



## St. Luke's Family Advent Devotions

The origins of the Advent wreath are found in Europe, probably Germany. Traditionally, the wreath is made of four candles in a circle of evergreens. Three candles are violet and the fourth is rose, but four white candles or four violet candles can also be used. Each day at home, the candles are lighted, perhaps before the evening meal -- one candle the first week, and then another each succeeding week until December 25th.

Christians kept these traditions alive, and by the 16th century Lutherans across Germany used these symbols to celebrate their Advent hope in Christ, the everlasting Light. From Germany the use of the Advent wreath, Christmas Trees, Christmas lights and Santa Claus spread to other parts of the Christian world over the years. Advent is a great time for us to prepare for the coming Savior, while at the same time gathering our loved ones together around God's Promise of his second coming in glory.

## The Meaning of the Wreath

### **1st Candle - "Candle of Hope" - (Purple)**

We can have hope because God is faithful and will keep the promises he made to us. Our hope comes from God.

*And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. - (Romans 15:12-13)*

### **2nd Candle - "Candle of Preparation" - (Purple)**

Preparation means to 'get ready'. "Help us to be ready to welcome YOU, O GOD!"

*As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God's salvation.'" - (Luke 3:4-6)*

### **3rd Candle - "Candle of Joy" - (Pink)**

The angels sang a message of JOY!

*And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

*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 of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ 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, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."*

*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." - (Luke 2:7-15)*

#### **4th Candle - "Candle of Love" - (Purple)**

God sent his only Son to earth to save us, because he loves us!

*"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)*

#### **5th Candle - "Christ Candle" - (White)**

The white candle reminds us that Jesus is the spotless Lamb of God, sent to wash away our sins! His birth was for his death; His death was for our birth!

*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" - (John 1:29)*

*Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."*

*In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."*

*"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"*

*Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." - (John 3:1-8)*

Setting aside a few minutes each day during Advent to light the candle(s) and worship will help everyone in the family to get ready for Jesus' birthday celebration! On the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day burn the first candle, read the Scripture references, sing a carol (or read it) and pray. On the next Sunday, you will burn the first and second candle. Continue in this manner until the Sunday before Christmas when you will burn all four candles. On Christmas Day you burn the 'Christ Candle', signifying that Jesus has come!

## **First Week of Advent**

*Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains." - (Mark 13:5-8)*

O Jesus, your voice sounds through the house of my world: Be on your guard! Stay awake! Yet I hardly hear you. Busy with so much, we hardly notice at times your Word of truth and grace. WE admit to forgetting your words about our life on earth, our life in heaven and our daily need for confession and forgiveness. My spirit within has grown tired and you, my God, seem far away. How can I hear your voice today? I am a sinner and you are a holy God. Come Lord and restore my soul. Grant me forgiveness. Without you we have no hope. With you hope springs eternal. With you we can do all things. Speak to my heart. Restore my eyes to see you. Focus my heart and life to look forward to your 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. Remind me again of the journey you call me to make and the work you would have me do. I am your servant, O Lord. Speak to me during our Christmas celebration and turn my eyes and heart to watch and hope for your coming. Amen. Come Lord Jesus. Come quickly. Amen.

#### **CW Hymn # 2 "Savior of the Nations Come"**

1. Savior of the Nations Come,  
Virgin's Son, make here your home.  
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth,  
That the Lord chose such a birth.
2. Not by human flesh and blood,  
By the Spirit of our God  
Was the Word of God made flesh,  
Woman's offspring, pure and fresh.

## Second Week of Advent

*In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" – (Matthew 3:1-3)*

O Jesus, my heart is cluttered with many things. My life is packed with problems in wrong places. I confess I need a house cleaning inside and out. Prepare my heart and my life for your 2nd coming; just as I prepare my house for Christmas celebrations of your first coming. Clean out the dust and dirt of my sins. Decorate my heart and mind with beautiful things from your Word. Make my words and actions to be beautiful lights that celebrate your love for the world. Prepare me Lord to meet you face to face and use me Lord so that others will be prepared for your 2nd coming in glory. Amen Come Lord Jesus. Come quickly. Amen.

### CW Hymn # 2 "Savior of the Nations Come"

2. Not by human flesh and blood,  
By the Spirit of our God  
Was the Word of God made flesh,  
Woman's offspring, pure and fresh.
3. Wondrous Birth! O wondrous Child  
Of the virgin undefiled,  
Though by all the world disowned,  
Yet to be in heav'n enthroned.

## Third Week of Advent

*But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ 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, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." - (Luke 2:10-14)*

O Jesus, if only we could have heard the angles sing for joy on that first Christmas night. We are sorry for forgetting what great things you have done for the world. Not only have you made us but you have saved us. Put love in our hearts and joy on our lips this Christmas and throughout the year as we live to praise you. Help us to see your love everyday of our lives in everyplace we look. Especially Lord keep on the top of my thoughts and the tip of my tongue the gratitude for your life's work of salvation from the virgin's womb to the earth's tomb. As you brought joy to the shepherds by sending the message of your birth across the countryside, use us Lord to bring the message of forgiveness to those living around us. Use us Lord as your messengers of joy as you used the angels. Amen Come Lord Jesus. Come Quickly. Amen.

### CW Hymn # 2 "Savior of the Nations Come"

3. Wondrous Birth! O wondrous Child  
Of the virgin undefiled,  
Though by all the world disowned,  
Yet to be in heav'n enthroned.
4. From the Father's throne he came  
And ascended to the same,  
Captive leading death and hell –  
High the song of triumph swell!

## Fourth Week of Advent

*But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." – (Matthew 1:20 -21)*

O Jesus, I believe you are the Son of God who took on human flesh in order to save me. Help me in my unbelief, dear Savior. Take away my selfish heart and doubting mind and give me a calm confidence in your Word of salvation. Help me to find comfort and peace in the mystery of your birth, life, death and resurrection for me. Give me focus, Lord, to remain true to you. When I am weak give me friends and family to direct my selfish heart and doubting mind to your manger and your cross and your empty tomb. This Christmas, Jesus, I want you to come to my heart and my home and never leave. Be my companion throughout the days and years of my life, until I see you with my own eyes. Use me to be a blessing to my family and friends, that they too may see you with their own eyes in paradise. Merry Christmas, Lord. Merry Christmas. Come Lord Jesus. Come Quickly. Amen.

### CW Hymn # 2 "Savior of the Nations Come"

4. From the Father's throne he came  
And ascended to the same,  
Captive leading death and hell –  
High the song of triumph swell!
5. Praise to God the Father sing,  
Praise to God the Son, Our King,  
Praise to God the Spirit be  
Ever and eternally.

## Additional Scripture verses for during Advent

<u>Four Weeks Before Christmas (November 29th - December 5th)</u>	
Sunday	Isaiah 7:14 & Micah 5:2
Monday	Matthew 1:18-24 and Luke 1:26-33
Tuesday	Luke 2:1-5
Wednesday	Luke 2:6-7
Thursday	Luke 2:8-9
Friday	Luke 2:10-12
Saturday	Luke 2:13-14
<u>Three Weeks Before Christmas (December 6th - 12th)</u>	
Sunday	Luke 2:15-16
Monday	Luke 2:17-18
Tuesday	Luke 2:19
Wednesday	Luke 2:20
Thursday	Luke 2:21
Friday	Matthew 2:1-2
Saturday	Matthew 2:3-6
<u>Two Weeks Before Christmas (December 13th - 19th)</u>	
Sunday	Matthew 2:7-8
Monday	Matthew 2:9
Tuesday	Matthew 2:10-11
Wednesday	Matthew 2:12-15
Thursday	Galatians 4:4-5
Friday	Ephesians 2:8-9
Saturday	1 John 4:7-16
<u>Christmas Eve or Christmas Day</u>	
<p><i>The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. 3 You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder. 4 For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. 5 Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. 6 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. - (Isaiah 9: 2-6)</i></p>	

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