

Advent Answers

InfoServ (<http://infoserv.umc.org>), the information service of United Methodist Communications, is available to answer questions about the United Methodist Church. Below are three Frequently Asked Questions about Advent:

Question: What do the candles in our Advent wreath mean? Why is there one rose candle and one white candle?

Answer: The Advent wreath, four candles on a wreath of ever-green, is shaped in a perfect circle to symbolize the eternity of God. In some churches, four purple candles, one for each week in Advent, are used with one larger white candle in the middle as the Christ candle. Other churches prefer three purple or blue candles with one candle being rose or pink, to represent joy. The lighting of the first candle symbolizes expectation, the second symbolizes hope, the third joy and the fourth purity. The Christ candle is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day reminding Christians that Jesus is the light of the world.

Question: What are Chrismons?

Answer: Ornaments made from Christian symbols (or Chrismons, a contraction for 'Christ monograms') were first developed by Frances Spencer and the women of the Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Va. Many churches display a Chrismon tree during the Advent and Christmas season decorated with handmade ornaments.

Question: What is the "Hanging of the Greens?"

Answer: Many churches hold a service of preparation for Christ's coming, which includes hanging greenery traditionally associated with everlasting life. Greens such as cedar for royalty, fir and pine boughs for everlasting life, holly symbolizing Jesus' death and ivy representing the resurrection are used.



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Joy to the World



"Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people."

—Luke 2:10

December 2008 Prayers

Joy to the World • December 2008 Prayers

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 God, prepare my heart to receive the truth and grace of Christ my king this Advent season. Psalm 98:4	2 God, send gentle, holy Jesus to free us, reshape us and bring joy to the world. Matthew 24:36	3 God, show me moments to stop rushing and to reflect quietly on the meaning of Advent and Christmas. Ecclesiastes 5:2	4 God, teach me to prioritize my time so that I can read, study and memorize your word through scripture. 2 Corinthians 3:3	5 God, help me refrain from getting swept away in the secular side of this season. Luke 10:41-42	6 God, make me a messenger of your good news and great joy. Psalm 107:1-2
7 God, fill our hearts with faith, peace, hope and love. Psalm 72:19	8 God, take away our sadness and sorrow and surround us with joy. Psalm 30:11	9 God, comfort me on those days that I'm just not feeling joyful and help me be a comfort to others. Psalm 118:24	10 God, make your presence felt by my family and my church as we carry out our Advent and Christmas traditions. Mark 1:2-3	11 God, thank you for bringing joy to the world through the gift of Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 3:9	12 God, as I anticipate the celebrations ahead, open my heart to the pure excitement and joy of Christmas. Philippians 4:4	13 God, remind me that my top priority is to joyfully worship and serve you. 1 Peter 1:8
14 God, may the Advent candles at our churches remind us of your promise that Christ will come. Matthew 24:44	15 God, grant peace and comfort to those for whom Christmas brings sad memories. Matthew 1:23	16 God, may Christ our Savior bring light into the darkness of this world as we wait for Christmas day. Luke 2:10	17 God, do not let the busyness of this season distract me from the true meaning of Christmas. James 5:7	18 God, light our way so that we can find you no matter where we are or what obstacles we face. Psalm 72:5	19 God, may I always be joyful, pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances. Psalm 100:1	20 God, enable us to confess and turn away from our sins in an attitude of sincere repentance. Ephesians 5:8
21 God, we pray that long-expected Jesus Christ will come show us the way to salvation. Romans 4:20	22 God, when I struggle or feel stressed, may the joy of the Lord be my strength. Nehemiah 8:10	23 God, I pray that I will fully experience and remember this Christmas season. Habakkuk 3:18	24 God, thank you for sending a child to save us. Isaiah 7:14	25 God, help me find the words today to express my overwhelming joy. John 16:21	26 God, guide my path so that I might have a more abundant life through you. John 10:10	27 God, help me to not only know Jesus Christ but to be like Jesus and live by Jesus' example. Hebrews 11:6
28 God, we pray that the whole entire world will experience the hope that comes from knowing the Christmas story. 1 Peter 3:15	29 God, thank you for the offer of salvation no matter what our circumstances. Psalm 72:2	30 God, strengthen my desire to develop a dynamic, powerful and personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Matthew 5:14,16	31 God, we praise you for our Savior Jesus Christ, who brings the gift of joy, peace, good news and salvation to all who believe. Matthew 2:11			