



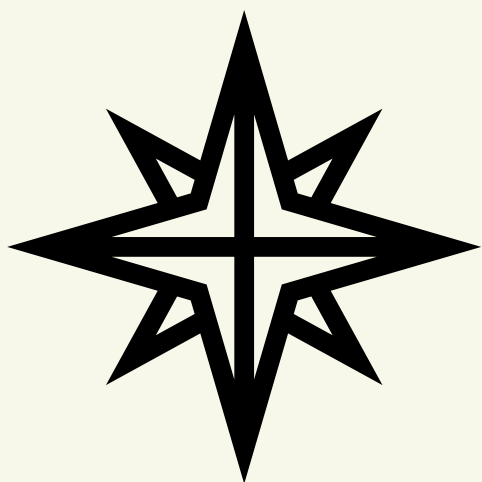
Advent 2021

The Promise of New Birth

A calendar of daily reflections, prayers & simple practices to help us invest in hopeful, justice-seeking discipleship during Advent.



28 November -25 December



#jesusandjustice
www.redletterchristians.org.uk

During Advent, Christians expectantly await the celebration of Jesus' birth, when God walked the earth in a flesh-and-blood human body.

Matthew and Luke's Gospels show us the 'royal' family into which he was born. The author of creation chose to lift up the lowly, release those captive to enslaving systems, and demonstrate the reign of divine justice not as a prince born in a palace, but as a refugee born in an animal trough.

The daily practices, prayers, and reflections in this Advent calendar offer an opportunity to center ourselves in this way of discipleship. Each Sunday begins with a special reading to accompany the lighting of the week's Advent candle.

You may light the candle with your faith community or as part of your personal devotional practice. (The last two pages of this PDF include additional resources and a printable Simple Celtic Advent Wreath that can be used with tea lights.) Throughout the season, reflect:

How does the extraordinary Christian experience of new birth call us to act in ordinary places?

Sustaining Hope

WEEK 1 ✨ 28 Nov - 4 Dec

SUNDAY

28

Read Matthew 1:1-17, Jesus' genealogy.

The Jewish people lived through many generations, marked by oppression and exile, while hopefully waiting for the Messiah.

As you light the Hope candle, consider the centuries of struggle during which their communities battled despair. This week, pray and consider how faith in Jesus sustains hope in challenging times.

MONDAY

29

Check out the Hopeful Activists' Podcasts. Look for a story/activist who inspires you. How can their action kindle your own passions?

TUESDAY

30

Chat together with a friend/small group about a shared concern for your neighborhood or community. How can you bring mutual hope into the situation?

WEDNESDAY

01

Take a meditative walk through an area that inspires hope, or where you hope for transformation, praying for God to open you to seeing possibilities.

THURSDAY

02

Read **Romans 8:22-25**. How does faith in Jesus strengthen us to hope for a redemption we can't yet see? Pray & journal about how you see Jesus in times of struggle.

FRIDAY

03

Take a hopeful action today: make a donation, phone call, offer a ministry of presence, etc. Let your God-given light shine into shadows of despair.

SATURDAY

04

Sing the hymn Come Thou Long Expected Jesus, with others if possible. Feel the words. What is your highest expectation of Jesus' birth into our world?

Living Out Love

WEEK 2 ✨ 5-11 December

SUNDAY

05

Read Matthew 1:18–25. Joseph's plan to dismiss Mary is rooted in righteousness—what would have been considered 'making right' at the time. But the angel of the Lord challenges Joseph's understanding: love means holding on, despite what others think.

Light the Love candle, reflecting on how the Holy Spirit challenges us to question what our culture calls 'righteous' when it interferes with justice-seeking love.

MONDAY

06

Joseph stayed with Mary despite the scandal of her premarital pregnancy. Who in your life has a 'scandalous' relationship? Demonstrate God's righteous love by standing in solidarity with them.

THURSDAY

09

Check out **Just Love.**

Consider supporting the next generation of Jesus-inspired activists through donating your time and/or money.

TUESDAY

07

Read Micah 6:1–8. Is your work for justice committed to God's way of loving, kind humility? Do you avoid self-righteousness in disagreements with others? Pray and reflect.

FRIDAY

10

Make time to care for the bodies of yourself and a loved one by preparing and sharing a meal together. Say grace, focusing on God's nourishing love for us.

WEDNESDAY

08

Take a walk with a loved one today. Share in meaningful conversation. How can you be the loving presence of Jesus for them today?

SATURDAY

11

Read John 3:14–17.

Jesus' interceding love turns us from the venoms of the world—greed, hatred, fear—when we follow him. Pray for what you need.

Co-Creating Peace

SUNDAY

12

Read Matthew 2:1-12.

King Herod is so threatened by the birth of the Messiah—an innocent baby—that he makes requests of the Magi under false pretenses. Because they are open to hear from God in a dream, they do not fulfill his request. **As you light the Peace candle,** consider: How do we listen for God to discern the will of the powerful, whose motives may be unclear even to themselves? How may God be challenging us to disrupt unjust requests in order to co-create peace?

MONDAY

13

Check out **CHIPS'** **approach to Christian peacemaking** across divides. Think of an issue that raises your passions for peace. How are those on the 'other side' included?

TUESDAY

14

Read John 14:25-27. We can expend ourselves for others and forget that Jesus promises us the same peace. Pray for the Spirit to open you to Christ's peaceful freedom.

WEDNESDAY

15

Walk through an area that fills you with peace. What is it about this place that creates this feeling? Journal or create art around how you can carry this peace with you.

THURSDAY

16

Wage peace on social media today. Refuse to engage in pointless debates that further divides. Find ways to constructively offer a peaceful perspective on contentious topics.

FRIDAY

17

Sing *O Come O Come Emmanuel*, preferably with others. Pray for Spirit to open you to the peace of Christ. How does the promise of his coming comfort you today?

SATURDAY

18

Pray this litany of lament, preferably with a faith community. Listen for how Jesus is calling his gathered body to refuse violence and wage peace in your neighbourhood.

WEEK 3 ✨ 12-18 December

Sharing Joy

WEEK 4 ✨ 19-25 December

SUNDAY

19

Read Luke 1:26–56.

At first, Mary is fearful and bewildered, not joyful. But when she joins Elizabeth, the two of them, through the movement of the Holy Spirit, share and inspire one another to joyfulness.

As you light the Joy candle, focus on kindling and sharing joy in uncertain times.

MONDAY

20

Elizabeth affirms Mary's trust in God. Mary responds with poetry, rejoicing in her participation in God's justice. Affirm a justice advocate today by donating, or offering encouragement.

TUESDAY

21

Jesus was formed by the justice-centered theology of his mother, revealed in her poem. Name and thank a spiritual foremother who has been foundational for your faith.

WEDNESDAY

22

Engage in vigorous exercise today: an energetic walk/workout/etc. Even better, exercise with others. Feel the joy of moving in your body today.

THURSDAY

23

Does someone in your life exude the joy of the Spirit?

Send them a letter, some art, or just tell them what their joy means to you.

FRIDAY

24

Read Matthew 28:16–20. Jesus' parents fled to protect him. Now he returns and promises his eternal presence with his disciples—with us! Know the joy of his presence.

SATURDAY

25

Read Luke 2:1–20, preferably with others. Share how the Incarnation—God becoming human in Jesus, living love and justice, bringing life—makes a difference. Praise and worship!

Advent 2021

Reflection Questions & Additional Resources

Week 1: Sustaining Hope

Yakhal: Hope – Advent Word Study with the Bible Project

Hope Candle-Lighting Liturgy from Christian Aid

More from Red Letter Voices:

Advent: A Time of Reflection & Repair by Harry Wyld (Birmingham)

Lamenting the Lost Hope of Advent by Mark Charles

Reflection Question:

Where did you see glimpses of hope this week?

Week 2: Living Out Love

Agape: Love – Advent Word Study with the Bible Project

Love Candle-Lighting Liturgy from Christian Aid

More from Red Letter Voices:

Shepherds & Magi, Hospitality & Love by Mick Kane (Manchester)

Disarm Our Hearts: An Advent Prayer by Art Laffin

Reflection Question:

When was Jesus' love for you most real this week?

Week 3: Co-Creating Peace

Shalom: Peace – Advent Word Study with the Bible Project

Peace Candle-Lighting Liturgy from Christian Aid

More from Red Letter Voices:

The Magnificat: Prose, Power & Provocation by Luke Larnier (Bedford)

Keep Watch with Me: Advent & Peacemaking by Michael McRay

Reflection Question:

Who embodied peace for you this week?

Week 4: Sharing Joy

Chara: Joy – Advent Word Study with the Bible Project

Joy Candle-Lighting Liturgy from Christian Aid

More from Red Letter Voices:

Chaos & Glimpses of Light by Dr Sally Mann (East London)

Tasting God's Justice & Joy by DL Mayfield

Reflection Question:

How did you know the joy of the Holy Spirit this week?

This Advent 2021 calendar was compiled by Faith Van Horne with Danielle Wilson on behalf of RLC UK. Feel free to use, print and share this far and wide (as long as this calendar/ content is not sold for profit).

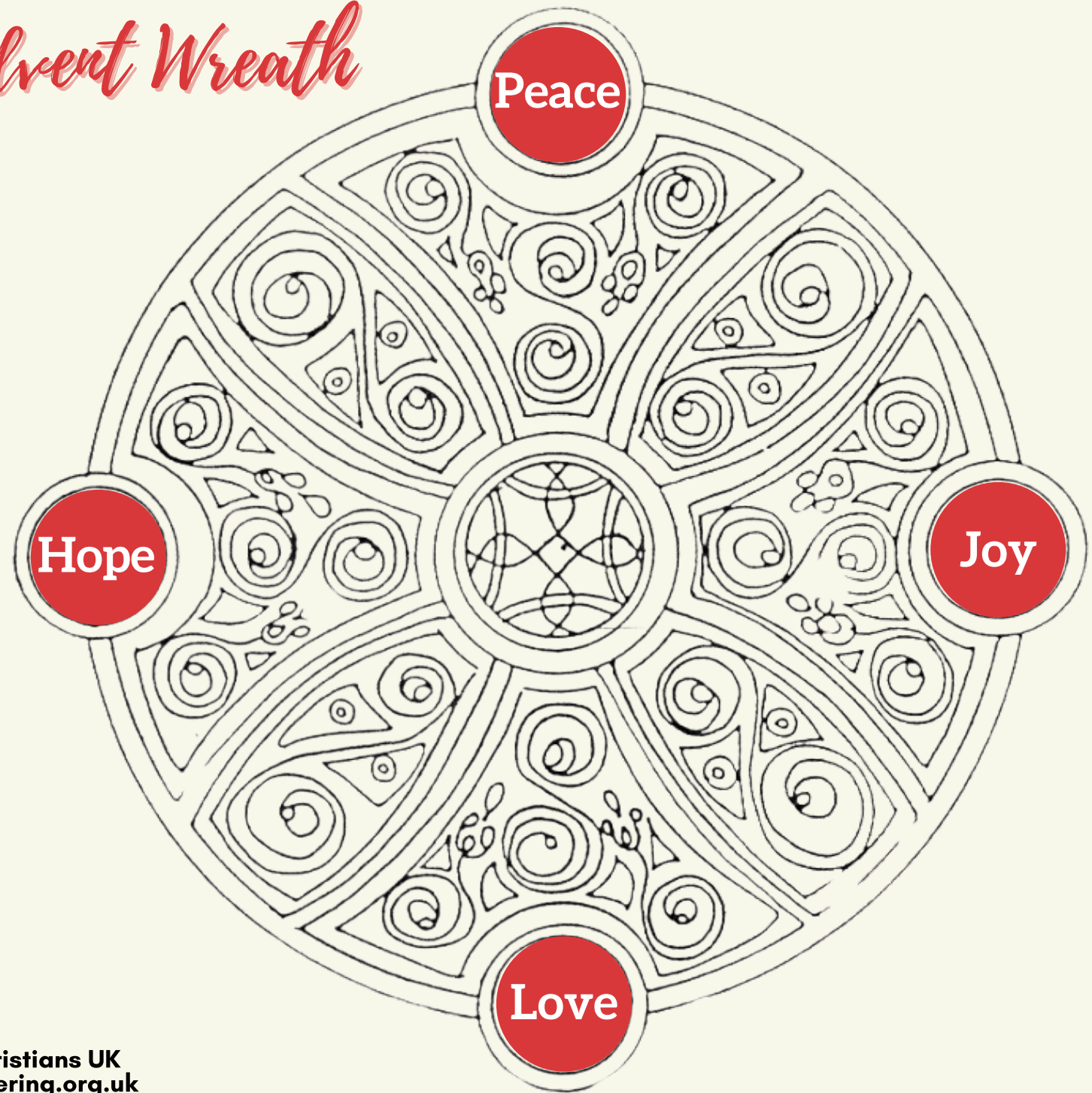
If you are using this calendar as a print-out, the links to resources listed throughout can be found here: www.redletterchristians.org.uk/advent-2021-with-red-letter-christians-uk

If you would like to subscribe to receive regular updates and other resources like these, go to www.redletterchristians.org.uk/subscribe-to-our-newsletter



Simple Celtic Advent Wreath

1. Print this sheet on a piece of A4 paper.
2. Fill in the design with any pen or crayon colours you choose.
3. Cut around the outside of the design.
4. Place the design on a plain heat-proof dinner plate.
5. Place 5 tea lights on the circles.
6. Light the candles for Hope, Peace, Joy and Love on the 4 Sundays of Advent. Light the centre Christ candle on Christmas Eve or Day.



This printable wreath is intended for use with tea lights that will be lit briefly during an Advent service or personal reflection. If you plan to keep your candles lit, please use battery-operated tea lights instead for safety. Please don't leave candles burning unattended.

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