

November 2020

Dear Mosaic Chapel,

Advent is the season leading up to Christmas, meant to cause us to pause and reflect on the coming of Jesus. Advent comes from the Latin word "Adventus," meaning "coming," and points to both the first coming of Christ celebrated by Christmas, and Christ's promise to return.

This Advent Guide is designed to help you make the most of this holiday season. This Guide provides a devotional and Scripture reading for each week, as well as some activities. Consider setting up your own Advent wreath and candles at home and taking time each week to read and reflect on the included Scriptures and devotional readings, by yourself or with your family or roommates. An Advent wreath consists of a wreath with 5 candles, and one can be a different color to signify the Jesus candle.

May this holiday season, in all its uniqueness, be filled with joy, fun, laughter and special memories. And more than anything, may the reality of Jesus, of God sending His Son into the world, be made new and overwhelm your hearts this year. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him," (John 3:16-17).

Your friend,

Pastor Molly



Sunday, November 29 – Church in a Box (No Home Groups)

For the first week of Advent, plan to set up your Advent wreath and do the readings as a family, with your roommate, or in your own time. Here's a format you can follow:

1. Set up your Advent Candles. You can add a wreath or any other decorations you'd like.

2. Watch the "What is Advent?" video on Mosaic Chapel's YouTube or Facebook Page
(posted at 9am on Sunday, November 29)

3. Discuss the following questions:

- What stood out to you?
- Was there anything in the video we'd like to implement in our holiday traditions?
- What's one way we can prioritize Jesus this holiday season?
- With the pandemic, what's going to be different this year? How can we make the holidays special?

4. Read the enclosed Advent devotional and Scripture and light your first Advent candle. Consider doing the additional Action and Share elements.

You can also participate in the first Facebook Live Devotional at 6PM on Sunday, November 29.

Facebook Live Advent Devotionals

Beginning Sunday, November 29, 6PM

Each Sunday evening of Advent, and Christmas Eve, the pastors and leaders of Mosaic Chapel will lead an Advent reading and Devotional. Join us on Facebook Live each Sunday evening at 6PM, as well as Thursday, December 24 (Christmas Eve).

Facebook Page – “Mosaic Chapel”

Sunday, December 20 – Advent will be part of our Christmas Service. The service will be on Facebook Live beginning at 5PM.



Christmas Service – Two Ways

Mosaic Chapel Christmas Service - In-person or at home

Sunday, December 20, 5PM

Happy (Half) Hour - 4:30PM

Join us for Christmas! We'll have carols, teaching, kids' Nativity and candlelighting. Christmas cookies and hot cocoa will be served at 4:30pm. We'll have a free ticket system to ensure we can keep the space safe and socially distanced. For anyone who would prefer to participate from home, we'll get you candles and carol sheets in advance. This is a great opportunity to invite a friend or family over for dinner and online service! More details to come!

Advent Guide 2020

Each week, take time to read the devotional and Scripture. Then say a prayer together, and light the next candle. We've also provided some additional Action and Share activities you can do.

Sunday, November 29

The First Sunday of Advent

The Prophecy Candle – “Promise of Peace”

The Prophecy Candles refers to all the prophecies in the Old Testament, pointing to the coming of Jesus. This prophecy in Isaiah promises that the ultimate responsibility, the leadership of all things, rests upon Jesus. Written several hundred years before his birth, this prophecy points towards what God will do. Here, 2000 years later, we have the privilege of looking back upon what God did. He sent His Son to earth to be His bringer of light, love, grace and redemption through Him.

We are all walking through a challenging and uncertain season, and all our experiences of that are unique. If ever we needed the assurance that God is in control, it's now! For us personally, Isaiah is promising us that if we let Him, Jesus will bring us peace. And for the world at large, God's ultimate plan is that through Jesus, God will redeem all things to Himself and Jesus will reign with justice and righteousness. He is the one we ought to trust with the leadership of our lives, both now and forevermore.

*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.
Of the increase of His government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this. (Isaiah 9:6-7)*

Additional Scriptures: Matthew 1:18-25, Philippians 4:4-9

SHARE: In this passage, Isaiah calls Jesus “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Consider each of these titles in turn. What does this title mean to you, in your own words?

ACTION: Who do you know that needs peace? Think of someone specific. What do they need to hear this week? Consider what it would look like to be a bringer of peace.

Sunday, December 6

The Second Sunday of Advent

The Bethlehem Candle – “Promise of Purpose”

The Bethlehem Candle refers to the little town outside of Jerusalem where Jesus was born. Micah prophesied 800 years prior that it's here that the Messiah would be born. That this little, insignificant town would play an important role in the story of the Savior.

*“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times.” (Micah 5:2)*

The below passage is another prophecy. This one refers to John the Baptist, whom God called to tell people in advance of who Jesus was. Just like Bethlehem, John had an important role in God's plan. John was obedient and followed what God had for him, being a herald of Christ and pointing to His redemptive work.

*A voice of one calling:
"In the desert prepare
the way for the LORD;
make straight in the wilderness
a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.
And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
and all mankind together will see it.
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."
(Isaiah 40:3-5)*

God has a plan and a purpose for us during this time. Whether it's to pray and intercede, speak life and peace into those around us, or to get involved in people's safety and provide practical needs, God still wants to work and move through us, in the middle of this season. In fact, I think He's placed us here for such a time as this. We have an important purpose, right here and now!

Additional Scriptures: Luke 2:4-7

SHARE: What do you think God's purpose for you is, right here and now? If you're not sure, spend some time praying, either individually or together, and ask God to speak to you.

ACTION: Consider how you can live out that purpose this week. What can you commit to doing? Choose one way to step out in faith to live out what you believe God wants you to do, right here and now.

Sunday, December 13

The Third Sunday of Advent

The Angel's Candle – “Promise of Joy”

The Angel's Candle refers to the role of angels, God's heavenly messengers, in the coming of Jesus. God sent angels to speak to many people. Angels appeared to Mary, Joseph, and Zachariah, telling them to not be afraid, but to look with anticipation to the miraculous work God was doing, sending His Son into the world. And after the birth of Jesus, a giant group of angels appeared to the shepherds in the fields, announcing the birth of the Savior of the world.

“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” (Luke 2:8-14)

The coming of Jesus is full of joy! Joy is often confused with happiness. Happiness is a feeling caused by external, positive circumstances or experiences. It can wax and wane, depending on the day (or hour). Joy, on the other hand, is

a feeling of deep satisfaction, based in the knowledge of God's goodness, grace and the reality of our salvation in Him. Joy comes from God. Specifically, the Bible says joy is a fruit of the Spirit. As we invite the Holy Spirit to fill us and grow in us, joy grows. Joy from God can exist above and beyond what's happening around us.

The following passage is a prophecy from Isaiah, that Jesus quotes in Luke 4, to describe why he came.

*The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
and provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the LORD
for the display of his splendor. (Isaiah 61:1-3)*

Additional Scriptures: Luke 1:1-38, 2:8-14, Matthew 1:18-25

SHARE: Spend some time expressing gratitude and thanks. Ask the Lord to fill you with a new sense of joy.

ACTION: How can you bring joy to someone this week? Consider together a creative way you can spread joy to others. Maybe it's even a random act of kindness!

Sunday, December 20

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

The Shepherd's Candle – "Promise of Provision"

The Shepherd's Candle refers to the shepherds in the field that the angels appeared to, harkening the birth of Jesus. I think it's so beautiful that the first people God shared His Son with were the shepherds. The lowly shepherds. In 1 Samuel 16, David's father didn't even think to mention him to the prophet Samuel, because he was "tending the sheep."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen Him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this Child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. (Luke 2:15-18)

Although shepherds in ancient Israel were low in the social structure, Jesus refers to himself as the Good Shepherd. In John 10, he describes for us what that means:

"Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." Jesus

used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. (John 10:1-15)

SHARE: Spend some time discussing Jesus as the Good Shepherd. What does a good shepherd do for his flock?

ACTION: Like Jesus the Good Shepherd, how can you provide for someone's needs and safety this week? Maybe it's helping a friend or giving to the Food Bank. Choose something together to help someone.

Thursday, December 24

Christmas Eve

The Jesus Candle – “Promise of Life”

The Jesus Candle refers to Jesus Himself. We light it on Christmas or Christmas Eve, signifying the culmination of the Advent season, the celebration of the birth of Christ. Jesus came into the world to bring life. It's in Him that we experience life, true life, full life. In His own words, Jesus describes it like this, *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full,”* (John 10:10).

Just like the candle, one of the ways Jesus is described in the Bible is light. Specifically, light contrasted with darkness. In the passage below, one of the concepts the author is communicating is that apart from Christ, we walk in darkness. We don't even realize it, until we're illuminated by the light of Christ.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of

God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
(John 1:1-14)*

Additional Scripture: John 12:44-46, 2 Corinthians 4:1-12

SHARE: Spend some time reflecting and discussing this idea of light. What does light do? How have you seen the light of Jesus illuminate things in your life? Consider sharing your stories of meeting Jesus. Are there areas of your life it's time to allow Jesus' light to shine into and illuminate? Allowing Jesus in to an area is the first step to letting Him bring healing and wholeness.

ACTION: Reach out to some friends and family that you don't get to see this year. Tell them you're thankful for them, and share with them how Jesus is bringing you light, life and joy.

This Christmas, thank the Lord for His love, His grace, His care, and His light.