

503.698.5555



sunnyside4.org

13231 SE Sunnyside Road, Happy Valley, OR 97015

Rejoice!

Advent Guide

2024



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



“Rejoice” - Luke 2:10-11

Advent is the month-long celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ the Savior of the world. Our theme this year is “**Rejoice**” which is the appropriate response to the Light of the world (John 8:12), Jesus, invading the darkness of our world to redeem us and bring us back to God. As we reflect on the amazing arrival of God’s love in human form let’s **Rejoice** like the angel’s did the of Christ’s birth!

This Advent Guide is designed to help you and your family (friends, roommates, etc.) create a weekly rhythm to Rejoice in God as you reflect on the miracle of Christ’s birth. We have provided some instructions, yet please feel free to have fun with it and be creative in ways that work for you. Our pastoral team would love to hear how your household creatively **Rejoices** in God during the Christmas season. This is a tool to remind us that Christmas is about Christ and to help us praise Him like never before.

I have asked some of the pastoral team to each write one of the five Advent devotionals to help us get to know them a little more, their heart for God, and their love for Christmas. Each week includes a Scripture, a candle to light, a devotional thought, discussion questions, and more! Be reminded that God looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7), so don’t get caught up in how smooth things go, or how long, but rather having a heart that **Rejoices** in God.

In conjunction with our **Rejoice** theme, the sermons during December will be the songs of Advent found in the Gospel of Luke. This includes the songs of Mary, Zechariah, the angels, Simeon, and more! I have never taught these particular Scriptures so I’m very excited. People need someone to *rejoice* about, so please be prayerfully minded of people in your life who may need and appreciate an invitation to a church service, especially at Christmas.

Please keep these special and identical services in mind and in prayer as you make your holiday plans: Monday, Dec. 23rd @ 7PM and Tuesday, Dec. 24th @ 4PM.

We pray this devotional inspires you to **Rejoice** during Christmastime like never before!

Rejoicing in God,

Pastor DJ

Prophecy Candle

Sunday, December 1st

Have you ever had to wait for something for a really long time? How long did you have to wait? Would you be able to wait for hundreds of years for something? That's how long the people of God waited and hoped for the coming of their savior, the Messiah! Could you imagine just how much Joseph rejoiced when he heard the news from an angel that the savior of the world was finally coming?! It might not have been the way Joseph was expecting, but Jesus was finally coming! In this season, we can also rejoice that Jesus came, and we can be encouraged that God will give us a reason to rejoice as we hope and wait on His promises. -Justin Kiley

■ **Light one of the smaller candles**

■ **Read Matthew 1:18-25**

Reflect

- In what ways are you going to be celebrating Jesus' coming?
- How do you think you would react if God answered one of your prayers in an unusual way?
- What's something that you want God to do in your life or the lives around you?

Pray

Dear God, I am so grateful that you sent your Son, Jesus, to us to save us from our sins and to do the work that we could not do ourselves. God, today we celebrate you; we celebrate that you came! We put our hope in you, God, and we receive your answers to our prayers however you decide to give them to us. Thank you that you have given us the choice to rejoice! In Jesus' mighty name, we pray, Amen.

Bethlehem Candle

Sunday, December 8th

As I read this familiar story, I am struck by Joseph and Mary's circumstances. What reason do they have to rejoice? Joseph, the defeated descendant of the great king David, returns to the defeated city of David to be numbered in a foreign king's census. Not only that, but he returns amidst scandal; his fiancée is pregnant, and everyone knows the child isn't his. Future generations may call Mary blessed, but the present generation has other things to say. But God does not require perfect circumstances to begin his work. Rather, as life boxes them in, the Savior of the world arrives in a feeding trough: first to the teen girl whose faithfulness was called promiscuity, second to the defeated son of David in the defeated city of David; and from them, to us. We can rejoice with Joseph and Mary because God did not wait for better circumstances to become God With Us. Rather, Jesus steps into our broken circumstances as they are, takes us by the hand, and begins his work of restoration – piece by impossible piece. So let us rejoice! -Alyssa Simonson

■ **Light two of the smaller candles**

■ **Read Luke 2:4-7**

Reflect

- Is there a circumstance in your life where it feels impossible for God to move? Or where you are doing your best to follow God, but feel misunderstood?
- What would it look like to invite God into that space?

Pray

Jesus, thank you that you are Immanuel – God With Us. Thank you that you don't need perfect circumstances to move in my life; all you need is my 'yes.' I invite you into the areas of my life that feel impossible. I ask you to come and be Immanuel, God with me. Help me to remember that there is no situation too impossible for you. Lord, help me to rejoice with faithful anticipation of your work in my life. Amen!

Angel Candle

Sunday, December 15th

Angels are God's messengers who do what he wants done. In God's word, sometimes the messages they brought were good news, and sometimes they were bad news. The angel in this passage had the best news anyone could hope for. God's glory- his beauty and power -shone around. It was startling- better than any special effects in a movie. All of heaven was so excited that a great company of angels showed up after the amazing announcement and praised God for his incredible plan for humanity. Thousands of years later, we too can join with the angels and keep praising God that he sent Jesus, our Savior, our hope. No matter how hard life in this world seems, we can listen to the angel whose message from God was truly good news that continues to bring joy for everyone who believes. We have a great reason to rejoice! -Kim Satterthwaite

■ **Light three of the smaller candles**

■ **Read Luke 2:8-14**

Reflect

- Do you feel God's joy inside when you think of Jesus coming to be your personal Savior? How can you express that joy?
- What things distract you from experiencing God's joy in your heart?

Pray

Father, you are our creator. You designed us to rejoice at good news! Thank you for showing us the excitement of the angels after Jesus' birth was announced. Help us to be excited about the way you pursued us to provide us with true forgiveness and love through Jesus' sacrifice. Please remove anything that would distract me from you this Christmas. It is a privilege to praise you for making a way for us to experience your peace and joy. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd Candle

Sunday, December 22nd

The shepherds went away glorifying and praising God because the thing they had waited all their lives for -the birth of the King- had now come to life in front of them. I love answered prayers because it reminds me how much He loves me, and I am sure they felt the same way. Their prayers and waiting had been answered. They rejoiced just as we can rejoice knowing how much he loves each of us. -Linda Huff

■ **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

Mary's Song

"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant." Luke 1:46-48

Within Mary's young womb, the Savior of the world is slowly developing. Within this young woman's body, God's plan for redeeming the entire world is taking on the form of a baby. This precious child will be God's answer to once again have the relationship with His creation, just as He initially intended. His son Jesus will be born into this humble servant's life, to be raised in meek and modest means, experiencing life as a humble human, to conquer death and redeem His beloved creation. Who would have thought that such an amazing and powerful plan would start with a humble woman of such youthful status? Rejoice.....God did! -Fred Macy

Light all the candles

Read Luke 1:46-55

Reflect

Our God who brought Jesus to us as a child, wants you to know:

- You are loved! Can you see His love for you in the story of Mary?
- He has Joy and Hope available for you! How can you receive what God has for you today?
- Do you know someone who needs to accept His hope and joy this Christmas? How can you share God's love and message with them? Plan something special for them.

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 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!

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OUTREACH

Our heart is to spread the joy of Jesus this Christmas! Globally, we've partnered with **Compassion First**. They are an effective ministry that rescues young woman from human trafficking and restores them with Christ's love. To donate to this ministry, please visit 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 or their child with specific needs this Advent season.

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FIRE CHRISTMAS PARTY

Wednesday, December 18th • 6:45 pm

Students 6-12th grade, put on your PJs and join us for a movie night in the Sunnyside Room. We'll have a hot chocolate bar, popcorn, candy, cookies, and more! The snacks are on us – bring your slippers, blankets, and friends!

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CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Monday, December 23rd at 7pm and Tuesday, December 24th at 4pm

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.

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SUNNYSIDE KIDS CHRISTMAS PARTY • KIDS MINISTRY

Sunday, December 29th

We're rounding out the Christmas season in style! Put on your PJs and join us for a Sunday morning movie party. We'll have hot chocolate and snacks to enjoy with our movie. It's going to be a blast – can't wait to see you there!



