

What is the meaning of Advent?

Advent is a special time in the Christian calendar that's all about looking forward to the birth of Jesus at Christmas. The word "Advent" means "coming," highlighting the anticipation and waiting for something important. It's not just about the excitement of the holiday season but also about orienting our hope in Christ and longing for his ultimate return. Advent helps us connect with the ancient promise of a Savior, foretold in old prophecies. During this season we marvel at the Incarnation, the miracle of God taking on human form and entering our world as a vulnerable baby.



How can we commemorate the significance of Advent as a congregation? (Choose one of the practices below, or make your own.)

- ❑ **Advent Wreath Lighting:** The four candles we progressively light symbolize growing hope in dark times. We remember Jesus' birth in the past and eagerly expect his return in the future. It teaches us to balance being grateful for what has already happened while eagerly anticipating what is yet to come.
- ❑ **Advent Devotional Guides:** Distribute or make available Advent devotional guides for members. These guides can include daily readings, reflections, and prayers that invite us to practice hope, joy, peace, and love.
- ❑ **Advent Calendar Activities:** Develop an Advent calendar with daily activities for members, such as acts of kindness, meditations, or Scripture reflections. This can create a sense of daily connection and shared purpose.

How can we participate in Advent with Jesus? (Choose one of the practices below, or make your own.)

- ❑ **Simplicity:** Practice the art of letting go. Reorganize your priorities so that they flow from loving and serving God above all else. Root your identity in God's love, not wealth and possessions.
- ❑ **Slowing:** Choose to be intentional about slowing down during one of the busiest and most stressful times of the year. Ask God to help you live in the present moment and fight the addiction to busyness and constant activity. Realize that life only happens in the now.
- ❑ **Solitude:** Prioritize time and space to be with God without distractions. In a season of reuniting with loved ones, solitude may seem counterintuitive. However, even brief moments of solitude may be exactly what we need to recenter ourselves in God's presence to practice other spiritual disciplines like Bible study, prayer, or journaling.

