

CREATING YOUR ADVENT WREATH & WORSHIP AREA

Advent Wreath

- Decorate your Advent wreath circle board. Use any supplies you have at home and be creative! See some examples below!
- Place the 5 circle stickers on your board where the candles will sit.



Worship Area

- Choose your room. You'll want one with a good wi-fi connection, enough space for everyone watching, and a TV or a place for a viewing device. You'll also want to minimize other distractions or interruptions. Get creative! It could be your dining area, your family room, a den, a heated garage space, or a bedroom.
- Choose your alter location. It's going to feel a little sacrilegious, but this is where your TV is or where your computer/phone will go for watching worship together. You can put a cross or other symbol in that area if it helps. Also, make sure you have charging cords, access to YouTube or Facebook on that device.
- Find a place for your Advent Wreath. It may be a small stand, a mantle, or some other creative, fire-safe platform—anything that will let you easily access and see your wreath on Sundays and Christmas eve.



Worship Area, continued

- Color the prayer poster, put together, and hang by your alter and advent wreath.
- Check your seating. Are there enough seats for your congregation? Can everyone see and hear? Is your seating comfortable for those joining?
- Tell everyone. It may be a bit of a secret unless you let others in your household know you're making a worship center in your house (the Pastor said you could). Invite everyone to help. Put "Sunday Worship, 9:00 am" on your shared and individual calendars so everyone knows and has it marked. Let everyone claim their "regular" seat for worship (we all do it at a church, why not at home?).
- Know the schedule. You'll also want to make sure you have the DZ and Fusion schedule as well so that your children, if it applies, can attend "Sunday School" with their class after worship. Assigning rooms and devices can also be helpful.
- Spruce it up! The night before, prepare your space. Make sure its clean and ready to go. And, don't forget, you'll need something to light your candles with and this packet for the advent scripts.
- Make it memorable. At church, (when it's not covid season) we serve donut holes and coffee. What will you serve your congregation? Bring others in on the planning and preparation. Get creative.
- Become the worship leader. If you have any dissenting members of your in-home congregation, you'll want to help them engage by leading with your own engagement. Sing with the songs (even if you're a terrible singer), pray when there's prayer and say 'amen,' laugh at all the pastor's jokes, take notes and follow the scriptures. You might feel awkward at first, but every worship leader does until everyone gets used to it. It's also recommended that your in-home congregants bring their Bibles or Bible apps with them, but be mindful of wandering phone users.
- Share your worship! Post to Horizons' "We Are the Church" or check in with a photo to our main Facebook page, or message us a picture of your worship.



Take pictures or video of your wreath and worship area and send it to us or post on the 'We are the Church - Horizons Group' FB page!! Share with others how you are celebrating this season!

An Advent Season in Reverse

Welcome to the Horizons 2020 Advent Candle lighting tradition. You may not be familiar with the Advent tradition, as it is not celebrated at churches. Horizons has chosen to follow the tradition in one way or another because we know how easy it is to get distracted by the business of the season or led into very different reasons for celebrating the season. Highlighting Advent gives shape and focus to the days leading up to Christmas so that we may draw as near as possible to Him. It is a season of the liturgical year as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas and the return of Jesus at the Second Coming.

A significant part of the Advent season is the lighting of candles to mark our distance along our journey and to focus on particular aspects of Christ's coming into the world. Although there may be differences in the words churches used to mark each week, Horizons uses the common listing and order: Hope, Peace, Joy, Love, and the Christ candle, or the candle of Light. There are traditional writings many churches use to accompany the lighting of these candles. However, Horizons composes our own writings to speak directly to our community and situation. We will read these writings each week as we light another candle.

Finally, in another tradition at Horizons, we have "Horizonized" this tradition further, this year, by reversing the order of the candles and themes. To some this may be disruptive and uncomfortable, but we have taken this liberty with great consideration. Our choice to reverse the order comes from two motivations: one, to respond to the type of year we have had with a pandemic, social and political tensions, and all the subsequent fallout from each, and two, to remind us that while we may tend to start with other things we need on our way to Christ, it is ultimately true that all good things come from Christ, thus requiring Christ to come first in our lives.

We hope you enjoy our Horizonized Advent tradition and find great meaning in our Christ-first, turned upside down order of moving through this season.

November 29, 2020: The Christ Candle

“Our season of Advent begins today to draw us near to Christ and His birth. Our focus this year is faithfulness—God’s faithfulness to us in this gift and season and God’s call to us to be faithful as well.

In the same way many of us feel as though this year has turned our worlds upside down, we have felt it most fitting to explore the traditional themes of advent—hope, peace, joy, love, and Christ—in an upside down, reversed order.

So today we light the Christ candle, the center candle, representing light and salvation. While it’s typically the last candle we light, it is a powerful reminder for us that if we desire to have hope, peace, joy, and love in this season or any other, we must first have Christ. From James 1:17, “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

As we reflect on God’s faithfulness in every season and His call to us to be faithful in the world, regardless of our circumstances, we are reminded to put Jesus first, to seek His kingdom and His righteousness. All else will come as we need it, when He is truly first.

LET US PRAY:

Jesus, we feel, in so many ways, that our worlds have been turned upside down and drown backward. But, you have shown us that all good things come from once-small flickers of light. Lord, as we strive to put you first in this season, forgive us for the ways we let you fall to the back, and let us put you first so that your light will illuminate our paths forward once again. AMEN.”

[AFTER reading, Light week 1 candle]

December 6, 2020: The Candle Symbolizing Love

“Advent continues today as we draw nearer to Christ and His birth. Our focus this year is faithfulness—God’s faithfulness to us in this gift and season and God’s call to us to be faithful as well.

To mark a season that has left us feeling turned upside down, we are journeying through the traditional themes of advent backward, starting first with the Christ candle. From Christ we now enter into the theme of love.

Today, we remember Jesus came in love to establish love as our highest pursuit under God’s new covenant. Jesus demonstrated and defined love most faithfully and clearly in his actions of putting others first and serving their needs as though they were His own.

In order to show this love today, we must set all hurts and the hardened parts of our hearts aside and part ways with our self-focused motives—no matter how frightening doing so may be. As Paul would say, in the world we have nothing to gain, but in Christ, all is gain. Let us be faithful to love as though we have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

LET US PRAY:

Jesus, thank you for coming into our lives, claiming our hearts with your love, and giving us a new command to love others. Equip our hearts to see past our hurts and step faithfully in to love, just as you have so faithfully loved us. And as we let love arise in us, let it create a spark that warms the hearts of others, drawing them nearer to your light. In Your name we pray, Jesus. AMEN.”

[AFTER reading, Light week 1 & 2 candles]

December 13, 2020: The Candle Symbolizing Joy

“Advent continues today as we draw nearer to Christ and His birth. Our focus this year is faithfulness—God’s faithfulness to us in this gift and season and God’s call to us to be faithful as well.

To mark a season that has left us feeling turned upside down, we are journeying through the traditional themes of advent backward, starting first with the Christ candle. From Christ we entered into love, and today the theme of Joy.

While we might ask the question can anything joyful come from a season that has left us feeling so disoriented and empty-handed, we are reminded that Nathaniel once asked if anything good could come from Nazareth, referring to Jesus’ legitimacy as the messiah.

What Nathaniel, and now millions have experienced and can testify to is, “yes,” good can come from Nazareth, just as joy can and will come, also, from the most unexpected places.

Today, faithfully take up an attitude of trust and let joy come into your lives as Christ only provides it. He is our joy, and He is our infinite giver of joy. And as you are being filled with his joy, let it flow from you to others in Christ’s name. He has come among us, He is here, He is coming still!

LET US PRAY:

Jesus, thank you for bringing joy into our lives and giving us reason to have joy, knowing that you came, that you are with us still, and you are yet coming into our lives more everyday. Give us the strength to let your joy in, and give us sight to know who around us most needs our joy in their lives. In Your name we pray, Jesus. AMEN.”

[AFTER reading, Light week 1, 2 & 3 candles]

December 20, 2020: The Candle Symbolizing Peace

“Advent continues today as we draw nearer to Christ and His birth. Our focus this year is faithfulness—God’s faithfulness to us in this gift and season and God’s call to us to be faithful as well.

To mark a season that has left us feeling turned upside down, we are journeying through the traditional themes of advent backward, starting first with the Christ candle. From Christ we enter into love and joy, and today, into the theme of Peace.

Being only days away from our celebration and welcoming of Christ into the center of our lives once again, we must find time to create pause in our lives. While slowing down may feel alarming or like loss of momentum, Jesus assures us peace is found most readily when we pause. It’s why Jesus calmed the storms in front of the disciples on many occasions and restored health to the many who were tormented by demons—to model peace. Peace was even found when Jesus uttered His final words on earth, “It is finished.”

As we pause to find peace and welcome it into our lives, let us be grateful that Jesus is so faithful to give us this peace as we ask for it. It will not always stop the chaos around us, but it will strengthen the steady, unfettered resolve within us.

LET US PRAY:

Jesus, your peace is not only sweet on our lips, it is also breath in our lungs and assurance to our step. Your peace tells us not to be afraid, that everything is going to be okay, and that you are always right here. Thank you for your faithfulness in every season, and the gift of peace we have in our contemplation of it. In Your name we pray, Jesus. AMEN.”

[AFTER reading, Light week 1, 2, 3 & 4 candles]

December 24/25, 2020: The Candle Symbolizing Hope

“Now the advent and arrival of Jesus is fully upon us. He is here, He is Lord and King and long-awaited Messiah—Emmanuel, God with us. It is by our reversed journey through the themes of Advent that we are able to arrive at the most important of all, which is hope. Again, when Jesus comes first, all other things are possible and will come as good gifts to those who love him.

Hope is so important because it is what shines when all else feels dim and lost. Hope is what keeps us pointing and moving forward. Hope is always enough to keep us alive. But Jesus must come first in order for hope to be true. In fact, without Jesus’ birth, death, and victory on the cross, hope would merely be a hollow shell of optimism.

And so, because of Jesus, here with us in faithfulness, full of hope, we who are hopeful in him must be faithful to share His hope with the world. We should never be ashamed or hesitant to share our reason for hope, even when it seems so small. Others will find hope in their own lives only as we let our own shine and give reason to trust in it.

LET US PRAY:

Jesus, thank you for who you are, for how you came, and why you made yourself servant to all. Now that our celebration of your light in the world is fully upon us, let us faithfully go into the world as hopeful people, never losing sight of your faithfulness, and never losing sight of our chances to let hope come alive through us. In Your name we pray, Jesus. AMEN.”

[AFTER reading, Light all candles]