

Advent Kit Dates

CHRISTMAS AT HERITAGE

Sunday November 15th at
Rock Island worship services

Tuesday November 17th at
Bettendorf Campus 4pm-6pm

Thursday November 19th at
BridgePointe 11am-1pm

Sunday November 22nd at
Rock Island worship services

Week of November 23rd
Pick up in the BridgePointe lobby



Light of the
WORLD

Advent at Heritage



2020

Introduction to Advent

CHRISTMAS AT HERITAGE

This Advent (the season of anticipation leading to Christmas), we invite you to focus on the Light of the World. You'll be encouraged to wonder more deeply about the birth of Christ, to imagine in greater detail the Christmas story, and to make connections to your own context this season. We hope our weekly Advent devotional will help you discover more about the Light of the World and how God invites us to find hope, joy, peace, and love in every season.

These weekly devotions are written for adults, children, and families. You may interact with them individually, as a family, or in your circles of community. Don't feel the need to complete all the activities to have a meaningful experience. Each week includes the elements below. We invite you to look at each week and then determine what works best for you.

Each kit includes a candle, which we encourage you to use as you join for worship virtually or as your Christ candle in your advent wreath. Celebrate your experiences through social media using the hashtag #christmasat heritage.

Advent Devotional Elements:

- **Weekly Advent Candle Lighting:** As we interact with the Advent wreath, we provide some helpful tools to enrich your experience as you light your candles each week.
- **Activity:** Each activity offers a way to prepare you for Advent and Christmas while connecting with the weekly scripture reading.
- **Scripture Passage:** Look up each scripture and read it aloud. Use your own Bible or the Bible App/Bible.com.
- **Scripture Reflection:** We offer a brief reflection for each of the scripture texts.
- **Personal & Family Interaction:** As you interact with these questions, consider journaling your response.

SONGS OF ADVENT

We invite you to follow the Heritage Advent Playlist on Spotify for joyful songs to celebrate the season. Many of these songs we will be singing together across our multiple worship expressions, so make sure to listen throughout the week and worship with us.

To use a QR Code, open your phone's camera app and hold it over the square to open the playlist.

You can also find the playlist at:
<https://l.ead.me/bbnjvG>



Introduction to Advent

CHRISTMAS AT HERITAGE

Weekly Service Engagement Opportunities

- In-Person Gatherings @ Rock Island Campus - Sundays 9am & 11am
 - <https://heritageqc.churchcenter.com/registrations>
- Online Live Stream - Saturdays 5pm & Sundays 9am
 - <https://heritageqc.online.church>
- On Demand Streaming after 12:30pm each Sunday for that week's service
 - <https://www.heritageqc.com/watch>
- Local TV - Sundays 10am on 8.3 MyTV and 11am on 8.1 WQAD

Join us for Christmas Eve Services

We can't wait to be together to celebrate Christmas Eve. There are a variety of ways you can connect with your Heritage Church Family. In order to continue to provide safe environments with the best experience for all, we will be utilizing a ticket system for our in-person Christmas Eve Services to enable you to select the service and seat of your choice. Go to www.heritageqc.com to select your service time and get your free ticket.

Service Times

1:00pm Rock Island Campus
3:00pm Bettendorf Campus
4:30pm Bettendorf Campus
6:00pm Rock Island Campus
6:30pm 8.3 MyTV (Mediacom 3 or 716)

Introduction to Advent

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PHASES:

While this Advent Kit is written for all ages, following are some helpful tips for kids from birth through 12th grade as they interact with these activities and resources. The Parent Focus will help you understand your role as a parent in each phase. Then, the Student Goal will help you define the desired outcome for each phase. Lastly, the Advent Journey and Parent Tips should give a grasp of how this advent kit can be utilized.

High School Phase (9th - 12th Grade):

- **Parent Focus:** Fuel their passion by mobilizing their potential.
- **Student Goal:** Keep pursuing authentic faith and discover a personal mission.
- **Advent Journey:** Use this resource to help them **put their faith into action**.
- **Parent Tips:** Encourage devotional habits, be transparent, and welcome questions. Encourage them with scriptural insights on their present circumstances. Talk about how you have seen God at work in their life and collaborate on a plan to keep them connected to a local faith community.

Middle School Phase (6th-8th Grade):

- **Parent Focus:** Provoke discovery by affirming their personal journey.
- **Student Goal:** Own their own faith and value a faith community.
- **Advent Journey:** Use this resource to help them **discover who God is to them**.
- **Parent Tips:** Don't be shocked by hard questions. Respond with things like, "I'm glad you asked me or I'm not sure, but we can find out together." Share some of your doubts or struggles and how you handle those. Pray for them and ask them questions that help them personalize their faith.

Elementary Phase (K-5th Grade):

- **Parent Focus:** Provoke discovery by engaging their interests.
- **Child Goal:** Trust God's character and experience God's family.
- **Advent Journey:** Use this resource by **choosing the activities that will engage them**.
- **Parent Tips:** Purchase a kid's bible (NIRV for readers is great!). These will be available for a suggested \$5 donation at our Advent Kit pickup locations. Read the weekly scriptures together and pray with them. Share personal faith stories with them.

Toddler Phase (Zero to 4 Yrs):

- **Parent Focus:** Incite wonder by embracing their physical needs.
- **Child Goal:** Know God's love and meet God's family.
- **Advent Journey:** Use this resource to help them **know God's love for them**.
- **Parent Tips:** Zero to One: Pray aloud during the advent moments with them. One & Two: Read the stories together using a preschool bible. Repeat basic truths like, "God made me" and "God loves me." Three & Four: Have them repeat some simple bible verses. Encourage them to pray during the advent candle lighting.

Week 1: Hope

NOVEMBER 29

- **Complete your Advent Wreath Activity 1st** (see "Weeks 1-5 Activity: Advent Wreath Activity")
- **Week 1 Advent Candle Lighting:**
 - **READ:** Hope. People hope for many things – we hope for the desires of our hearts, for higher positions in life, and for the best for the future. Many of these hopes are practical – to bring about more opportunities and better circumstances. Yet Christians share a deeper hope – one that touches the deepest longings of the human soul.
 - **READ:** Today marks the first week of Advent – a season recognized by the Church around the world as a time to prepare our hearts and lives to welcome the coming of Jesus Christ at Christmas. We track this season by engaging in several rhythms, one of them being to light candles – one for each week leading up to Christmas day. Today we light the FIRST candle, traditionally called the CANDLE of HOPE.
 - **LIGHT 1ST CANDLE**
 - **READ:** With this candle, we symbolize the HOPE we have through Christ – hope for redemption, hope for light in the darkness of this world, hope for heaven to touch earth and meet us in the midst of our mess and brokenness.
 - **PRAY:** “Lord Jesus, thank you for the hope you brought to us at Christmas. Shine your hope in us, in our homes, in our communities, and around the world. When all seems hopeless, Holy Spirit, teach us to Hope in Christ! Amen.”
- **Activity: Advent Wreath** (see "Weeks 1-5 Activity: Advent Wreath Activity")

Week 1: Hope

NOVEMBER 29

- **Scripture Passage:** Luke 1:26-45

- **Scripture Reflection:**
 - Mary and Elizabeth were first time moms! They had questions about having a baby. Would they be safe? Would they know how to be mothers? Their lives were changing. Have you ever had a change that made you afraid or nervous?
 - We are thinking about Mary and Elizabeth's story because they were brave and hopeful, even though they did not know what would happen. An angel visited Mary to give her a message about her baby. Mary's baby would change the world. God also chose Elizabeth's baby for important things (see Luke 1:5-25). Still, God's plans for baby Jesus and baby John felt so mysterious. How do you think Mary and Elizabeth felt about this big announcement? Nervous? Afraid? Excited?
 - While they may have been afraid, both families held hope God would be faithful through their journey. We know Mary and Elizabeth held hope, because the story tells us some amazing things that happened when they saw each other. When Elizabeth heard Mary's voice, baby John leaped inside of Elizabeth's womb! Then Elizabeth was filled with Holy Spirit and began to give a blessing to Mary. Of course, it is possible to feel afraid and hope at the same time.

- **Personal & Family Interaction:**
 - Share about a time you have felt scared. Tell the story to one another or journal about it. What did you hope for? How did hope help you be brave?
 - What do you think Mary's hope looked like as she navigated her new situation?
 - How can we all hold hope for someone when they feel discouraged or nervous?

Week 2: Peace

DECEMBER 6

- **Week 2 Advent Candle Lighting:**
 - **READ:** Peace. This desired yet elusive ideal is not found in politics, the news, social media, addictions, or shallow relationships. Peace is only found through Jesus Christ. When we are at peace with God, then God's peace may be in us.
 - **READ:** Today marks the second week of Advent and we light the CANDLE of PEACE.
 - **LIGHT 2 CANDLES**
 - **READ:** Old Testament prophecies in the Bible were written for their immediate context, but some of these prophecies were also a foreshadow to Jesus. At Christmas, we read these prophecies to remind us of who Jesus is and why Jesus came to us at Christmas.
 - **READ:** Isaiah 9:6 (NIV) is a popular scripture used in Advent: *"For unto 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."* Jesus came as a child born to us, with the Eternal Government of heaven on his shoulders as his responsibility. Jesus is in charge; where Jesus rules, there is PEACE.
 - **PRAY:** "God, thank you for the promise of peace. Thank you for moments where we feel it deep in our hearts. Teach us to make peace with our words, with our hands, for our own place and all places. Amen."

- **Activity: Mary's Song**
 - **Materials:** Scissors, glue, tape, staples, etc. Art supplies (markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc.)
 - **Instructions:**
 - Songs, hymns, and carols bring us peace when we sing together or apart. We hear the words and melody, and our heart rate slows down, we breathe deeply, and we feel connected to others. Music can link us together, check out the Songs of Advent playlist and listen to "Breath of Heaven."
 - Take some time to color the lyrics from Mary's song on the "Week 2 Activity Page Mary's Song" in this bag. Talk about what they mean and why they are special. Then cut them into strips. Link the strips together to form a chain by taping or stapling the ends together, linking them one by one.
 - To lengthen your chain, make more strips by writing out on your own paper lyrics of your favorite songs, hymns, and carols that bring you peace. Such as, "Peace on earth and mercy mild." "All is calm, all is bright." "Peace on earth, goodwill to all." "Faithful friends who are dear to us, gather near to us."
 - You can use your paper chain as a decoration on your tree, on your Advent wreath (away from the candles!), or hung over a doorway. Remind each other that when we sing, we bring peace to ourselves and our world.

Week 2: Peace

DECEMBER 6

- **Scripture Passage: Luke 1:46-55**

- **Scripture Reflection:**

- When you are afraid, what do you do to know God is with you? One important way the people feel peace when they are afraid is to sing songs about God's peace – the restoring peace that brings the world to flourishing.
- As this passage begins, Mary has just finished talking with an angel who shared big, amazing news with her. She may have felt afraid or nervous or unsure or excited. Maybe more than one of these big feelings were mixed up inside of her. What happens inside of you when you are feeling a lot of big feelings at the same time?
- Suddenly, Mary began to sing about God's amazing love, power, and peace: *"My soul glorifies our God! My spirit rejoices in God, my Savior. God's mercy is forever...God fills the hungry...God reminds all those God loves of God's promises."*
- As Mary sang, her song reminded her of the peace God brings. Maybe Mary's song brought peace to Elizabeth as she listened. God's peace isn't just the calm of a still river or the silence of a quiet room. God's peace makes sure everyone has enough and knows they belong.
- As we read Mary's song, we are reminded it is important to lift our voices and sing. When we sing with our church, our families, our friends, or alone in our rooms, our songs tell the story of the peace God brings to the world. As our songs fill our hearts and float out into the air around us, they can also bring a sense of peace to our lives. When you sing, whether by yourself in your room or with your whole family, remember God is always bringing peace to our lives, our families, and the whole world.

- **Personal & Family Interaction:**

- What is your favorite Christmas song as you prepare for celebrating Jesus' birth? Take turns sharing and, if you have time, sing each song together.
- Is there a part of your favorite song that reminds you of the peace God brings?
- Can you think of a time you felt several big emotions at once? How did you help bring peace to your body and spirit when you had those overwhelming feelings?

Week 3: Joy

DECEMBER 13

- **Week 3 Advent Candle Lighting:**

- **READ:** Joy! Many events in life muster joy within us. Joy is deep confidence and delight in God for who He is, regardless of our circumstances. Joy is a gift from the Lord.
- **READ:** Today marks the third week of Advent – we join followers of Jesus all over the world in preparing our hearts and lives to welcome the coming of Christ Jesus at Christmas. Today we light the THIRD candle, traditionally called the CANDLE of JOY.
- **LIGHT 3 CANDLES**
- **READ:** While you might currently have Christmas music dancing through your head, know this - music that calls us to rejoice is, on a deeper level, also calling us to worship. Worship and Joy go hand-in-hand. Joy wells up in our hearts to the point of song, laughter, and dance. And when this joy and delight are directed at God, that is worship.
- **READ:** At Christmas, we are challenged to be filled with Joy and worship Christ our King. If worship and rejoicing are difficult for you in this moment, ask God to help you choose joy. In Isaiah 61:3 (NIV), we read Holy Spirit anoints and empowers us in order to bestow upon us the *“oil of joy instead of mourning and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.”* God is ready and able to teach you how to worship in joy and praise. Just ask.
- **PRAY:** “Father, Son, and Spirit, thank you for the ways you accept and celebrate all of who we are. Thank you for the many, many ways you live among us. Teach us to recognize you and to share our joy. Amen.”

- **Activities: Christmas Light Viewing & Color Sheet**

- **Christmas Light Viewing:** Experience the joy of the advent season through a night of looking at Christmas lights with friends or family! Grab some hot chocolate (included in bag) and check out some of the joy and beauty of Christmas through Christmas light displays! One of our favorites is Henry's Christmas Yard at 1504 26th Ave. Moline, IL 61265. Share your experience and light displays that you enjoyed through social media by tagging your pictures with #christmasaheritage.
 - Discussion Questions for the Car Ride:
 - How does what we're seeing express the joy of Christmas?
 - How do the Christmas lights we're seeing tonight connect to the birth of Jesus the Light of the World?
 - If we made a Christmas Light Show that explained the story of Jesus' birth, what would it look like?
- **Color Sheet:** Color the sheet as you reflect on what brings you Joy during this season.

Week 3: Joy

DECEMBER 13

- **Scripture Passage: Luke 2:1-14**

- **Scripture Reflection:**

- In our scripture, the shepherds were in the fields taking care of the sheep. Maybe their job had become routine. Perhaps they were used to living in the fields, and they had forgotten to notice the green grass or look up at the glittering stars. Suddenly, the angels came to the shepherds to share, “the good news of great joy for all the people.” They said, “Jesus has been born. It is a blessing for you. It is a blessing for everyone!”
- Can you imagine the joy that filled that moment? Joy is always contagious. The angels’ joy spread to the shepherds and they were bursting to talk with one another. Those shepherds decided to journey to Bethlehem and search for baby Jesus; just like them, you probably experience amazing joy at times that you want to share with others, too.
- Even better, we don’t have to wait for special days to experience joy. Ordinary joy happens in the quieter moments of life. Noticing our ordinary joy and sharing it with our friends and family is the way we practice joy. As we practice joy, it grows in our own hearts. As we share our joy with others, it grows in their hearts.

- **Personal & Family Interaction:**

- Can you imagine how the shepherds felt when the angels appeared with their message of joy? What do you think they looked like? How do you think they sounded? If you are doing this with children, have them take turns acting it out.
- Have you ever been so stuck in the routine of life that you forgot to look for joy? How do you feel on days when you do not notice the joy around you? What about on the days you do? Share or journal your response.
- Share one way you experienced ordinary joy today. Then, make a plan to practice joy this week by sharing one ordinary joy every day.

Week 4: Love

DECEMBER 20

- **Week 4 Advent Candle Lighting:**
 - **READ:** What is love according to the Bible? In one word: Incarnation. When Jesus was born of a virgin, God took on human flesh for the purpose of dying the final death, to rescue humanity and all of the created order from the grasp of sin, death, and hell. This is love in its truest, highest, and purest form: God loves the people he created so much that he sent his Son, Jesus, to die so that we could live.
 - **READ:** Today marks the fourth week of Advent and today we light the FOURTH candle, traditionally called the CANDLE of LOVE.
 - **LIGHT 4 CANDLES**
 - **READ:** With this candle, we symbolize Christ's perfect LOVE. *"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him."* - John 3:16-17 NLT.
 - **READ:** Christ's mission of rescue and redemption is fulfilled through his birth at Christmas. In the Incarnation of Jesus – being fully human and fully Divine as God-in-the-flesh, the HOPE of Christ symbolized by the first candle moves to the LOVE of Christ symbolized by the candle we light today. Our hope is no longer an abstract concept, but is actualized and solidified through Christ. God's love becomes tangible because of Jesus. Pause and rest in his love today.
 - **PRAY:** "Father, Son, and Spirit, thank you for all of the ways we are loved. Thank you for all of the ways we can love. Teach us to listen closely to each other, and to our world, for all of the ways and places love is shared. Amen."

- **Activity: Christmas Cookies & Treasure Love**
 - **Christmas Cookies:**
 - Spend some time making memories and sharing the hope of Christmas through baking and decorating Christmas cookies with your family or circle. Consider sharing these cookies with a friend or neighbor as an act of love.
 - **Treasure Love** (see "Week 4 Activity & Coloring Page: Treasure Love Activity")

Week 4: Love

DECEMBER 20

- **Scripture Passage: Luke 2:15-20**

- **Scripture Reflection:**

- Have you ever had an event planned for a long time, only for it not to happen the way you expected? It's easy to be disappointed when things don't go as planned. You can get lost in your expectations, get frustrated, and even close your heart to what is happening, instead of noticing the wonderful experiences around you.
- In the story, Jesus was born with animals, hay, and strangers around him. Then a group of shepherds walked in to meet Jesus and Mary. This is probably not how Mary imagined Jesus being born. However, she chose to open her heart and invite them in. And because she chose to be open, the shepherds left to share this good news with everyone.
- What do you do when things don't go as planned, when you're nervous or afraid, and the ground feels like it is shaking beneath your feet? Do you lock your heart up tight? At times, people lock their hearts, because they think it will protect them. The problem with locking your heart is that it doesn't actually protect you; it keeps out all the love you need. When Mary opened her heart to the unexpected, she chose love. Choosing love transformed both her heart and the world. That's what happens when you open your heart: you can't help but share a message of love.

- **Personal & Family Interaction:**

- What do you think it was like for Mary after Jesus was born? What do you think helped Mary choose love in her story?
- Can you think of a time when things didn't go as expected and you felt disappointed? Did you choose love? If not, imagine what might have changed if you had chosen love? What is one way you can choose love this week?
- Consider praying for those receiving your gift of cookies this week.

Christmas Eve & Day: Christ

DECEMBER 24 & 25

- **Christmas Eve Advent Candle Lighting:**

- **READ:** Today is the day! Our season of Advent has come to its full culmination as tonight and tomorrow morning we celebrate the birth of Christ at Christmas. These past four weeks we have been preparing our hearts and our homes to celebrate the coming of Christ. We've been tracking this Advent season by lighting candles – one for each week leading up to Christmas day. Today we light the FOUR CANDLES, and also the fifth and final candle – the WHITE CANDLE, traditionally called the CANDLE of LIGHT or the CHRIST CANDLE. One option is to use the Light of the World Candle included in your kit.
- **LIGHT 4 CANDLES AND THE WHITE CANDLE**
- **READ:** These candles symbolize the HOPE, PEACE, JOY, LOVE, and LIGHT Christ brings to the world through his birth, life, death, and resurrection. Christ came to defeat sin, death, and hell so we might have abundant life (see John 10:10).
- **READ:** Christ, the Light of the World, came to shine light in the dark areas of our lives and offer us new life through Him. Jesus offers us a fresh start and the life change we've been longing for inside. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"* - 2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV.
- **READ:** Do you long for new life this Christmas? We are all sinful people in need of grace we don't deserve. Jesus offers grace and all we must do is confess our sin and need for God, then receive God's forgiveness, grace, and empowerment to live differently - to live in Christ's hope, love, joy, peace, and light.
- **PRAY:** Father God, thank you for the gift of Jesus. We confess our selfishness, sin, and need for you. We receive your forgiveness and ask you to empower us by your Holy Spirit to live Godly lives. Teach us to follow you Jesus, not only at Christmas, but everyday. May your light shine in our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen!

- **Activities: Nativity & Family Movie**

- **Nativity:** Find an item around your house that represents you. Put that item at the foot of the manger in your nativity scene. Read this week's scripture and remember that Jesus was born for everyone, including you.
- **Family Movie:**
 - *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*
 - Why was the Grinch so upset?
 - What happened when the Grinch really understood the meaning of Christmas?
 - *The Nativity Story*
 - How does this movie help us to remember the real meaning of Christmas?
 - What can you do to help yourself stay focused on the real meaning of Christmas?
 - *The Star*
 - What did you like best about the movie?
 - How do you think Mary and Joseph were feeling?

Christmas Eve & Day: Christ

DECEMBER 24 & 25

- **Scripture Passage:** Luke 2:1-7, 2:20

- **Scripture Reflection:**

- Merry Christmas! Joy to the world! The Lord has come! Our world is vast and there are many problems to keep us busy. However, on Christmas, we stop to think about Jesus' birth. We focus on this newborn baby and give Him our full attention.
- When we focus on Jesus' birth, the problems around us get smaller. We imagine ourselves in this place full of love, joy, peace, and hope – experiencing the sights, sounds, and smells of that first Christmas. We may wonder why the rest of our lives don't feel like Christmas all the time.
- One of the lessons of Christmas is that we can live out love, joy, peace, and hope every day. When we are overwhelmed with fears or worries or when we forget the good news of great joy that has come to all humankind, we can stop and reflect again. Because Jesus is Emmanuel, "God with us," we are invited to rest in the presence of Father, Son, and Spirit in every moment.

- **Personal & Family Interaction:**

- How is Christmas day different for you and your family? What are the important sights, smells, tastes, sounds, and feelings of the day?
- We invite you to reflect on the significance of the baby in a manger and stop thinking about all of the worries and stressors in your life. Where do you find yourself in the story of the nativity? How does that impact how you celebrate today?
- We encourage you to practice this breath prayer as you walk through the rest of this holiday season: Breathe in 'Emmanuel' and exhale 'God with us.'

May the Light of the World shine in us and through us as we embrace all 2021 holds for each one of us!!!