

What is Advent?

Advent means *arrival or coming into place*. In the Christian church, Advent celebrates the birth of Christ, the awaited-Messiah, and anticipates His final and glorious return. As Old Testament Israel longed for the Messiah to come, so, New Testament Christians long for their Savior to come again.

In the Western church, Advent has a festive and celebratory tone. Common observances for Advent include reading scripture, prayers, and the singing of Christmas songs that proclaim the majesty of Christ. Many incorporate the lighting of candles each week of Advent to signify that Jesus is the light of a world that is covered in darkness.

There is no command in scripture to celebrate an Advent season or even Christmas. But Christians are called to rejoice from the heart over the arrival of Jesus and live in happy anticipation of his return. At Agape, we choose to observe a season of Advent to ponder in our hearts the spiritual meaning of Christmas and to meditate on the impact of the incarnation, when God became man, on our lives.

Family Worship

In this guide you will find scripture readings for each day of Advent. Daily reminders and reflection questions will be sent through text messages for those who sign up to receive them. By using this guide, families at Agape can worship individually while simultaneously participating with the entire congregation for edification and growth.

The following is a sample order for family worship that you can use to get started, but we encourage each family to establish your own Advent traditions:

- Have someone light a candle to begin worship signifying Jesus as the light of the world. Some families choose to have an Advent wreath with 4 candles. One candle is lit the 1st week, two candles the 2nd week, three candles the 3rd week, and four candles the final week. Some choose to have a fifth candle that is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.
- Sing a Christ-centered Christmas song or hymn together.
- Ask the Holy Spirit for His guidance, and read the scripture found in this Advent guide. If worshipping with others, rotate who reads the passage each night.
- Give prayers of thankfulness, repentance, and petition based on what the Spirit has brought to your mind.
- Choose a family in the church, pray for them, and then reach out to encourage them in some way.

Advent at Agape 2020

Agape's Advent theme this year is **God IS with us**. This was the very meaning of the name Immanuel (**Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23**), the prophesied Messiah. This name was given to Jesus who was sent by God to save His people from their sins. As we close out one of the most turbulent years in modern history, there is perhaps no greater promise for us to meditate on than the reality that God has promised to be with His church always.

During this season we will focus on several divine attributes of God and how His character is made real to us through our faith in the person of Jesus Christ. As we look back on the birth of Christ, as well as look ahead to His final return, we can also anticipate his daily Advent in our lives. All the promises of God, that we place our hope on, find their yes and amen in Jesus. *Maranatha!!*



Scripture Readings for Advent 2020

To join with us in this Advent celebration and receive daily reminders and reflection questions, simply text the word **AgapeAdvent** to **84576**

Week 1 - God IS Perfect

Nov 29: Deuteronomy 32:4

Nov 30: 2 Samuel 22:29-31

Dec 1: 2 Samuel 22:32-34

Dec 2: 1 John 4:18

Dec 3: Philippians 3:12-14

Dec 4: Hebrews 9:11-12

Dec 5: Hebrews 9:13-14

Week 2 - God IS our Refuge

Dec 6: Proverbs 18:10

Dec 7: 2 Chronicles 15:4, Psalm 46:1

Dec 8: Psalm 27:1, Psalm 46:2-3

Dec 9: John 4:13-14, Psalm 46:4

Dec 10: Psalm 23:1-4

Dec 11: Psalm 46:6, Gen 1:1

Dec 12: Psalm 46:8-9, Psalm 66:1-5

Week 3 - God IS our Deliverer

Dec 13: Isaiah 7:14-16, Matthew 1:20-23

Dec 14: Jonah 2:1-10, Matthew 12:39-40

Dec 15: Exodus 14:21-28

Dec 16: Luke 7:22, Isaiah 29:18-19

Dec 17: Mark 14:61-62, Daniel 7:13-14

Dec 18: John 11:49-52

Dec 19: Matthew 28:5-7

Week 4 - God IS Faithful

Dec 20: Galatians 4:1-7

Dec 21: Micah 5:1-5

Dec 22: 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5, 1 Pt 4:19

Dec 23: 1 Peter 1:13-19

Christmas Eve - God IS our Peace

Dec 24: 1 John 1:5-10

Candlelight Service at Agape 9:00pm
(Doors open at 8:30pm - Livestream available)

Christmas Day - God IS with us

Dec 25: Luke 2:1-20 **Merry Christmas!!!**

Special thanks to Sam Knowles, Alex Taylor, and Kevin Small for contributing to this worship guide.