



The season of Advent, which comes from the Latin word *adventus* meaning "coming" or "visit," begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. Advent is the beginning of the church year for Christians.

During Advent, we prepare for and anticipate the coming of Christ. We remember the longing of Jews for a Messiah and our own longing for and need of forgiveness, salvation and a new beginning. Even as we look back and celebrate the birth of Jesus in a humble stable in Bethlehem, we also look forward anticipating the second coming of Christ as the fulfillment of all that was promised by his first coming.

This Advent we are joining together in a church-wide study and a 30-minute time of fellowship around the advent wreath. This guide is designed to accompany the wreath lighting. To learn more, visit emoryfellowship.org/advent.

Mark your calendars:

- **"Almost Christmas" Advent Candle Wreath Lighting at Home:** Each Sunday, November 29 to December 20 at 6-6:30pm
- **Almost Christmas: A Wesleyan Advent Experience Study:** First Four Wednesdays in December at 7 pm
- **Advent Christmas Drama Presentations,** Saturday, December 18 at 5pm
- **Christmas Celebrations:** Thursday, December 24 at 6pm and Friday, December 25 at 9:00am
- **New Year's Eve Watch Night Experience:** Thursday, December 31 at 10:30pm

Almost Christmas Advent Wreath Lighting

The Emory Fellowship will be gathering on Sundays from 6-6:30 p.m. to share in a virtual time of fellowship around the advent wreath. You may choose to set up a traditional advent wreath at home and use it and the guide each night before dinner and/or to have it before you when we gather.

You may purchase advent candles on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) using your EBOL smile account or at craft stores. If you have small children at home, you may want to consider working to create their own advent wreath. <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/the-99-cent-advent-wreath>

What follows is a short scripture, reflection and prayer to be used as you light the candle. You may want to sing one or more verses of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" as a way to close your family time.

1. *O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.*

Refrain:

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.*

2. *O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go. Refrain*

3. *O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times did give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe. Refrain*

4. *O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem,
unto your own and rescue them!
From depths of hell your people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.
Refrain*

5. *O come, O Key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe for us the heavenward road
and bar the way to death's abode.
Refrain*

6. *O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night
and turn our darkness into light. Refrain*

7. *O come, O King of nations, bind
in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease
and be yourself our King of Peace. Refrain*

November 29, Week 1: An Altogether Peace

Lighting of the Candle of Peace

Conduct yourselves with all humility, gentleness, and patience. Accept each other with love, and make an effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit with the peace that ties you together. You are one body and one spirit, just as God also called you in one hope. (Ephesians 4:2-4)

We light this candle to signify our hope for the Prince of Peace, whose birth we await in this Advent season, who brings peace, not as the world gives, but true peace that passes all understanding.

Prayer

Lord God, we look to you to bring us true peace in a world where peace seems far away. We hear your call to us to be peacemakers within ourselves and in the world around us, but we know we cannot find peace apart from your grace. Prince of Peace, we wait for you. Come, Lord Jesus. Be born in our midst. Grant us peace in our hearts and lives. Amen.

December 6, Week 2: An Altogether Hope

Lighting of the Candle of Hope

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be blessed! On account of his vast mercy, he has given us new birth. You have been born anew into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3)

As we light the candle of hope, we not only look to our own bright future but also seek the well-being of our neighbors and even our enemies, bearing witness to a living hope that the One who lifts us up has come to redeem and restore all the world.

Prayer

Gracious God, you are the source of our hope and the One we hope for. May the hope we find in you surround us and lift us, driving out fear and inspiring us to love. And may this lively hope lead us into new birth through Jesus Christ. Amen.

December 13, Week 3: An Altogether Love

Lighting of the Candle of Love

“With all my heart I glorify the Lord! In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior. He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant. Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored because the mighty one has done great things for me. Holy is his name.” (Luke 1:46-49)

We light this candle as a reminder of the power of love, which comes to us just as we are and fills every corner of our hearts, bringing light wherever there is darkness.

Prayer

Eternal God, we stand in awe of your overwhelming love. It is frightening to welcome it, to allow ourselves to be fully loved just as we are, to say yes to your love without knowing where it will lead us. By your grace, fill us with love and drive out all the darkness in our hearts, That we might say yes to you and bring your love to others. Amen.

December 20, Week 4: An Altogether Joy

Lighting of the Candle of Joy

O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me. O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol, restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit. . . . Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning. (Psalm 30:2-3, 5b NRSV)

We light the candle of joy as a reminder that whether we climb the highest heavens, or make our bed in the pit of despair, God is with us.

Prayer

Gracious God, our hearts leap for joy knowing that you, though almighty and everlasting, will soon be born as a humble baby, revealing to us the depths of your love for all of creation. By your Spirit, give us the courage to share the everlasting joy of your messiah. Amen.

December 24, Christmas Eve

Lighting the Christ Candle

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:1-5 NRSV)

We light the Christ candle to reveal that our Advent waiting is almost complete. Our altogether peace, hope, love, and joy rest in the trust of God's promised Messiah, the child wrapped in swaddling clothes whom angels announce, shepherds celebrate, the wise worship, and the meek treasure.

Prayer

Gracious God, whose Word became flesh, we give you thanks for Emmanuel, the prince of peace, the hope of all nations, the eternal love from generation to generation, and the joy of your steadfast presence. Grant us the patience and fortitude to live into the light that knows neither absence nor end. In the name of Christ, our Savior, Amen

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing.

2. Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found.

4. He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love!