

What Happened?

The Mystery of Advent

Advent 2018

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What is Advent?

The word advent comes from the Latin word “adventus” which means “coming or “arrival.” Therefore, to celebrate Advent is to celebrate the coming of Jesus, the Christ. Advent usually begins four Sundays before Christmas. In the Christian world Advent is a season of spiritual preparation for the birth of Jesus Christ. The Advent season marks a time of celebration and a time of recognizing what life would be like without a Savior. Christians remember Christ’s first coming as an infant, Christ’s presence with us today, through the Holy Spirit, and anticipating His final return.

Advent is a time of reflection, joyful expectation, and observing some of the traditional Advent customs. Each Sunday of Advent is celebrated around four major themes; love, joy, peace and hope. Candles are lighted to represent each theme, one per Sunday. Prayers and family activities are encouraged to stimulate Christian devotions and a deeper understanding of the true gift of Advent, Jesus the Christ.

Children often follow the Advent calendar where they find games, craft instructions, baking recipes, and scriptural lessons. Often children make tree ornaments representing symbols of Christianity, like doves, fish, angels and the star. Family prayer is observed focusing on the love, joy, hope and peace Jesus brings.

Discover what really happened long ago when Jesus Christ was born. Discover what has really happened in your life because He came. Come and rejoice because of His arrival, for truly He is the son of the living God.

Symbols of Advent

Lights: The symbol of light is at the heart of the Christian faith. Jesus is our light that shines in the darkness of our world. This light brings life to all.

Gifts: Why do we give gifts during this season? A gift is a voluntary expression of love that expects nothing in return. Just as the “magi” brought gifts to Jesus to show their love for Him, subsequently, we give gifts to spread love to one another.

Circles: The circle represents many things in life. However, the circle during this season represents the eternal, the never ending. Jesus came into the world so that we might have eternal life.

Angels: Angel means messenger. An angel is the bearer of God’s message to His people. Therefore, the message of the angles is important and allows us to understand the whole experience of the Christmas season.

Music: The word “noel” means carol. A carol is a song of celebration. Subsequently, we celebrate the birth of Jesus with music.

The Jesse Tree: The Jesse Tree represents the family tree, or genealogy of Jesus Christ. This tree helps to tell the story of creation, the coming of the messiah and salvation.

The Infant Jesus: The purpose of Advent is to celebrate and seek to understand the true meaning of Jesus’ birth. As Jesus came in an unexpected way, so must we open our hearts to God’s unexpected events in our lives.



An Advent Message

As we prepare to receive Jesus in our hearts anew, let us focus on two important activities; devotion to show sorrow for sin and celebration of our eternal hope. Let us be mindful that the former is busily at work in systems that fail the needy and those who are disenfranchised. Sinful practices are tolerated and have almost become the norm so that speaking truth to power is prohibited. The reality of what happened long ago has somehow become hidden. Long ago Jesus came unto us bringing peace, love, joy and hope and of his government there is no end. To follow as we believe means, that we must spread what Jesus brings into our lives, subsequently, we must spread love, peace, joy and hope. Advent is a time to remember how much we need a savior and look forward to his second coming. It is also a time for us to come together with family and pray, sing carols, share stories, and partake in our favorite foods. Let us seek Jesus this advent season in places where people have adapted practices that destroy the human rights of others, and try to incarcerate those who seek freedom from oppression. Seeking Jesus this advent season, means going to uncomfortable places and offering peace, love, joy and hope, simply put, it means celebrating Jesus even in places that seem to have no room for him.

The daily meditations, prayers, activities contained in this publication are designed to encourage you to seek Jesus in all that you do. May each day be filled with endless opportunities to see Jesus being born in you. Honor Jesus by spending quality family time and concentrating on the wonderful gift He is to us. Discover what really happened long ago, what has happened in your life and rejoice at what is to come.

During this Advent season and until Christ returns, may you be blessed with love, peace, joy and hope. Prepare the way to bless others with Jesus joy.

Because He Came,
Rev. Marla C. Hawkins





Advent Prayers for Children

God in the night
God at my right
God all the day
God with me stay
God in my heart
Never depart
God with thy might
Keep us in light
Through this dark night.
AMEN

Here I wait in quiet hope
that you will come,
water the field of my heart,
and make your love blossom.
AMEN

Open my eyes to see your light.
Open my hands to receive your bread.
Open my ears to hear your word.
Open my mouth to speak your love.
AMEN

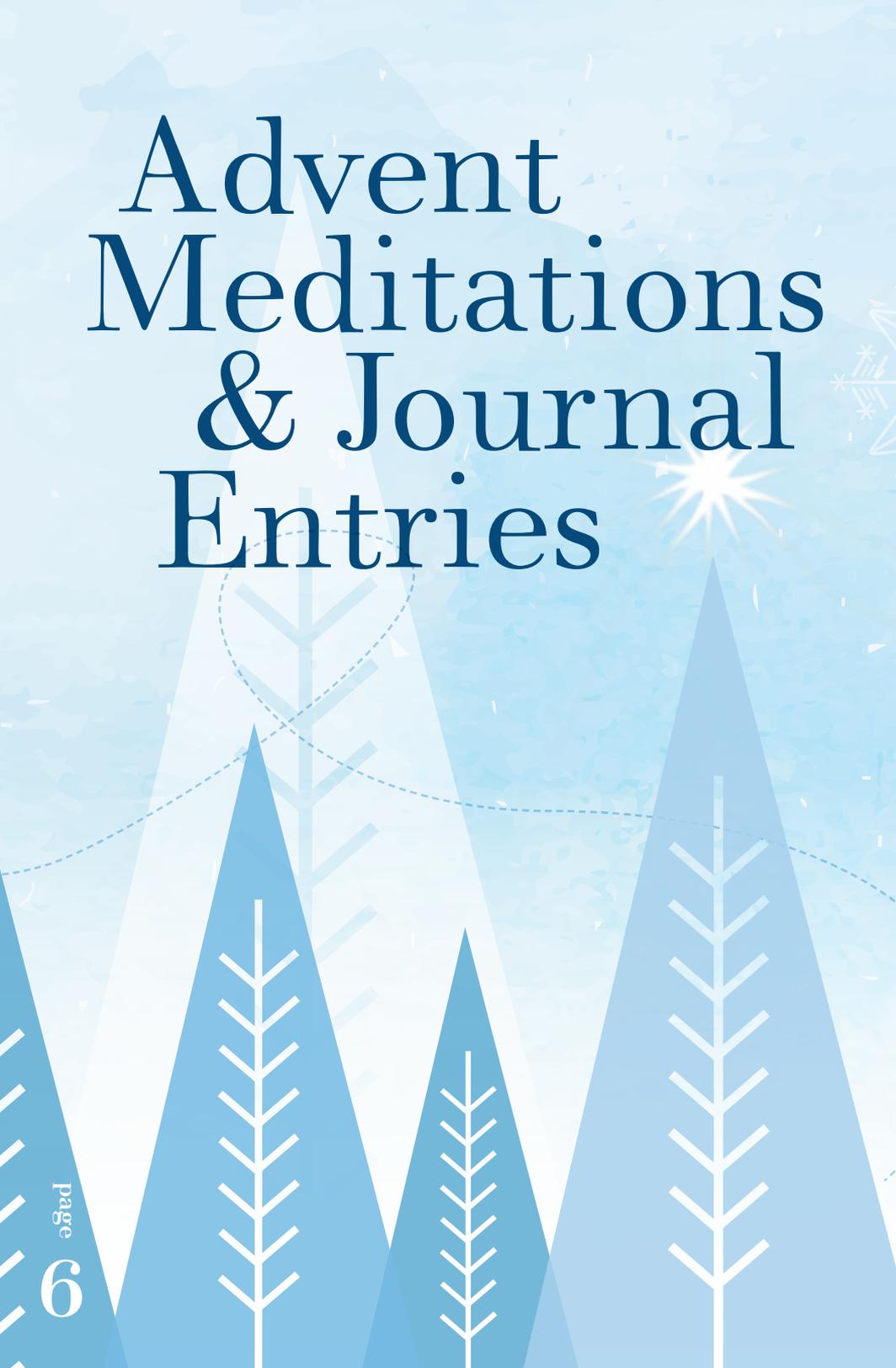
Angel sent by God to guide me,
Be my light and walk beside me;
Be my guardian and protect me
On the paths of life direct me.
AMEN

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care
And fit us for heaven to live with you there.
AMEN

Here is the stable
Where Jesus was born
and was laid in a manger
That first Christmas morn.
And Mary and Joseph
And the cattle and sheep
Smiled down on the baby
And watched him, asleep.
AMEN

Jesus Christ, a child so wise,
Bless my hands and fill my eyes.
Watch me as I sleep in bed,
Help me in the days ahead.
AMEN

Advent Meditations & Journal Entries



Week II

Dec. 9–15, 2018

Second Sunday of Advent

What would the future bring? No one knew, especially Mary. But Mary knew that she could trust God to be with her. We can trust God, too. No matter what things God asks of us, no matter how hard they might be, God will be there every step of the way to help us.

Prayer

Dear God, we thank you for Mary who was the mother of your son, Jesus. We trust you and know that you will always be with us. AMEN.

Scripture Reading for the Week

“Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women! But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then 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 bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give 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. Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man? And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible. Then Mary said, Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her.” – *Luke 1:26-38 (NKJV)*

Weekly Journal Entry

In the space provided below, reflect on a time when you did not understand what was happening to you. Everything seemed to be so confusing, but God sent a messenger to let you know He was with you.

Week IV

Dec. 23–24, 2018

Fourth Sunday in Advent

The first people to hear the good news that a Savior had been born were shepherds in the fields surrounding Bethlehem. How wonderful that such good news came to ordinary people like you and me. Once the shepherds had seen the child, they couldn't keep the good news to themselves. Such good news is hard to keep inside.

Prayer

Dear God, we thank you for the love that came down to us at Christmas. Help us to share this love with everyone. AMEN

Scripture Reading

“Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold an angel of the Lord stood around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, Do not be afraid, for behold I bring you good tiding of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign to you: You will find the a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, 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, goodwill toward men! So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us. And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.” — *Luke 2:8-20 (NKJV)*

Weekly Journal Entry

In the space provided, write a prayer thanking God for sending His Son to you and giving you the gift that never stops giving... Jesus the Christ.



Christmas Day

Dec. 25, 2018

Prayer

Dear God, show us how to share the love that you sent to us on that Christmas night in Bethlehem. AMEN.





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**Merry
Christmas
and Season's
Greetings**

*from the Alfred Street Baptist
Church Kids' Street Family*