

December 24: On the fourth Sunday of Advent, we focus especially on the impending birth of the Prince of Peace and light the Candle of Peace. Though Jesus Christ was born in lowly estate, He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He is the Prince of Peace! The birth of the Promised One has come at last. Let us draw near, let us worship Him. The Scriptures we use on this day will be: 2 Sam 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38.

Join us....

Mark your calendars for December 3, 2017, at 6 PM, for an Epiclesis tradition and gift to the Sacramento community: ***A beautiful, simple service of Advent Lessons and Carols.***



We'll gather at **6 PM** in our Carmichael Chapel for a beautiful service of Scripture, sacred art, music, and some words from the Church Fathers.

Our annual service is a lovely way to mark the beginning of Advent and the Season of Light.

After the preparation time of Advent, and beginning at sundown on Christmas Eve, the Church observes **Christmas**, the festival of the birth of Christ and the celebration of the Incarnation. The Christ candle, typically a white candle that often stands in the center of the Advent wreath, is lit on Christmas Eve (or Christmas Day). A 12-day period from December 25 to January 5, and includes either one or two Sundays, Christmas is traditionally signified with the colors white or gold which represent purity and joy.



Epiclesis

An Ancient-Future Faith Community...

**Worshiping Sundays at 10:30 AM at the Carmichael Chapel
4600 Winding Way; Sacramento, CA; 95841**

www.Epiclesis.org

For more information: Info@Epiclesis.org

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Advent 2017

(Year B)

Learning about Advent...



“Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat!” It’s time to get ready! This time of year, folks from all walks of life are getting ready for Christmas— at least the commercial kind of Christmas. One of the obvious ways we can tell that Christmas is coming is that the stores start to decorate and promote Christmas sales... *and it seems like they begin earlier each year!*

We believe, of course, that the true meaning of Christmas has nothing really to do with gifts and Santa Claus and department store sales, as fun as that part of the season can be. Believers hold that Christmas is all about the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. And we also believe that Advent gives Christians a time-honored, biblically-based way to prepare.

Worship and the Christian Year...

How do you tell time? It’s difficult not to let the world shape the way we think about time. But the Bible’s view of time is much different than the world’s view. For the ancient Hebrews and for the early church, all of time was meant to be redeemed for the Lord. Our contemporary idea of thinking that worship is a “Sunday thing” would be foreign to the first century believer. Romans 12 reminds us, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world.” *It encourages us to live all of life as a sacrifice unto the Lord.* Worship happens 7 days a week, 12 months of the year!

Today, as the world demands so much of our time, many Evangelicals are returning to the ages-old, traditional Christian year as a meaningful way to redeem the time. *In following the Christian year, we join with believers all over the world and across the ages in a pilgrimage toward redeeming time for the Lord.*

Redeeming the Time: A Closer Look at the Christian Year...

Walking through the Christian year means following in Christ’s footsteps and learning more about discipleship, all while marking time in a spiritually disciplined way. While the Christian year is not expressly prescribed in Scripture, it is centered on Jesus and provides a guide to discipleship and a kind of textbook of theology that beautifully supports and illuminates the Bible’s narrative.



What is Advent?

Advent, which means “coming,” is the Christian observance signaling that Christmas is on the way. But here’s something you may not have known: The Advent season, one of preparation and anticipation, focuses as much on Christ’s second coming as it does on His first— *and there are many common themes*: watchfulness, eagerness, hope, and faith.

Advent is a four-week period when the Church joyfully remembers the coming of Christ and eagerly looks forward to His coming again. Beginning with the Sunday nearest November 30, the season includes the four Sundays before Christmas. You’ll notice that one of the dominant colors used in worship during this time of year is purple, which is meant to be a reminder of the royalty of Christ and the dignity of the season. The color also harkens to an early practice when, like Lent, Advent was considered a time of penitence

Advent
2017

The Four Sundays in Advent, 2017...

During Advent, each of the four Sundays traditionally has a different focus. *Here’s a look at how we will observe each week at Epiclesis:*

December 3: On the first Sunday in Advent, we light the candle of hope— *hope as we eagerly await Christ’s coming!* For Christians, there need not be any fear about the future. Although it does hold surprises, we know *Who holds the future!* So, in the meantime, how do we wait? As Mark writes in the passage for this Sunday: “Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.” Other Scriptures we’ll use in worship this day: Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; 1 Cor 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37.

December 10: On the second Sunday of Advent, we say with John the Baptist, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord,” and light the candle of love. As we think about preparing our hearts for the arrival of the Baby Jesus, we can also consider how we can prepare for the arrival some day of our Conquering King. The Scriptures we use on this day: Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2; 8-13; 2 Pet 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8.

December 17: The third Sunday of Advent traditionally is the Sunday of Joy. You may notice that the candle lit on this third Sunday, the candle of Joy, is rose in color. This custom is ages old and goes back to the time when this particular Sunday in Advent marked an easing off of the fasting and penitence of the previous weeks. On this day we rejoice and consider the One who is to come. The Scriptures we use this Sunday: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thess 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28.

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The Chrismon Tree...

The “Chrismon Tree,” or “Christ Tree” has long been a favorite among churches of many denominations to mark the Advent and Christmas seasons. “Chrismon” is a shortened form of the words “Christ monogram,” and these symbols represent a rich heritage of visual arts that reaches back to the very early church— even to New Testament times.




The tradition calls for an evergreen, a symbol of new life and growth, to be covered with monograms and emblems associated with the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. The ornaments are usually white or gold in color and represent purity, holiness, and joy.

Chrismon Ornaments and Their Meaning...

Perhaps the most recognizable symbol on the Chrismon tree is the cross. There are many cross designs and each with a rich history. Here’s a sampling:


The “Cross Patée,” resembling the “Maltese Cross,” is a beautiful form of the cross often used for decorative purposes.



 The “Jerusalem (or Crusaders) Cross” is comprised of five crosses that symbolize the five wounds of our Lord (the flogging, crown of thorns, the plucking of His beard, the crucifixion, and the piercing of His side).


The “Cross Crosslet,” four Latin crosses joined at their bases, is similar. Its arms symbolize Christianity and the Gospel spreading in the four directions of the compass.



 Another familiar cross is the “Anchor Cross” used by the early Christians in the catacombs and it is thought to be ancient Egyptian in origin.


The “Celtic Cross” (or the “Cross of Iona”) dates back to the ancient church. Its stonework-like design is said to have evolved in the 9th and 10th centuries from intricate crosses fashioned out of bronze and gold.



 The simple “Greek Cross” has arms of equal length and it may also be found on one of the Lord’s Supper table coverings, or “paraments”.


The “Tau Cross,” so-called because of its resemblance to the Greek letter *Tau*, is thought to be the kind of cross our Lord was crucified upon.



 The “St. Andrew’s Cross” represents the kind of cross tradition says the apostle Andrew died upon. He requested crucifixion in a manner unlike that of the Lord.

The beautiful “Budded Cross” (or Cross Botonnée) is said to represent the young or immature Christian. Its opposite is the Cross Fleurée, which has flared, or “flowered”, ends.



 The plain “Latin Cross” is the most common form of the cross.

The “Cross and Crown” symbolizes the reward of life after death for all believers in the living and resurrected Lord.



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The “Cross and Triangle” is a symbol used mostly in church embroidery. Here, the cross intertwined with the triangle emphasizes that Christ is one in the Holy Trinity.

Other Chrismon ornaments...

The butterfly has been used since the ancient church to symbolize resurrection and eternal life.



The dove expresses innocence and purity. It most often signifies the Holy Spirit and the presence of God as hovering over the water of creation, and above Jesus at His baptism.

The Lamb standing with the banner of victory represents Jesus, no longer wounded, but standing with the banner of victory, suggesting the victorious nature of His perfect sacrifice.



The so-called “IHS” emblem represents the first three letters (iota, eta, sigma) of the Greek spelling of Jesus. The second letter, eta, is often drawn in the shape of a shepherd’s staff.

The “IX” symbol represents our Lord and consists of the initial letters of the Greek words for Jesus Christ arranged as a monogram.



The simple trefoil is a symbol of the Holy Trinity.

The fish was a secret sign used by the early persecuted Christians to designate themselves as believers in Jesus. The initial letters of the Greek words for “Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Savior,” spell “fish” in Greek.



● The plain circle, or sphere, represents the eternal, endless nature of God.

Other Chrismon symbols not represented here:

Of course, there are many other symbols and monograms that point us to Jesus Christ. A good suggestion for further reading: Symbols of the Church (Abingdon Press, 1987. ISBN 0-687-18301-4). It’s a terrific booklet with dozens of symbols associated with Jesus Christ, the Bible, and church history. The material in this flyer was drawn, in part, from this source.



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