

The Christian Story

- ◆ Advent begins the Church's Year. Advent Sunday is the Sunday nearest to November 30th.
- ◆ "Advent" means "coming". It is a time of preparing for the birth of Jesus by looking at Old Testament prophecies which foretell his coming, and at his forerunners. The four Sundays of Advent are dedicated to: the Prophets, John the Baptist, Mary and All God's People OR: The Patriarchs, the Prophets, John the Baptist, Mary (according to the custom of the church).
- ◆ Advent is a "penitential season" – a time for repenting and making new beginnings in one's life.

The Beliefs

- ◆ Jesus' birth as Christ, or Messiah, was foretold in the teaching of the Old Testament prophets. He was seen as a great king and a bringer of justice and peace.
- ◆ John the Baptist was the immediate forerunner of Jesus' ministry. His message of repentance reminds us of the need for people to prepare their lives properly for the coming of Christ.
- ◆ The Annunciation to Mary shows Jesus as the Son of God. Mary has become an example of someone who trusts in the promises of God.
- ◆ Christians look forward to the Second Coming of Christ.

ADVENT

Isaiah chapter 11 verses 2-4, chapter 53, Luke chapter 1 verses 30-33, 42-45, Matthew chapter 25 verse 31-46,



The Customs

- ◆ Advent rings or crowns are used in churches to mark the Sundays of Advent – traditionally they have four red candles, and a white central candle for Christmas Day.
- ◆ Advent calendars (really December calendars) mark the countdown to Christmas, especially for children. A proper calendar should have something to do with the Christmas story behind each door – not chocolate or Barbie!
- ◆ Church furnishings and vestments will be purple – the sign of sorrow and repentance.
- ◆ "Stir up Sunday" (Sunday before Advent) is the traditional day for making Christmas puddings.

The Christian Experience

- ◆ Repentance
- ◆ New beginnings
- ◆ Hope
- ◆ Trust & faithfulness
- ◆ Promise
- ◆ Anticipation of the Day of Judgement