



We are so glad you are joining us for our Advent celebration this year. We have great hopes for what God is going to do as we walk this journey as the FAMILY of Crossroads.

During this season, the hope is that we can take a pause and bring the reason we celebrate back into focus. The hope is that each night we take some time to slow down, reflect on these questions, and give God space to speak into our lives.

If you are new to observing Advent, welcome! Hopefully, this will be a great experience, and you get an idea of what the Church has traditionally observed for thousands of years. We will be lighting Advent candles on our Advent wreath. If you don't have the materials, don't worry. You can be creative, and celebrate with what you have!

There is no wrong way to celebrate. The idea is that we are observing this Advent season with the intention of focusing more on God. If you are able, we encourage you to celebrate this with others. You could celebrate this as a family, a friend group, or with your neighbors.

The Prophecy Candle

December 4

Read Isaiah 9:2-7



Today, we find ourselves in between two Advents, two arrivals. We are caught in the tension of Jesus' first Advent and the one that is still to come. It's a beautiful tension: one that draws our hearts closer to Jesus in excited anticipation of His work on earth.

This week we will be lighting the Hope, or Prophecy candle each night. The candle reminds us of the prophecies in the Bible about Christ's birth, as well as the feeling of hope God's people experienced for hundreds of years as they awaited His coming. Centuries before Jesus' first Advent had dawned, Isaiah's words that told of His coming brought hope to a weary people in desperate need of a Savior. In the midst of utter darkness, the hope of light glimmered in their hearts.

As we reflect on hope this week, we realize our hope is found in the God whose character has proven that even amidst the darkness, there is light. His name is Jesus, and He is what we hope for in this Advent season. He is the light that permeates the darkness.



December 5

Do you think God's people had a hard time waiting for their Savior? What are some things that you have a hard time waiting for? How do you think God wants you to spend your time waiting?

December 6

Read Psalm 62:5-6 as you light the Prophecy candle. We are given great hope. It lives in us today, as we cling to the promise of His return. What are some things you hope for this Advent season?

December 7

Read Jeremiah 23:5-6 and Malachi 3:1. How can you prepare your heart to celebrate Jesus' coming, just as Jeremiah and Malachi were getting their people prepared to celebrate the new King? Pray together that God would focus your hearts and your minds on Him during this season.



December 8

Show and Tell: Find something in your home that represents hope to you. Bring it to your Advent candle lighting and hold it near. If you are celebrating with others, share why you picked that object. Take some time to thank God for the hope that He brings and ask Him to increase it even more in your life.

December 9

Picture Time: Throughout the week, try to be aware of ways God is showing you hope in your surroundings. Snap a picture of something that reminds you of hope and share it with someone and tell them why it reminds you of His hope.

December 10

Before lighting the Prophecy candle tonight, turn out all the lights. As you observe the glow of this candlelight, reflect on the theme of hope as you consider what it means for Jesus to be a light in the midst of darkness, and for the people walking in darkness to see a great light.





The Bethlehem Candle

December 11

Read Micah 5:2-5



This week we will be lighting the Bethlehem candle and Prophecy candle each night. The Bethlehem candle, also known as the Peace candle, reminds us of Mary and Joseph's journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem before Mary gave birth to Jesus. Building on the hope found in the prophecies of God that we reflected on last week, the Peace candle causes us to look back to a particular promise of what the Messiah, and His kingdom, would look like.

During a time of political unrest caused by the Roman occupation and personal unrest between God and humanity brought upon by sin, the Messiah's kingdom would be one of peace—shalom. Shalom doesn't simply mean an absence of war or conflict but a true restoration of what has been lost. His advent promised the arrival of wholeness, completeness; a true peace on earth.



As we reflect on the promise of peace this week, let it give us comfort. There is likely no shortage of pain and longing in all of our lives. Christ's peace has the power to mend, heal, and restore what was lost. He has the power to bring wholeness and healing to lives in our broken world. And as followers of Jesus, we are called also to be agents of peace in the world and spread the good news of His kingdom to all. And to think: this Kingdom of Peace all started with a baby born in Bethlehem, in only a small village among all the people of Judah.

December 12

As we light the candles tonight, is there an area in your life that needs peace? Is there a relationship, emotional unrest, a presence of fear, or any other difficult situation in your life needing the peace of Jesus? In John 14:1 Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." Jesus is saying we have a say in the matter. We don't have to be troubled by our circumstances, we can choose to receive His peace and comfort as we invite Jesus into tough situations. Take some time to invite Jesus into these areas and bring His perfect peace.



December 13

As we light the candles tonight, ask if there is any conflict that needs to be dealt with in your life. We saw that true peace is not the absence of conflict but the replacement of something better. If there is conflict in your life, what is something better you can replace it with?

December 14

Action Step: Where can you bring peace to a relationship in your life? Maybe God is asking you to move toward someone in humility you may have hurt, or maybe He is asking you to extend forgiveness to someone who has hurt you.



December 15

Show and Tell: Find something in your home that represents peace to you. Bring it to your Advent candle lighting and hold it near. If you are celebrating with others, share why you picked that object. Take some time to thank God for the peace (shalom) that He brings and ask Him to increase it even more in your life.

December 16

Picture Time: Throughout the rest of this week, try to be aware of ways God is showing peace to you in your surroundings. Snap a picture of something that reminds you of peace and share it with someone and tell them why it reminds you of His peace.

December 17

As we reflect on the peace candle for the final night, think about how we are called to be agents of peace in the world. What would it look like to be an agent of peace in your family, friend circle, workplace, neighborhood, or even the world?



The Angel Candle

December 18

Read 1 John 4:9-12

This week we will be lighting the Bethlehem candle, the Prophecy candle, and the Angel candle each night. The Angel candle is also known as the Love candle.

Jesus' way of life when He was on earth was to show love by always focusing on other people's needs without gaining anything himself. True love is shown not just to those easy to love, but to those who might bring discomfort—those who are more difficult to love. As we desperately await the second coming in a world that needs Jesus more than anything, the greatest unbreakable force we can cling to is love. And in this season, we know the love of the Father through the unforgettable birth of His only Son.



December 19

Read Luke 2:8-14.

Have you ever thought about the angels in this story? Have you thought about how excited they must've been to tell the shepherds the great news that the Savior had been born? They probably knew about God's loving plan to send Jesus to the world to save it. They had to wait a long time, thousands and thousands of years, before they could announce God's plan of a gift to the world. Then, one day God said, "It's time!" Have you ever been so excited to give a gift to someone you loved? Was it hard to wait to give it to them? Imagine how much more our heavenly Father loves to give gifts!

December 20

Re-read Luke 2:8-14.

The Angels were sent to declare amazing news to poor shepherds, keeping watch over their flocks at night. In what ways do you see God speak to you or show evidence of His grace toward you in the simple moments of the day? Keep your eyes and ears open and look for God in the small things.



Dec 21

Show and Tell: Find something in your home that represents love to you. Bring it to your Advent candle lighting and hold it near. If you are celebrating with others, share why you picked that object. Take some time to thank God for the love that He brings and ask Him to increase it even more in your life.

Dec 22

Picture Time: Today (or throughout the day tomorrow), try to be aware of ways God is showing you love in your surroundings. Snap a picture of something that reminds you of love and share it with someone and tell them why it reminds you of His love.



December 23

As you light the candles tonight, see Mark 12:30-31, where Jesus talks about the two greatest commandments. He says we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. How well do you love yourself? A great question to ask is: if you cared for people the way you care for yourself, would you be loving to them? To love someone as you love yourself, you must love and care for yourself. This is a question of identity and knowing your value bestowed on you by your Father. Do you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you are a loved son or daughter of God? Sit with this and ask Him to show you how much you are loved so that out of the abundance of love you receive from Him, you can pour that love out to others.



The Shepherds Candle & the Jesus Candle

December 24



Today we light four candles for Advent. The fourth candle is the pink candle, which symbolizes joy. Christmas Day is almost here, and our joy grows more and more as we anticipate Christ's coming. This candle reminds us of the joy the shepherds felt when the angels brought them glad tidings and great joy.

Luke 2:8-15

“That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep.
9 Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified,
10 but the angel reassured them. “Don't be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. 1
1 The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!
12 And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.”



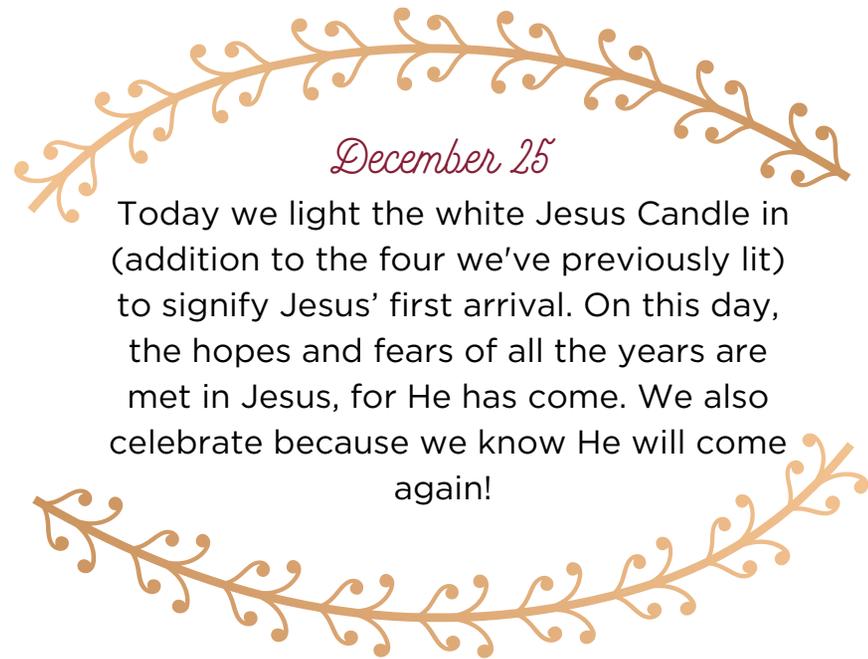
13 Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

14 “Glory to God in highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”

15 When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

The shepherds joyfully ran to Bethlehem to see Baby Jesus. And for this reason, we call this candle the “Shepherd’s candle,” for when we light it; we too ought to rejoice.

It’s not always easy to rejoice. But biblical joy is different from mere happiness. Biblical joy is an attitude God’s people embrace. It’s an attitude not determined by circumstances but by God’s love and promise—the promise that Jesus has overcome death, that we will be with Him forever, and that there will one day be no more pain or sorrow. It’s the gift of God’s presence in you, inspiring hope amidst the hard, hurt, and pain. When we light the pink candle today, let’s rejoice like the shepherds . . . for we have great hope and great news for the world.



December 25

Today we light the white Jesus Candle in (addition to the four we’ve previously lit) to signify Jesus’ first arrival. On this day, the hopes and fears of all the years are met in Jesus, for He has come. We also celebrate because we know He will come again!

Reflection:

As we wait in the tension of two Advents, we know we have true hope, peace, and love. How can you embrace the Joy we have in Christ and bring that Joy with you into the new year? What are some ways you can share that joy with the world? Let’s continue the celebration of the promises we have of hope, peace, and love for the rest of this year and into the next. We hope you have a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!





CrossRoads

N.A.M.P.A.

