



While the shopping malls and stores rush from Halloween to Christmas in their need to generate sales, the church patiently waits to enter the season of Advent. Advent, in its early days was the end of the church calendar and focused on the return of Christ. Now Advent is at the beginning of the church calendar and is a time for us to prepare for the birth of Jesus, our redeemer. Both these themes are marked by waiting. Advent is the season when the church waits expectantly for God's salvation. However, we do not wait, tapping our foot. The waiting of God's people has a Scripture shaped character to it. During this season we will explore the character of waiting as God's people. We will use

the three epistles of John to explore the Advent themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. As well, we'll explore the Christmas theme of the incarnation. When God took on human flesh and dwelt among us.

The traditional symbol of Advent is the wreath with five candles: four on the outside and one on the inside. Each week we light one candle, adding as we go, until all four candles shine their light together. This gradual increase of light symbolizes our growing anticipation of the birth of Jesus. We also symbolize the themes of Advent—preparation and joy—through the colours of the candles. Preparation is solemn so the first, second, and fourth candles are purple. The third candle represents joy so it is rose-coloured. And the Christ candle is white which symbolizes festivity.

December 2, 2018 | I John 2:28–3:10 | *First Sunday of Advent: Hope*

The first characteristic that a people who wait must have is hope. Not a wishful thinking hope. Not a cross our fingers and hope for the best hope. But, a sure hope. We must be confident that God is without a doubt coming through.

December 9, 2018 | I John 4:7–21 | *Second Sunday of Advent: Peace*

The second characteristic that a people who wait must have is peace. This is not the peace and quiet that we try to get from our jobs or our kids. This is not the peace of avoiding hostility or keeping out of the drama. This is the peace that comes from the work of Christ restoring us to the right relationship with God and others.

December 16, 2018 | III John 1–4 | *Third Sunday of Advent: Joy*

The third characteristic that a people who wait must have is joy. This is not the temporary happiness that comes from a new toy. This is not the fabricated feeling from a Hallmark Christmas movie. Our joy finds its source in God which means it does not fade and flows to all of our lives. It is the joy of being whole.

December 23, 2018 | I John 3:11–18 | *Fourth Sunday of Advent: Love*

The fourth characteristic that a people who wait must have is love. This is not the love of the world. A type of love that will benefit you if you benefit me. This is a love that benefits an enemy, a stranger, the poor. This love mirrors Christ's love for us—giving up everything for the other.

December 30, 2018 | II John 4–11 | *Season of Christmas*

"Who is Jesus?" is always a relevant question and the way we answer that question impacts how we relate to God. There is always a risk of speaking of God and worshiping God generically. However, God has come in the flesh in the person of Jesus the Christ so all authentic worship goes through him. Only this way do we worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.