.

"But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you." (Psalm 5:11)

Christmas Carol suggestion: 'Joy to the World'

Where are the places in my life that bring me great joy? What are the joy dampers?

As I light four candles on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, I ask for the grace of love.

"And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them."

(1 John 4:16)

Christmas Carol suggestion: 'Once in Royal David's City'

Where are the places in my life that long for more love? Where do I experience love?

Some traditions light a fifth candle on Christmas Eve to celebrate Jesus' birth.