



ADVENT 2025

WITH EXPECTANT HEARTS

Waiting Through Advent Together

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An Advent Journey for Children & Youth Families

Advent is a season of waiting — a time to prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus. Each week, we light candles, tell the story, and open our hearts a little wider to God's love.

This year, we invite families to journey ***With Expectant Hearts*** — preparing, loving, singing, and finding peace together.

This devotional is designed to help your family create sacred space at home during Advent. Whether you gather around the dinner table, near your Christmas tree, or before bedtime, each week offers a simple rhythm of worship you can share together: lighting candles, reading scripture, wondering aloud, creating, serving, and praying.

GETTING READY FOR ADVENT

Setting up your space

Before Advent begins, November 30, set up a small “Advent space” in your home — somewhere visible and peaceful.

You might include:

- An Advent wreath (four candles — three purple, one pink — and a white Christ candle for Christmas Eve)
- A Bible opened to the Gospel of Luke
- Simple decorations like greenery, nativity figures, or a cross

Each Sunday (or any day that works best for your family), gather around your Advent space. Light the candle for the week, take turns reading the words together, and let everyone participate — even little ones can help light, hold, or say “Come, Lord Jesus, come.”

As you journey ***With Expectant Hearts***, remember: Advent isn’t about rushing to Christmas. It’s about making room — in our homes, our schedules, and our hearts — for the light of Christ to shine in and through us.

So breathe deeply. Watch the light grow brighter each week. Listen for the good news. And open your hearts to the One who is coming — Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us.

With love,
Children and Youth Staff

ADVENT WEEK 1

Waiting with **HOPE**

Week of November 30

“PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD”

Scripture: Luke 3:1-6

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING



Reader:

This is the first week of Advent — a time to wait and get ready for Jesus.

The prophets told us that one day God’s peace and light would fill the earth.

John the Baptist reminded everyone to prepare their hearts for the coming of the Lord.

We light this first candle as a sign of our hope — hope that God’s promises are true and that Christ’s light is coming into the world.

(Light the first purple candle — the Candle of Hope.)

All:

With expectant hearts, we wait for your light, O God.
Come, Lord Jesus, come.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

John's call reminds us to get ready for Jesus — not just by cleaning our homes or decorating, but by preparing our hearts to love and serve.

- 1 What are some ways we can “prepare the way” for Jesus in our home this Advent?
- 2 How can we share hope with someone who needs it?

ACTIVITY IDEAS

- 1 **Hope Garland:** cut out paper hearts or stars. Each day, write or draw something you hope for or pray for and hang it up. Watch your hope grow.
- 2 **Service Idea:** bake cookies or write notes of encouragement for a neighbor, teacher, or healthcare worker.

PRAYER

Dear God,
With expectant hearts we await Christ's coming.
Into our lives, bring light.
Into our hearts, bring love.
Into our world, bring peace.
Come into our hearts Lord Jesus. Amen

ADVENT WEEK 2

Waiting with **LOVE**

Week of December 7

THE ANNUNCIATION: MARY'S RESPONSE

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING



Reader:

This is the second week of Advent — a time to remember God's love.

When the angel came to Mary, she said “yes” to God's plan.

God's love calls us to say “yes,” too — to love and serve others in Jesus' name.

We light the candle of Love to remind us that God's love is always with us and grows when we share it.

(Light the first and second purple candles — Hope and Love.)

All:

With expectant hearts, we welcome your love, O God.

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

When Mary heard God's plan, she responded with love and trust: "Let it be with me according to your word."

1 How do we show love to God and others?

2 When is it hard to trust that God is working in our lives?

ACTIVITY IDEAS

1 **Servant Hearts:** Make "love coupons" for family acts of kindness (help with chores, a hug, share something, pray for someone).

2 **Nativity Moment:** Set up your nativity scene. Talk about how Mary said "yes" to God and brought love into the world.

PRAYER

Dear God,

With expectant hearts we await Christ's coming.

Into our lives, bring light.

Into our hearts, bring love.

Into our world, bring peace.

Come into our hearts Lord Jesus. Amen

ADVENT WEEK 3

Waiting with **JOY**

Week of December 14

THE SONG OF MARY

Scripture: Luke 1:46-55

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING



Reader:

This is the third week of Advent — the week of joy. When Mary visited Elizabeth, their hearts were filled with gladness and praise.

Mary sang a song of joy because God was doing great things.

We light the candle of Joy to remind us that God's goodness fills our hearts with singing.

(Light the first three candles, 2 purple and 1 pink) — Hope, Love, and Joy. The Joy candle is pink.)

All:

With expectant hearts, we rejoice in your goodness, O God.

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

Mary's heart overflowed with joy because of what God was doing in her life. Joy is contagious – it spreads when we share it!

1 What makes your heart sing for JOY?

2 How can you spread JOY this week?

ACTIVITY IDEAS

1 **Joyful Noise:** Have a family caroling night – sing Christmas song together or make joyful instruments from household items.

2 **Joy Jars:** Write down things that bring your joy and keep them in a jar. Save them to read on Christmas morning.

PRAYER

Dear God,

With expectant hearts we await Christ's coming.

Into our lives, bring light.

Into our hearts, bring love.

Into our world, bring peace.

Come into our hearts Lord Jesus. Amen

ADVENT WEEK 4

Waiting with PEACE

Week of December 21

ZECHARIAH'S SONG

Scripture: Luke 1:67-79

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING



Reader:

This is the fourth week of Advent — the week of peace.

Zechariah praised God for sending a Savior who would guide our feet into the way of peace.

God's peace is more than quiet — it is wholeness, healing, and love that makes all things new.

We light the candle of Peace to remind us that Jesus brings calm to our hearts and peace to the world.

(Light all four candles, 3 purple and 1 pink — Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace.)

All:

With expectant hearts, we trust your peace, O God.
Come, Lord Jesus, come.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

Zechariah found peace after a time of silence and waiting. God's peace comes when we trust that God is still at work, even in the quiet.

- 1 When do you feel peaceful?
- 2 How can we bring peace to others – at home, school, or in our community?

ACTIVITY IDEAS

- 1 **Silent Night Practice:** Spend a few minutes in silence as a family before bedtime. Light a candle and talk about where you have seen peace today.
- 2 **Peace Dove:** Cut out dove shapes and write prayers for peace on them. Hang them near your tree or Advent wreath.

PRAYER

Dear God,
With expectant hearts we await Christ's coming.
Into our lives, bring light.
Into our hearts, bring love.
Into our world, bring peace.
Come into our hearts Lord Jesus. Amen

CHRISTMAS EVE

Waiting for **THE GIFT**

December 24

CHRIST IS BORN!

Scripture: Luke 2:1-20

The waiting is over – the Light of the World has come!

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING



Reader:

Tonight we celebrate! The waiting is over — Jesus is born!

God's promise has come to life in a baby who brings hope, love, joy, and peace to the world.

We light the Christ candle to remember that Jesus is the light of the world, shining in our darkness and guiding us always.

(Light all four candles, 3 purple and 1 pink as well as the center white Christ Candle.)

All:

With expectant hearts, we welcome you, Christ our Lord.

You are the light of the world.

CHRISTMAS EVE ACTIVITIES

1

Attend Christmas Eve Service together as a family.

2

Before bed, turn off all the light except the Christmas tree or Advent candles. Read Luke 2:1-20 together. Share what you are most thankful for this Christmas.

PRAYER

Dear God,
With expectant hearts we await Christ's coming.
Into our lives, bring light.
Into our hearts, bring love.
Into our world, bring peace.
Come into our hearts Lord Jesus. Amen

CHRISTMAS EVE

AT FIRST UNITED METHODIST MCKINNEY

Children's Service

1:30 p.m.

Traditional Sanctuary Services

3, 5, 7, 9, 11 p.m.

Wellspring Contemporary Services

3, 5, 7 p.m.

JOURNAL

JOURNAL

ADVENT SEASON EVENTS

AT FIRST UNITED METHODIST MCKINNEY

CHILDREN'S CHOIR CONCERT | DECEMBER 7, 3 P.M.

Our children's choir is proud to present **"Bethlehem Blessings"**, a concert of Christmas music in the Sanctuary.

NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM | DECEMBER 7, 4-6 P.M.

Invite friends and bring the whole family for crafts, activities, a petting zoo, and more as our Children's Ministry turns the church into a bustling marketplace in Bible-era Bethlehem.

Want to volunteer?

Contact Cheridy Dodd, cdodd@sharingtheheart.org

CHRISTMAS CAROLING | DECEMBER 10, 6:30 P.M.

Join us for caroling in Downtown McKinney. Meet in the preschool area at the church and we will walk together to spread Christmas JOY!

BLUE CHRISTMAS | DECEMBER 14, 3 P.M.

This is a quiet and prayerful service in the Sanctuary for those who are having a difficult time during the Christmas season.

YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY | DECEMBER 14, 5-7 P.M.

All youth are invited to wear your favorite Christmas sweater or outfit and come ready for food, fun and fellowship at The Hub.

CHRISTMAS CHOIR CONCERT | DECEMBER 14, 7 P.M.

Our music ministry is proud to present **A Christmas Concert: Rejoice and Be Merry** featuring Flutes of the spirit, bell choir, chancel choir, youth choir, the wellspring music team, and you!

Visit sharingtheheart.org/advent or sharingtheheart.org/christmas for more information, video devotionals and opportunities during the Advent season.