

A person is shown from the back, in silhouette, with their right hand raised in a gesture of prayer or praise. The background is a blurred screen displaying a red and white graphic, possibly a cross, and some indistinct text. The overall lighting is dim, with a blue and purple hue.

ADVENT: PREPARING  
OUR HEARTS FOR  
CHRIST

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# A Word from Our Heritage

In the rich heritage of the Church Of God In Christ, we are constantly reminded that our roots run deep in a legacy of fervent faith, uncompromising holiness, and passionate worship. These roots are more than a historical reference; they are the living foundation upon which our spiritual lives are built. As we enter this Advent season, we pause to reflect on the powerful testimonies and enduring witness of those who have gone before us – saints who dared to believe in God's promises, who gathered in prayer and expectation, and who allowed the Spirit to lead them even when the way was not always clear.

Our spiritual ancestors have gifted us with more than tradition; they have left us a pathway—well trodden and lit by faith—for drawing near to the Lord. Their emphasis on preparing one's heart, seeking the fuller presence of God, and walking boldly in the Spirit instructs us still. This Advent, let us look back with gratitude, drawing strength from our heritage, and move forward with renewed hope and purpose.





**"If you want the Spirit of God, you must go where  
the Spirit of God is."**

Bishop Charles Harrison Mason, Founder, Church of God in Christ

# The Focus of Spiritual Preparation

Spiritual preparation is the cornerstone of a meaningful Advent experience. In our busy world, it is all too easy to rush through the days without pausing to prepare our hearts for God's movement. Our heritage teaches us the benefit of slowing down, of carving out time for reflection, prayer, and intentional conversations with the Lord. When we honor the sacred rhythm of Advent, we allow God to do something new within us—reviving our faith, restoring our hope, and renewing our joy.

Setting our focus on spiritual preparation means making room for God amidst all our responsibilities. It is a spiritual discipline learned from elders, pastors, and prayer warriors who understood that Christ's coming deserves careful anticipation and reverent attention. As we turn the pages of this guide, may we allow ourselves to be shaped by this ancient yet ever-relevant call: Prepare the way of the Lord.

# What Is Advent?

Advent, from the Latin word 'adventus,' means "coming" or "arrival." It is the four-week season on the Christian calendar that marks a time of preparation and anticipation for the coming of Jesus Christ. Across generations and denominations, Advent has served as an annual spiritual practice—a sacred pause in the year's rhythm, inviting us to remember God's faithfulness in sending the Messiah and to look ahead with joyful expectation for the return of Christ.

The meaning of Advent extends far beyond decoration and tradition. It is a call to faithfulness, a time when believers remember Christ's first coming in humility—a baby born in Bethlehem, wrapped in swaddling clothes—and anticipate His promised return in glory. The double focus of Advent gives us both a reason to celebrate and a reason to consecrate our lives once more, focusing our attention on the core of the Christian faith.

# Understanding Advent's Twofold Focus

Advent holds out two radiant truths for every believer: we look back, and we look forward. We remember Christ's first coming—the Incarnation, when the Eternal Word humbled Himself to reconcile us to God. In this, we find immeasurable grace and the assurance that God keeps His promises. At the same time, Advent stirs our hearts to await Christ's return, when He will establish perfect justice and reign forever. This twofold focus shapes the prayers we pray, the songs we sing, and the actions we take during this season.

Advent is distinct in that it is not only a commemoration but a declaration of hope. We live between two Advents: the birth in Bethlehem and the second coming in glory. As we navigate life's in-between times—waiting for answers, longing for justice, yearning for renewal—Advent reminds us that God is present and faithful, both historically and in our present journey.





# Why the Church Observes Advent

The early Church recognized the need for seasons that called believers to deeper devotion and reflection. Advent is such a season—an invitation to slow down, to redirect our gaze from the distractions of daily life to the hope found in Jesus Christ. In a world obsessed with hurried schedules, Advent stands as a countercultural practice that insists on the value of stillness and anticipation.

Observing Advent is not merely about tradition or ritual; it is about molding our hearts in expectation and readiness. Advent encourages us to reflect, to examine our motives and affections, and to enter a sacred space where God can speak new things into our hearts. Embedded in the Advent journey is the call to consecration—to holy surrender, purposeful repentance, and committed faith. In doing so, the Church aligns itself with God's heart, longing for the fullness of His presence.



# Advent Reflections



## A Season of Reflection

Advent beckons us to look inward as we anticipate God's outward movement. By reflecting on the year past, we better understand our need for a Savior and welcome His presence more fully.



## Family and Faith

Advent's message is not for individuals alone; it shapes communities and families. Gathering for prayer and worship nurtures faith across generations, strengthening our common hope in Christ.



## Consecration and Worship

The path to spiritual wholeness passes through consecration. The songs, prayers, and silence of Advent worship open the way for God's transforming presence in our lives.





# Advent in the Church Of God In Christ (COGIC)

The Church of God in Christ, as a Holiness–Pentecostal denomination, embraces worship rooted in the Word and directed by the Holy Spirit. Although Advent is not formally required in the COGIC calendar, the season’s spiritual priorities closely align with core Pentecostal beliefs – seeking after God, preparing for the fullness of the Spirit, and advancing in personal holiness. For COGIC communities, Advent is an opportunity to join with the wider Church in emphasizing Jesus Christ: His birth, His redemptive work, and the glorious promise of His return.

Central to COGIC’s understanding of Advent are three pillars: biblical authority, Spirit-filled worship, and fervent preparation through consecration. In this context, Advent is more than candles and carols – it is a lived experience of longing, trust, and hope. As we participate in this season, let us embrace the rich harmony between our heritage and the rhythms of Advent.

# COGIC's Advent Distinctives



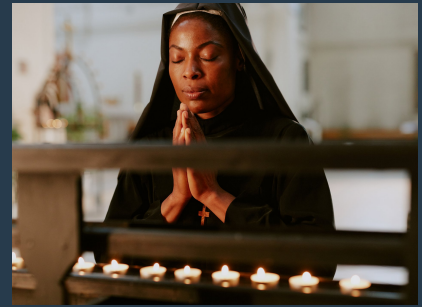
## Biblical Authority

COGIC emphasizes the centrality of Scripture. Advent anchors every tradition and devotion in the authority and story of God's Word.



## Spirit-Led Worship

Spirit-led worship is a hallmark of COGIC. During Advent, believers are called to fresh encounters with God through praise, prayer, and expectancy.



## Preparation and Consecration

In COGIC, preparation is both inward and outward – a call to renew our hearts in faith, seek holiness, and commit to being used by God.

# Preparation Through Consecration

The call to preparation is inseparable from the call to consecration. COGIC, grounded in the holiness tradition, invites believers to a deeper walk with God through sanctification—a setting apart of ourselves for God’s noble purposes. Advent perfectly mirrors this spiritual posture with its focus on prayer, fasting, and careful self-examination.

God honors those who seek Him with undivided hearts. In prayer, we lay our lives before Him, seeking His wisdom, submitting our plans, and confessing our need for grace. Fasting opens space for God to move, reminding us that our true hunger is for righteousness. Self-examination calls us to honest reflection: Are we truly living as those set apart? Are our words and actions yielded to God’s love and truth? As we embrace this process, Advent becomes a time when revival can take root deep within.





# Expectation: Living in the Light of Christ's Return

Pentecostal faith is alive with expectation. As COGIC believers, we live not only in the memory of Christ's first coming, but in the joyful anticipation of His glorious return. Advent emboldens us to cultivate expectancy – to look for signs of God's kingdom breaking into our lives, to pray with faith, and to yearn for the promise of the world restored. In times of struggle, our hope is not in circumstance but in the certainty of God's faithfulness.

Living in the light of Christ's return shapes our daily actions. It gives us strength to persevere, grace to forgive, and hope to share the Good News with others. Advent is an invitation to shift our gaze beyond the temporary, anchoring our lives in the unshakeable hope that Christ will come again in power and glory. Let every hope, every act of service, and every prayer during this season reflect the conviction that we live as a people awaiting a King.

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**"We are called to live as people who are prepared to meet the Lord at any moment, hearts and hands ready, for that day surely draws near."**



# The Four Themes of Advent

The Church designates one theme for each week of Advent. Over four weeks, we trace the deep currents of the gospel: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Each theme is rooted in Scripture and made real in the life of the Church through devotion, reflection, and prayer. These themes are not abstract ideas—they are living realities made tangible in the life of every believer who welcomes Christ into their heart. As we journey through these four weeks, we draw closer to the heart of God, prepared to receive the gift of Christ anew.

Let us enter into the rhythm of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, inviting God to establish these truths in our homes, our churches, and our lives. With each passing week, may our anticipation grow, until Christmas dawns with the full light of God's promise fulfilled.

# Week One: Hope — The Promise of Salvation

The first candle of Advent is lit in hope. Not a fragile wish, but a bold, unyielding confidence in God's promises. Hope in Scripture is expectation placed in God's unfailing word and character. Isaiah proclaimed, "For unto us a child is born... and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God." (Isaiah 9:6) Paul wrote to the Romans, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." (Romans 15:13) For every believer, hope anchors the soul through seasons of waiting and even disappointment.

During this week, take time to reflect: Where have you lost hope? Where is God inviting you to trust again, to believe afresh in His goodness and faithfulness? Hope is strengthened through prayer, sustained through worship, and secured through God's Word. Waiting seasons are never wasted when we wait in hope.

# Week One Devotional Reflections

## Scripture Focus: Isaiah 9:6

"For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given... and  
his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting  
Father, Prince of Peace."  
As we meditate on this  
promise, we see God's  
character on display. Let  
this truth restore hope  
where it has faded.

## Restoring Hope

Take time this week to  
pray: 'Lord, restore my  
hope. Help me to trust  
Your promises and walk  
by faith, not by sight.  
Remind me of what You  
have spoken on long  
nights and in difficult  
seasons. Amen.'

## Reflection Challenge

Where has  
disappointment  
weakened your hope in  
God? Write down your  
burdens and surrender  
them in prayer, trusting  
the God who never fails.



# Week Two: Peace — The Gift of God's Presence

Peace is not the absence of trouble; it is the presence of Christ. In Advent's second week, we contemplate the peace given by Christ, promised by the prophets and made available to every believer by the Holy Spirit. Isaiah writes, "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." (Isaiah 26:3) Jesus assures us: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you... let not your hearts be troubled." (John 14:27)

Advent peace is found in surrendering our worries to God, in trusting His sovereignty amidst chaos, and in allowing His presence to permeate our daily lives. As you light the second candle, ask yourself: What burdens do I need to lay down? How can I rest more deeply in the love and promises of Christ this week?

# Week Two Devotional Reflections

## Scripture Focus: John

14:27

"Peace I leave with you;  
my peace I give to you.  
Not as the world gives do  
I give to you. Let not your  
hearts be troubled,  
neither let them be  
afraid." God's peace is  
not temporary—it is  
everlasting and  
transformative.

## Receiving God's Peace

Ask the Lord this week:  
'Prince of Peace, quiet  
my heart and mind. Help  
me to release anxieties  
and choose Your peace  
now and always. Amen.'

## Reflection Challenge

What worries must you  
surrender to God this  
week? Write them down,  
pray over each, and trust  
God's presence to bring  
stability.



# Week Three: Joy — Rejoicing in God's Salvation

The third week's candle radiates joy—a response not to fleeting circumstances, but to the unchanging truth that God has acted to save us. This is the heart of the angel's proclamation: "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." (Luke 2:10–11) Paul's exhortation echoes across the ages: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice." (Philippians 4:4) Advent joy is rooted in what God has already accomplished in Christ and in hope for all God yet will do.

In every season, we can find reasons to rejoice when our focus is set on the faithfulness, power, and mercy of God. This week, reflect on reasons for joy and let gratitude shape your prayers and actions. In worship, service, and witness, let joy overflow in your interactions, your home, and your church.



# Week Three Devotional Reflections

## Scripture Focus: Luke 2:10–11

"And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.'" Let Christ's arrival continue to stir your gladness and hope.

## Practicing Gratitude

Examine your week for small evidences of God's faithfulness. Where have you seen His hand? Where is joy hidden in ordinary routines? Give thanks for these gifts in prayer.

## Reflection Challenge

What has God already done that should stir joy in you? List three things and let them shape your worship this week.



# Week Four: Love — God With Us

The theme of love draws Advent to its culmination. This love surpasses sentimentality or mere feeling – it is the sacrificial, redeeming love of God breaking into our world through Christ. 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son...' (John 3:16). Paul writes: 'God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.' (Romans 5:8) Advent love is active, tangible, and transformative.

Love calls us from comfort to commitment. As we celebrate Christ's birth, we are also compelled to embody His love in daily life—by serving our communities, forgiving others, and standing in solidarity with those in need. This week, open your heart to the fullness of Christ's love and ask the Holy Spirit to help you reflect that love in practical ways.

# Week Four Devotional Reflections

## Scripture Focus: John 3:16

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." Receive this love anew and let it direct your steps.

## Walking in Love

Ask the Lord: 'Loving Savior, help me walk in Your love today. Show me how I can care for others and witness to Your grace. Amen.'

## Reflection Challenge

How can you show Christ's love to someone this week? Find a practical opportunity and follow through in kindness and faithfulness.

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**"Love is the legacy that lingers long after the candles are extinguished and the songs are sung. It is Christ's love, alive in us, that outlasts every season."**

Pastor Eric Brown

# Christmas: The Fulfillment of Advent

On Christmas Day, the long journey of Advent bursts into joy. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:14) Christ's birth is the fulfillment of ancient longings and the dawn of a new hope for all creation. We celebrate not only His arrival in Bethlehem but the assurance that God is truly with us—Emmanuel—and that every promise finds its 'Yes' in Christ.

Yet Christmas is not only a backward glance; it is also a forward-looking faith. We rejoice in Christ's birth even as we await His promised return, when the fullness of God's kingdom will be revealed. Let every song, every prayer, and every act of love in this holy season be offered in glad expectation of the day when all creation will rejoice before the King.







# Closing Prayer and Sending Forth

Lord Jesus, prepare our hearts as we wait. Strengthen our faith as we remember.  
Renew our joy as we celebrate, until You come again in glory. Amen.

As we leave this season, let us carry Advent's message into our daily lives. Embody hope in your home, sow peace in your relationships, rejoice in every circumstance, and love as Christ has loved you. The world is waiting for the witness of people prepared to meet the Lord—may we be those people, living in the light of Christ, every day.