



The Season of Advent

Advent is the four Sundays before Christmas and the weekdays that follow them. This can be a time filled with so much rushing to get ready for Christmas that we feel ragged. Advent reminds us to take time out to consider what Christmas is all about and how best to prepare for it.

To think about Christmas, start by remembering that God's timetable can differ from ours. God's people of the Old Testament waited, not weeks but centuries, for the promised Savior to be born. That was the first and longest Advent, from the promise to Adam to the birth of our Savior.

The Church prepares by watching in three dimensions:

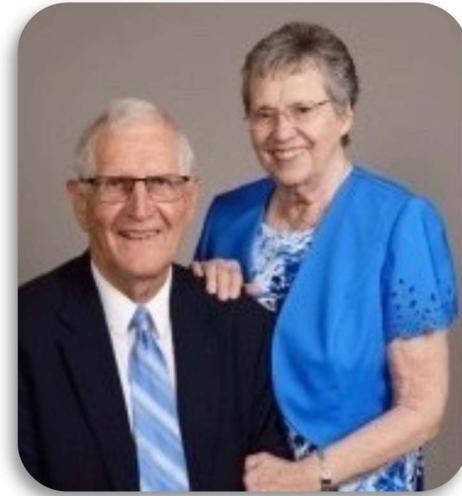
Toward the past—in the direction of those promises in Holy Scripture that the Messiah would come, that a virgin would conceive and bear a Son who is called Immanuel, God with us.

In the present—for ways by which Christ's life is here and now in our midst: the preaching of the Word of God and the offering of the Sacraments of forgiveness.

And toward the future, as it watches with patience and hope for Christ's final coming, when his word of judgment will be clothed with eternal life for all who believe in him.

Advent is a season for immersion in the words of Scripture, especially those promises of Christ's birth, of his life-giving presence in his Church. It is also a season of confession and repentance that allows the Church to see its own sin-filled darkness, confess, and receive the Lord's forgiveness. And Advent is a season of fervent prayer, the Church repeating to the Lord his promises that he will come again.

The hymns of Advent are the focus of these devotions, exploring the promises of Christ's birth and helping us prepare to welcome him. Both Emmanuel's website and mobile app provide options for reading the daily devotion, listening to the featured hymn, and visiting Pastor Brunow's website. May these devotions bless your Advent season!



About the Author

Pastor Gene Brunow has served the Lord and his church for more than 62 years as teacher, principal, district education executive, and pastoral assistant. He and his wife Donna have been married for 61 years and have four daughters, eleven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Gene writes: "There are so many great Advent hymns. With only four weeks of Advent, we get to sing just a limited number of them. Therefore, I thought it would be good to have a devotion on each of the Advent hymns. I pray that these devotions help to prepare you for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In addition to these devotions, Gene has created a website with notes on scripture verses, courses on books of the Bible, devotions, and biblical topics of interest. To access this helpful resource, go to his website at genesbrunotes.com.