

The season of Advent is upon us, starting this Sunday, November 28th. This is a time of preparation for the birth of Jesus, who is the light of the world!



To help you celebrate this special season, since we are still not able to gather in person due to the coronavirus, we have included lots of different Advent calendars and activities, to hopefully help you and your families soak in the season of love!

Included is a copy of:

- ~The Maine Diocese advent calendar with daily Bible readings,
- ~ A musical Advent calendar link also prepared by the Maine Diocese:
[Diocese of Maine Hymn Advent Calendar \(tuerchen.com\)](http://Diocese of Maine Hymn Advent Calendar (tuerchen.com))
- ~ A few fun activities from our national church
- ~ A calendar that I created with some weekly ideas and crafts for your family

The meaning of Advent, the Advent wreath and the symbolism of the colored candles we use.

Advent is four weeks long and each week represents one of the four themes of the season; **Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.**

In churches and in some families' households, an advent wreath and the traditional candles that symbolize the Christmas season are displayed.

The wreath It is usually made up of various evergreens and signifies continuous life. The circle shape of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the everlasting life we find in Christ.

Even the individual evergreens that make up the wreath have their own meanings that can be adapted to our faith. The laurel signifies victory over persecution and suffering. The pine, holly, and yew signify immortality and the cedar signifies strength and healing. The pine cones that decorate the wreath symbolize life and resurrection. The wreath as a whole is meant to remind us of both the immortality of our souls and God's promise of everlasting life to us through Christ.

The candles and their colors. There are four candles on the outside of the wreath; three purple candles and one rose colored candle. The fifth candle in the middle is white and represents Jesus as the light of the world. Each week in Advent we light a new candle, adding one to the previous week, culminating with Christmas when all 5 are lit.

The candles and their symbolism

The first week's candle represents the **hope** we have in Jesus.

The second week's candle represents the **peace** we find in Jesus.

The third week's candle is the **joy** we find in Christ

The fourth is the **love** given to us from Jesus.

The fifth candle located at the center of the wreath for the birth of Christ, who is the light of the world and represents purity.



Family Advent Calendar by weeks of Advent.

This family Advent calendar is organized by the 4 themes of the weeks leading up to Christmas. It has some possible activities and crafts to do throughout the week based on those themes, that may fit into your family schedule. Maybe you can choose a few or take turns with each family member picking one.

As we prepare for the celebration of Jesus's birth we look forward with a hopeful heart.

HOPE

The First week of Advent- November 28th-December 4th

- ✎ Make some Christmas cards to send to family and friends- Use cookie cutters for shapes for the kids to color in or to write a message.
- ✎ Share blessings of food to those in need- Look for local neighbors in need and shop for items to deliver on December 11 & 12th. Here is one in Yarmouth:



- ✎ Make and wrap a present for Jesus.
 1. Everyone picks a family member's name out of a hat. That person will be the special family member you do something kind for.
 2. It could be to play a game with your little sister, if you pick her name or help in the kitchen for parents.
 3. Then write your "kindness gift" on a piece of paper and place it inside the present for Jesus to open on Christmas morning.
 4. Once everyone has placed their kind act, wrap the gift and place it under the tree.

Hope Craft:

Make an advent wreath.

Option 1:

- ✎ Simple: collect 4 empty toilet paper rolls, cover 3 with purple construction paper or color with crayons or markers and 1 with pink construction or markers. Then add construction paper flame. Place them on a paper plate, colored green to represent the wreath greens.
- ✎ [Cardboard Roll Advent Wreath Craft - Happy Hooligans](#)
- ✎ A little more prep: Collect some greens and form a circle. Add in either 3 purple, 1 pink and 1 white candles, if you have an advent set.

PEACE

The second week of Advent- December 5th- December 11th

- ✎ Take a moment to go outside and look at the stars. Take in the tranquility of the quiet night and the awe of the expansive universe.
- ✎ Make some warm cocoa, dim the lights, sit by a fire if you have one, or put on a fireplace video and listen to Christmas music. (Maybe even make this a “time in” to be totally present with each other with no cell phones for 15-30 minutes.)
- ✎ Help your kids settle to bed with peaceful thoughts- Read Christmas themed books at bedtime or those that have the message of love. Maybe even add in an extra book!
- ✎ Follow along with a family yoga meditation or calming, YouTube video

Peace Craft:

[Peace Dove Handprint Craft - That Kids' Craft Site \(thatkidscraftsite.com\)](http://thatkidscraftsite.com)

JOY

The third week of Advent- December 12th- December 18th

- ✎ Choose a Christmas song and sing along with a YouTube video
- ✎ Have a Christmas dance party- be silly with the kids 😊
- ✎ Share joy with someone else- give a friend a hug
- ✎ Watch a Christmas movie with your family: Like Charlie Brown or the Grinch and share the real meaning of Christmas and the love we have in our hearts.
- ✎ Make some warm hot chocolate and give everyone their own thermos, while you take a drive looking for lights.

Joy craft/activity:

Make homemade playdough together

[The Easiest Homemade Playdough Recipe {Lasts for Months!} \(livingwellmom.com\)](http://livingwellmom.com)

LOVE

The fourth week of Advent- December 19th

- ✎ FaceTime grandparents, friends or family- possibly think of 1 thing you really love about them to share or tell them or share a wish for them you have this Christmas season.
- ✎ Make a cake or put a Birthday candle in a dessert to celebrate Christmas and Jesus's birth.
- ✎ Open your “kindness” gift to Jesus.
- ✎ Support and/or donate to those in need. One organization in Portland is Preble Street. Their mission is to empower people experiencing problems with homelessness, housing, hunger and poverty and to advocate for solutions to these problems. They help all ages in need, but have teen urgent services for runaways and also has anti-trafficking services. This year they have helped over 150 homeless youth find safety, services and housing and helped over 100 survivors of human trafficking reclaim their lives

[Preble Street - Social work services, supported housing, shelter, food pantry](http://preblestreet.org)

MERRY CHRISTMAS! I hope that this holiday season will bring to you and to those you love, God's peaceful presence, joy and feelings of love to last into the New Year!

With joy,
Michelle