

Advent with All Saints Boyne Hill

It's been a long time since we could all be together.
At times this year has been so hard.
We have missed friends and family, handshakes and hugs.

But it has also been a year full of hope, peace, love and joy as we came together to take care of each other and to say thank you to those who take care of us.

Advent and Christmas will be different this year. While we will miss gathering together, dressing up as shepherds and blessing the Christmas tree, there are lots of ways that we can live the spirit of advent, spread a little hope, peace, love and joy and have plenty of Christmas fun! We hope you try some of the activities and we look forward to seeing you in the new year!



Advent is more than just a chance to have chocolate everyday (although we are very keen on that bit too). Advent is a special time in church marked by the

four Sundays that take place before Christmas. Each Sunday has a different theme and we celebrate this in church by lighting one of four special candles.

Make your own Advent candle wreath

You will need:

A small tray or plate

4 clean and empty jam jars (because we love a bit of recycling)

Purple and pink ribbons or glass paints if you have them

4 battery operated tea lights (you can use proper tea lights but a grown up must, must, must be in charge of them at all times because no-one wants your lovely advent wreath to go up in smoke!)

Some greenery from the garden - again ask a grown up to help - you could use small evergreen branches, green leaves or even off cuts of a christmas tree,

What to do:

- Take each of your four jam jars and either paint or wrap the outside with ribbon as follows:3 purple and 1 pink.
- Arrange your jam jars on the plate or small tray so that they are in a nice group. The tray or plate should be flat enough that they don't wobble
- Pop a tea light into each jam jar
- Thread your evergreen branches around and in-between your jam jars.

Ta dah! You now have your very own advent wreath. Get that handy grown up to help you switch on or light one of your tea lights each week.

Another way you or a family member can bring some light to advent is to light a virtual candle on the Church of England Website at <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/light-candle>



The first candle symbolises The Patriarchs. It is purple.

What is a Patriarch? I here you ask... A patriarch is a person who founds or fathers something. There are lots of patriarchs in the Bible. The patriarch candle at advent is a symbol of the patriarchs Abraham and David. The candle also symbolises hope.

Abraham and his wife Sarah waited for a long, long time for God to give them the child that He had promised. Abraham never lost faith despite being very, very old and God kept his promise. Like the candle, Abraham had hope.

Interesting fact: Bethlehem where Jesus was born was known as the city of David named after King David. Purple is the colour of royalty.

Prayer

Dear God,

Abraham and Sarah had hope that God would bless them with a baby and that hope came true as Isaac was born. We pray for hope in our world today that we may be kept safe. We give thanks for our NHS staff who care and support us and to Our Lord Jesus who brings us the hope of New Life. AMEN

Stargazing

God told Abraham to count the stars in the sky and that would be the number of his descendents. Wait for a clear night, wrap up warm and stand in your back garden (if you have one). Even without binoculars or a telescope you should be able to make out lots of stars and the occasional planet. The two easiest constellations to spot are Orion's Belt and The Plough. You can also keep an eye out for the Geminids meteor shower that takes place in December. For lots more information on winter stargazing visit www.nationaltrust.org.

Hope - let's
bring a little ho
ho hope to
everyone!





Make a rainbow tree ornament. Maybe not a traditional Christmas symbol but definitely the symbol of this year and a reminder of the hope sent by God to Noah after the flood. Hang a rainbow on your tree to say a big thank you to NHS staff and as a reminder that even on the cloudiest days light shines through!



Crumple up some kitchen foil until you have a nice rainbow shape. Tie a piece of string around your rainbow so that you can hang it up. Use tissue paper and pva glue mixed with a little water to cover your rainbow, leaving the string free. When dry, use paint or pens to colour your rainbow. You could even add a little sparkle with some glitter!

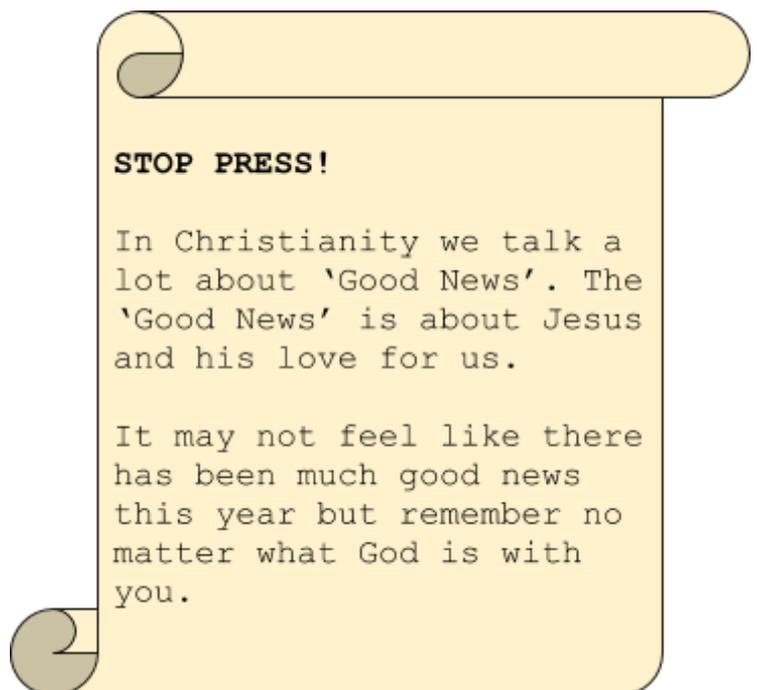
The second candle is for the Prophets. It is purple

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This candle remembers the prophets who came before Jesus. A prophet is a messenger; someone who is able to connect with God. They might foretell things that would happen or prepare the way. They shared God's message of love and peace and laid the foundation for Jesus. The theme of this week is peace, because that is what the message of Jesus brings!



Sharing
some
Good



STOP PRESS!

In Christianity we talk a lot about 'Good News'. The 'Good News' is about Jesus and his love for us.

It may not feel like there has been much good news this year but remember no matter what God is with you.

News

Can you come up with your own good news story? Think about something that brought you joy or brought joy to the world. Can't think of anything? Make some good news happen for someone maybe by sharing a small act of kindness or reminding someone that they are loved. Design your own newspaper with headlines, stories and pictures to share your good news. You could make it into a special gift for a loved one.

A Message of Peace

One of many much loved traditions on Christmas day is the Queen's speech. Since 1932 at around 3pm, with tummies full of Christmas dinner and usually wearing a very silly hat, families have gathered around the TV to watch the Queen share her special message, reflecting on the year that has passed and sharing her hopes for the future.

Imagine you are the Queen (or King) what would your message be? What could you say or do to share a message of peace? Create a message to share with your loved ones on Christmas Day. You could ask a grown up to video you and then have a special screening. They could also send your message to loved ones that you can't be with this Christmas.

Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you for the prophets Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel who wanted people to live at peace with one another. These people pointed to a Saviour who brought peace to the World and his name was Jesus. May we pray for peace in our homes, our schools, our churches, our country and the world. AMEN



The third candle is for John the Baptist. It is purple.

John the Baptist was a prophet who lived during the time of Jesus. He told people to prepare for the coming of Jesus and would baptise them to bring them into the family of God. He baptised Jesus in the River Jordan. Advent is not just a time to get ready for Jesus' birth but to remember his life and teachings too. Baptism is probably the

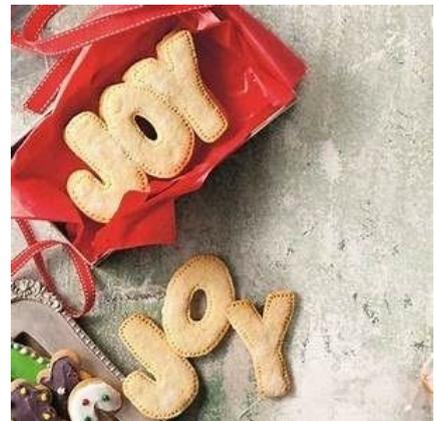
most important moment in Christian life. It marks the time you become a follower of Jesus and become part of the Christian family. Baptism is a time of huge joy and this candle helps us to remember this and how all of us are connected as a family, all the way back to Jesus' own baptism.

Joy to the World

What better way to share a bit of joy than through biscuits.

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp golden syrup
- 60g/2¼oz caster sugar
- 50g/1¾oz butter
- 3 tbsp double cream
- ½ tsp ground ginger
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 175g/6oz plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda



You will need a grown-up to help you!

1. Heat the golden syrup, sugar and butter in a saucepan until the sugar completely dissolves. Remove from the heat and add the cream and spices.
2. Add the flour and bicarbonate of soda, stirring as you add it until you have a loose mixture. Place a sheet of baking paper on a tray and tip the mixture on top. Cover with another piece of baking paper and flatten the dough slightly. Leave to cool in the fridge for 2–3 hours. After this you should have a thick dough.
3. Preheat the oven to 180C/160C Fan/Gas 4.
4. Remove the dough from the fridge and roll between the sheets of paper with a rolling pin until 1cm/½in thick.
5. Dust a work surface and rolling pin with flour and roll the dough out until it about half a cm thick.
6. Cut out J O and Y shaped biscuits and place onto the lined baking tray. Bake the biscuits for 8–10 minutes, or until they are rich brown at the sides and slightly paler in the centre.
7. Once cool, you can decorate them with icing if you would like.

Prayer

Dear God

We thank you for John the Baptist, who baptised Jesus in the River Jordan. John asked people to follow the example of Jesus by being baptised to become members of Jesus' Family. We pray that we may share the joy of knowing Jesus as our friend. May we show that joy too by sharing simple acts of kindness by maybe sharing one of our biscuits with people we know. AMEN

The fourth candle is for Mary. It is pink.

The fourth Sunday in Advent is also called Gaudete which means 'rejoice'. If you were in church you might notice that the priest is wearing pink.

Mary is perhaps the second most important character in the Christmas story. Imagine how she must have felt when an angel came to her and said she would give birth to the son of God?

The Birth of Jesus Foretold Luke 26 -38

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called[a] the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail."

38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled."
Then the angel left her.

On this Sunday we remember Mary's love for her child and her love for God. It is a
reminder of how God loves all of us as his children.

Show some love!

Show some love to the people who take care of us everyday by leaving a Christmas card for the postman, the people who collect your bins and anyone else you can think of who helps you out!

You could even send a card to our local emergency services and NHS staff who have been working really hard this year to keep everyone healthy and safe.

Maidenhead Fire
Station
Bridge Road
Maidenhead
SL6 8PG

Maidenhead Police
Station
Bridge Road
Maidenhead
SL6 8LP

Wexham Park
Hospital
Wexham Park
Slough,
SL2 4HL

Prayer

Dear God,

Mary showed her love for her son Jesus by caring for him when he was young, by supporting him when he was a young man and by following his example of how to live a good life after he had died and risen to New Life. We pray that we may follow the example of Mary by living good lives sharing our love with those in need and those who have taken care of us this year. AMEN

The fifth candle - hang on! There is a fifth candle?

One of the highlights of the year at All Saints is the crib service that takes place in the afternoon on Christmas Eve. We welcome lots of our community in (it is a big squeeze) and we share songs, readings and a short nativity. We also light the fifth candle of Advent, a white candle representing Jesus and we put the figure of baby Jesus into the nativity scene. Sadly we can't open our doors for the crib service this year but we do hope that you will take a few moments on Christmas Eve to say the following prayer.

Prayer

We thank you Lord Jesus that you came at Christmas to share God's hope, peace, joy and love for the world. We pray that Jesus' light may shine in our hearts. AMEN

We hope that you have enjoyed the ideas shared here and that you are able to try some of the activities - especially if you would like to make us biscuits! Whatever your Christmas celebrations look like this year we hope you have a wonderful time, and remember in all of the wrapping paper, lights and sparkle, the greatest gift ever given came from our Lord when he gave us his son Jesus Christ.

Merry Christmas from All Saints Boyne Hill