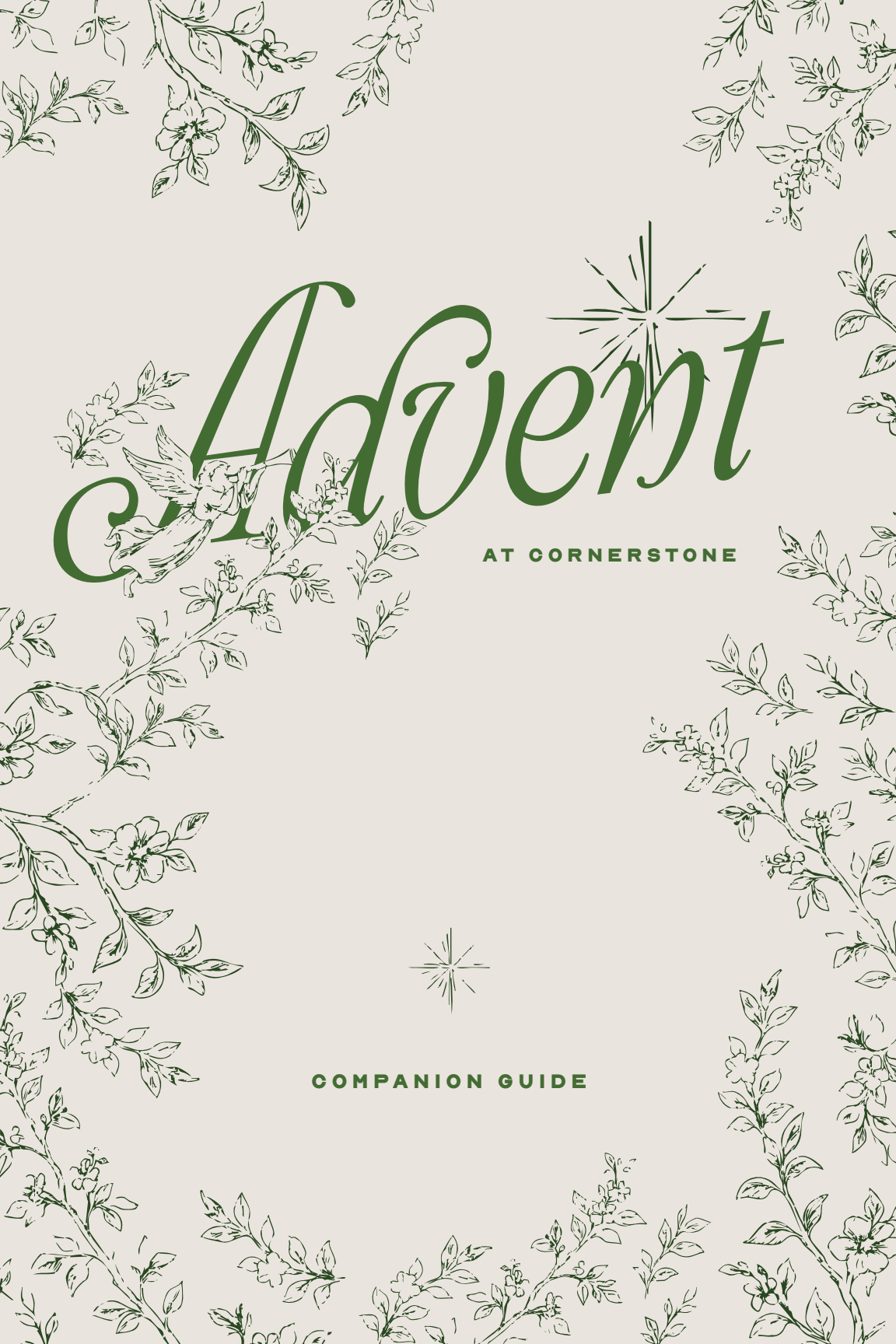




Advent

AT CORNERSTONE



COMPANION GUIDE



*O come, O Bright and
Morning Star, and bring us
comfort from afar! Dispel the
shadows of the night and turn
our darkness into light.*

O COME, O COME EMMANUEL

What's Inside

HOW TO USE THIS ADVENT GUIDE • 4

WHAT IS ADVENT? • 6

ADVENT AT CORNERSTONE • 8

WEEK 1: FEAR NOT • 11

WEEK 2: GOOD NEWS • 16

WEEK 3: GREAT JOY • 21

WEEK 4: FOR ALL PEOPLE • 26

ADVENT SEASON REFLECTION • 32



How to Use This Advent Guide

This guide will serve as a companion throughout the Advent season. Each week is based around a theme word and includes scripture readings, Advent worship song lyrics, questions for reflection, and a kids connection moment. Bring this booklet on Sundays to take sermon notes.

“I’M FOLLOWING THE SPIRITUAL WORKOUT PLAN. IS THIS GOING TO CONFLICT WITH THAT?”

No! We encourage you to continue following the Spiritual Workout Plan, as the additional Advent reading should only add a few minutes to your week. Consider creative ways to incorporate it into your season by reading it aloud with your family over dinner, listening during your morning commute, or whatever works best for you. The reflection questions in this guide can be applied to any Bible reading you do that week. As you spend time in the Word, we hope you’ll pay special attention to the Advent theme for each week.

“I’D LIKE TO TRY THIS, BUT WILL I GET OVERWHELMED?”

We hope not! This guide is designed to support your spiritual growth and allow you to experience Advent in a more powerful way. Each week, there’s a short scripture passage that corresponds with the Advent theme of the week. Reflect on that reading throughout the week as you complete the questions in the guide.

“CAN I INCLUDE THE WHOLE FAMILY?”

Yes! No need to make things complicated. For older kids, read the Advent scripture as a family, listen to the worship song, and discuss the questions. Each week also includes a “kids connection” for parents of littles to foster conversation and plant gospel seeds. Read the abbreviated scripture selection and share the object lesson. Don’t worry—wiggles, interruptions, laughter, and distractions are a normal part of talking to kids about God. You don’t have to follow the suggested script exactly or have all the answers to experience a meaningful time of family connection.

“HOW CAN I USE THIS GUIDE FOR DISCIPLESHIP?”

Find a time each week to connect with someone and discuss what you’re learning. This could be a friend, a spouse, someone in a group you attend, or your Spiritual Workout Plan Accountability Group. Use this meeting as a chance to enjoy in-person relationships and to take a break from studies or screens.

**WE HOPE THIS BOOKLET IS A CHANCE FOR
REFRESHMENT AND ANTICIPATION DURING A TIME OF
YEAR THAT TENDS TO BE HEAVILY SCHEDULED AND
FULL OF STRESSORS.**





WHAT IS ADVENT?

The word “Advent” comes from the Latin word “adventus,” meaning “a coming” or “arrival.” In the context of the historical Christian church, it marks a season of reflection on Christ’s first coming and anticipation for his second. While the specific origins of Advent are unclear, by the 5th or 6th century, Advent had taken its place in the liturgical calendar as Christians used different seasons throughout the year to reflect on the story of redemption. Occurring near the shortest day of the year in the northern hemisphere, its location in the calendar symbolized Christ’s arrival as a light in the darkness. Today, Advent is widely observed across many denominations. This season begins four Sundays before Christmas Day, culminating in the celebration of Christ’s birth.

The structure of the Advent season is meant to help us look backward and forward. Each week traditionally emphasizes a biblical theme with the lighting of a corresponding candle on Sunday. Church traditions vary in their practice of Advent and how these biblical themes are interpreted.



WEEK 1: HOPE

Christians should reflect on Israel's yearning for the promised Messiah from the line of David. We look back with gratitude, imagining the long-suffering of God's people, giving thanks that we live on the other side of Christ's birth. We wait with hope for Christ's second coming.

WEEK 2: PEACE

Because of our restored relationship with God through Christ, Christians live with a deep sense of peace in a world still in turmoil. Just as God's people were thankful for the reconciling peace of Christ's first coming, we know that he will bring ultimate and eternal peace to the world when he comes again.

WEEK 3: JOY

This week is historically referred to as "Gaudete Sunday," which is Latin for "rejoice," and brings to mind scriptures like Psalm 100 and Philippians 4:4. Just as the shepherds and Mary rejoiced at Christ's birth, our hearts should swell with joy as we reflect on the manger and anticipate his second coming.

WEEK 4: LOVE

This week is a time for Christians to consider the verse "...God so loved the world...that he sent his one and only Son" (John 3:16). Believers reflect with awe, humility, and gratitude because of God's love and grace for his people, knowing this will endure for eternity.

Christmas Eve

Though not an official part of Advent, many church traditions use this service to highlight Jesus as the "Light of the World" (John 8:12). It typically concludes with a congregation-wide candle-lighting ceremony, symbolizing Christ's Spirit in each believer as they go forth to live as lights in a dark world.



ADVENT AT CORNERSTONE

Though not mandated by scripture, actively participating in the Advent season can help us emphasize God's redemptive plan in a post-Christian world. While secular Christmas celebrations center around Santa, reindeer, and elves—along with huge batches of presents—Advent puts the true gift of the Messiah back into focus. Thematic Bible readings, prayers, and hymns are traditional ways to recount the story of Christ's coming and the hope we have in his return. Advent can be a catalyst for sharing the gospel with our family, friends, and neighbors, too, as we observe this special season amidst other cultural Christmas celebrations.

As we go through the season of Advent as a church at Cornerstone this year, consider how you can use this as a chance to be a faithful presence and share Christ's love with others through gratitude and generosity.

We'd love for you to join our church family in journeying through Advent together in reflection, participation, discipleship, and giving.

Reflect

Make space each day or week to personally reflect during a busy and consumeristic season. Use this companion guide alongside the Spiritual Workout Plan to help focus your heart on the good news of Christ's coming. Express gratitude for the ways his grace has and is transforming your life.

Participate

Attend weekly Advent services at Cornerstone and come prepared to give thanks for the gift of Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and learning. During this series, we'll do a deep dive into one of the most-quoted verses about Christ's birth, Luke 2:10, breaking down each phrase to understand why it matters for our lives today.

Disciple

Engage others in conversations about the gospel through the stories of Advent. Use this companion guide or another Advent devotional to help you discuss Christ's coming with your children, roommates, connection group members, and neighbors.

Give

As a steward of your finances, influence, talents, and time, consider how you can share your resources by participating in the Ornament Project, the Christmas Eve Special Offering, and end-of-year giving. Let your gratitude for the undeserved gift of grace through Jesus Christ be the motivation for cheerful and generous giving to others.

**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



WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

WEEK I

Fear Not



THIS WEEK'S READING

LUKE 1:1-56

NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 7

COME, THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS,
BORN TO SET THY PEOPLE FREE;
FROM OUR FEARS AND SINS RELEASE US,
LET US FIND OUR REST IN THEE.
ISRAEL'S STRENGTH AND CONSOLATION,
HOPE OF ALL THE EARTH THOU ART;
DEAR DESIRE OF EVERY NATION,
JOY OF EVERY LONGING HEART.

BORN THY PEOPLE TO DELIVER,
BORN A CHILD AND YET A KING,
BORN TO REIGN IN US FOREVER,
NOW THY GRACIOUS KINGDOM BRING.
BY THINE OWN ETERNAL SPIRIT
RULE IN ALL OUR HEARTS ALONE;
BY THINE ALL SUFFICIENT MERIT,
RAISE US TO THY GLORIOUS THRONE.

O, Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
Meredith Andrews

Reading Reflection

1. What people, situations, or future unknowns tend to stir fear in your heart?
2. Where do you most often turn for hope, assurance, or comfort in the midst of fear?
3. In your scripture reading this week, where did you see God's steadfast and sovereign character displayed? How does that change the way you view fearful circumstances?
4. What hope do you have in Christ, and how does that change the lens through which you view your fears?



Kids Connection

GATHER:

Have your children grab their favorite comfort item.

READ:

Luke 1:26-38

DISCUSS:

“Why do you love your <comfort item> so much? How does it make you feel safe? When do you like to have it?”

CONNECT:

“Like your <comfort item>, God can bring us comfort when we’re scared or sad. But unlike your <comfort item>, God is always with you, and he has power over everything sad and scary. When Jesus came to earth, the angels said, “Fear not!” because God was showing his love for people, making a way for them to be with God forever.”

Sermon Notes

DECEMBER 7

LUKE 2:10 _____ **FEAR NOT**



WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

WEEK 2

Good News



THIS WEEK'S READING

LUKE 1:57-80

DECEMBER 8 - DECEMBER 14





**O HOLY NIGHT! THE STARS ARE BRIGHTLY SHINING
IT IS THE NIGHT OF OUR DEAR SAVIOR'S BIRTH
LONG LAY THE WORLD IN SIN AND ERROR PINING
'TIL HE APPEARED AND THE SOUL FELT ITS WORTH
A THRILL OF HOPE THE WEARY WORLD REJOICES
FOR YONDER BREAKS A NEW AND GLORIOUS MORN
FALL ON YOUR KNEES; O HEAR THE ANGEL VOICES!
O NIGHT DIVINE, O NIGHT WHEN CHRIST WAS BORN
O NIGHT, O HOLY NIGHT, O NIGHT DIVINE!**

O Holy Night

Reading Reflection

1. Can you think of a time when you received good news? Why was it so refreshing, and how did it impact your mood or actions?

2. Based on your reading or knowledge of the redemptive story, why does mankind even need good news? (See: Romans 5) What is the bad news we face apart from Christ?

3. How was Christ's coming a unique moment of good news for God's people, and what makes it good news for people today?

4. If you have received this good news, how has it changed your life and brought you peace?

Kids Connection

GATHER:

Think of some silly/simple examples of good news and bad news you could give your kids. Write the good news on one sheet and the bad news on the other, and fold them up. (Examples: “Bad news—you have to go to bed two hours earlier tonight. Good news—you get to stay up late and watch a movie!”; “Bad news—your favorite toy is missing. Good news—you get to go to the store and pick out a new toy.” Don’t overthink it, just help the kids grasp the concept—they like good news, not bad news!)

READ:

Luke 1:68-75

DISCUSS:

“How did you feel when you heard the bad news and good news I shared?”

“What if I only shared the bad news and there was no good news?”

CONNECT:

“The word ‘gospel’ means good news. Zechariah’s prophecy was good news, because it meant that the Messiah was coming soon and God would keep his promise to his people. Because God is loving and kind, he wants to be with us forever, even though we don’t deserve it. Jesus’s coming is good news for us today!”



Sermon Notes

DECEMBER 14

LUKE 2:10 ————— **GOOD NEWS**

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

WEEK 3

Great Joy



THIS WEEK'S READING

LUKE 2:1-20

DECEMBER 15 - DECEMBER 21

**BEHOLD THE KING HAS COME
DIVINITY INCARNATE
CREATOR OF THE WORLD
BREATHING OUR AIR
BEHOLD WHAT LIGHT HAS COME
AND THE DARK CANNOT CONTAIN IT
THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD
IS FINALLY HERE**

Behold
Phil Wickham

Reading Reflection

1. How would you define joy?
2. What things tend to get in the way of having “great joy” even after hearing and knowing the good news?
3. What do you tend to rely on to bring you a sense of joy?
4. What scriptures from this week’s reading gave you confidence that true joy is found in Christ?



Kids Connection

GATHER:

Grab a balloon and bring everyone together in the living room.

READ:

Luke 2:8-20

DISCUSS:

Blow up the balloon yourself, or give each person their own balloon to try. “Do you see how I had to blow air into the balloon to inflate it? What if I tried to blow it up by using candy or toys or movies? They wouldn’t fill up the balloon, would they?”

CONNECT:

“The angels announced that the birth of Jesus would mean great joy for all people. The angels were right! When the shepherds visited Jesus, it filled their hearts, and they left praising God. Just like a balloon is filled with air, as we get to know Jesus, he fills our hearts with joy. No amount of movies or toys can give you the joy of Jesus. Joy doesn’t mean you’re always happy or laughing, but it means that deep down, you feel secure because you know God is good and God is with you.”

Sermon Notes

DECEMBER 21

LUKE 2:10

GREAT JOY



WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

WEEK 4

For All People



THIS WEEK'S READING

LUKE 2:21-52

DECEMBER 22 - DECEMBER 24





**HERE WITHIN A MANGER LIES
THE ONE WHO MADE THE
STARRY SKIES
THIS BABY BORN FOR SACRIFICE
CHRIST, THE MESSIAH!
INTO OUR HOPES, INTO OUR FEARS
THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD APPEARS
THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL YEARS
CHRIST, THE MESSIAH!**

He Shall Reign Forevermore
Chris Tomlin

Reading Reflection

1. Who are the people in your sphere of influence? Who are you called to love, disciple, and serve on a regular basis?

2. Where did you see God's love for all people show up in your scripture reading this week?

3. What role do the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ play in God's expression of his love?

4. What role do you have in loving "all people," and what actions do you want to take today to share God's love with others?

Kids Connection

GATHER:

Choose one gift for your children to open early (or pair this activity with your family celebration). Do this separately so you can really discuss the meaning of a gift.

READ:

Luke 2:25-38

DISCUSS:

“Why are you getting this gift?” (This isn’t something they worked for or earned by being well-behaved or doing chores—parents delight to give their children gifts because of love! A gift is freely given.) “What is the right response to a gift?” (Smiling, enjoying it, saying thank you, etc.)

CONNECT:

“Simeon and Anna responded with praise and thanksgiving when they encountered Jesus. They knew he was a gift. God gave us the gift of grace through Jesus. We can respond to that gift by following Jesus and living with thankful hearts.”



Sermon Notes

DECEMBER 24

LUKE 2:10

FOR ALL PEOPLE



**TRULY HE TAUGHT US TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER;
HIS LAW IS LOVE AND HIS GOSPEL IS PEACE
CHAINS SHALL HE BREAK, FOR THE SLAVE IS OUR BROTHER
AND IN HIS NAME, ALL OPPRESSION SHALL CEASE
SWEET HYMNS OF JOY IN GRATEFUL CHORUS RAISE WE
LET ALL WITHIN US PRAISE HIS HOLY NAME
CHRIST IS THE LORD; O PRAISE HIS NAME FOREVER!
HIS POWER AND GLORY EVERMORE PROCLAIM
HIS POWER AND GLORY EVERMORE PROCLAIM**

O Holy Night



Advent Season Reflection

**HOW DID THIS SEASON OF ADVENT HELP YOU DRAW
CLOSER TO GOD?**

**WHAT VERSES, PRAYERS, SONGS, OR SERMON QUOTES
HELPED YOU APPRECIATE CHRIST'S FIRST COMING?**

**WHAT VERSES, PRAYERS, SONGS, OR SERMON QUOTES
STOKED YOUR EXCITEMENT AND ANTICIPATION FOR
CHRIST'S SECOND COMING?**

**WHAT TYPES OF TEMPTATIONS AND DISTRACTIONS DID
YOU FACE DURING THIS SEASON THAT THREATENED
TO TAKE YOUR ATTENTION OFF OF GOD? HOW DID YOU
RESPOND TO THESE?**

**ARE THERE ANY PRACTICES OR TRUTHS YOU LEARNED
DURING THIS SEASON THAT YOU WANT TO IMPLEMENT OR
TAKE ACTION ON IN THE NEW YEAR?**



"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

ROMANS 8:38-39



Advent

AT CORNERSTONE

THERE'S SOMETHING NEW EVERY WEEK

See our Advent page for the schedule
and additional resources



