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What Is Advent and How Is it Celebrated?

Thanksgiving is behind us, Christmas movies are ahead of us, and the lights, decorations, and music that fill our homes and communities are rapidly appearing.

So, if we really *start* celebrating Christmas on December 25th, what are we celebrating *until* then? This space in-between Thanksgiving and Christmas is known as **Advent**; a Latin-based word that means “arrival.” The four weeks of Advent are in part the celebration of the arrival of Christ into our world, but Advent is also the anticipation of his next arrival.

Just as the ‘weary world’ awaited the arrival of a Savior up until his birth in Bethlehem, so we now await the coming arrival of that same Savior as he returns to make all things new. Advent encapsulates both the joy of his first arrival and the longing for his return. It is a time of joy fulfilled, and joy anticipated.

The Advent Candles

Perhaps the most beautiful part of Advent is the candles! The beauty of candles burning brightly as we read Scripture, pray, and focus our hearts on Christ holds a beautiful symbolism as we worship the Light of the World. There are various traditions surrounding the candles and their meaning, but the most accepted versions are below.

The Hope Candle (December 1, 2024)

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” - 1 Peter 1:3

The first Sunday of Advent is when the first candle is lit. This first candle represents *Hope* and is sometimes called the “Prophet’s Candle”. It represents the hope of a lost world awaiting Messiah, as foretold and promised by the prophets of old.

The Peace Candle (December 8, 2024)

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” - John 16:33

The second candle represents *Peace* and is also known as the “Angels’ Candle”. This candle is lit on the second Sunday of Advent, along with the first one. This week we continue on thanking God for the peace that we can only know in Christ. Jesus told his disciples that they would have true peace in him, and that promise carries on today.

The Joy Candle (December 15, 2024)

“The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.” - Luke 2:20

The third candle represents *Joy* and is also known as the “Shepherds’ Candle”. This candle is one that is lit on the Third Sunday of Advent along with the previous two. Just like the shepherds of long ago, who “went away praising God” for the things they had seen and heard”, so we rejoice in knowing that Jesus has made a way to peace with God!

The Love Candle (December 8, 2024)

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” – John 3:16-17

The fourth candle represents *Love* and is sometimes called the “Bethlehem Candle”. This candle, along with the previous three candles, is lit on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. This week we reflect on the love of God shown to us through Jesus, and how that love impacts how we live and interact with those around us.

The Christ Candle (December 24, 2024)

“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.” - Luke 2:11

The fifth candle is lit on Christmas Eve. As the name suggests, this candle represents the *Birth of Christ* and works to focus our hearts and minds on the moment when God became one of us, born as a man and living a holy and sinless life in a sinful world. Jesus is the only perfect human being to ever live, and being fully God and fully man, he alone can bring us true and lasting hope, peace, joy, and love.

FYI...We are looking for individuals and families that would like to light our advent candles during the Sunday services. There is a sign-up sheet located on the sign-up table for individuals and families that would like to take a Sunday to help with the readings and lighting of our advent wreath and candles.

New Sermon Series

As the year comes to a close, we are reminded of God’s unfailing presence in our lives. The Advent and



Christmas season is a sacred time to pause, reflect, and celebrate the blessings God has given us, even in the midst of challenges. This year, we invite you to join us for a special 4-week sermon series titled "**The Best Christmas Ever.**" Together, we’ll

explore the traditional Advent themes of **hope, peace, joy, and love**—gifts from our Savior that truly make every Christmas the best one yet. Let us draw closer to the heart of Jesus as we reflect on what is truly important.

Advent Bible Study

Enhance your Advent journey by joining our **Advent Bible Study**, which aligns with the sermon series, "The Best Christmas Ever." These gatherings offer a time to dive deeper into God's Word and experience the profound truths of the season.

Morning Class: Thursdays, 9:00 a.m. (Multi-Purpose Building)
Lite breakfast provided.

Evening Class: Thursdays, 6:00 p.m. (Pastor's Parsonage)
Potluck meal; bring a side dish to share. A main dish will be provided.
Zoom option available for those unable to attend in person.

Study Dates & Themes:

- **December 5, 2024 (Hope):** Discover the eternal hope we have in Jesus and how we can share His light with others.
- **December 12, 2024 (Peace):** Embrace the peace that surpasses all understanding, a precious gift from Christ.
- **December 19, 2024 (Joy):** Reflect on the joy rooted in our relationship with Jesus.
- **December 26, 2024 (Love):** Celebrate God's unconditional love, revealed through His Son, and learn to love others as He loves us.

Sign up on the information table or call the church office to receive materials and Zoom invitations.

Movies Under the Oaks

Every Friday starting @ 6:30 p.m.

Bring your field blankets and folding chairs. There is a complete schedule through April 11th on the information table. This event will be free to the community and food and refreshments will be provided: Hotdogs, soft pretzels, popcorn, lemonade, tea and hot chocolate on chilly nights. Movies will be projected on our 14 ft outdoor screen unless weather conditions do not allow for this and in that case, movies will be shown in multi-purpose sanctuary.

There is an UPDATED schedule of the movie dates and times on the information table.



Choir Christmas Cantata/Holiday Mixer

Date: December 15, 2024

Let's rejoice together as our church choir brings Christmas cheer through music and fellowship.

- **Holiday Mixer: 5:00 p.m.** (Multipurpose Building)
Join us for Christmas goodies, a chocolate fountain, games, and an ugly sweater contest!
- **Christmas Cantata: 6:00 p.m.** (Historic Sanctuary)
Experience uplifting music and scripture that will prepare your heart for the coming of our Savior.



Blue Christmas Service: A Time for Healing and Hope

Date: Sunday, December 22, 2024

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Historic Sanctuary



For many of us, the holiday season can be a bittersweet time, filled with both cherished memories and heartfelt challenges. If you find yourself carrying grief, loss, or struggle this year, we invite you to our **Blue Christmas Service**—a sacred time to find peace, comfort, and hope.

This special evening is designed to be a gentle, reflective space where we can bring our hurts to God and experience the light of His presence. Through quiet worship, meaningful scripture, and heartfelt prayer, we'll remember that even in the darkest moments, Christ's love shines brightly for us all.

Whether you are navigating the loss of a loved one, facing life's uncertainties, or simply feeling weary, know that you are not alone. Let's gather as a church family to embrace the hope and joy that only Jesus can bring this Christmas season. You are welcome here.

Parsonage Open House

Pastor Kerry and his wife Tiffany would like to invite you over to the church parsonage for a Christmas Eve Open house.

Date: December 24, 2024

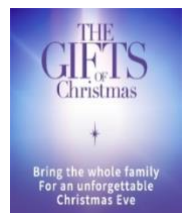
Time: 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Stop by before the Candlelight Service and experience the joy of the season with your church family. on December 24th @ 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Come enjoy Christmas treats, gifts, fellowship, decorations and lights. There is no sign up necessary...just show up.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Celebrate the true meaning of Christmas with us on **December 24, 2024**, at 7:00 p.m. in the Historic Sanctuary. This year's theme, "**The Gifts of Christmas**," reminds us of the divine gifts of **Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace** through Jesus Christ.

Come for an unforgettable evening with a special children's sermon, the lighting of the Advent wreath, and an inspiring message about the treasures of God's love.



Choir practice is on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. Now is the time to join if you would like to be a part of the music during Advent and Christmastide. For more info, contact:

Gerry Nielson (321-652-5361; gerry Nielson@gmail.com)

December Birthdays

Hatcher, Terry 8
 Hubbard, Edie 12
 Boyette, Margaret 15
 Surlles, Peggy 21

Dec. Anniversaries

Michael & Mary Alice Linzy 3
 Russell & Amy Clarke 6

REALM site. The church secretary can help you set up your account.

Finding Christ in Christmas Specials



Rudolph! Frosty!
 The Grinch! The most beloved Christmas characters of all time illustrate timeless truths in this interactive One-Man Show by Jason Korsiak!

Korsiak plays Scotch, an overworked elf

trying to get on top of the Christmas rush, but each present he packs only reminds him of one of his favorite holiday movies -- and what they can teach us about such lessons as expectations, the gift of grace, being a good neighbor, and how your "red nose" makes you a valuable part of the Body of Christ!

Inspired by his book, *The Christmas Gospels*, "Finding Christ in Christmas Specials" is a festive treat for the whole family, featuring singing, games, and ample opportunity for audience participation!



Santa Clause is Coming to Chaires Methodist!

December 21st is going to be a busy day at Chaires Methodist Church. Not only will we be hosting a FREE community festive treat for the whole family with "Finding Christ in Christmas" but Santa Clause will be coming to our historic sanctuary to provide children and families with

free photo opportunities with Santa along with some Christmas gifts to be handed out to all children who attend. Santa will be providing photos in the historic sanctuary from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

ECHO is a mission partner of Chaires MC. They are currently in need of the following:

Food

- . low salt soup
- . cereal
- . low sugar can fruit
- . proteins
- . pastas

Home goods

- . pots and pans
- . towels and washcloths
- . sheets (queen and twin)

Giving Through Our Website

Go to <https://chairesmethodist.church> and just click the blue GIVE button and you will be taken to the church

*Dear Pastor Foote & The Chaires Family,
 I hope you're enjoying a wonderful Thanksgiving break! Thanksgiving has become one of my favorite traditions here in the U.S. because it provides a special opportunity to thank the people who mean so much to me. Therefore, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt appreciation to you, and our Chaires family.*

This is my eighth Thanksgiving in the U.S., and I know I wouldn't have come this far without your support. Thank you for welcoming me when I was in Tallahassee and thank you for letting me be a part of our Chaires family. Your support and impact on my life has been profound, and I am deeply grateful.

Additionally, thank you so much for being my reference when I was doing the job search. You have been so much more than just a pastor to me—you are a true mentor and inspiration.

*Wishing you a happy and restful Thanksgiving!
 Best,
 Huixian Wu (Anna)*



Members

Bobbie Harrison
 Casey Friel

Friends and Family

Family of John Galbreath
 Chad Craig

Two Palm Beach police officers who lost their lives in a crash. Another was seriously injured.

Family of Marilyn Remsberg

Larry & Karen Clark

Eli and his son

Family of Marilyn Remsberg

Jane Powell (cousin of Frances Chaires)

Betty Posey

Witmer Family

Nick Swickley

Cindy Waldron (Marion Lollie's sister-in-law)

Gretchen Pennington

Pastor Bill Petersen

Chris Taylor (daughter in law of Jeanette Wood)

Family of Kim Wilson

Vickie Matthews (co-worker of Sue Graham)

Mrs. Bobbie Adams (friend of Diane Matthews)

Michelle Rackley (sister-in-law of Diane & David Matthews)

Dirk Flachsmeier (friend of Ed Fannin)

Chaires Staff

Pastor	Rev. Kerry Foote
Secretary	Susan Capelouto (chairesmc.office@gmail.com)
Music Director	Gerry Nielsen
Custodian	Janet Cayson
Audio/Visual	Marty Holland