

CHRIST CHURCH, AMSTERDAM



Advent 2020

29 NOVEMBER - 24 DECEMBER

A Time of Repentance and Hope

In Advent...

"...we ask God to heighten our awareness of His presence, to open our eyes to what He is doing---in us and in the world.

...it is fitting to contemplate both the beginning of time and the end of time, the creation of the cosmos and the promised new heavens and earth.

...we know that God has been acting in history to redeem this brokenness, to put all things right, and that He will one day complete this redemptive work

...We have a picture of our ultimate home, a glimpse into our final destiny. So in this season of hope, we imagine what is promised and intensify our longing for that future. We cry, 'Come, Lord Jesus!' "

Bobby Gross

Thoughts on using this booklet

Pray.

Ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit to
open your ears to His voice,
open your eyes to see Him,
open your heart to know Him more,
open your hands to let Him fill them.

Be still and listen.

Breathe in and out slowly,
allow the Spirit to calm your mind and
quiet all the noise of life.

Read the passage.

Read slowly.
Read several times through the week.
Look for actions and reactions in the reading.
Underline or highlight phrases or verses that
stand out to you.

Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening...

First Sunday

Revelation 21:1-7

1 Then I saw 'a new heaven and a new earth,' for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling-place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.

4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'

5 He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then He said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'

6 He said to me: 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.

7 Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be My children.

Collect

"Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which Your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when He shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through Him who is alive and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever."

Thoughts

"The more we let the Scriptures fuel our imagination and intensify our longing for the gracious rule of God, His just and peaceful realm, the more robust will be our frequent prayer: Let Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven."

~ Bobby Gross

"In a very real sense, the Christian community lives in Advent all the time. It can well be called the Time Between, because the people of God live in *the time between* the first coming of Christ, incognito in the stable in Bethlehem, and His second coming, in glory, to judge the living and the dead. In the Time Between, 'our lives are hidden with Christ in God; when Christ who is our life appears, then we also will appear with Him in glory.' (Col. 3:3-4). Advent contains within itself the crucial balance of the now and the not-yet that our faith requires. ... The disappointment, brokenness, suffering, and pain that characterize life in this present world is held in dynamic tension with the promise of future glory that is yet to come."

~ Fleming Rutledge

Week One

Reading 30 November - 5 December

I Peter 1:3-9

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

Week One

Reading 30 November - 5 December I Peter 1:3-9

Why do you think St. Peter began his letter with praise?

For what he is praising God?

What is our inheritance?

According to St. Peter in his letter, why do we suffer?

Of what do you need to repent?

What brings hope to you in this passage?

Week Two

Reading 6 December - 12 December

I Peter 1:13-25

"...with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at His coming. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.' Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through Him you believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so your faith and hope are in God. Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

For, 'All people are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;
the grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of the Lord endures for ever.'
And this is the word that was preached to you."

Week Two

Reading

6 December - 12 December

I Peter 1:3-9

How can we have alert and sober minds?

How can we be alert and not conform to the evil around us?

How can we be holy? How can we love sincerely and deeply?

What do you see about God in this passage?

Of what do you need to repent?

What brings hope to you in this passage?

Week Three

Reading 13 December - 19 December

I Peter 2:1-3, 9-12, 20b-25

"...rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

...But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Living godly lives in a pagan society. Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us.

...if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps. 'He committed no sin,

and no deceit was found in his mouth.' When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly.

'He himself bore our sins' in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; 'by His wounds you have been healed.' For 'you were like sheep going astray,' but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

Week Three

Reading 13 December - 19 December | Peter 2:1-3, 9-12, 20b-25

"Rid...crave...grow". What changes in your life will bring about these?

"Chosen...Royal..Holy...Special Possession." Do you see yourself as God declares you to be? What should be your response to His declaration?

How can we be holy? How are we called to suffer?

What does this passage tell you about Christ?

Of what do you need to repent?

What brings hope to you in this passage?

Week Four

Reading 20 December - 24 December

I Peter 4:7-10, 12-16; 5:6-10

"The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To Him be the power for ever and ever. Amen."

Week Four

Reading 20 December - 24 December | Peter 4:7-10, 12-16; 5:6-10

St. Peter twice in this passage reminds us to be alert and sober-minded. Why do you think he repeats this throughout his letter?

St. Peter urges us to "love deeply", "offer hospitality", "use [our] gift". How are you seeking to practice these? How can you grow in these?

"Do not be surprised..." Have the troubles during Covid and other difficulties surprised you? How does St. Peter tell us to view suffering?

St. Peter warns us of our enemy. How does he encourage us to deal with him? What part does "the God of all grace" play during these sufferings?

Of what do you need to repent?

What brings hope to you in this passage?

Songs, Prayers & Meditations

O kom, o kom, Immanuël

O kom, o kom, Immanuël,
Verlos uw volk, uw Israël,
Herstel het van ellende weer,
Zodat het looft uw naam, o Heer!
Weest blij, weest blij, o Israël!
Hij is nabij, Immanuël!

O kom, Gij sleutel Davids, kom
En open ons het heiligdom;
Dat wij betreden uwe poort,
Jeruzalem, o vredesoord!
Weest blij, weest blij, o Israël!
Hij is nabij, Immanuël!

O kom, die onze Heerser zijt,
In wolk en vuur en majesteit.
O Adonai die spreekt met macht,
Verbreek het duister van de nacht!
Weest blij, weest blij, o Israël!
Hij is nabij, Immanuel!



O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe for us the heavenward road
and bar the way to death's abode.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night
and turn our darkness into light.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

Latin, 13th century

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

Come, Thou long expected Jesus,
born to set Thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.



Born Thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by Thine all sufficient merit,
raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Charles Wesley, 1744

Advent Calendar by Rowan Williams

He will come like last leaf's fall.
One night when the November wind
has flayed the trees to bone, and earth
wakes choking on the mould,
the soft shroud's folding.

He will come like frost.
One morning when the shrinking earth
opens on mist, to find itself
arrested in the net
of alien, sword-set beauty.

He will come like dark.
One evening when the bursting red
December sun draws up the sheet
and penny-masks its eye to yield
the star-snowed fields of sky.

He will come, will come,
will come like crying in the night,
like blood, like breaking,
as the earth writhes to toss Him free.
He will come like child.

Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending

Lo! He comes with clouds descending,
once for favoured sinners slain;
thousand, thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of His train.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
God appears on earth to reign.

Ev'ry eye shall now behold Him,
robed in dreadful majesty;
those who set at naught and sold Him,
pierced, and nailed Him to the tree,
deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
shall the true Messiah see.

Ev'ry island, sea, and mountain,
heav'n and earth, shall flee away;
all who hate Him must, confounded,
hear the trump proclaim the day:

Come to judgment! Come to judgment!
Come to judgment, come away!

Now Redemption, long expected,
see in solemn pomp appear!
All His saints, by man rejected,
now shall meet Him in the air.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
See the day of God appear!

Yea, amen! let all adore You,
high on Your eternal throne;
Saviour, take the pow'r and glory,
claim the kingdom for Your own.
O come quickly, O come quickly;
alleluia! come, Lord, come.

Charles Wesley, 1758



O Come, Divine Messiah

O come, divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph,
And sadness flee away.

Sweet, Savior haste;
Come, come to earth,
Dispel the night and show Thy face,
And bid us hail the dawn of grace.

O come, divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph,
And sadness flee away.

O Thou, whom nations sigh for,
Whom priests and prophets long foretold,
Will break the captive fetters;
Redeem the long-lost fold.

Sweet, Savior haste;
Come, come to earth,
Dispel the night and show Thy face,
And bid us hail the dawn of grace.

O come, divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph,
And sadness flee away.

Shall come in peace and meekness,
And lowly will Thy cradle be;
All clothed in human weakness
Shall we Thy Godhead see.

Sweet, Savior haste;
Come, come to earth,
Dispel the night and show Thy face,
And bid us hail the dawn of grace.

O come, divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph,
And sadness flee away.

Abbé Simon J. Pellegrin, 1663-1745
16th Century French Carol



Almighty God, who in many and various ways spoke to Your chosen people by the prophets, and have given us, in Your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of the hope of Israel: Hasten, we beg You, the coming of the day when all things shall be subject to Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. ~ Church of South India

***"Safe in the deepening darkness,
uncover a heart that sings..."***

~ from a poem by Andy Raine, based loosely on Judges 1:12-15

Our Lord's First Coming

Could've come like a mighty storm
With all the strength of a hurricane
You could've come like a forest fire
With the power of Heaven in Your flame.

(But) You came like a winter snow
Quiet and soft and slow
Falling from the sky in the night
To the earth below.

Oh You could've swept in like a tidal wave
Or an ocean to ravish our hearts
You could have come through
like a roaring flood
To wipe away the things that we've scarred.

(But) You came like a winter snow
Quiet and soft and slow
Falling from the sky in the night
To the earth below.

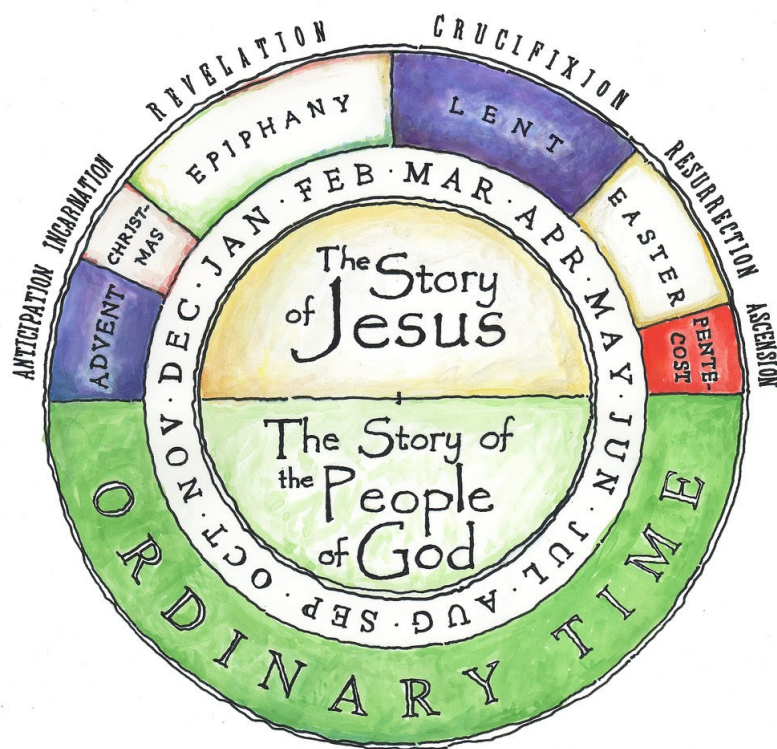
Ooh no, Your voice wasn't in a bush burning
No, Your voice wasn't in a rushing wind
It was still, it was small, it was hidden.

(But) You came like a winter snow
Quiet and soft and slow
Falling from the sky in the night
To the earth below.

Falling, oh yeah, to the earth below
You came falling from the sky in the night
To the earth below.

Audrey Assad





"Advent has stolen the old Christmas mystique. The symbolism of darkness awaiting dawn makes sense in a postmodern world where Christmas razzmatazz has been debunked, demythologized and deconstructed.

Hope in the night, not glitzy commercialism,
is what we want and need.

This is a deeply biblical move. Cut Christmas out of the Bible, and you lose three chapters (the doctrine of the incarnation hardly hinges on it, as the evidence of Paul makes clear).

Try cutting Advent, and you lose half the Old Testament and most of the New. Jews and Christians have always, though in a wide variety of ways, lived within and by the story of God's order appearing within the world's confusion, God's fiery light burning away the shadows.

The New Testament re-uses the Old Testament language and imagery of God's breaking into world history, not least 'the day of the Lord', to speak of what will happen on 'the day of our Lord Jesus Christ'.

Get Advent right,
and you will find Christology comes along with it.

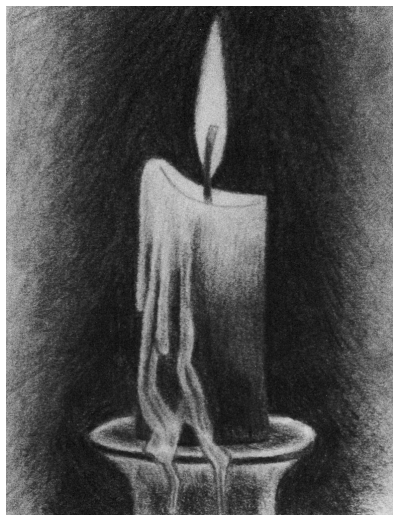
The watchful hope of Jesus' loyal followers calls us to further vigilance. To believe in God's future is to see why it is vital to stay alert and take action in the present. Christmas has become cosy. Advent calls us to stay awake."

Why Advent?

Any time we set aside and spend time with our Heavenly Father is time well invested.

Advent is a journey that begins in darkness but leads us to the Light of lights as we remember His first coming as a Baby and anticipate His second coming as King. We walk with the prophets and believers of early times as they waited for Messiah, the Christ, the Saviour.

This journey of reflection and preparation truly makes the celebration of Christmas more alive and vibrant. Let's walk together on this journey of personal and corporate repentance that we will be a community of hope and joy.



SUNDAY WORSHIP CENTRE -
10:00
SUNDAY WORSHIP SOUTH -
10:15
SUNDAY WORSHIP COHS -
13:30

CHRIST CHURCH
AMSTERDAM
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Services at
Groenburgwal 42,
1011 HW Amsterdam

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS:

OPEN WEDNESDAYS

15:00 - 18:30

CAROLS SERVICE - ZOOM

20 December, 18:30

CHRISTMAS EVENSONG
HOLY COMMUNION

24 December, 20:30
24 December, 23:00

CHRISTMAS DAY (CENTRE)

25 December, 11:00

BEING BLESSED THROUGH ADVENT:

Just as Lent is meant to prepare our hearts for celebrating the victory that is the Resurrection, *Advent* is a time to prepare our hearts for the great victory that will be the Second Coming of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, when our Inheritance will be given to us in full!

