

ADVENT

MMXXX

HOPE

Today we begin the first week of Advent as we begin to anticipate the celebration of Jesus' arrival. Maybe you've already been longing for Him in a new and fresh way. Perhaps the long road of this year has made you weary. Jesus is the light of the world, the living water, the very bread of life. Don't be ashamed of your longing, your desire, your hope for more.

In the book of Isaiah, as it points us forward to Jesus, we are reminded of the bounty and fullness provided in Jesus. Ponder these words carefully, slowly, as you receive God's invitation, and step forward towards Jesus.

ISAIAH 55

¹Is anyone thirsty?

*Come and drink—
even if you have no money!*

*Come, take your choice of wine or milk—
it's all free!*

²Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength?

Why pay for food that does you no good?

Listen to me, and you will eat what is good.

You will enjoy the finest food.

³"Come to me with your ears wide open.

Listen, and you will find life.

I will make an everlasting covenant with you.

I will give you all the unfailing love I promised to David.

As you light the first candle of Advent, the candle of HOPE let this remind you of the hope you have for today, the unknown of tomorrow, and even in death. Our hope is the Light of the World, Jesus, who loves you.

Isaiah 9 says: "The people walking in darkness, have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.""For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

PRAY

Thank Jesus for who He is and what He has done. Tell Him what He means to you and why you long for His presence. Tell Him that He is your hope — your confidence is that you are not condemned but accepted, loved and cherished.



LOVE

The word Advent means “arrival”. Today you are invited to light the advent candle that represents love – the magnificent love that was displayed at Jesus’ birth.

John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

It’s amazing to think God loves us so much so that He gave his most precious treasure....His Son, Jesus. Today His love continues to pour out. It never ends. Just as the angels, shepherds and wise men did many years ago, this morning we come to worship and adore Him.

Read that Scripture again and replace the word ‘world’ with your name. Ponder that. Jesus loves the world, but even more specifically, He loves you. Stop and meditate on that truth – His personal love for you.

CONSIDER JOHN 15:15-17

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.

PRAY

Thank Jesus for what He has done for you. Thank Him for what He continues to do for you – His love displayed through His birth and life and continued faithfulness to. Ask Him to show you how to receive His love today and to give love to the people around you.



JOY

Today you light the advent candle of **JOY**. Advent is the remembrance of Jesus arrival. We know from Scripture that many people were anticipating Jesus birth ... his arrival. They were doing so with expectancy, so that when He did arrive their response was worship, gratitude and joy.

LUKE 2:10-14 SAYS

“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

You are invited to rejoice today with that same enthusiasm. Apart from Jesus the world is dark, lonely, hopeless and without peace. With Him

everything changes. He is the source of life – the author of life – the giver of life. As you celebrate Him, do so with great **JOY**, amazed at what God has done for you in Jesus. His life is now your life as you are United with Him.

PRAY

Jesus, I thank you for the Joy we have through you. Today I rejoice because of you and the joy only you can provide. I need you. Apart from you I have no joy. I ask that you would give me your joy again.



PEACE

LUKE 1:26-33 SAYS:

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Once we were far from God, not following Him. We were enemies of God, rebelling against Him. However, because of Jesus, His birth and His life – you now have peace with the Father. Today you light the advent candle of **PEACE**. Advent means, coming or arrival, and during this season, we anticipate the

coming of Jesus. As you light the **PEACE** candle, be reminded

that you are children of the most high God. Through His peace, He shows you how much He cares for you, and that your peace comes from Him. Jesus is our peace when the noise of the world gets too loud, your peace when you feel afraid or alone. Jesus is your peace when life can overwhelm and overpower you. He is here for every moment – your Peace on earth, our mercy mild.

PRAY

Pause. Take a moment to pray right now. Thank him for his amazing piece that nothing else can replace. Thank him that he continues to give and give and that his peace never runs out. Ask him for a fresh and new measure of peace right now that he would gift to you for this very moment. Tell him that you are aware that he knows and sees you in this season on this day. Rest in his peace and tell him that you are receiving his peace even now.



CHRIST

Over the past 4 weeks, you have celebrated Advent by the lighting of candles. And through your devotion, prayer, and worship. By doing this we are reminded that God sent His Son Jesus to give us Hope, Love, Joy and Peace.

Tonight the Advent season ends. We wait no longer. And as you light the last candle, know that God's promise of a Redeemer is fulfilled through Christ Jesus' birth. It happened on this night so many years ago. As you pause and consider and reflect on that first Christmas Eve, let the awareness of that moment create a sense of amazement and awe in you. Respond in gratitude and worship right now.

Many years ago in Bethlehem, the shepherds saw a great light and heard the voices of angels. They traveled to the manger and saw the baby Jesus.

That same night, wise men saw a star in the sky. They followed the star to the place where they found

Jesus. Just like the shepherds and wise men, tonight, you come to worship and adore Him.

PRAY

As you pray, tell Jesus how much you need him and tell him why and how he has made all of the difference for you. Expressed to him that he is not only the light of the world, but your light. Thank him for being born into this world walking this earth living his perfect life on your behalf and then dying in your place. Tell him why his birth changes everything for you. Prepare prayers of rest and gratitude and worship.

