

ADVENT 2015

Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church

Celebrating Advent at Home



Angel-Filled Advent

Wouldn't it be wonderful
if Advent came filled with angels and alleluias?
Wouldn't it be perfect
if we were greeted on these December mornings
with a hovering of heavenly hosts
tuning their harps and brushing up on their fa-la-las?
Wouldn't it be incredible
if their music filled our waking hours
with the promise of peace on earth
and if each Advent night we dreamed of nothing but goodwill?
Wouldn't we be ecstatic
if we could take those angels shopping,
or trim the tree or have them hold our hands
and dance through our houses decorating?
And, oh, how glorious it would be
to sit in church next to an angel
and sing our hark-the-heralds!
What an Advent that would be!
What Christmas spirit we could have!
An angel-filled Advent has so many possibilities!
But in lieu of that,
perhaps we can give thanks
for the good earthly joys we have been given
and for the earthly "angels" that we know
who do such a good job of filling
our Advent with alleluias!

Ann Weems,

from *Kneeling in Bethlem*

The Celebration of Advent in your Home.

This booklet is designed as a guide to help you establish an Advent tradition in your home. It is centered on the lighting of the candles of an Advent wreath. Each of the four candles represents one of the four Sundays in Advent. One is lighted each week until all the candles are lit. The Bible readings are selected to highlight the themes of the season.

The lessons may be omitted on weekdays when used with younger children, although it is suggested that when the candles are lit on weekdays, John 8:12 may be read, “Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life’” and be repeated by all.

The Church Year begins with Advent. It is intended to be a spiritual time of preparation and anticipation for the birth of Christ. Our time of preparing for Christmas has been transformed by the world into a time of busy-ness and fatigue. We spend a great deal of time, energy, and money in the weeks before Christmas buying gifts, preparing food and decorating our homes. The use of the Advent wreath may assist your family in finding the joy of a Christ-filled Christmas.



The Season of Advent

Advent means “coming” in Latin. It is the first season of the church year and it has four Sundays. This year Advent begins on November 29th and the last day of Advent is always December 24th. In the cycle of liturgical readings, Advent also marks the beginning of a new lectionary year. On November 29th, we will begin the Revised Common Lectionary Cycle C.

The Advent Wreath

It is believed that the tradition of the Advent wreath had its beginnings long ago in Northern Europe.

The wreath symbolizes the period of waiting for Jesus’ coming.

The circle symbolizes eternity, the continuing presence of God.

Evergreens symbolize everlasting life.

Four candles represent the four weeks of Advent.

The white candle, or Christ Candle, is lit on Christmas Day.

A Family Celebration

Each Sunday of Advent, gather around the wreath and light an additional candle. The prayers and activities in this booklet can be used throughout the season of Advent.

Dear God,

*Bless this wreath and help our family to remember that
Christmas is a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus.*

Week One

The family gathers around the wreath and lights one candle.

Leader: Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Let us pray.

Prayer for the first week of Advent

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Readings for the First Week of Advent

Sunday - Luke 21:25-36

Monday - Matthew 8:5-13

Tuesday - Luke 10:21-24

Wednesday - Matthew 15:29-39

Thursday - Matthew 7:21-27

Friday - Matthew 9:27-31

Saturday - Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5-8



Week Two

The family gathers around the wreath and lights two candles.

Leader: Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Let us pray.

Prayer for the Second Week of Advent

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Readings for the Second Week of Advent

Sunday - Luke 3:1-6

Monday - Luke 5:17-26

Tuesday - Matthew 18:12-14

Wednesday - Matthew 11:28-30

Thursday - Matthew 11:7-15

Friday - Matthew 11:16-19

Saturday - Matthew 17:9-13



Week Three

The family gathers around the wreath and lights three candles.

Leader: Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Let us pray.

Prayer for the Third Week of Advent

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

Readings for the Third Week of Advent

Sunday - Luke 3:7-18

Monday - Matthew 21:23-27

Tuesday - Matthew 21:28-32

Wednesday - Luke 7:19-23

Thursday - Matthew 1:1-7, 17

Friday - Matthew 1:18-25

Saturday - Luke 1:5-25



Week Four

The family gathers around the wreath and lights four candles.

Leader: Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Let us pray.

Prayer for the Fourth Week of Advent

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Readings for the Fourth Week of Advent

Sunday - Luke 1:26-38

Monday - Luke 1:39-45

Tuesday - Luke 1:46-56

Wednesday - Luke 1:57-66

Thursday - Luke 1:67-79

Friday - Christmas Day - Luke 2:1-14



Christmas Day



You may add a center candle to your advent wreath. The center candle is called the Christ Candle. The central location of the Christ Candle reminds us that the incarnation is the heart of the season, giving light to the world. This candle is lit after sundown on Christmas Eve. The following prayer may be used for lighting the Christ Candle.

The family gathers around the wreath and lights the white candle.

Leader: We light this candle to remind us of the great light that comes at last with the birth of Jesus, the Word of God made human for us. As we welcome him in the poor stable in Bethlehem, we offer ourselves to bring his transforming love to birth in all dark places, and to serve him in all our brothers and sisters.

The Christ candle is lit.

Leader: Let us pray.

O God, your love was so great for us that you gave us your Son to shine out in our darkness. Help us to make that love known in all the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. All: Amen.



Advent Calendar

29



Each day this week light the 1st candle in your Advent Wreath.

30



Choose a book to read together as a family.

1



Offer a prayer of Thanksgiving for happy things that happened this year.

2



Gather food & canned goods to take to the local food bank.

6



Each day light the 1st & 2nd candle in your Advent Wreath.

7



Decorate the Christmas tree together.

8



Put Mary & Joseph across the room from the nativity scene.

9



Read more of your family's Advent Book selection.

13



Each day light the 1st, 2nd & 3rd candle in your Advent Wreath.

14



Volunteer at a local animal shelter.

15



Make dinner together as a family.

16



Hanukkah begins at sundown. Play the Dreidel Game.

20



Each day light all 4 candles in your Advent Wreath.

21



Send a Christmas card or call a friend far away.

22



Finish reading from your family's Advent book selection.

23



Help finish wrapping presents and deliver them to friends.

27

28

29

30



3



Set up your family Nativity scene, except for the Holy Family

4



Make cookies to take to a nearby nursing home.

5



St. Nicholas Day. Put candy in everyone's shoes.

10



Make an ornament for you family's Christmas tree

11



Gather up blankets & coats to take to a local shelter.

12



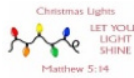
Gather some neighbors & friends and go caroling.

17



Imagine what it was like to travel to Bethlehem by Donkey.

18



Take a drive to see Christmas decorations & displays.

19



Family Movie Night. Make some popcorn & watch a Christmas movie.

24



Put Mary & Joseph in the Nativity scene. Add grass to the manger to get ready for the Baby

25



Christmas Day. Put the Baby in the manger.

26

**We wish you all a Merry Christmas from
Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church
For more information on Church events, please visit the
Holy Innocents' Website.**

2015 Christmas Service Schedule

THE EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD: Thursday, December 24th

3:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist *
Primary & Younger Children's Choirs
Christmas Pageant

8:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with Parish Choir *
7:30 p.m. Choral Prelude

11:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with Parish Choir
10:30 p.m. Choral Prelude

THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY: Friday, December 25

12:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with Carols

**Childcare will be available during the 3:00 and 8:00 p.m. Christmas Eve services.*



HOLY
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