



**TBA Church Family,**

**Join us for the celebration of Advent!** The Christmas season is drawing near, and during this time we want to focus our attention on Christ by celebrating "Advent" as a church this year from Sunday, November 26<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> (Christmas Eve).

### **What is Advent?**

Advent is an annual season of patient waiting, hopeful expectation, and soul searching. It's the season of reflective preparation for the celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas and anticipation of His expected return in the Second Coming. We are, literally, waiting on the Lord.

What we want most for Christmas this year is to join you in seeing Christ in all his fullness, and that we together are able to love what we see with a love far beyond our own half-hearted human capacities. When we gather during this season, we hope to see and savor this savior whose first advent we celebrate, and whose second advent we anticipate.

Each Sunday, we will light a candle surrounded by a wreath as we approach our Christmas Eve service. You will hear a candle lighting song and a prayer. *Read the details on the backside of this letter to get an idea of what each candle and week represents in the Advent celebration.*

### **How Can You Participate?**

Group up with your family, friends, or with your D-Group each day **starting December 1<sup>st</sup>** and go through the devotions, pray, worship, and remember that Jesus is coming soon! You can find a link on the TBA Website at <http://tbachurch.com> – in the top menu you will see “Advent Resources” and can download a pdf copy of the devotional, or you can access an audio version. *We will also have several copies available at Next Steps if you need a printed copy.*

You can also buy your own wreath and candles and follow along each Sunday as we light candles as we are guided through the Christmas Story. Oh, there's also the chocolate part! Often there are calendars to count the days with chocolate treats behind each day. You can purchase one at any retail store in the Christmas candy section. These can go along with the daily readings for those with kids, or for that chocolate lover in you.

**And last but not least, invite someone to the Christmas Eve morning service! It will be at 10 a.m. Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>.**

The word "Advent" is from the Latin *adventus* for "coming". We celebrate His first coming (birth) and anticipate His second coming.

## The Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is a prominent symbol of the Advent season. It is usually made up of evergreen branches or boughs placed in a circle, topped with four candles with a fifth, "Christ Candle" in the middle.



**The EVERGREENS** on the Advent wreath remind us of the everlasting life promised to us by the gift of Jesus Christ, who came among us to save us from sin and death.

**The LIGHTING OF CANDLES** banishes the darkness as a reminder of Jesus Christ the Light who has come into the world through His birth, and who continues to shine brightly through His Church.

**On the first Sunday of Advent**, the wreath is blessed and one candle is lit. Every Sunday, another candle is lit until all four candles are burning brightly. On Christmas Eve, the Christ Candle is put in the center.

### The COLOR of the Candles:

**PURPLE** symbolizes our waiting, hoping, longing expectation for the arrival of Christ.

**ROSE "pink"** reminds us that the time of Christ's arrival is fast approaching, and we must prepare.

The **CANDLES** represent the four virtues Jesus brings us: Hope, Love, Joy, Peace and Purity.

Week 1: Prophecy Candle - Hope

Week 2: Bethlehem Candle – Love

Week 3: Shepherd Candle – Joy

Week 4: Angel Candle – Peace

### Christ Candle – Purity, Birth of Christ and Christ's Second Coming

On Christmas Eve, the white center candle is lit. This candle is called the "Christ Candle" and represents the life of Christ that has come into the world. The color white represents purity. Christ is the sinless, spotless, pure Savior. Those who receive Christ as Savior are washed of their sins and made whiter than snow: "*Come now, let us settle the matter,*" says the Lord. "*Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.*" (Isaiah 1:1)

Join us as our church family gathers around the Advent wreath and lights the first candle till Christmas Eve, let our prayer be together:

*Father, we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We celebrate what is past: the Word made flesh and dwell among us. We rejoice in the present grace, that to as many who receive him, he gives the power to become your children, With steadfast hope, we look forward to that day when every tear will be wiped away, when Christ, your Son will come in glory, Help us to remember that He is truly Emmanuel, God with us. Help us to be open to his grace in this time, so pregnant with opportunity. Help us to pray with yearning hearts, "Come, Lord Jesus." Amen.*