

An aerial photograph of a dense forest covered in a thick layer of snow. The trees are dark and their branches are heavily laden with white snow. In the center of the image, there is a vertical dark red rectangle. Overlaid on this rectangle is the word "Joy" in a large, white, cursive script font.

Joy

TO THE  
WORLD

ADVENT GUIDE  
2023

# 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





## **“Joy to the World” - Luke 2:10-12**

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

-Luke 2:10-12

The Christmas season annually reminds us that God still offers joy to the world! Biblical joy is not a shallow happiness based in our surroundings or circumstances, rather it is a deep confidence rooted in the person of Jesus Christ, what He has done, and will do. I personally have had my joy tested recently and seek to choose daily not to let anything steal the joy I have in Jesus.

This Advent Guide has one goal, which is to help you and your family keep Christ your focus this Christmas. Advent means “arrival or coming” and many believers in Jesus choose to be intentional during Advent season (the month leading up to Christmas), to deepen their devotion to Jesus our Savior, who came in the form of a baby. Practicing Advent has always blessed our family with wonder and joy and it has been such a blessing to celebrate Advent with our Sunnyside Church family.

If this is a new practice for you, we have made it super simple! Some members of our staff have written a devotional with a Scripture, questions, and sometimes a practical application. The goal is to do this once a week and then the fifth one on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. You can do this alone or with a house full. Either way you’re choosing to make Christ your joy during the Christmas season, which sometimes can be difficult.

I want to invite you to do two things with your renewed joy in Jesus. Ask God to give you eyes for someone who could use some joy this season and discover a way to encourage or help them. Secondly, let’s all consider who we can invite to one of our Christmas Eve services, Sunday, December 24th 10am or 4pm. I’m always amazed how people are more receptive to church invites this time of the year.

I pray this Advent our hearts and our community will be filled with the good news of Jesus which will cause great joy for all who believe!

Merry Christmas to you and yours!

Pastor DJ

# Prophecy Candle

Sunday, November 26th

I am sure that when Joseph heard that Mary was pregnant his first thought wasn't joy. He probably had many feelings that weren't joyful, but after he heard the angel speak to him about the prophecy of the coming King, maybe he did feel joy. I think I would. To have an angel speak to me would encourage me that no matter what I am going through, God already knows and cares and will bring me through. You can have joy as well, because he knows and cares about YOU! – Linda Huff

■ **Light one of the smaller candles**

■ **Read Matthew 1:18-25**

## **Reflect**

- Are you living your life full of joy or do you let circumstances get you upset?
- Are others seeing you live your life in joy or do you hide it?

## **Pray**

Thank you, Lord, for who you are. Thank you for caring for me. Thank you for giving me a life that no matter what happens in my circumstances, I can still love you and have a life of joy. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# Bethlehem Candle

Sunday, December 3rd

There is a joy that entered the world through difficult times and with a lack of knowledge. The name Bethlehem means, “house of bread”. This would be the birthplace of our Lord and King. Just as Mary was ready to give birth, there was no room for her in the inn. But our Father in heaven knows what we need, and when we need it. At just the right time and in just the right place, the heavens opened, and with great joy the angels began to sing. Jesus our Savior and King was born. -Paul Lopez

**Light two of the smaller candles**

**Read Luke 2:4-7**

## Reflect

- In what area in your life are you lacking joy?
- Can you remember a time when God came through for you in a way you did not expect?

## Pray

Father, we thank you for the way you care for us. We thank you for knowing what we need before we ever ask. We thank you for sending your son, Jesus, “the bread of life” to be born at just the right time, and in just the right place. Thank you for the joy that you continually offer us through your son. In your son Jesus’ name. Amen

# Angel Candle

Sunday, December 10th

Seeing the angel arrive would have been terrifying and confusing. Yet the message is, “do not fear.” That is the great message of comfort that Jesus himself said to his disciples and to us today. The message is beyond fear and the reason is the joyful hope that only God fulfills. The physical sign of God’s promise to us was a baby, wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. As a final step, this one angel is joined by heaven’s angels praising God. The ability to enter in with praising for the miracle is up to you. Join in the joyful praise of God’s promise as he fulfilled it with the birth of Jesus. Let us go see this thing that has happened! – Ken Shonk

■ **Light three of the smaller candles**

■ **Read Luke 2:8-14**

## Reflect

- Is it possible for you to hear the message of God that the promised Savior has come to you for peace in your world?
- What choices can you make to see Christ for yourself?
- What do you think of God fulfilling promises through you? Would you make different choices for your life?

## Pray

God, I want to hear your message for me today. My hope in this world is for your life to be in my life and home. May I not miss the amazing display of your presence in my world. And even in difficulty and misunderstanding, may your promises be fulfilled today. Give me the courage to change what I am doing; to be doing what You want me to. May the presence of Christ fill the hungry with good things and guide our feet into the path of peace. In Jesus’ name, Amen

# Shepherd Candle

Sunday, December 17th

The shepherds had a big responsibility tending to their flock of sheep and ensuring that they were healthy and cared for and safe from predators. Being a shepherd was not considered a noble or high held position; however, God chose them to be the first to hear of the arrival of Jesus. Overwhelmed with anticipation they hurried off as their hearts were filled with joy. Seeing the baby lying in the manger they couldn't help but share the joyous news of what the angel had told them, and they left amazed. The shepherds glorified and praised God for all the things they had heard and seen. Just like the shepherds, we too can be joyful no matter how mundane or unpopular our lives may seem right now. The birth of our Savior Jesus Christ is reason for joy and celebration. – Shawna-Rei Sagadraca

**Light Four of the smaller candles**

**Read Luke 2:15-20**

## Reflect

- How can you spread joy to those who may be going through hard times or have lost all their joy?
- Share a moment God has brought you joy.
- Who is someone you can invite to a Christmas Eve Service?

## Pray

Lord, we thank you that your love for us is unconditional and that you sent your son to save us. We pray that you help us to be a light in this dark world and to bring joy to those who are hurting around us. Lord, as we go through each day, we pray that you would bring us joy in our own lives, so that we can share our testimonies with others of how amazing you are. Lord, help us to be shepherds and spread the good news of Jesus to our family, friends, community and the world. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# Jesus Candle

Sunday, December 24th

When the Lord turns your fears into joy, you can't help but worship Him. The fact that Jesus came and was born in human flesh, reassures us that our holy and almighty God is also a personal God. When we put our faith in the Living God, His perfect love expels all fear, and brings us joy. The Good News about Jesus is that He comes to anyone with a heart humbled enough to accept Him. Now, that is Good News worth sharing to everyone who will listen.

– Makana Sagadraca

## ■ Light all the candles

## ■ Read Luke 2:10-2

### Reflect

- How does Jesus' birth brings joy and hope to your life?
- How can you share this joy and hope with others?

### Pray

Lord, we ask you to replace our fears with joy. We ask that we feel You in our hearts and cover us with Your peace and comfort this Christmas season. We pray that we, and those around us will come to know the unconditional love of Jesus Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.



# Sunnyside Advent

visit [sunnyside4.org](http://sunnyside4.org) for more information

## CHRISTMAS EVE INVITES

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

...

## OUTREACH

Our heart is to spread the joy of Jesus this Christmas! Globally, we've partnered with **Compassion First**. They are an effective ministry, which rescues young woman from human trafficking and restores them with Christ's love. To donate to this ministry, please visit [sunnyside4.org/giving](http://sunnyside4.org/giving), click give online and choose Compassion First-Global Outreach. We will also be taking a special love offering for Compassion First during our evening Christmas Eve service.

Locally we are supporting local families by partnering with **YoungLives** a division of YoungLife. YoungLives supports teen parents through mentorship, community, and a life with Christ. Please visit the Christmas tree in the foyer and grab a gift tag and support a young mom, dad and their child with specific needs this Advent season.

...

## FIRE CHRISTMAS PARTY

*Wednesday, December 13th • 6:30 pm*

Students 6th-12th grade come enjoy a fun and joyful night as we celebrate the reason for the season. We will also honor and praise Jesus for the Sagadraca family. Come wearing your best ugly Christmas sweater or jammies and there will be a hot cocoa bar and a Christmas movie. Come celebrate with us!

...

## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

*Sunday December 24th at 10am and 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.

...

## HOLLY JOLLY PJ PARTY • KIDS MINISTRY

*Sunday, December 31st*

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