



Advent

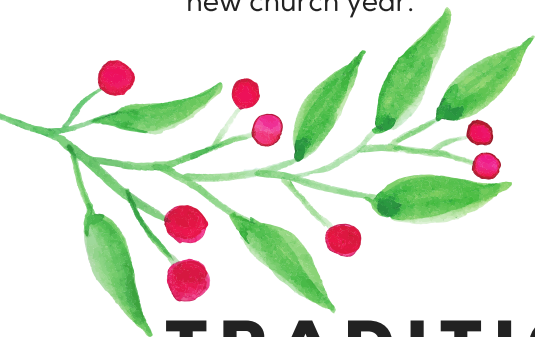
NOV. 29-DEC. 23, 2020

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH
COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

WHAT IS ADVENT?

Advent is the beginning of the new church year. There are four Sundays in Advent and it continues until the day before Christmas Eve. Advent is derived from a Latin word for "coming". The season is a time of preparation and expectation for the coming celebration of our Lord's nativity, and for the final coming of Christ "in power and glory." This year Advent begins on November 29.

Advent also marks the beginning of the new church year.



TRADITIONS

There are many different traditions during the Season of Advent. Here are a few traditions that you may see around St. Thomas.

- The color of Advent is blue (for Mary, the mother of Jesus) or purple (for the newborn king). We use both colors at St. Thomas.
- Advent Wreaths
- St. Nicholas Day
- Jesse Tree

ADVENT & COVID



Over the past few years, I have ordered the Living Well Through Advent books from Living Compass. When I opened the book for this year, this quote was on that page from The Rev. Cathy Boyd: "Hope is expectation holding space for the reality of Emmanuel: God-with-us. Hope is a decision, and a practice. " I felt this was a good starting place for Advent.

Parents, first I would like to give you a standing ovation and say to each of you "Bravo! Job well done!" You have explained hard things to your children while trying to understand them yourself. You have made decisions that you felt were best for your family at the time and sometimes you had to pivot to make a different decision. You have had to work through your own worries and fears to continue to parent. You couldn't hide in the closet until this was over; you did hard things over and over.

My gift to your family is a digital access to activities that will work well for your family. You will find curated resources as well on our website.

May you find the courage to continue to practice hope day by day. And when you can't find the courage, know that we are here to help shine the light for you. and a voice of hope In the wilderness.





ADVENT WREATHS

There are several different types of Advent Wreaths. However, there is one important part to it; the candles. Each wreath has three blue or purple candles, one pink candle and one white candle.

The first Sunday, light one blue/purple candle. The second Sunday light two blue/purple candles. The third Sunday light the pink candle, for Mary, and two blue/purple candles. The fourth Sunday light all blue/purple candles and the pink candle. Christmas Eve light the white candle, the Christ candle.

We are including prayers for you to use while lighting candles. This might be a new tradition for your family. Perhaps something you incorporate into your Sunday evenings around dinner time.

We also invite your child to practice generosity by doing one small activity a week.



ADVENT MUSIC

We are creating an Advent Spotify Playlist. It includes some traditional Advent hymns and non-traditional versions. You are invited to add your favorite Advent songs to the playlist. Since we are still unable to sing together as a community during in-person worship, we inviting you to sing together as a community in your home and car to introduce some of the beloved Advent music to your children. Do you have a favorite Advent song? Please add it to the playlist to share with the community.



ST. NICHOLAS DAY

December 6 is the Feast Day for St. Nicholas. The true story of Santa Claus begins with St. Nicholas. He was Bishop In the 3rd century It was now modern day Turkey. Through the centuries many stories and legends have been told of St. Nicholas' life and deeds. These accounts help us understand his extraordinary character and why he is so beloved and revered as protector and helper of those in need. December 6 at 6:30 pm, the Rev. Rich Nelson will tell this beloved story.



GODLY PLAY

Godly Play was created the Rev. Dr. Jerome W. Berryman. While conducting research in the Texas Medical Center, he realized that there needed to be a simplified method of telling stories to children who were in the hospital. He created Godly Play. Here are some facts taken from the Godly Play Foundation:

- Godly Play is a creative, imaginative approach to Christian formation and spiritual guidance.
- Godly Play has a Montessori foundation with 40+ years of research and practice.
- Godly Play values process, openness, discovery, community and relationships.
- Godly Play models the worship life, stories, symbols and rituals of Christian congregations.
- Godly Play allows practitioners to make relevant and personal theological meaning.
- Godly Play nurtures participants to larger dimensions of belief and faith through wondering and play.



ADVENT STORY

The Godly Play Advent story is quite lovely and will be something that your entire family may enjoy listening to weekly.

Each week Wendy Wright will record the story with a brief write up. Included are the "Wonder" questions for you to share with your family.



CHRISTMAS STORY

Over the last few yers, we have used the Godly Play Christmas story for our pageant. This year, we invite you to tell the story at home.

We are using a modified version for the Christmas pageant. We will also provide a copy of the Godly Play story on our website for you to read at home at Christmas.

HOW TO MAKE A JESSE TREE

A Jesse tree helps us count down the days to Christmas like an Advent calendar. Allow the children to explore in their yard for a large enough stick to hold the paper ornaments. Secure the stick so it will stand. Print the ornaments. Color and hang with ribbon/string on the branch.



JESSE TREE

The Jesse Tree tradition comes from the imagery found in Isaiah 11:1; "A shoot will come from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a branch will bear fruit." Jesse, the father of David, is the great ancestor of Jesus, and the Jesse Tree symbolizes Jesus' family tree. A modern-day Jesse Tree is simply a small tree or branch with a collection of ornaments, each of which symbolize a Bible story from Christ's lineage.

ACTIVITIES

There are readings, discussions and activities that correspond with the ornament. Each Sunday a new week will posted on the website.

