

The Season of Advent

Our Journey
Starts
Here!



To reach for,

Looking Forward

Waiting

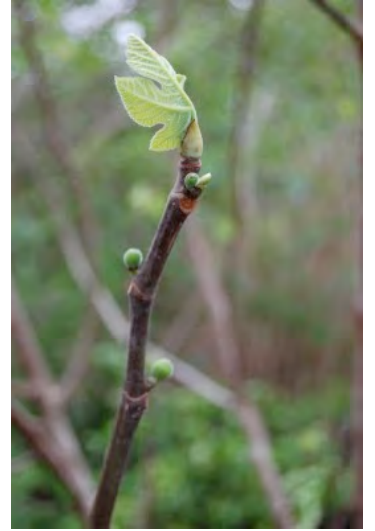


Advent
Means:

Expectation to arrive
Hopeful

ADVENT 1:

Luke 21: 29-32



"Look at the fig tree and all the trees.

³⁰When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near.

³¹Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

³²"I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.

The first week of our **Advent Journey** we focus on HOPE. Take a leaf and hang, or stick it onto our Advent tree so we can see the tree start to sprout, bringing with it the hope of a promise, of a love that will never let go.



At last a branch sprouts!

Don't be silly this tree is dead.

Hurray the expected one is due.

What's all the fuss, It will be
ages yet.

Great News, the poor will be treated fairly.

Huh, the poor should get on and
help themselves!

Look the people are being fair to each other

What, has everyone gone soft
or something?

Rejoice, all creation is able to live .



Thunder in the desert!

"Prepare God's arrival!

Make the road smooth and
straight!

Every ditch will be filled in,

Every bump smoothed out,

The detours straightened
out,

All the ruts paved over.

Everyone will be there to see

The parade of God's
salvation."

Luke 3: 4 - 6

The second week of our Advent Journey we focus on Joy.

We are called to make the paths straight. Road building is rough work; hands calloused, back near breaking.



Take a stone and place it along our wilderness path as you think of how you could help to make the journey of others through their wilderness this Advent, a little lighter, a little less taxing, a little Joy-filled.



ADVENT 3

⁷⁻⁹ When crowds of people came out for baptism because it was the popular thing to do, John exploded: "Brood of snakes! What do you think you're doing slithering down here to the river? Do you think a little water on your snakeskins is going to deflect God's judgment? It's your life that must change, not your skin. And don't think you can pull rank by claiming Abraham as 'father.' Being a child of Abraham is neither here nor there—children of Abraham are a dime a dozen. God can make children from stones if he wants. What counts is your life. Is it green and blossoming? Because if it's deadwood, it goes on the fire."

¹⁰ The crowd asked him, "Then what are we supposed to do?"

¹¹ "If you have two coats, give one away," he said. "Do the same with your food."

¹² Tax men also came to be baptized and said, "Teacher, what should we do?"

¹³ He told them, "No more extortion—collect only what is required by law."

¹⁴ Soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?"

He told them, "No shakedowns, no blackmail—and be content with your rations."

¹⁵ The interest of the people by now was building. They were all beginning to wonder, "Could this John be the Messiah?"

¹⁶⁻¹⁷ But John intervened: "I'm baptizing you here in the river. The main character in this drama, to whom I'm a mere stagehand, will ignite the kingdom life, a fire, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He's going to clean house—make a clean sweep of your lives. He'll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he'll put out with the trash to be burned."

Luke 3: 7 - 18

The third week of our Advent Journey we focus on Peace



Peace is one of God's gifts to us. John the Baptist called the people of Israel to repent, to find peace with God. John also declared that it is in our actions of love and justice that God's peace is shown.

Take one of the footprints. As you place your footprint down in the aisle of the church think about where we might need to go, or what we might need to do to bring God's peace to our world.



What is peace?

Not just quiet, or an absence of noise or conflict - more than that.

Peace is about relationships; about the relationship between us and the people around us, or the world we live in, or between us and God.

Relationships are active; they have to be worked at.

One of the names given to Jesus is "King of Peace". That doesn't mean he kept quiet and did nothing, or that he avoided conflict.

Peace isn't about accepting everything as it is, about an absence of change.

If anything, it's more about accepting or creating change.



And Mary said, I'm bursting with God-news; I'm dancing the song of my Savior God. God took one good look at me, and look what happened, I'm the most fortunate woman on earth! What God has done for me will never be forgotten, the God whose very name is holy, set apart from all others. His mercy

flows in wave after wave on those who are in awe before him. He bared his arm and showed his strength, scattered the bluffing braggarts. He knocked tyrants off their high horses, pulled victims out of the mud. The starving poor sat down to a banquet; the callous rich were left out in the cold. He embraced his chosen child, Israel; he remembered and piled on the mercies, piled them high. It's exactly what he promised, beginning with Abraham and right up to now.



Luke: 1 44-55

The Fourth week of our Advent Journey we focus on Love



Take a candle from here into the church and place it in the sand tray at the front. As you light it remember the message of Christmas is God's great love for the world. This Advent let us make room for arrival of God's love, in our hearts, in our homes, in our relationships together. Immanuel shall come and dwell with us....even if it is sometimes unsettling. He may arrive and crash on the couch...or in a manger.

WAITING FOR LOVE

For God so loves the world God comes to us.

Sleeping Bag by Steve Collins

Jesus is in the sleeping bag Stopping over

He comes around any time he likes

Right time, wrong time He don't mind

Foxes have holes, birds have nests

But the son of man has the sofa

He's poking around the fridge

Which needs defrosting

Old sins stuck in the icebox

Fruit gone bad Leftovers still left over

He throws them out

I guess I should clean up, but I never get much warning

It's embarrassing, But I'd still rather he came

We sit up late talking Where we've been

And where we're going next

He's already bought the tickets

All I have to do is get time off work

Goodnight rustle in the corner

The room feels warmer with him in it.

