



Advent

Celebrating the Arrival of the Christ Child
Daily Advent Bible Readings for November 21-December 25, 2021



Advent

Advent Readings for 2021

I found it amusing as I was listening to my music on Spotify and a Home Depot commercial came on, which said something along the lines of, “No one wishes you a Merry Almost Christmas.” I laughed to myself as I thought, “Hey, you don’t know me and my mom, buddy!” My mother and I LOVE to decorate for the holidays, but especially for Christmas. After Thanksgiving, our home is filled to bursting with angels and snowmen and Nativity sets (yes, multiple, because it isn’t Christmas if there aren’t nativity sets in each room, right), and a big, fat Christmas tree completely covered with several generation’s worth of ornaments. And we love to dress for the season. Wearing red and green, or fluffy snow-like scarves, and bright red Santa hats whenever we go out. We are those weirdos who will wish you a Merry Almost Christmas. And we will do it with a smile on our faces and joy in our hearts. We love Advent just as much as we love the Christmas season itself.

Going back to the Home Depot commercial, while their execs were merely seeking to sell decorations, they were doing so while stressing the fact of how much we Americans love to celebrate just getting ready for Christmas. My mom and I aren’t the only ones. Think about it. Often as soon as Halloween is over, sometimes even before, stores stock their shelves full of Christmas decorations, special Christmas dish ingredients, Christmas clothing, and handy, pre-packaged Christmas gifts ready for wrapping. The stores, whether they know it or not, are recognizing Advent... even if they aren’t technically celebrating it.

The Christmas season, also known as the 12 Days of Christmas, doesn’t actually begin until Christmas Day. Before that, the time of getting ready for Christmas, is the season of Advent. Advent means “beginning, starting, or coming.” The Advent Season is the 4 weeks leading up to Christmas Day. It’s the season to prepare for Christmas, and I don’t just mean preparing your decorations (though that’s fun, too). It’s the time in which we celebrate the coming of the Christ child. The starting of His time on earth. It should be a time of focusing on the true meaning of Christmas, preparing our hearts and minds for truly and fully celebrating Jesus’ arrival on earth, as He took on flesh, the Creator living among His creation, all for the purpose of saving us to the glory of God the Father.

It may seem like a small difference between the Advent season and the Christmas season, since they both celebrate the birth of Jesus. It’s a difference of being excited that Jesus

is *coming* (Advent), and being excited that he has *arrived* (Christmas)! It's a state of mind. Or, more accurately, a state of heart.

Traditionally, Advent is from November 28th to December 24th. However, when the church observes this special season varies depending on the day of the week that Christmas falls on that year. With Christmas Day falling on a Saturday this year, some churches may choose to celebrate Christmas Sunday on December 19th, and some may choose December 26th. It isn't important *when* it's celebrated (after all, theological historians generally agree that Jesus was probably born in the summer time); what's important is that it *is* celebrated. Here at Cornerstone, we have chosen to celebrate Christmas Sunday on December 19th, and that means that our Advent celebrations begin on November 21st.

Included in this packet are readings for each week of Advent. The Scripture references are broken up into daily readings for your convenience. But the entire reference for the weekly reading is included so that you can dig deeper if you want. You can choose when and how to go through the Scriptures, the important thing is to simply do so. Perhaps you could read it before you pray over your dinner in the evening. Maybe you could read it before bed. I would also encourage you to follow each reading with a prayer. Ask God to show you what He wants you to learn about Christmas this year. Maybe you could even sing an Advent or Christmas carol. It's your choice. Just have fun celebrating the coming of the long-awaited Savior!

Kids: cut out each red or green box and put a little glue or a piece of tape to make the paper strip into a ring. Attach each new ring to yesterday's ring and soon you'll have a fun and festive Advent chain that you can use to add to the Christmas decorations in your home.

Adults: even if you don't have littles at home anymore, you can still cut out the strips and make an Advent chain, too, if you want. Our heavenly Father enjoys it when we approach Him with child-like faith.

Week 1 – Hope

Jesus' Birth Foretold

Luke 1

Sunday, November 21, 2021

“The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.” – Isaiah 40:28b-31

Monday, November 22, 2021

“Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God’s eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord’s commandments and regulations. They had no children ...” – Luke 1:6-7a

Tuesday, November 23, 2021

“While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him ... Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him. But the angel said, ‘Don’t be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord... He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord.’” – Luke 1:11-15a, 17b

Wednesday, November 24, 2021

“In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary ... ‘Don’t be afraid, Mary,’ the angel told her, ‘for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!’” – Luke 1:26-27, 30-33

Thursday, November 25, 2021

“Mary responded, ‘I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.’ And then the angel left her.” – Luke 1:38

Friday, November 26, 2021

“Mary responded, ‘Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior! For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One is holy, and he has done great things for me.’” – Luke 1:46-49

Saturday, November 27, 2021

“Then his [John’s] father, Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy ... “And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord. You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins.” – Luke 1:67, 76-77

Week 2 – Love

Joseph and Mary
Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-7

Sunday, November 28, 2021

“... do everything with love.” – 1 Corinthians 16:14

Monday, November 29, 2021

“This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.” – Matthew 1:18-19

Tuesday, November 30, 2021

“As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. ‘Joseph, son of David,’ the angel said, ‘do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’” – Matthew 1:20-21

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

“... I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” – Genesis 3:15

Thursday, December 2, 2021

“All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord’s message through his prophet: ‘Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means “God is with us.”’” – Matthew 1:22-23

Friday, December 3, 2021

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” – Isaiah 7:14

Saturday, December 4, 2021

“When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.”
– Matthew 1:24

Week 3 – Peace

The Shepherds and the Angels

Luke 2:8-20

Sunday, December 5, 2021

“... let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.” – Colossians 3:15

Monday, December 6, 2021

“That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. ‘Don’t be afraid!’ he said. ‘I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!’” – Luke 2:8-11

Tuesday, December 7, 2021

“And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.” – Luke 2:12

Wednesday, December 8, 2021

“Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.’” – Luke 2:13-14

Thursday, December 9, 2021

“When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’” – Luke 2:15

Friday, December 10, 2021

“They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.” – Luke 2:16-20

Saturday, December 11, 2021

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.” – Isaiah 9:2

Week 4 – Joy

Jesus Presented at the Temple

Luke 2:21-39

Sunday, December 12, 2021

“You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.” – Psalm 16:11

Monday, December 13, 2021

“Eight days later, when the baby was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived... When Jesus’ parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Lord, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee.” – Luke 2:21, 39

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

“Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. The law of the Lord says, ‘If a woman’s first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the LORD.’ So they offered the sacrifice required in the law of the Lord—‘either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.’” – Luke 2:22-24

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

“At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, Simeon was there.” – Luke 2:25-28a

Thursday, December 16, 2021

“He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, ‘Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!’” – Luke 2:28b-32

Friday, December 17, 2021

“Jesus’ parents were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby’s mother, ‘This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul.’” – Luke 2:33-35

Saturday, December 18, 2021

“Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old... She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.” – Luke 2:36-38

Christmas Week

Jesus: the Light of the World

John 1:1-18

Sunday, December 19, 2021

"I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark." – John 12:46

Monday, December 20, 2021

"In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it." – John 1:1-5

Tuesday, December 21, 2021

"God sent a man, John the Baptist, to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world." – John 1:6-9

Wednesday, December 22, 2021

“He came into the very world he created, but the world didn’t recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.” – John 1:10-13

Thursday, December 23, 2021

“So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.” – John 1:14

Friday, December 24, 2021

“John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, ‘This is the one I was talking about when I said, “Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.”’” – John 1:15

Saturday, December 25, 2021

“From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses, but God’s unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father’s heart. He has revealed God to us.” – John 1:16-18