

The word "Advent" is written in a white, elegant cursive script. A small, lit candle with a yellow flame is positioned to the left of the letter 'A'. The word is surrounded by decorative gold-colored flourishes, including a large swirl above the 'A' and a smaller swirl below the 't'. Radiating lines emanate from the top and bottom of the word, suggesting light or fire.

Advent

2017 Devotional Guide

What is Advent?

Advent is a season in the church's year designed to help us long for God's coming. We read of the ancient hopes of God's people and hope for our own fresh taste of His presence in our lives. Advent readies us for the celebration of Christmas — the wonder of God-becoming-flesh.

We must remember the miracle that Christ came, but also the miracle that Christ comes. That He comes in the midst of the darkness and despair. That He comes into our world and into our lives.

Christ came. Christ comes. Christ will come again.

All three "comings" are to be remembered, longed for, and anticipated at Advent.

The reading guide in your hands is intended to help you as you wait and hope this season.

May your observance be blessed.

- MBCC Pastors

Devotion Questions

We recommend using these questions as you read through the scripture daily.

1. In this passage, what are the promises of God? What are the hopes and longings of His people?
2. How do the hopes of this passage compare/contrast with the things happening in my life?

Week #1 - Hope

Beginning Sunday, November 26th

HOPE. For many people, hope is a desire or a wish that things will somehow get better. We live in a broken world full of sickness and disease, war and terrorism, broken relationships and broken homes... death - sometimes it feels like HOPE is a rare commodity, or maybe just a dream.

For the people of God, HOPE is more than just a desire or a dream. It is the confident expectation that God Himself will one day set all things right, that He will restore all things completely. This restoration is made possible by the Advent of Jesus Christ, our Everlasting King.

The word Advent means "coming" or "arrival." When we use this word at Christmas time, it reminds us of the anticipation, expectation, and HOPE held over hundreds of years by the people of Israel as they waited for the coming of their Messiah and promised King.

The first candle of Advent represents HOPE. Just as the people of God long ago hoped for the coming of the Messiah, "the light that was coming into the world," today we also HOPE and long for His second coming. The Advent season is a season of HOPE.

Sunday:	Isaiah 2:1-5
Monday:	Psalms 126
Tuesday:	1 Corinthians 15:50-58
Wednesday:	1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Thursday:	1 Thessalonians 3:11-13
Friday:	Matthew 24:36-44
Saturday:	Luke 21:25-36

Week #2 - Peace

Beginning Sunday, December 3rd

PEACE. To be human is to long for PEACE. In Scripture, PEACE is not simply the absence of conflict. It is a word that describes completeness, wholeness, fullness, the way things are supposed to be. God created all things to be at PEACE.

Yet, PEACE is not a word that describe our world today. Sin disrupts the PEACE that God desires for His people and His world. The world is full of conflict and broken lives. Mankind's only hope for true PEACE is the coming of Jesus Christ.

The second Advent candle represents PEACE, the PEACE that comes into the world through Jesus Christ.

When Christ came, when He was born as a human, He came to bring PEACE. PEACE with God accomplished by His death, burial, and resurrection. He offers this PEACE to any who will trust in Him alone. And He promises that one day, He will come again to bring a complete and lasting PEACE. The Advent season reminds us of our secure hope for PEACE.

Sunday:	Isaiah 11:1-10
Monday:	Psalms 25:1-10
Tuesday:	Romans 15:4-13
Wednesday:	2 Peter 3:8-15
Thursday:	Philippians 1: 3-11
Friday:	Matthew 3: 1-12
Saturday:	John 1:1-9

Week #3 - Joy

Beginning Sunday, December 10th

JOY. On the night of our Savior's birth, the angel said, "Fear not, for behold, I bring to you good tidings of great JOY which shall be to all the people." The announcement of Christ's birth was the announcement that true JOY had entered into the world.

True JOY is much more than just a happy feeling that comes and goes. It is an eternal perspective. It is gratefully celebrating what God has provided for His people - peace through His Son. Our JOY is expressed by our praise.

Christ's coming brought great JOY to Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, Anna, Simeon, the wise men, and many others at the time of His birth. His coming still brings great JOY to us now. When we see Christ, when we are in His presence, we can experience the fullness of JOY because we know that He has come to save us. And when He comes again, we, as the people of God, will experience a lasting and uninterrupted JOY, praising His glorious name forever.

Sunday:	Isaiah 61:1-4; 10-11
Monday:	Psalms 80:1-7
Tuesday:	James 5:7-11
Wednesday:	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
Thursday:	Philippians 4:4-7
Friday:	Matthew 11:2-11
Saturday:	John 3:16-21

Week #4 - Love

Beginning Sunday, December 17th

LOVE. The fourth advent candle represents “LOVE.” One of the great wonders of the universe is the fact that God loves us, even though we don’t deserve it. Throughout Scripture, we see promise after promise that God loves His people with an unfailing, never-ending, steadfast LOVE. His ultimate expression of this love is through His Son, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because God loves us, He sent Jesus, our Savior, to be born as a human.

Because God loves us, Jesus, our Savior, grew up to die as a sacrifice for our sins. He makes possible the forgiveness of our sins, so we can have peace with God.

Because God loves us, Jesus, our Savior, did not stay dead, but was resurrected. He makes it possible for us to receive eternal life, so we can experience fullness of joy as we live with Him forever. We receive all of this by faith alone, in Christ alone.

With the coming of Christ, God communicates His LOVE in a tangible way. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” The Advent season reminds us of God’s great LOVE.

Sunday:	Psalm 89:1-5, 27-29; Psalm 103:8-13; John 3:16
Monday:	Isaiah 40:6-11
Tuesday:	Isaiah 9:1-7
Wednesday:	Hebrews 1:1-4
Thursday:	Titus 3:3-7
Friday:	Zephaniah 3:14-17
Saturday:	Luke 1:26-38
Christmas Eve:	Matthew 1:18-25

“It is not objective proof of God’s existence that we want, but whether we use religious language for it or not, the experience of God’s presence. That is the miracle that we are really after. And that is also, I think, the miracle that we really get.”

- Frederick Buechner



MOUNTAIN BROOK
COMMUNITY
CHURCH
www.mbcc.us