The Season of Advent

Advent means coming or arrival. The Advent season invites us to pause and wait for the coming of Christ, not just in history, but afresh in our lives and stories today, and with expectant hope of his coming again. In this time we embrace the "already" but "not yet" paradox of our Christian existence.

In its historical origins, the season of Advent was patterned after the season of Lent, a six-week period of penitence and preparation for Easter. Similarly, the four weeks of Advent present an opportunity for communal discernment and personal examination, as the church prepares to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord and looks with hope for Christ's return.

"In Advent, we anticipate the promised justice of God's new world, yet we praise God who raised the “righteous branch” to rule with justice and righteousness. We hope for the restoration of the afflicted, the tormented, and the grieving, yet we delight that healing has come in Christ. We long for the beating of swords into plowshares, yet we rejoice that the Prince of Peace has appeared. We yearn for the barren deserts of our inner cities to flourish, yet we laud the desert Rose that has bloomed. We dream of the land where lions and lambs live in harmony, yet we acclaim the child born to lead us into the promised land.

Christ has come! Christ is risen! Christ will come again! In Advent, we are living between the first and the second coming of the Lord. The tension and paradox we find in Advent shapes our celebrations during the season."¹

The advent and arrival of Jesus' birth can be found in Luke 1-2 and Matthew 1-2 which gives the narrative of the events below:

- Mary and Joseph traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem to register for the census
- While in Bethlehem Mary gave birth to Jesus
- Angels appeared to a group of shepherds announcing Jesus' birth
- A group of magi saw a star in the sky that helped them locate where Jesus was; upon their arrival they gave him gifts.
- King Herod wanted the magi to come back and tell him where Jesus was but they were told not to do so through a dream and instead returned to their homeland a different way.


¹ An excerpt from the Companion to the Book of Common Worship (Geneva Press, 2003, 96)