

advent

2025 devotional guide



hope peace joy love christ

advent at city point

Sunday, November 30: Hope - Philippians 2:1-11

Sunday, December 7: Peace - Isaiah 11:1-10

10:45 am | Worship Cantata

4:00 pm | Blue Christmas Service

Sunday, December 14: Joy - Isaiah 35:1-10

12:00 pm | Potluck and Caroling

Sunday, December 21: Love - Philippians 1:3-9

10:45 am | Carillon Bell Choir

Wednesday, December 24: Christ - Luke 2:1-20

5:00 pm | Christmas Eve Service

the season of advent

Advent is a season of waiting. Named after the Latin word *adventus*, meaning “coming,” Advent occurs the 4 weeks leading up to Christmas and encourages us to prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ, God With Us, into the world.

Like all seasons in the church year, Advent is assigned special colors to help us observe the season in worship. The liturgical colors for the season of advent are **blue** (symbolizing hope and anticipation) and **violet** (symbolizing penance and preparation). You will notice that this year's Advent Kits are purple, but could also be blue, as are the decorations in the sanctuary at City Point UMC. **Rose** (symbolizing joy), **gold** (symbolizing glory, light, and celebration), and **white** (symbolizing purity and new life) are also seen throughout Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany.

The staff at City Point UMC prays this booklet will help lead you through the season of Advent as we eagerly wait for the coming of Christ. Each week features a devotional, prayer, simple activities for all ages, and reflection questions to journal about or discuss with others. We hope you will share photos of your family participating throughout the season by tagging us on Facebook so we can experience the joy of Advent together!

devotional

We spend a lot of our lives hoping for things. We “hope” that we will make the sports team, we “hope” that we will get a new promotion, we “hope” that our medical tests will come back with good results. We almost always hope for things that we don’t have, for the things we are convinced will make our lives easier, better, happier, more fulfilling.

Hope is a good and beautiful and necessary thing. It helps us imagine a way forward, it helps guide us, it calls us to action. Without hope, we are stuck. Without hope, we have nothing to look forward to, nothing to chase after, nothing to help us grow closer to God or closer to each other.

Paul’s letter to the church in Philippi is a call for hope. The people of the Philippian Church were living in division and isolation. They were growing resentful and stuck in their lives, in their ministry, and in their relationships. They needed a source of communal hope to unify them. Paul reminds the Philippians that Christ, who left the glory of heaven to be born “like a slave” in this world, is hope embodied. Jesus is the source of our hope, the object which we have hope in, and the hope that lives in and through us.

But the thing about hope is that it demands action. If we are truly hopeful of something, then our very lives will reflect that expectation. We will spend time practicing for tryouts, put in extra hours at the office, or follow our doctor’s care plan. Real hope transforms us. It bleeds into every part of our lives. Every fiber of our being becomes buzzed with hope-filled adrenaline that drives us forward, giving our lives purpose and meaning. For many, our sense of identity is grounded in our hope.

To have hope in Christ is to be transformed by his love. To be invigorated by his life-giving grace. To be a witness of his love to others through your very presence. To have “the mind of Christ” is to hope for the world that Christ came to share - a kingdom full of love, joy, and peace for all people. A world where God is known and hope is fulfilled.

This Advent season, we are reminded of our calling to be people of hope. As we wait with hope and expectation for the coming of Christ, we also wait with hope and expectation for the coming of Christ's kingdom in our world. May this hope not be merely a passive wish, but a confidence so firm that our lives are transformed as we actively participate in Christ's kingdom here and now.

By: Rev. Macy Craft
Pastor of Connections and Children

reflection questions

- What do you think God's hope for the world is? How can you be part of making that hope a reality?
- Who in your life is in need of hope right now? How can you be a source of hope for them?

prayer

God of Hope, as we wait for the coming of Christ this Advent season, may we wait with expectation to be transformed by your love. May we be people whose words and actions reflect the hope of Christ's coming kingdom - full of love, joy, and peace for all. Amen.

activity

For Kids: Purple and blue are the main colors we use to celebrate the season of Advent. Pay special attention to where you can find purple and blue around you this week. When you see purple and blue, tell a friend or grown-up about it. Let it remind you that Jesus' birth is coming soon!

For Teens: Have you ever thought something like "I can't wait to be an adult" or "just wait until I'm old enough to move out"? This is a pretty common feeling for teenagers - hoping for the day you can make decisions for yourself and be a "grown-up." This week, instead of focusing on the things that are out of your control, or wishing for the future to come faster, think about the things you *can* control. What are things in your family, friend group, school, sports team, church, etc. that you wish were different? How can you be part of making that change? Your dreams for a better world are a source of hope. This week, let's put that hope into action!

For Grown-Ups: This week, challenge yourself to spend at least 30 minutes visiting face-to-face with someone who has a different lifestyle, belief system, political ideology, etc. than you. Try to have an entire conversation without mentioning the things you disagree on and instead, focus on finding hope and unity in the midst of disagreement.

For Families: Take time to set up your Advent wreath as a family. You can find the instructions and supplies in your Advent Kit. Then, light the first purple candle: hope.

hope

monday

Where did you see a glimpse of hope today?

tuesday

How did you live into the hope of Christ today?

wednesday

Where did you see a glimpse of hope today?

thursday

How did you live into the hope of Christ today?

friday

Where did you see a glimpse of hope today?

saturday

How did you live into the hope of Christ today?

devotional

When we think of peace, we often imagine quiet... no noise, no conflict, no chaos. But the peace Isaiah describes is much bigger than that. It's not just the absence of trouble; it's the presence of harmony.

Isaiah paints a beautiful picture: "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid." It's a world where natural enemies live side by side, where what used to be dangerous is now safe, and where fear no longer controls anyone. This isn't just a fairytale vision. It is God's promise of what the world can look like when Christ reigns in our hearts and in our world!

Peace begins in the small places: in our homes, our conversations, our choices. It's in how we treat each other when we disagree, how we pause to listen instead of react, and how we trust that God is still working, even when the world feels anything but peaceful.

During Advent, we wait for the Prince of Peace, the one who brings this harmony to life. Jesus shows us that peace doesn't come through power or control, but through humility, love, and forgiveness. Each time we choose patience over anger, kindness over judgment, or prayer over worry, we make space for that peace to grow.

The stump Isaiah describes reminds us that even when things look dead or hopeless, God can bring new life. Out of the stump of Jesse comes a branch, Jesus, who restores peace between God and humanity, and between one another.

reflection questions

- Where do you see peace growing in your life right now?
- What might God be asking you to make room for, so that peace can take root?

prayer

God of Peace, calm our hearts and renew our hope. Help us live as peacemakers in our families, our community, and our world. May your peace take root in us and grow through us. Amen.

activity

For Kids: Peace can feel like calm inside our hearts, even when things around us are loud or busy. Sit comfortably and close your eyes. Rub your hands together to make them warm, then place them gently over your heart. Take a slow breath in... and a slow breath out. Imagine God's peace filling your heart like still water, calm, gentle, and strong. Say: "Jesus brings me peace!"

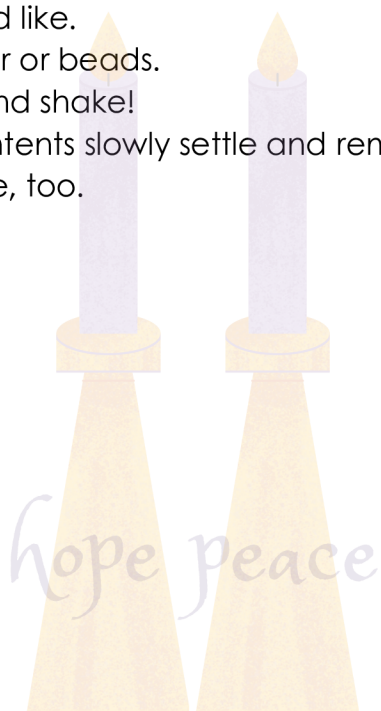
For Teens: Music often helps us experience peace in ways words can't. Create a "Peace Playlist" this week. Think of 3–5 songs that make you feel calm, hopeful, or connected to God. You can listen to it when you feel stressed, frustrated, or rushed in the chaos of life.

For Grown-Ups: Sometimes peace doesn't grow in our lives because our schedules are so full there's no room for stillness with God. This week, choose one thing to gently say "no" to: a to-do list that can wait, a distraction that steals your focus, or a habit that drains your energy. When you say "no" to something unnecessary, you are saying "yes" to peace with God: yes to rest, yes to prayer, yes to God renewing what feels like a "stump" in your life. This week, ask yourself: What helps me notice God's presence? How can I make space each day for more of that?

For Families: Light the hope candle and the second purple candle: peace.

As a family, make a "Calm Jar" to help remind you of God's peace. You'll need: a clear jar or bottle with a screw-top lid, water, and something that moves slowly in water (glitter, beads, or rice).

1. Fill the container mostly with water. Feel free to add food coloring if you'd like.
2. Add your glitter or beads.
3. Close tightly and shake!
4. Watch the contents slowly settle and remember: God helps our hearts settle, too.



monday

What does peace look like? (in your heart, workplace, family, community, church, country, world, etc.)

tuesday

What brought you peace today?

wednesday

Where do you see peace in nature?

thursday

What parts of our world are yearning for peace?

friday

Who brought you peace today?

saturday

How were you a maker of peace this week?

week 3: joy

Isaiah 35:1-10

Isaiah 35 describes a holy road where God leads people with singing and gladness, and where sorrow flees away. **What would it look like for you to walk in that “way of joy” this Advent season?**

devotional

When I was a child, I experienced Christmas joy through many activities... I spent a decade of my childhood performing each year in The Nutcracker, dancing to the famous Tchaikovsky score as a toy soldier, gingerbread man, jester doll, party child, in the Waltz of the Flowers; you name it... I've danced it! I experienced joy by turning on Christmas CDs (remember those?!) as my family would decorate the tree while being serenaded by Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald. I would go Christmas caroling with my youth group and high school choirs, spreading the joy to others. Sense a common theme here? Much of my Christmas joy is tied to music and the arts (no surprise, I know!). But I sense you can relate... Music brings many people joy, especially amidst the hectic holiday season! When you hear a certain carol, perhaps it transports you back to a specific time or memory, or maybe it reminds you of your grandma or someone special to you. One of my favorites is "Angels We Have Heard On High" because my grandpa would sing that long "Gloooria" with his own descant and twist that would always make my brother and I stifle our giggles at the Christmas Eve service!

Our Scripture reading, Isaiah 35:1-10, directly proclaims that the wilderness will rejoice and blossom and SING with gladness at the coming of the Lord! We are lucky that in our worship through this Advent season, we get to sing our joys and praises to the Lord through every carol. I encourage you to truly absorb the blessing it is to sing with gladness, and bask in the JOY that comes with music. Now go listen to and sing along with your favorite Christmas carol... the time is near, Jesus is coming!

By: Sarah Gould

Assistant Choir Director, Children's Music Director

reflection questions

- What is your favorite Christmas carol tied to faith? Why?
- How does music bring you joy?
- What other festive activities bring you joy?
- What is a Christmas song that brings back a joyful memory for you?

prayer

God, we thank you for the gift that is music, especially in this season of waiting for the coming of Christ. We thank you for the joy that music and Christmas bring! We are grateful for the melodies and harmonies that we find in music and in memories, and we pray you remind us of this joy in harder times. Amen.

activity

For Kids: Let's make a joyful noise! Find jingle bells to ring, a shaker egg, or make your own noisemaker using beads in a lidded container. Then, have a grown up play a lively Christmas carol. Sing along and shake your instrument to the beat. Just like the desert road in Isaiah sings with joy, we can make music to celebrate Jesus coming!

For Teens: What brings you joy? People, places, memories, music, all of the above? Spend time this week thinking about what brings you the most joy, then find a way to experience those things more often! Hang up pictures in your bedroom or locker of the people who bring you joy, read a scripture that brings you joy at the start and end of each day, write a letter to the friend who always knows how to cheer you up, change your alarm clock sound to be your favorite joyful song, etc.

For Grown-Ups: This week, set aside a few quiet minutes to listen intentionally to your favorite Christmas carol. Consider following along with a written copy of the lyrics as you listen. After listening, reflect: What memory does this song stir? What joy does it awaken? How can you strengthen that joy this Advent season?

For Families: Light the the hope candle, the peace candle, and the rose candle: joy.

Spend time this week listening to Christmas carols as a family. What are your favorite Christmas songs - from the church or secular world? What memories do they spark? How do these memories bring you joy? Consider creating a Family Christmas Music Playlist to listen to throughout the Advent and Christmas season.



monday

What does joy look like? Feel like? Sound like? Taste like?
Smell like?

tuesday

What brought you joy today?

wednesday

Where do you see joy in nature?

thursday

What parts of our world are yearning for joy?

friday

Who brought you joy today?

saturday

How were you a maker of joy this week?

week 4: love

Philippians 1:3-9

What is the relationship between thanksgiving and love? How do love and gratitude build each other up? What happens to a relationship when one is missing from the equation?

devotional

In November, we entered into a time of thankfulness and gratitude and after Thanksgiving a time of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

Philippians 1:3-9 shares of Paul's thankfulness for the church, offering prayers of joy for the Philippians in their partnership in the gospel. We, as a church, celebrate this time of the year giving thanks, expressing our gratitude to others, and showing love to those around us.

Verse one of the hymn, "Love Came Down at Christmas," reads, "Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine; Love was born at Christmas; star and angels gave the sign." Love came down at Christmas as a tiny baby. Love in the Bible is not defined as a feeling, but as a selfless, sacrificial action.

Growing up as a child, I loved and still love this time of the year. Special times with family and friends, and now the joy of wonder in my grandson's faces. I love the twinkling of the Christmas lights, the cheerful singing of Christmas songs, the extra smiles on peoples faces, the flickering candlelight at the Christmas Eve Service.

Being a preacher's kid, we were always in worship on Christmas Eve at our home church, with our church family. I have fond memories as a child coming to those services and feeling like I had extra grandparents and loved meeting all their children and grandchildren who were visiting.

The love shown by those individuals is why I love worship so much. Seeing children grow up to be parents, to be grandparents, seeing the faith of a little child, grow because of love shown to them as a child. I give thanks to each of those congregations I grew up and am not a part of. Love is a beautiful thing and the Love of Christ is poured out for us all to pour into others.

But why do we need to just celebrate that love of Christmas during December?

Can you image how different life would be if we had a thankful heart, full of gratitude, hope, peace, joy, and the love of Christmas each and every day? Well, we can, we just have to keep the spirit of the season.

Read Philippians 1:3-9 this week, but read it in different translations, let the words speak to you in new ways. A great place to do this is online through Biblegateway.com.

In the Message version, verse 9 and 11 shares a prayer: "So this is my prayer that your love will flourish and that you will not only love much but well. Live a lover's life, circumspect and exemplary, a life Jesus will be proud of: bountiful in fruits from the soul, making Jesus Christ attractive to all, getting everyone involved in the glory and praise of God." Amen.

By: Laurie Thompson
Church Administrator

reflection questions

- How can you show love to others, not just during December?
- How can we give thanks for our church like Paul did?
- Who is someone that is on your mind that you can give thanks to God for and reach out to them to thank them and spread Christmas joy and love to?
- How can you embrace thankfulness and love in 2026?

prayer

“So this is my prayer that your love will flourish and that you will not only love much but well. Live a lover’s life, circumspect and exemplary, a life Jesus will be proud of: bountiful in fruits from the soul, making Jesus Christ attractive to all, getting everyone involved in the glory and praise of God.” Amen. (Philippians 1:9-11, MSG)

activity

For Kids: Gather some paper and crayons. Draw or write a message of love for two people: someone in your family and someone in your community (neighborhood, school, church, etc.) Sharing love with others makes both the giver and receiver feel God’s love!

For Teens: Grab a piece of paper and a pen. Draw a circle in the middle and write your name inside it. Around your circle, write the names of people in your life - family, friends, classmates, neighbors - anyone you care about or interact with daily. Next to each name, jot down one specific way you can show love to that person this week.

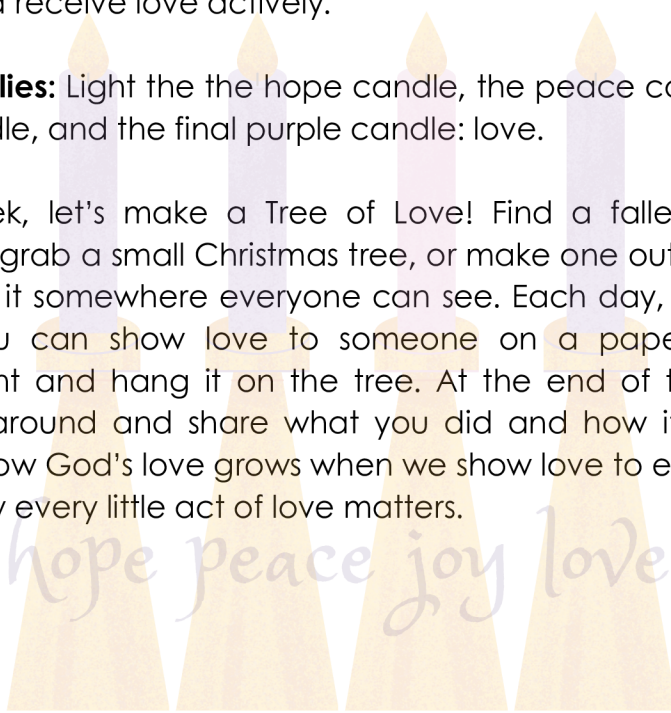
Once your map is complete, pick one action and do it! Afterward, reflect: How did actively showing love impact the relationship? How did it impact your own heart? How does noticing where love flows in your life help you live more like Jesus, as Philippians 1:9 encourages?

For Grown-Ups: Take out a notebook or some paper and create two lists. On the first list, write all the ways you actively show love to others. These can be big or small actions, like cooking a meal, listening carefully, giving encouragement, or volunteering your time. On the second list, write all the ways you feel most loved and cared for, maybe through words of affirmation, quality time, acts of service, gifts, or physical touch.

Once your lists are complete, take a few minutes to reflect and pray: Are there ways I can show love more intentionally that match how others receive it? Am I paying attention to the ways God loves me, so I can share that love with others? Keep these lists somewhere visible this week as a reminder to both give and receive love actively.

For Families: Light the the hope candle, the peace candle, the joy candle, and the final purple candle: love.

This week, let's make a Tree of Love! Find a fallen branch outside, grab a small Christmas tree, or make one out of paper and put it somewhere everyone can see. Each day, write one way you can show love to someone on a paper leaf or ornament and hang it on the tree. At the end of the week, gather around and share what you did and how it felt. Talk about how God's love grows when we show love to each other and how every little act of love matters.



monday

What does love look like? Feel like? Sound like? Taste like?
Smell like?

tuesday

How were you loved "well" today?

wednesday

How did you love others "well" today?

thursday

Who or what in your daily life reminds you of God's love?

friday

What are you thankful for today?

saturday

How did you notice God's love in action this week?

christmas eve: christ

Luke 2:1-20

The angels first appeared to the shepherds, people who were overlooked, looked down upon, or considered “unimportant.” Who in your life or community feels overlooked or forgotten? **How might you share the love, hope, and light of Christ with them this Christmas?**

devotional

Shepherds weren't very respected in Jesus' day. We read in today's scripture that they lived outside. In other words, shepherds didn't have homes, they lived in the fields with their sheep. Because of this, some people thought shepherds were dirty, that they weren't as "good" as people who lived in houses. Yet, it was these shepherds, these people who lived outside with animals who were the first people to hear the Good News that the Savior, a Messiah, was born. I wonder why?

I wonder why the multitude of angels didn't perform their impromptu concert celebrating the birth of Jesus in front of "important" people like religious and political leaders? I wonder why the angels didn't appear to the people who lived in Bethlehem, the "good" people who lived in houses? Was it because these good, respectable homeowners ignored the cries of a young woman, and the frantic pounding on doors by her husband who was desperate to find a warm place for his wife to give birth?

I wonder why God chose to bless looked down upon shepherds? Maybe it's because the light of Christ seems brightest in the dark? Maybe it's because the peace, love, hope, and joy that Jesus brought into the world is felt most powerfully by people who are looked down upon, neglected, lost, and unloved? Maybe the angels chose shepherds to hear the greatest news ever because God is always reaching out to the poor and unwanted? Maybe part of the reason Jesus was born was so that we could reach out to the poor and unwanted too?

Jesus' birth was the beginning of the greatest story ever told, and that story continues in us. The light of Jesus is within us, I wonder what we will do with it?

By: Rev. Ramiro Rodriguez
Senior Pastor

reflection questions

- What do you think it was like being a shepherd?
- Have you ever felt less important than others?
- How can you share the joy of Christmas with others?

prayer

Holy God, thank you for sending us Jesus. May his light, love, joy, peace, and hope shine through us this day and every day. Amen.

activity

For Families: Light the the hope candle, the peace candle, the joy candle, the love candle, and the Christ candle.

Spend some time as a family reading the Christmas Story. There are two versions in the New Testament: Matthew 2 and Luke 2:1-20. What differences do you notice? What similarities are there? The most important parts - Jesus' birth - remain the same!

hope peace joy love christ

christmas day

John 1:1-14

reflection questions

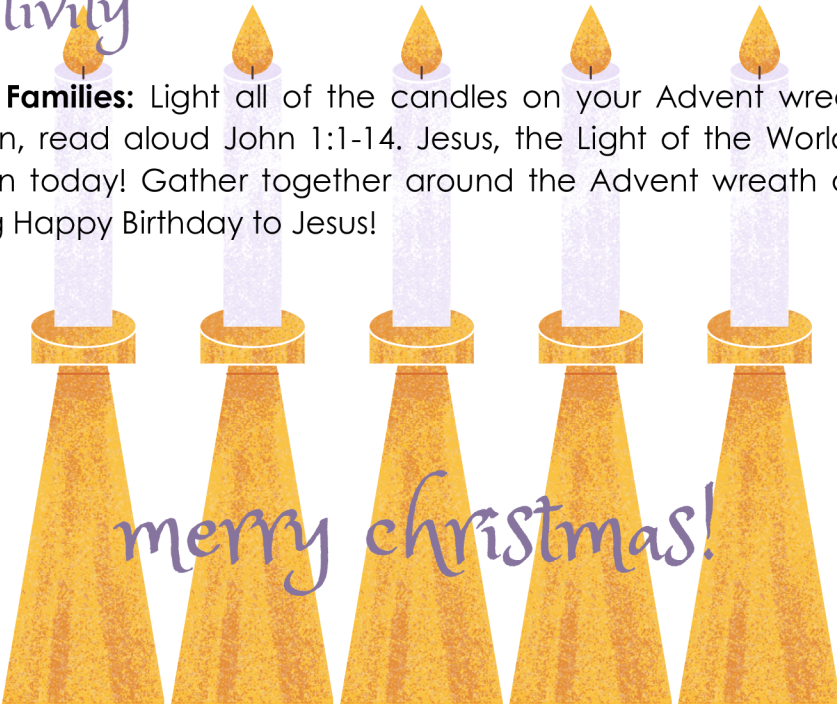
- Where do you see the Light of Christ shining in the world today?
- How can you be a Light for others to experience God's hope, peace, joy, and love?

prayer

Holy God, thank you for sending us Jesus. May his light, love, joy, peace, and hope shine through us this day and every day. Amen.

activity

For Families: Light all of the candles on your Advent wreath. Then, read aloud John 1:1-14. Jesus, the Light of the World, is born today! Gather together around the Advent wreath and sing Happy Birthday to Jesus!



2026 at city point

January: Come and See!

Modern Worship | 8:15 am in the Sanctuary

Traditional Worship | 10:45 am in the Sanctuary

Pastor's Study | The Gospel of John

Thursdays | 10 am or 6 pm

Wednesday Night Worship & Dinner

Third Wednesdays | 6 pm in Reeves Hall

Lent 2026

Ash Wednesday | February 18

Drive by Ashes | 7-9 am
Worship | 12 pm, 6:30 pm

Easter Picnic & Egg Hunt

March 28 | 11 am

Maundy Thursday | April 2

Dinner | 6 pm
Worship | 7 pm

Good Friday | April 3

Worship | 7 pm

Easter Sunday | April 5

Modern | 8:15 am
Traditional | 10:45 am

VBS 2026: God's Dreamland



June 22-25

9 am-12 pm

Registration
opens April 1 at
citypointumc.org

notes

Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple sets of three horizontal dashed lines for tracing and writing practice.

notes

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 sets of three horizontal dashed lines.

