



ADVENT

a true hope

2021

EQUIPPING HOUSEHOLDS TO
CELEBRATE ADVENT TOGETHER



LIVING HOPE
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

★ TABLE OF CONTENTS ★

| | |
|--|-------|
| Christmas Calendar | 1 |
| ADVENT 2021 | 2-5 |
| Build-A-Farm Fundraiser Overview | 3-4 |
| Advent Candle Lighting & Liturgy..... | 5 |
| Jesse Tree..... | 5 |
| How to make your wreath..... | 6 |
| Fun Facts about Advent and the wreath | 7-8 |
| Advent Poem | 9 |
| ADVENT 2021: A TRUE HOPE..... | 10-30 |
| Build-a-Farm Week 1 | 12 |
| NOV 28: The first Sunday in Advent | 13-15 |
| Build-a-Farm Week 2 | 16 |
| DEC 5: The second Sunday in Advent | 17-19 |
| Build-a-Farm Week 3..... | 20 |
| DEC 12: The third Sunday in Advent | 21-23 |
| Build-a-Farm Week 4 | 24 |
| DEC 19: The fourth Sunday in Advent..... | 25-27 |
| DEC 25: Christmas Day Service | 28-30 |
| Appendix: Some extra things about Advent | 31 |

★ CHRISTMAS CALENDAR ★

Mark your calendars, and join us at Living Hope for a variety of events this Christmas season as we anticipate and celebrate the coming of our Saviour, Jesus!

DECEMBER

4

3-6 pm
NEIGHBOURHOOD CHRISTMAS

12

6 pm
LESSONS & CAROLS

25

10 am
CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE

31

7 pm
NEW YEARS EVE SERVICE

★ ADVENT 2021 ★

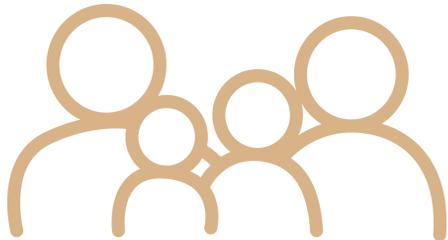
*I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. —
Luke 2:10*

During Advent we take time to cultivate anticipation for Jesus' arrival, recognizing Jesus is the one true hope for this world. When the angels announced Jesus' arrival, they proclaimed that it was news of great joy for all the people. We practice hope recognizing that the one who has come, will come again — a source of great joy for all who believe in him and long for the renewal of all things.

We encourage you to take these practices in your homes. These practices engage our senses which stands in contrast to much of our formation throughout the year in watching church through a screen. Additionally, it helps us to remember that 2000 years ago Jesus came in a real and tactile way. The Message famously translated John 1:14 as “The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighbourhood.” God coming to dwell amongst us is something that calls us to celebrate wherever we are. The celebration is not limited to our churches but expanded into the neighbourhood and into our homes.

We have several different ways that you are invited to participate in the advent season this year:

- Build-A-Farm Fundraiser
- Advent Candle Lighting & Liturgy
- Jesse Tree



Build-a-Farm

FUNDRAISER



This year we are continuing last year's Build-a-Farm fundraiser for World Renew – where we will be competing with the other churches in Abbotsford to build the biggest and most creative farm. The money that is raised will go towards supporting the disaster relief and community development projects that World Renew is a part of across the world.

EACH WEEK HAS TWO COMPONENTS THAT GO TOWARDS OUR FINAL SCORE...

1. **The number of animals** – this is determined by how much was pledged that week.
2. **The artistic awards** – this is our time to get creative! All ages are invited to participate in drawing, painting, sculpting, or dressing up as the animals that we are purchasing each week. Let your creativity flow!

It was incredible to see the joy in both the generosity and creativity of those who participated last year. We will also see whether we can hold onto our title from last Advent or whether we have to hand the trophy over to one of other churches. Either way, we're looking forward to seeing what sorts of creative things come from this year's contest!

SUBMISSION DATES TO REMEMBER...

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| NOV. 23rd | Chicken & Cow artwork and donations |
|---------------------------------------|---|

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| DEC. 7th | Goat & Agricultural Training artwork and donations |
|--------------------------------------|--|

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| NOV. 30th | Duck, Duckling & Pig artwork and donations |
|---------------------------------------|--|

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| DEC. 14th | Beehive & Farmer artwork and donations |
|---------------------------------------|--|

TO BUY ANIMALS...

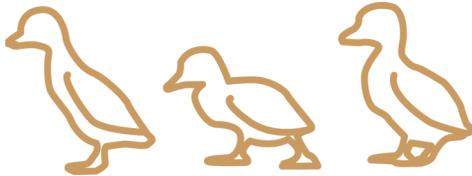
STEP 1 Email office@livinghopecrc.ca with the number and types of animals you pledge to donate by **Tuesday night**.

STEP 2 Give the pledged amount to World Renew through our website or by dropping the money off at the office.

To give online: Go to livinghopecrc.ca, select 'give' in the top right corner, and select 'build-a-farm' in the drop down menu.

TO SEND ARTWORK...

Email office@livinghopecrc.ca a picture of your artwork by **Tuesday night** to be considered for that upcoming Sunday.



SAMPLE EMAIL...

SUBJECT: Week 1 Build-a-Farm

Hi Irene,

I've attached the image Anneke drew of a chicken dreaming about what it would be like to be a cow.

Pledge for this week is:

- 3 chickens
- 1 cow

I'll donate through the giving tab on the website.

Warm regards,
Alyssa

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING & LITURGY

“The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.” — John 1:9

You are also encouraged to continue the candle lighting liturgy in your households. Last year we sent candles and materials for making a wreath, and we saw some people get creative in how they put it together. This year we are still supplying candles with ribbons, but you are encouraged to have even more freedom in how you make your advent wreath. Just be sure to find a jar or something to safely hold the candles.

Once you have your wreath, you are encouraged to read through the Advent liturgy inviting members of the household to participate in any ways that they can – if it’s reading a passage with you or helping to light the candle.

The liturgy can be found on pages 10-30. You are encouraged to read through it beforehand and assign readers – feel free to be creative for your household – depending on reading ability.

There are 4 readers listed. If your household has children that are newer to reading we recommend giving them readers 3 or 4 as they have less-challenging lines.



JESSE TREE

“A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.” — Isaiah 11:1

This year we are adding the option of participating in the Jesse Tree! The Jesse Tree Kit contains materials to make 25 symbolic ornaments as well as a daily devotional for the first twenty-five days in December.

For the last 500 years, Christians have had a tradition in the Advent season to hang different symbols on a tree or a branch that recalls those in Jesus’ family tree. This is an image-rich way of reflecting on the truth of God’s story. The hope is that through the visuals you will get a refreshing sense of the grace that Christmas guides us towards.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR WREATH

You have been given 5 candles and coloured ribbons for your Advent candle lighting. You're invited to get creative to make your own wreath. Here is a step by step explanation of how to make yours.



STEP 1

Place each of your candles in clear jars, vases or cups for safety.



STEP 2

Tie each of the ribbons around the jars.



STEP 3

As a base, place a plate or wood round somewhere sturdy. Arrange the candles on it with the white ribbon one in the centre.



STEP 4

Add some greenery (artificial or real) around the base.



STEP 5

There is no step 5. You're done!



★ FUN FACTS ★

ABOUT ADVENT & THE WREATH

WHY ADVENT?

Advent means arrival – or coming.

We celebrate Advent to prepare ourselves for the coming of Jesus.

Advent is the beginning of the Church liturgical year. In the church calendar, Advent is meant to stand in contrast to the cultural busyness of Christmas. In Advent, busyness is replaced by the long wait of Israel for the coming of their Messiah. As we look to how others prepared for Jesus, we are reminded of the preparations we share with Israel as we wait and long for Jesus to come again.

“ Advent cultivates in us a discerning eye, helping us to spot the sin that clutters our lives and notice the ways we need to be saved. By helping us to hope intensely for restoration, to feel our own need to be saved, Advent prepares us for Christmas joy and faith in the one who saves us from our sin, Jesus. ”

Philip Reinders, SEEKING GOD’S FACE

WHY A WREATH?



Circle | The wreath, first of all, has a circular shape. The circle, without beginning or end, reminds us of Jesus’ divinity, of his sacrifice in becoming Immanuel, and of his unending love and care for us.



Evergreens | The evergreens, as sign of life amid the starkness of winter, point to Christ’s redemptive gift of life, now and forever. With the assurance of this gift, we can eagerly pray for Christ to return and restore all of creation.

WHY CANDLES?

Lighting the candles is a visual aid that helps us better see and understand the season.

Light in darkness is a familiar theme throughout scripture:

- **Genesis 1:1-5** | The Bible begins in darkness, and God creating light and declaring it to be good.
- **Psalm 27** | The Lord is described as light and salvation.
- **Isaiah 9 and 11** address Israel as people who walked in darkness and see a great light – and then it goes on to talk about the Messiah.
- **Isaiah 59 and 60** speak of waiting for light and experiencing darkness. We depend on God to bring the light.
- **John 1** | Jesus is the life and light for all peoples. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.
- **Revelation 21-22** | In renewed creation there is no sun because God's full presence is light.



5 CANDLES | Each Sunday the candles are lit. Each representing a movement towards the light of Christ that is to be lit on Christmas Day. Having 4 candles before Christmas helps to sharpen our anticipation for the coming of Jesus.

COLOURS | The different colours of the candles carry symbolism.



Purple | Most advent traditions have purple candles because it is a colour that signifies the royalty of the coming King.



Pink/Rose-coloured | This candle is lit on the third Sunday, a time of joy.



White | The centre candle, the Christ candle, is always white. It signifies the purity and light of Christ.

AN ADVENT POEM

O Emmanuel

O come, O come, and be our God-with-us
O long-sought With-ness for a world without,
O secret seed, O hidden spring of light.
Come to us Wisdom, come unspoken Name,
Come Root, and Key, and King, and holy Flame.
O quickened little wick so tightly curled,
Be folded with us into time and place,
Unfold for us the mystery of grace
And make a womb of all this wounded world.
O heart of heaven beating in the earth,
O tiny hope within our hopelessness
Come to be born, to bear us to birth,
To touch a dying world with new-made hands
And make these rags of time our swaddling bands.

– Malcolm Guite



★ ADVENT 2021 AT LIVING HOPE ★

a true hope

HOPING FOR WHAT?

2021 has held its share of surprises and has dashed several people's hopes. Whether hopes were placed on people's ingenuity, science, timelines for restrictions, we've had to recalibrate those little hopes. In the midst of this, we open ourselves to the big hope that lies at the centre of reality. The hope that is found in the person of Jesus.

Advent itself can be translated as 'arriving or coming.' It is a season where we put special attention on the fact that Jesus is coming again. This is central to the Christian hope – we profess in the Nicene Creed, that Jesus *"ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will never end."* It is this coming again that we anticipate, the day where all will be made right.

While certain traditions have reduced it to simply a time to bask in nativity stories, the tradition of Advent points beyond that. It is a time where we remember that things are not as they are supposed to be and that we are deeply reliant on God to set things right. It is a time of self-awareness as we look towards the sin that clutters our own lives, and we prepare the way of the LORD. As we enter into the Advent season, you are invited to consider with your household: **How can we prepare ourselves for the coming of Jesus this year?**

One way we can prepare ourselves as a church is joining in the tradition of lighting the candles of the Advent wreath. Each week as we light the candles, we look expectantly to the day we can light the centre candle which represents the coming of Christ – the light to the world!

**AS A CHURCH WE WILL BE LOOKING AT
THESE PASSAGES LEADING UP TO
CHRISTMAS...**

NOV 28 | HOPE in the renewal of all things

Revelation 21:5

“He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!”

DEC 5 | HOPE in the One who is Love

John 3:16

“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.”

DEC 12 | HOPE that brings Joy

Luke 1:46

“My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.”

DEC 19 | HOPE towards Peace

Luke 1:76-79 “And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him.... to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

DEC 25 | HOPE in a manger (Christmas Day)

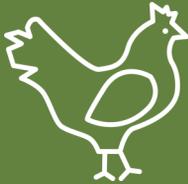
Luke 2:1-15 “I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.”

CHICKENS & COWS

Chicken & Cow artwork and donations are due by Tuesday, November 23rd.

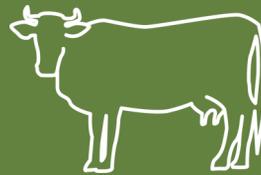
Submit your artwork by emailing the office:
office@livinghopeccr.ca in a similar format mentioned on page 4.

CHICKEN (\$4)



You'll want to scramble to get a chicken for families to raise for food, fertilizer, feathers, meat and of course, eggs! Your gift helps parents earn a stable income and provide more protein for their families.

COW (\$190)



Your gift of a young cow helps a farmer to begin to raise livestock. The farmer gives the cow's first calf back to their community group so another farm family can have the same opportunity to earn income. Over time, your gift of a cow lifts up a whole community!

HOPE



FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

READING

READER 1 Today is special because it is the beginning of a new season. We call this season “Advent.”

READER 4 What does that mean?

READER 2 “Advent” is a word that means “to come.” It is a time when we get ready, preparing ourselves for the coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus came when he was born on Christmas day.

READER 3 What are some things that we might do to get ready?

READER 4 We should get our hearts ready by thinking about Him.

READER 2 What we are doing right now around our Advent wreath is a way of preparing for Christmas. This is the first Sunday in Advent.

READER 3 Today, we light one purple candle.

READER 1 The traditional color for Advent is purple which refers to the coming of the royal King, Jesus Christ. Purple is also a deep color that symbolizes spiritual darkness outside the light of Christ.

READER 3 The first candle is the candle of hope.

READER 2 (*Light the first candle*) I lit this candle to remind us that we wait with hope for the day when we celebrate again the birth of Jesus. We hope that everyone will come to know God and worship God.

ALL Sing: “O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL”

(If you would prefer to sing with music or want to listen to the song instead, we’ve provided YouTube links for each week’s song)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utpZAIycWFU>

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer,
Our spirits by Thine advent here:
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death’s dark shadows put to flight. Refrain

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
and order all things far and night;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go. Refrain

O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind.
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven’s peace. Refrain x2

READER 2 Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, God spoke through prophets in the Old Testament to tell people that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, would come. This candle of hope is symbolic of the long years of waiting and hoping for when Jesus Christ would come to save the people from their sins.

READER 1 The Psalms point towards Jesus in ways that show us dependence on God to come and bring salvation from sin. In Psalm 25 it teaches us to place our hope in God saying: “You are my God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.”

READER 3 Jesus takes away our sin and we look forward to the day that Jesus comes back again to make all things new. Come, Lord Jesus.

READER 4 Hope was also given in the prophet Isaiah who said: Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. (7:14)

READER 1 The prophet Isaiah reminds us of the hope that God gives us in Jesus Christ. We have many lights around us at Christmas time.

READER 3 The lights can remind us that Jesus is the light of the world.

READER 4 (Prayer): Thank you, Jesus, for coming to earth, just like the prophets said, and for your promise to come again. Thank you, Jesus, for being our light so we know how to live. AMEN

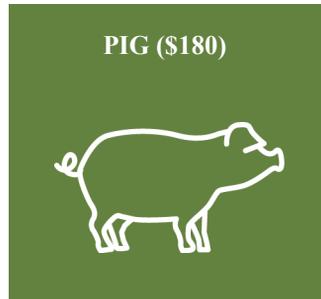
DISCUSSION

- What is hope?
- Who are the people in our world who need hope?
- What are the hopes we have for our world today?
- How do we help others know that God gives hope?

DUCKS, DUCKLINGS & PIGS

Duck & Pig artwork and donations are due Tuesday, November 30th.

Submit your artwork by emailing the office:
office@livinghopeccr.ca in a similar format mentioned on page 4.



Raising ducks helps farmers earn income year-round to feed their family and provide their basic needs. The families also support each other in a World Renew self-help group in their community.

What can you buy for a dollar each? How about 25 ducklings! Give a farmer the gift of being able to provide more food and better health for their family by raising ducks for eggs, meat, feathers, and income.

Your gift of a young pig provides a family with nutritious food, manure to fertilize their garden, and income. The young pigs are fattened and sold in the market for a profit, helping struggling families with income for essentials like soap and medical care.

LOVE



SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

READING

READER 1 This is the second Sunday in Advent. Do you remember why we are taking time to be together around our Advent wreath?

READER 2 To remember that Advent is a time of preparation. During these days we are getting our hearts ready for the coming of the Christ Child. Today, we light two purple candles.

READER 3 Last time we lit the candle of hope. (*Light the first purple candle.*)

READER 4 I will light another candle today, on the second Sunday in Advent, to remind us that Jesus came to earth to show and tell us of God's love. (*Light the second purple candle.*)

READER 1 During this Advent, we turn to the Psalms that teach us to pray "Show us your unfailing love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation" (Psalm 85). We pray this knowing that it points us to God's gift of Jesus to the world and know that God's love for all people is the reason for this gift.

READER 3 Love comes at Christmas in Jesus Christ.

ALL Sing: "AWAY IN A MANGER"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jqh0_pAMeoo

Away in a manger
No crib for a bed
The little Lord Jesus
Lay down His sweet head

The stars in the sky
Looked down where He lay
The little Lord Jesus
Asleep on the hay

The cattle are lowing
The Baby wakes
But little Lord Jesus
No crying He makes

I love Thee, Lord Jesus
Look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle
'Til morning is nigh

Be near me, Lord Jesus
I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever
And love me, I pray

Bless all the dear children
In Thy tender care
And fit us for Heaven
To live with Thee there.

READER 4 When we look at the second candle, we remember God's love.

READER 1 Matthew 1:18 - "Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit."

READER 4 In Matthew 1:20 an angel told Joseph: "The child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

READER 2 John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

READER 3 During Advent we remember God loves us.

READER 1 (Prayer): Thank you, God, for your son, Jesus. Thank you that you love us so much that you sent your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to love one another, our friends at school, and people everywhere we go. AMEN.

DISCUSSION

- Who are the people in our world who need the message of God's love?
 - How do we help others know God's love?
-

GOATS & AGRICULTURAL TRAINING

Goat & Agriculture Training artwork and donations are due by Tuesday, December 7th.

Submit your artwork by emailing the office:
office@livinghopeerc.ca in a similar format mentioned on page 4.

GOAT (\$62)



Push poverty baaack by giving a goat to a farmer to raise for food and income. A goat is a gift of good health that provides milk, meat, and fertilizer to grow more fruit and vegetables to eat or sell.

AGRICULTURE
TRAINING (\$250)



Help farmers learn new agriculture techniques so that they can grow more food to eat and sell for income. World Renew teaches subsistence farmers new crop-growing methods such as climate adaptation, soil conservation, making organic compost, permaculture practices, low-till techniques, and access to improved seeds and tools.

JOY



THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

READING

READER 1 This is the third Sunday in Advent. Do you remember why we are taking time to be together around our Advent wreath?

READER 2 To remember that Advent is a time of preparation. During these days we are getting our hearts ready for the coming of the Christ Child.

READER 3 On the first Sunday we lit the candle of hope. (*Light the first purple candle.*)

READER 4 We wait with hope for the day when we celebrate again the birth of Jesus.

READER 1 On the second Sunday we lit the candle of love to remind us that Jesus came to earth to show and tell us of God's love. (*Light the second purple candle.*)

READER 2 Today, on the third Sunday of Advent, I will light the candle of joy. (*Light the pink candle.*) Pink symbolizes a break in the darkness, and a time of joy as Christ's birthday gets closer.

READER 3 As we light the candle we joyfully say with the Psalmist "the LORD has done great things for me" (Psalm 126). We have joy as we remember God's gift of Jesus to the world.

READER 4 Rejoice!

ALL Sing: “JOY TO THE WORLD”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyciMYZq2-Y>

Joy to the World, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the Earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

READER 1 When we look at the third candle, we remember God’s promise of joy. God promised to send a Savior to the people.

READER 2 In the Bible, we read of Mary’s joy. Luke 1:46-47: Mary said, “Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!”

READER 3 Mary’s words can guide us to look for the joy of God even when things may be uncertain for us.

READER 4 When Jesus was born, the angels comforted shepherds with the joy of the good news.

READER 2 Luke 2:8-11: “There were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. ‘Don’t be afraid!’ he said. ‘I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!’”

READER 3 During Advent we rejoice.

READER 4 (Prayer): Lord, today we rejoice. We rejoice because our Lord and Savior, Jesus was born. Fill our hearts and our days with joy. We rejoice that you are with us always. Help us live in such a way that our words and our actions help others know of the joy you give. AMEN

DISCUSSION

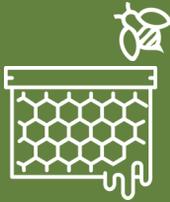
- Who in our world needs God’s joy?
 - What are our hopes for joy in our world today?
 - How do we help others know that God gives joy?
-

BEEHIVES & FARMER FIELD SCHOOL STARTER PACK

**Beehive & Farmer artwork and donations
are due by Tuesday, December 14th.**

Submit your artwork by emailing the office:
office@livinghopeccr.ca in a similar format mentioned on page 4.

BEEHIVE (\$45)



FARMER FIELD
SCHOOL STARTER
PACK (\$315)



Communities where World Renew works are buzzing – with bees! Your gift of a beehive not only provides a farmer with honey to sell for income, bees also increase crop production by pollinating plants for several kilometers around the hive. Sweet!

Give a rural village a Farmer Field School (FFS) Starter Pack that has everything needed to launch a group of subsistence farmers into earning a more adequate income. The starter pack includes a half-acre farm plot, gloves, boots, hand tools, and other equipment. It also includes seeds, bio-herbicides, and training in new agriculture and crop storage methods for food access year-round.

PEACE



FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

READING

READER 1 This is the fourth time we are celebrating Advent. Do you remember why we are taking time to be together around our Advent wreath?

READER 2 To remember that Advent is a time of preparation.

READER 3 During these days we are getting our hearts ready for the coming of the Christ Child.

READER 4 The first time we lit the candle of hope. We wait with hope for the day when we celebrate again the birth of Jesus. *(Light the first purple candle.)*

READER 1 The second time we lit the candle of love to remind us that Jesus came to earth to show and tell us of God's love. *(Light the second purple candle.)*

READER 3 We lit the third candle to remind us that the angels told the shepherds "good news that will bring great joy to all people." *(Light the pink candle.)*

READER 2 Today, we light the candle of peace. *(Light the fourth purple candle).* Our world is not always a peaceful world. People sometimes hurt other people. But God promises peace. During Advent, we pray the words of the Psalmist who says "Peace be within you" (Psalm 122). This is part of the Psalmist's prayer that God's peace goes all places.

ALL Sing: " HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xa5O6EnJtLk>

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored:
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of the favored one.
Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see;
Hail, the incarnate Deity:
Pleased, as man, with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail! the heaven born Prince of peace!
Hail! the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that we no more may die:
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

READER 4 When we look at the fourth candle, we remember that the angels told the shepherds about the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ.

READER 1 Luke 2:13-14: “Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.’”

READER 2 Isaiah 9:6: “For a Child is born to us, a Son is given to us. The government will rest on His shoulders. And He will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

READER 1 (Prayer): Thank you, Father, for sending your son, Jesus. Thank you for those in our world today who seek to act for peace. Help us look for ways to be peacemakers at home, at church and at school. AMEN.

DISCUSSION

- What is peace?
 - Who in our world needs to hear about God’s peace?
 - What are our hopes for peace in our world today?
-



CHRISTMAS DAY

READING

READER 1 Today is Christmas. The day we have waited for and prepared for is finally here!

READER 2 Today we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

READER 3 As we waited for this day we lit four candles.

READER 4 The first candle we lit was the candle of Hope. (*Light the first purple candle.*)

READER 1 The second time we lit the candle of Love. (*Light the second purple candle.*)

READER 2 The third time we lit the candle of Joy. (*Light the pink candle.*)

READER 3 The fourth candle we lit was the candle of Peace. (*Light the fourth purple candle.*)

READER 1 Today, on Christmas, we also light the center white candle. This candle represents Jesus. When we light this candle, we remember Jesus' birth. Our waiting has ended. (*Light the centre white candle.*)

READER 2 Psalm 98 teaches us to sing saying, "Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things." In Jesus we see God beginning something new, inviting us into new praises! Jesus is born! "The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!" (Luke 2:11)

ALL Sing: “SILENT NIGHT”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1DCeFEeruY>

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright.
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Hallelujah,
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, holy night!
Wondrous star, lend thy light.
With the angels let us sign,
Alleluia to our King!
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth.

READER 4 When we look at the center candle, we remember that Jesus is the light of the world.

READER 1 John 8:12: “Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, ‘I am the light of the world. If you follow Me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.’”

READER 3 God sent Jesus to give hope, peace, joy, and love to all people.

READER 1 Far away from Bethlehem, wise men saw a star in the sky. They remind us that the gift of Jesus was not just for the people in one place, but for all people.

READER 2 Matthew 2:1-2: “Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, ‘Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw His star as it rose, and we have come to worship Him.’”

READER 1 Matthew 2:10-11: “When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with His mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

READER 4 God used a star to guide the wise men to Jesus.

READER 3 God has guided us to the true meaning of Christmas during Advent. God has come into the world in Jesus Christ to be with us so that we will experience God’s hope, love, joy, and peace.

READER 2 (Prayer) Thank you, God, for your son, Jesus. Thank you for sending Jesus for all people. On this Christmas Day, help us remember and rejoice again because Jesus was born. Help us live every day remembering your love and care and showing that love and care to others. AMEN

DISCUSSION

- What are our hopes on this Christmas Day for our world?
- How can we help people remember God's promises after Christmas Day is over?

★ APPENDIX ★

SOME EXTRA THINGS ABOUT ADVENT

ADVENT THEMES

There is no single advent theme for different Sundays. In the Christian Reformed Church, it was not common to have a formal Advent season until the 1960s. Since then, a blend of different Advent traditions throughout Christian history have been used by different Christian Reformed Churches. Typically we centre on the words Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace – though the order of these are subject to change. Other times it is a focus on traditional Advent candles like the Prophecy candle, Bethlehem candle, Shepherds candle, and Angels candle. Another common option is to have a focus on the themes of light in the midst of darkness throughout scripture. In any case there is no single ‘Advent candle’ theme – but a variety – all of which point towards an anticipation of the coming of Jesus.

- 1. HOPE** | Prophecy: remembering those who first spoke the promise of the coming Christ child.
- 2. LOVE** | Bethlehem: a symbol of the preparations being made to receive and cradle the Christ child.
- 3. JOY** | Shepherds: remembering the first in a long line of people who joyfully shared the good news of the Savior's birth.
- 4. PEACE** | Angels: we are reminded of the hope fulfilled in the first coming of our Savior and of our continuing hope as we anticipate his coming again.
- 5. CHRIST** | Christmas Day: Advent season ends. We no longer wait! That great event for which we waited has happened. God's promise of a Redeemer is fulfilled. Christ Jesus is born. We light the Christ candle with praise to our God who brings joy to the world.



*Wishing you a blessed
Advent Season!*

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