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AdventThe first Sunday of Advent will be Sunday, December 1st 2024. On the first Sunday of Advent, Christians begin preparing through times of prayer and sometimes fasting, Church service and worship at home may include lighting the first Advent candle. This week represents the first day of a new church or liturgical calendar. In the first week of Advent, the purple candle of hope is lit. This is also known as the prophecy candle because of the hope we have in God. The prophet Isaiah prophesied the birth of Christ for us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on Davids throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. (Isaiah 9:6-7 NIV)Second Sunday and Week of AdventThe second Sunday of Advent will be December 8, 2024. On the second Sunday of Advent, the second purple candle is lit. This candle represents peace and is known as the Bethlehem Candle. Jesus is referred to as the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6-7 NIV)Jesus called for peace. His profound words are stated in Scripture. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Today, and every day, we are called to greet each other in peace.Third Sunday and Week of AdventThe third Sunday of Advent will be December 15, 2024. The third week of Advent is when the pink candle representing joy is lit. This candle is called the Shepherds Candle. As the candle is lit and Scripture is read, we are reminded of the rejoicing of the shepherds when the angels shared that Jesus came for everyone, not just the rich and powerful. Jesus came for the weak and humble, too.And there were shepherds living out in the fields near, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But, the angel said to them, Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. (Luke 2:8-12 NIV)Fourth Sunday and Week of AdventThe fourth Sunday of Advent will be December 22, 2024. During the fourth week of Advent, two candles may be lit. The purple candle, called the Angels Candle, represents love. Scripture shares many words about love. From the love God has for His creations, to the love between Joseph and Mary, to the love between Mary and Jesus, and many more examples, love is prevalent in the Bible.Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. (1 John 4:7 NIV)The white candle is called the Christ candle. The lighting of this candle, which usually sits in the center of the wreath, symbolizes the purity of Christ. Some churches light the Christ candle on Christmas day, while others choose to light it on Christmas Eve.What is the Advent Wreath and Candles?During the season of Advent, some churches place special colored candles displayed on a wreath. This Advent wreath is placed in a designated spot in the church. Each week, congregants may read meaningful readings of Scripture and devotions before or while the candles are lit. Often, children are included in the readings while adults light the candle for the week. Each candle offers a unique meaning.Although the color of the candles may vary, a common use is that the first, second, and fourth candles are purple, while the third candle is pink. A fifth candle is placed in the middle of the Advent wreath and is lit on Christmas day. The fifth candle is white and represents Christ, who brought light into the world.Various churches have different ways of celebrating Advent. The message is united as all who believe are preparing for the arrival of Jesus and the second coming of the Savior.The Importance of Remembering the Reason for the Advent WreathChurches may choose different colors or shades of candles used in the Advent wreath. Also, some churches may refer to the meaning of the lighting in different ways. There may be an interchange between the candle-lighting traditions. Whatever the color of candle, the importance of Advent is knowing Gods love for His creations and that reflection and remembrance can be found in every moment. As we experience the Advent season, hope and peace can be found in each lighting of the candles, singing special hymns, and sharing Scripture.What Are Some Great Hymns for Advent?Advent music and hymns are shared during worship. Songs such as O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, Joy to the World, and O Come All Ye Faithful may be sung. Each hymn shares the anticipation and excitement Christians experience at the birth of Jesus and His second coming.A Prayer for Each Week of AdventFather, in the first week of Advent, help us to remember the hope found in You. Guide us to help others know You. Amen.Heavenly Father in this second week of Advent, may we remember the peace found in Jesus Christ. Help us to be humble and filled with Your peace. Amen.Dear God, in this third week of Advent, we thank You for the joy found in knowing You. Thank You for the good news the shepherds heard and the reminder that You came for everyone, rich and poor. Amen.God, in this fourth week of Advent, we give thanks for Your love and mercy. Help us to love one another as You have loved us. Thank You. Amen.Father, as we light the Christ candle, may we come to You with humility and repentance. Your light is needed on this earth. Thank You for the love You give. Amen.As we prepare for Advent, may we draw closer to the Father and reflect on His love and glory.In His Name,Melissa HendersonPhoto Credit: Getty Images/Katarina GondovaAward-winning author Melissa Henderson writes inspirational messages sometimes laced with a bit of humor. With stories in books, magazines, devotionals, and more, Melissa hopes to encourage readers.Melissa is the author of Licky the Lizard and Grumpy the Gator. Her passions are helping in the community and church. Melissa is an Elder, Deacon, and Stephen Minister.Follow Melissa on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and at article is part of our larger Christmas and Advent resource library centered around the events leading up to the birth of Jesus Christ. We hope these articles help you understand the meaning and story behind important Christian holidays and dates and encourage you as you take time to reflect on all that God has done for us through His Son, Jesus Christ!What Is Advent: Meaning, History, and TraditionsAdvent Prayers for Friends, Family, and MoreWhat Is an Advent Wreath and How to Use One?The History of Santa Claus: Origin of St. NicholasChristmas Bible Verses & Scripture StoryWhat is Christmas? True Meaning and Holiday HistoryChristmas Eve History and TraditionsWhy Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh?When Was Jesus Born? Why December 25thWhere Was Jesus Born? The Third Sunday in Advent (Advent III) shifts from a tone of expectation of Christs coming to one of rejoicing at the arrival of Gods kingdom with the coming of Jesus.The theme for the third Sunday of Advent is Joy. This year, the third Sunday of Advent is on December 15th, 2024.Third Sunday of Advent Traditions and Spiritual SymbolsThe Jesse TreeDuring the third week of Advent, the Jesse Tree recounts the story of how Gods people often failed, revealing their deep need for a Savior. The branches on the tree this week are crooked and deathly-looking, with few leaves on them. 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