



Advent Guide



Getting Started

Here is what you need:

1. A wreath of evergreens and five candles, 4 of the same size and one larger, all placed inside the wreath.
2. Find a prominent place to put the wreath such as your coffee table or fireplace mantle.
3. Once a week, gather around the wreath with your family or roommates and intentionally use this time to be filled with the wonder of God's great love demonstrated through the birth of Christ.

How to begin:

1. Turn off the TV, radio, or other distractions and enjoy some silence
2. Light the particular candle(s)
3. Grab your Bible, read the Scripture and discuss it
4. Pray together

“Breathe” - John 1:14

The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Defined: “*take air into the lungs and then expel it*”

Give yourself permission to **breathe** this Christmas season. It is supposed to be the most wonderful time of the year yet sometimes rarely feels like it. More to do, more places to go, and more lists to complete can become overwhelming.

This is why I believe the Advent theme of “**Breathe**” came to mind. God wants us to pause, to inhale His grace, and exhale His praise. God wants us to slow down and discover a sustainable pace that is in step with Him even in December. God wants us to never forget that His love for us transcends all. Give yourself permission to **breathe**. It’s in alignment with God’s will to pause and talk to Our Heavenly Father.

Christmas reminds us that the Son of God humbled Himself by taking on human flesh, to learn to **breathe** as a person dependent on oxygen, and to be the Savior of the world. God, for the first time, needed to **breathe**. He was Immanuel (God with us) and still is. He was the perfect and sinless human who alone would provide redemption by the blood of His cross. This quote nails it: “Jesus always got a lot done, but never seemed to be in a hurry.” (*Art of Neighboring*). He modeled for us what it means to **breathe**.

Jenny and I pray this Christmas is different for you than any other. That you know that you are His beloved and nothing will ever change that. Jesus **breathed** the Holy Spirit into the first disciples and He does that to us today as well (John 20:22). We pray others will feel God’s love for them when they’re around you. Let your new boundaries to **breathe** help others around you to breathe as well. I’m going to try to only speed up in my life if Jesus tells me to, but I have a feeling He’s not going to. We also pray for this Advent Guide to provide you moments to **breathe** in Jesus with those you love on a weekly basis this Christmas. God is with you. **Breathe**.

Merry Christmas,

Pastor DJ

Prophecy Candle

Sunday, November 27th

I will never forget the feeling of anticipation and excitement when I asked my wife for her hand in marriage. She said she would need to think about it. What? I had to wait (while holding my breath) a day for her answer! She said, "YES!" A wonderful sense of relief came over me, like taking the deepest refreshing breath in my life. The ring was a symbol of our love and commitment for each other.

God, many years ago, gave us his love letters in the form of prophecies. He has often referred to the church as His "Bride." He wanted us to know He had a plan to redeem us. He was going to come to us not as a conquering King, but as a child, to dwell among us. His name will be Immanuel, God with us. He is our Bridegroom and He has paid the price for our salvation with His sacrifice on the cross. The empty cross, which was prophesied by the Old Testament prophets, is now a symbol of his love and commitment for his bride.

The day we say "YES" to Jesus as our Lord and Savior is the first day we can enjoy the deep breath of true peace, real freedom, and membership in our "Forever Family!" - Fred Macy

■ Light one of the smaller candles

■ Read Matthew 1:18-25

Reflect

- Are you needing peace and comfort in an area of your life? It is time to turn it over to God and take a deep breath. Trust the one who has known you from the beginning!
- Sometimes we need someone in our life to come beside us and remind us of God's love. Who do you know that needs to experience God's love? Help them take in a deep **breath** of God's love!

Pray

Dear Father God, thank you for revealing your love for us by your prophets. May I choose to rest and find comfort this Christmas Season by knowing that God came as a child to bring me freedom and eternal peace. Help me to trust you and **Breathe!** In Jesus name, Amen.

Bethlehem Candle

Sunday, December 4th

Just like Mary and Joseph, we too have walked or are walking a hard road in life right now. Life is hard already, but life without Jesus is even harder. We must realize God's presence is with us during our tough times. Although Mary and Joseph faced struggles along their journey, they were able to inhale God's grace and exhale His praise. They could **breathe** knowing God was with them and He is with us as well. So, **breathe** in the presence of God knowing He is faithful through it all. - Makana and Shawna Sagadraca

■ Light two of the smaller candles

■ Read Luke 2:4-7

■ Reflect

- Is there something happening in your life right now where you need to seek God's presence?
- What are some ways that God's presence has helped you to **breathe** and exhale His praise?

■ Pray

Father, we thank you for your continued faithfulness as we travel down hard paths. God, we know that life with you is much better, and we ask that you help us to take time to **breathe** when things get hard. God, we seek your presence in all that we do and exhale your praise daily.
In Jesus name, Amen.

Angel Candle

Sunday, December 11th

The angels promised peace to those who were in God's favor. As you take your moments to **breathe** this Christmas season, let His peace overwhelm you. I encourage you to give glory to God as you settle into the peace the Lord provides. Enjoy the small moments, choose calm over chaos. Look for the good in the people around you and remember to **breathe** in Jesus.

- Stacy Dwyer

Light three of the smaller candles

Read Luke 2:8-14

Reflect

- In your own words share what Christmas means to you.
- Sing *Hark the Herald Angel Sing* as a family and praise the Lord together.

Hark! The herald angels sing
“Glory to the new-born king
Peace on earth and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled”
Joyful all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
With angelic host proclaim
“Christ is born in Bethlehem”
Hark! The herald angels sing
“Glory to the new-born king”

- Share ways you can bring joy to those around you this season.

Pray

Lord, thank you for choosing to **breathe**. Thank you for becoming flesh to save us from ourselves. Help us this season to remember the why, to remember to see you throughout our day. Help us to see the joy and to give joy in return. Lord, help us smile and recognize that you are the Prince of Peace and without Christmas there is no You. In Jesus name, Amen.

Shepherd Candle

Sunday, December 18th

Being a shepherd in the days of Jesus' birth was most likely very routine and might even have felt somewhat uneventful. There were days that were spent tending to the sheep when a shepherd would not even have contact with other humans and could feel lonely. As a shepherd his duties were to lead the flock to new pastures and water, to untangle the sheep who had wandered and got stuck in the brush, to clean and tend to wounds and to protect the flock from wild animals.

And then there was good news of great joy! An angel appears and speaks to the shepherds of the Savior that had been born in the town of David. Overwhelmed with joy, the shepherds go to Bethlehem to see the newborn King.

As we celebrate the birth of our King Jesus, like the shepherds, let our hearts be overwhelmed with great joy. - Paul Lopez

Light Four of the smaller candles

Read Luke 2:15-20

Reflect

- Who are you sharing the joy of this Christmas season with this year?
- How would this Christmas season be different if we went into it with great anticipation?

Pray

Father, I thank you for meeting us right where we are at. Whether we are shepherds in the field, at school or in the workplace, you are faithful to meet us. This Christmas season, let our hearts burn with great joy and love for you and those around us. In Jesus name, Amen.

Jesus Candle

Friday December 23rd & Saturday, December 24th

“What is life all about?” “Isn’t there just an owner’s manual for this life thing?” Humans throughout history have all asked in some form or another these questions. Many have called it having “blessings”, “favor of the universe” (a.k.a. good karma), “the force being with us”, or “guidance of spirits and angels”.

What if we could just have goodness with us, not just at random or lucky times? What if we could experience God’s presence with us? The children of Abraham certainly sought that kind of goodness in their life. Even the request to leave Egypt was to worship their God. Eventually this was clarified in the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 that God would give us a confirmation sign of his presence, by a virgin bearing a son, and she would call him Immanuel.

Today, we remember that not only is there a day in history when the prophecy came true; but that Jesus is Immanuel. (Matthew 1:23) As we light this candle let us not just remember Jesus, but that God is with us today, and forever. (Hebrews 13:8) - Ken Shonk

Light all the candles

Read Matthew 1:18-25

Reflect

- Have I allowed the birth, life, and death of Jesus to really change me?
- What challenges am I facing today that would be changed by the presence of God?
- How would the presence of Jesus change something I am angry about? Can I do something like Jesus would do in this situation?

Pray

Christ Jesus, I recognize you as the Promised One from the prophets, and you as the fulfillment of the Promise to Abraham, Moses, and the children of Israel. Today, be with us. As I **breathe** in, may I feel the fullness of your Holy Spirit. As I **breathe** out, may I recognize what you are calling me to do. To bring your presence into this area of anger, fear, and darkness.

Thank you for coming to earth. Thank you for changing me from the wrongs I did. And thank you for being with us now in this dark time, bringing your light, even as these candles light this room. In Jesus name, Amen.

Sunnyside Advent

visit sunnyside4.org for more information

CHRISTMAS EVE INVITES

Grab an ornament off of the tree in the front foyer as an invite to our Christmas Eve or Christmas Eve service. Give one to a friend or neighbor today!

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OUTREACH

Our heart is to spread the love and joy of Jesus this Christmas! Globally, we've partnered with **Compassion First**. They are an effective ministry, which rescues young women from human trafficking and restores them with Christ's love. They are currently in final preparations for a new aftercare shelter in January 2023. To send a special Christmas love offering to this ministry, please visit compassionfirst.org.

Locally we are supporting North Clackamas families by partnering with the **Wichita Center**. Please visit the Christmas tree in the foyer and grab a gift tag with gift card recommendations to help these families provide Christmas for their children. We also are collecting specific items that are urgent in need.

Please visit sunnyside4.org/opportunities for a detailed list.

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FIRE CHRISTMAS PARTY

Wednesday, December 21st • 6:30 pm

Students 6th-12th grade come enjoy a fun and joyful night as we celebrate the reason for the season! Come wearing your best ugly Christmas sweater and participate in our ugly sweater contest. There will be gingerbread house decorating and a Christmas movie. Come celebrate with us!

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CHRISTMAS EVE EVE SERVICE & CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Friday, December 23rd at 7 pm • Saturday, December 24th at 4 pm

Expect a traditional candlelight service with Christmas Carols, a reading of the Christmas Story, and an inspiring message. Kids ministry will be available for kids 2 years & under.

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HOLLY JOLLY PJ PARTY • KIDS MINISTRY

Sunday, December 18th

Come join us in your jammies as we wrap up our Christmas celebration! We will be watching "The Star" and enjoying some donuts!



