

# **SEEKING THE KINGDOM**

CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

ADVENT READINGS, REFLECTIONS  
AND ACTIONS ON HOPE, PEACE,  
JOY AND LOVE

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## Introduction

Steve Bell writes "Advent is a robust and demanding season." Reflecting on hope, peace, joy and love is not for the faint of heart. It is for people of courage and grit. When we talk about hope, peace, joy and love during Advent, we can only talk about them if we recognize that they are in the context of waiting for something that is here, yet unfulfilled.

The people of Israel, as we see them in the story in the Hebrew scriptures, waited and waited for God's deliverance in the form of a Messiah...and other help along the way. Check out this bible project video for a nice overview

<https://youtu.be/3dEh25pduQ8>

The Messiah came...and still, in a lot of ways, we are in the exact same position as the people of Israel: waiting. We believe that Jesus came and began the process of the kingdom coming...and we mostly live with the not yet. Historically, churches and Christian families would not decorate for Christmas until Christmas Eve. The idea was that our churches and homes should reflect the somberness of advent--a time of penitence and lament in which we take seriously the brokenness of ourselves, and our world. This isn't common any more, and honestly, living in the northern hemisphere with the daylight shortening so dramatically in November, how would we make it through without twinkle lights! Especially for those of us who struggle with depression, we need plenty of help to get us through.

This Advent we would like to invite you to spend some time immersed in the concepts of hope, peace, joy, and love, in the context of waiting for that which is unfulfilled and which we know deep down will not be fulfilled just because December 25th comes. And yet, we watch for and become glimmers of the kingdom in ourselves, our families, our community and in our world. The kingdom of heaven is here with us and it is coming. We invite you to spend time with these advent themes as if we are on the road to Emmaus; heartsick and hopeless at the loss of Jesus and the cruelty of this world, not even recognizing Jesus when he is walking with us, but praying to have our eyes opened to ways Jesus is here with us now.

Some of you (kids and adults alike) might not connect with this talk about the darkness of the world and our personal brokenness...and maybe you do. Some of us will naturally see beauty and happiness in this world, and some of us are more naturally aware of the suffering in this world. Some of us are dealing with a lot of big feelings, like anxiety, worry, anger, despair. All feelings are welcome this Advent. God wants to know how we're feeling. Being honest with God is one of the most important things for having a relationship with God. Let's walk through the dark together.

## The Logistics

Advent begins on Sunday November 29. Each week, we will be thinking about a new theme.

November 29- December 5 - Hope

December 6 - December 12 - Peace

December 13 - December 18 - Joy

December 20 - December 26 - Love

The guide will help lead you through a rhythm of **prayer, learning, reflection, creating, mediation** and **action** and provides readings, videos, discussion prompts and activities in which to participate. The community is invited to log onto an online scrapbook on 'Padlet' to post pictures and share their Advent creations and thoughts (stay tuned for a link to our scrapbook).

As we prepare to begin on December 29, you may wish to collect items for use throughout the month. Hopefully most of these items will be things you have around your home. Here is a list materials:

- 4 candles
- notebook
- pens or pencils
- crayons, pencil crayons or markers
- a computer and access to the internet
- an amaryllis planting kit (available at most grocery stores)
- star stickers (optional)

### Art supplies

- clear glass jar(s)
- mod podge (or white glue mixed with water)
- small paint brush
- scissors
- Paper such as magazine pictures, tissue paper, coloured card stock, or decorative paper
- 1 battery candle
- decorative wire
- sticks
- small hooks or paper clips
- card stock
- glue stick

For families with small children, you may wish to use a calendar to mark the days you completed the tasks with a sticker or drawing.