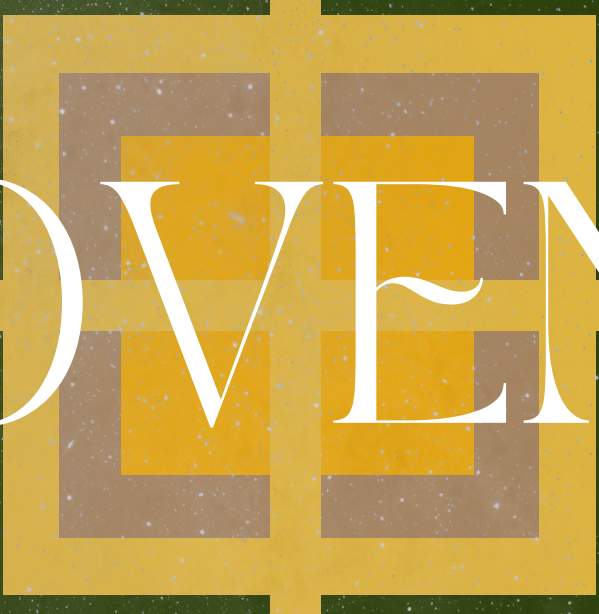


THE GATHERING PRESENTS:



ADVENT

A MOMENT ETERNAL
(SEASONAL GUIDE)



Concordance

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Advent Wednesday Evening Schedule

Advent Week 1 – Contemplation (The Hope in Dwelling on the Lord.) (past and present) (Dec. 3rd)

Advent Week 2 – Anticipation (The Peace in Waiting on the Lord and His Promises.) (Dec. 10th)

Advent Week 3 – Celebration (The Joy in Expressing our Gratitude.) (Dec. 17th)

Advent Week 4 – Culmination.
(Dec. 24th with Christmas on the 25th)

Isaiah 9.1-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. 3 You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. 4 For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. 5 For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. 6 *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given*; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

WHAT IS ADVENT AND ITS IMPORTANCE?

Editorial – Pastor Christian

Advent is the *anticipatory, celebrative,* and *contemplative* time where Christians look forward to the *Nativity*: the catalyst for the *Crucifixion* and the *Resurrection*; to the coming of the Christ to save Humanity; to the *Incarnation* of the Divine Christ in Human Flesh. Advent is an *Eternal Moment*, one of proper *History*, not merely an event, but as a reoccurring *Reality*.

Remembering

Advent is an act of *Remembrance*; a rebellion against the secular consumerism of Christmas.

Much like the anniversary of two wedded Lovers, the *Advent Season* is about recalling, attending, and participating in the story of our greatest *Love*; our *Lord* and our *Savior's* devotion to us and us to Him. We remember through celebration, through contemplation, and through anticipation. We remember *Together* as a *Family* and in the *Secret Place* as devoted *Followers*. Christmas has been diminished by lackluster celebration and hijacked by the world. It is up to us to reclaim the *Eternal Memory* of Christmas, of the *Incarnation*, and Advent is the way we do it.

Welcome to your guide:

Lexicon

Advent: A coming into being or use. A time of Preparation for the Nativity.

Incarnation: The sudden, yet heavily prophesied, appearance of the uncreated and transcendent Christ (*The Word*, *The Logos*) in the flesh of the created, immanent earth.

The Nativity (The Creche): The Birth of Jesus to the Virgin Mary and her husband Joseph, with the Star and the Wisemen and the Shepherds and Angels. This is the moment in time of Advent.

The Eternal Moment: The Advent story is not simply a point in history, but an always applicable truth that transcends time and, through the acts of Contemplation, Anticipation, and Celebration, the participant lives within the Eternal Moment, garnering all the benefits available.

Lexicon

Contemplative – Contemplation allows for the grand revelation of Advent to unfold like an onion.

Better than simply passing off Advent as a good idea or a previous date in time, contemplation bypasses the surface and enables the participant to unveil the deeper truths. Contemplation helps to conform the mind to the subject at hand, opening up avenues of thought previously undisclosed.

Lexicon

Anticipatory – Advent allows the participant proper time to prepare for the culmination of this eternal event through the preparation of mind, will, and body. This causes the timeless value of Advent to reside within the observant as expectation builds. Anticipation breeds excitement, desire, and a suitable conclusion come Christmas Eve when what hoped for is revealed.

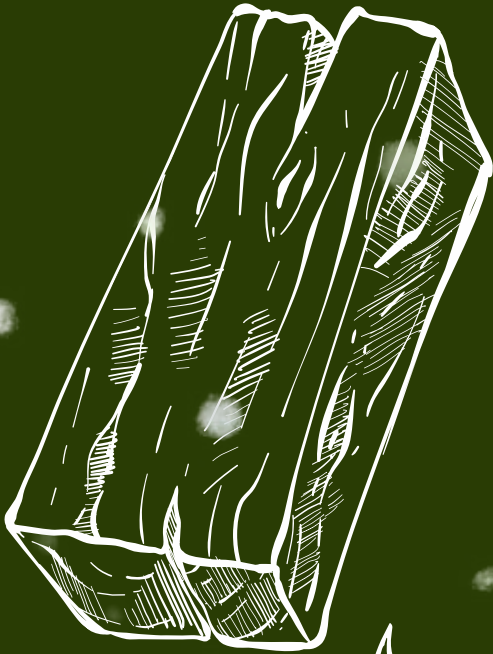
Lexicon

Celebrative – Celebration is the proper response to the Advent Event. When one celebrates something, they declare to themselves and others the value of the thing lauded. Celebration also thrusts the participant into the event/story being lifted up. Proper celebration is akin to a well cultivated memory, and we find we remember better when consistently reviewing and celebrating.

Lexicon

Culminative – Only through contemplation, anticipation, celebration can we properly appreciate and access the full culmination. Like memory, if we do not commemorate, lift up, and actively remember, the edges fade and the benefits are lost to us.

Advent Symbolology



Advent Symbolology

Symbolism is the meeting of higher *Heavenly* meaning and lower *Earthly* happening.

Symbolism is important to the participation and celebration of Advent because it gives purpose to action.

In the contemplation, anticipation, and celebration of the various Advent symbols, we participate in a real way.

Including the use of symbols in prayer, meditation, and festivities allows for the story of Advent/Christmas to be physically real to us.

Use these in your practice:

Advent Symbolology

Advent Wreath



The *Advent Wreath* is a mighty symbol of the Christmas Season. Traditionally made of evergreen branches formed into a circle with 4 candles held within, the evergreen circle is a symbol of *Eternal Life*. Green from the evergreen is considered a symbol of *Hope*. Winter is a desolate time of year, the life of the evergreen contrasts the death of winter.

Candle 1: Hope

Candle 2: Peace

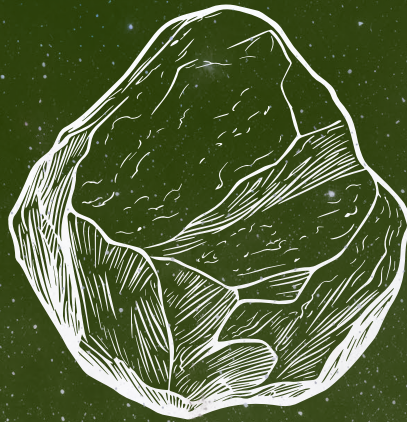
Candle 3: Joy

Candle 4: Love

The candles recall the weeks that pass until Christmas. Purple candles symbolize waiting. Rose or Pink is used on the third Sunday of Advent to symbolize rejoicing, since the Third Sunday of Advent is referred to as Gaudete (Rejoice) Sunday. The light is used as a symbol of Christ being the Light of the World coming through the darkness. Sometimes a white candle is placed in the middle, people use when lit as the representation of Christ entering the world.

Advent Symbolology

The Stone

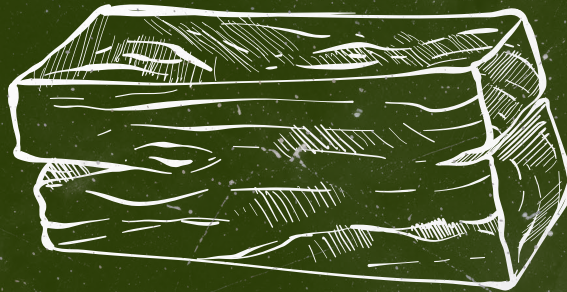


The Stone commemorates the *Incarnation* where
The Word put on *Flesh* (the earth).

1. The stone symbolizes God's commitment to the physical world for Eternity. The Logos was birthed in Earth like the creation of man in Genesis 1.
2. Christ is the stone the builders refused (Matthew 21.42) which became the cornerstone to the whole universe.
3. He is the foundation the wise build their homes (themselves) (Matthew 7:24-27).
4. He is the stone which becomes the Mountain of the Lord in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2.31-35) destroying all other Kingdoms in the Eschaton.
5. He is also the rock stricken by Moses meant to fill all who drink with life giving water (Exodus 17.1-7) (John 4.10).
6. The Patriarch Jacob wandered the wilderness and slept on a rock (Genesis 28.18-22). After his dream of the heavenly ladder, this stone became a monument to God's commitment to Israel, peace, and God's home on Earth.

Advent Symbolology

Wood



The material of a *Carpenter*,
the bed for a *King*, the cross for a *Savior*.

1. The wood symbolizes the humility of Christ in his earthy ministry (Philippians 2.5-11) as wood is generally common.
2. He was not born in a palace, but in a manger with animals (Luke 2.7).
3. Jesus would take up the family trade of craftsman, working with materials such as wood instead of a high governing official or nobleman (Mark 6.1-6).
4. The wood of a carpenter would become the instrument of torture used to crucify Christ, an extremely shameful death for the King of Kings (Acts 2.23).
5. The Temple of Solomon was constructed using Cedar Beams, very strong and elegant. Christ is the cornerstone as well as the structure upholding the eternal temple (2 Kings 6.14-18).

Advent Symbolology

The Chalice



The Chalice is the cup of royalty and contains in it the drink of the King.

Our King Jesus provides drink for our thirst.

1. As natural water is contained in the sea or in pools, so does the *Chalice* contain the *Living Water* provided by Christ (John 5.1-15).
2. Water is symbolic of the breaking of water in Labor. The Virgin Mary will give birth to Jesus in natural birth (John 3.1-15).
3. Water is representative of chaos as in the water covering over the unformed earth (Genesis 1.1-2). Christ orders chaos and the Leviathan (symbolic of chaos).
4. Christ would both calm and walk upon the chaos waters (Matthew 14:22-33).
5. Water is also present in *Baptism*, the act of dying and resurrecting into Christ's sacrifice (Romans 6:3-11.) The Baptism waters cleanse and regenerate. The Chalice is the Baptismal Fount in which we submerge and drink.
6. Water is also seen as the satisfactory refreshment of life/*Eternal Life*, the woman at the well encounters the one who gives *Living Water* (John 4.1-15).

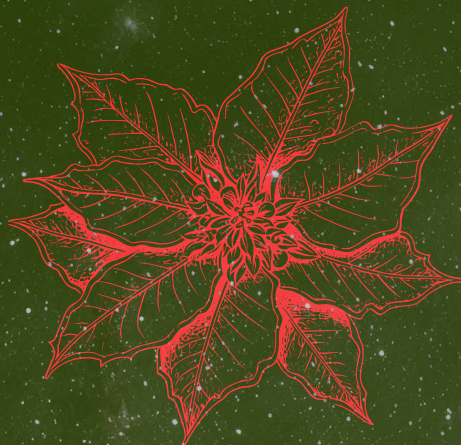
Advent Symbology

Miscellaneous



Holly symbolizes the Crown of Thorns that the Savior will wear during His Passion.

The thorns His crown. The berries the drops of Blood He shed. Moreover, the holly is held by tradition to be of the same plant as the wood of the Cross was said to come from.



Poinsettias, *Flores de Noche Buena*, or flowers of the Holy Night. Legend has it a poor girl, *Pepita*, had no present to give to baby Jesus at holiday services.

On the way to church, her cousin Pedro said, "Baby Jesus will be made happy by even the smallest gift." *Pepita* picked a handful of weeds outside the church and made them into a small bouquet. She put the weeds at the bottom of the nativity scene. Suddenly they burst into bright red flowers.

It was declared a miracle.



Bells herald the coming of something good or impending. During Christmas, bells are attached to doors, Christmas trees, and even cars. When you hear the ringing, be reminded of Christ's coming as a baby and His return to the trumpets of angels. The bells break us of our monotony and fill our hearts with cheer.



THE GATHERING PRESENTS:



ADVENT

SCHEDULE

Advent Week 1

Luke 1.68-79

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people 69 and *has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David*, 70 as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, 71 *that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us*; 72 to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, 73 the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us 74 that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, 75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. 76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, 77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, 78 because of *the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high 79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*”

Advent Week 1

Action: Contemplation

The Hope in Dwelling on the Lord:

Week 1 is devoted to *The Hope of the Coming Christ*, remembering Israel's darkness and hope for the Messiah; the one to shine a *light* in the *darkness*. The Incarnation is the hope of God's salvation to men, accessed through the meditation and dwelling on the Lord's word. *Contemplating* the ways in which God brings salvation is key. Often Hope becomes differed through disappointment. When Hope is lost the heart grows cold and we grow sick. During the Advent season we must keep our thought on Christ, *The Hope of Glory*.

Advent Calendar

Use for your daily devotion.

Dec. 1: Psalm 33 (Special
Emphasis (s.e.) on V. 18)

Dec. 2: Psalm 71 (s.e. V. 14)

Dec. 3: Psalm 42 (s.e. V. 11)

Dec. 4: Jeremiah 29 (s.e. V. 10-14)

Dec. 5: 1 Timothy 4 (s.e. V. 10)

Dec. 6: Psalm 130 (s.e. V. 5-7)

Dec. 7: Isaiah 42 (s.e. V. 6-7)

Advent Week 2

Luke 2.25-32

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, *waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him*. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, 28 he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, 29 "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; 30 for my eyes have seen your salvation 31 *that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.*"

Advent Week 2

Action: Anticipation

The Peace in Waiting on the Lord and His Promises.

The 2nd week of Advent is focused on *Peace* and the *Anticipation* of God's promises. Christ is the *Prince of Peace* and this peace is connected to the Rest of the 7th Day of Creation. Rest in the ancient world is achieved through the conquering of the enemy. King Solomon achieves rest when David's enemies are defeated. *The Incarnation* is the moment of creation where all of Hell is put on notice. We live in this inbetween time where Christ reigns but darkness still runs rampant. Because of this there is a peace necessary to our daily walk; a peace which passes all understanding built on *anticipating the promises* made by a faithful God. During week 2, lean into your anticipation, seeking peace in the time of waiting for that which God has promised. We do not grow weary in the waiting but are strengthened in our hunger and thirst for God.

Advent Calendar

Use for your daily devotion.

Dec. 8: Isaiah 26 (s.e. V. 3-4)

Dec. 9: Psalm 37 (s.e. V. 7, 39-40)

Dec. 10: Isaiah 40 (s.e. V. 31)

Dec. 11: Isaiah 64 (s.e. V. 4-5)

Dec. 12: Psalm 62 (s.e. V. 1-2, 5-8)

Dec. 13: John 14 (s.e. V. 27)

Dec. 14: Philippians 4 (s.e. V. 6-9)

Advent Week 3

Luke 2.8-14

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 10 And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, *I bring you good news of great joy* that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” 13 *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,* 14 *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”*

Advent Week 3

Action: Celebration

The Joy in Expressing our Gratitude.

Week 3 is all about *Celebration* as we come closer and closer to the coming of our Savior – Christ in the flesh. Celebration and *Gratitude* are joined at the hip; Joy expressed in *Thanksgiving*.

Celebration is something lost on modern Christianity, especially with Evangelicals (Descendants of Puritans) who don't observe a liturgical calendar. Like the Israelites commanded to remember the *Feasts* and *Holy Days*, celebrations help people place themselves in the Eternal Moment of God's purposes and moves. We Christians should be better than anyone at celebrating; we have more to be thankful for!

Celebrating during Advent looks like being immersed in the *Christmas Spirit* — feasting with friends, singing songs/carols, decorating your house or office, baking delicious goods, giving to the poor, inviting people to your house or party, gift giving, putting up with more annoyance because “*Hey, its Christmas!*” — all done with gratitude. When we actively celebrate, we tell the world of the Joy we possess.

Advent Calendar

Use for your daily devotion.

Dec. 15: Philippians 4 (s.e. V. 4-7)

Dec. 16: Psalm 16 (s.e. V. 7-9)

Dec. 17: Romans 15 (s.e. V. 8-13)

Dec. 18: Psalm 118 (s.e. V. 1,19-24)

Dec. 19: Isaiah 55 (s.e. V.12-13)

Dec. 20: Psalm 30 (s.e. V. 11-12)

Dec. 21: Jeremiah 31 (s.e. V. 4-6,7,
12-14)

Advent Calendar

The Culmination
December 22-25

(Love Revealed)

Use for your daily devotion.

Dec. 22: John 3 (s.e. V. 16-21)

Dec. 23: Psalm 143 (s.e. V. 7-8)

Dec. 24: Romans 8 (s.e. V. 31-35)

Dec. 25: Revelation 21(s.e. V. 1-5)



THE GATHERING PRESENTS:



ADVENT

*SEASONAL MATERIALS:
ART, TOOLS, CAROLS,
AND SUPPLEMENTUM*



Beauty and Art

Beauty is the visible depiction of the *Good* and *Art* is the presentation of *Beauty*. Since the *Birth of Christ*, artists far and wide have sought to represent the monumental moments of the Christmas story with excellence and reverence. In our preparation for Christmas, we should take the time to immerse ourselves in the instances of beauty and the celebration of the *Nativity* as well as the Christian cultural expressions of the Season. From Raphael to Norman Rockwell, stone carvings to Salvador Dalí, the Goodness of Christmas is well on display.

Take a look and contemplate the *Themes*, *Beauty*, and *Festivities*:

Beauty and Art



The Sistine Madonna by Raphael



The Annunciation
Fra Filippo Lippi



The Adoration of the Kings
Jan Gossaert



The Dream of Saint Joseph
Philippe de Champaigne



Adoration of the Magi
Sir Peter Paul Rubens



The Birth of Saint
John the Baptist
Bartolomé Esteban
Murillo

Nativity of Christ



Image of the Birth of
our Lord Jesus Christ 35



Detail from the Sarcophagus of
Adelfia (2nd quarter, 4th century)

Detail from the
Nativity
tympanum,
Trogir
Cathedral,
Croatia



Jesus Christ
lying in a
manger is on
view at the
Byzantine
Museum in
Athens.

Merry Christmas
Viggo Johansen



Three Wise Men
Salvador Dali

Merry Christmas,
Grandma
Norman Rockwell



Tree of Life
Gustav Klimt



Christmas Eve
Gustav Dore

The Coming of
Father Christmas





Sunset over the Winter Forest
Heinrich Gogarten



Man Tangled Up in
Christmas Decorations
Al Brule

Soldiers' Christmas
Wojciech Kossak



Christmas Eve
Carl Larsson

Blotter
Peter Doig



Carol Singers
Gunning King



Christmas in Madison Square Park
Paul Cornoyer



Winter Landscape with Deer and Ravens
Heinrich Gogarten



Sunset Landscape Painting
Heinrich Gogarten



Christmas at the Courthouse
Thomas Kinkade



Annunciation to the Shepherds
Rembrandt

Tips on Celebrating

Christians have celebrated Christmas in a myriad of ways, each meant to infuse the *Christmas Spirit* into the *Participant*. We who celebrate should not be shy about it, rather through *Decoration*, *Practice*, and *Communal Activity* we bring Christmas to the cultural fore. Don't play it safe or *minimal* during Christmas. *Festivity* is part of exercising memory.

Tips on Celebrating

1. *Charity* – Christian Feasts were synonymous with giving to the poor, whether alms or inviting the poor to feast with you.
2. *Decoration* – Scripture is filled with references to precious stone and other ornamental uses of worship. Christmas Decor: Pine/Fir Tree, Lights, Nativity Set (*The Creche*), etc. Get the children involved.
3. *Baking/Cooking* – Christmas Tradition is filled with savory/sweet treats. Nothing fills the soul up with joy like a festive baked good or a deliciously prepared meal.
4. *Fasting* – Advent is about preparation, and nothing prepares us like *Fasting*. While we anticipate the coming of Christ in the feasts, let us take some time to forgo food and combat gluttony.
5. *Feasting* – Eating together is paramount to Christmas. When we share a table we declare brotherhood, fidelity, and good will. Welcome people into your feasts and enjoy the goodness of food with a mind set to gratitude.

Tips on Celebrating

6. *Gift Giving* – Gifts have become the central theme of Christmas for the consumeristic world, but giving gifts is more than corporate greed. To give something to someone is to love them, to sacrifice for them, and to honor them. Make the gifts more quality minded than quantity minded. Make it a point to also give to those who have little.
7. *Serving* – The Christ came as a servant, in the form of a baby. He served humanity. During this *Holy Time*, let us find ways to help out or serve our family, community, church; giving of our time and kindness.
8. *Literature/Movies* – Christmas stories fill us with cheer, festivity, and put our mind in the *Spirit of Christmas*. Take the time to put on the classics and remind yourself of what Christmas is all about (e.g. Charles Dickens a Christmas Carol, It's a Wonderful Life, The Incarnation by St. Athanasius, etc.)
9. *Music* – Christmas music helps fill our world with the sounds of Christmas. Avoid the annoying commercial Muzak and go for the classic sounds of Winter, fun, and Christmas Cheer.
10. *Church Attendance* – The Mass in Christmas (dress nicely). Make sure to attend service and keep your attention on the Holy Time of Advent. Encourage family to attend church and participate with the body of Christ in this wonderful time of Hope, Joy, Peace, and Love.

Songs, Carols, and Poems

What is Christmas without Music? What are celebrations without singing? *Christmas Carols* date back to the 129 AD the *Angel's Hymn* (*Angels We Have Heard On High*) was decreed by the Bishop of Rome, *Telesphous* to be sung at Christmas services. Music has been a part of worship and gratitude since before humanity existed. Our *Christian History* is filled with the lyrics, poetry, melodies of Christians unapologetically pouring out adoration to God and allowing us, the participant, to remember.

Read these throughout Advent and allow your heart to interpret along side your mind. And if you're feeling extra grateful, perhaps sing a lyric or two...

Angels We have Heard on High (Angels Hymn)

Angels we have heard on high
Singing sweetly o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria,
in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be,
Which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria,
in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him Whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King:
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"

Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"
Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail th'incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel. [Refrain]

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.

Ben Jonson's Carol

Ben Jonson

I sing the birth was born tonight,
The Author both of life and light:
The angels so did sound it,
The angels so did sound it, so did sound it,
The like the ravished shepherds said,
Who saw the light and were afraid,
Yet searched, and true they found it,
Yet searched, and true they found it,
True they found it, and true they found it.

The Son of God, the eternal King,
That did us all salvation bring,
And freed the world from danger,
And freed the world from danger, freed from danger,
He whom the whole world could not take,
The Word which heaven and earth did make,
Was now laid in a manger,
Was now laid in a manger
In a manger, laid in a manger.

What comfort do we by Him win,
Who made Himself the price of sin,
To make us heirs of glory!
To make us heirs of glory, heirs of glory!
To see this Babe, all innocence,
A Martyrs born in our defense--
Can man forget the story,
Can man forget,
Can man forget the story,
Forget the story?
Can man forget the story?

Wartime Christmas

Joyce Kilmer

Led by a star, a golden star,
The youngest star, an olden star,
Here the kings and the shepherds are,
Akneeling on the ground.

What did they come to the inn to see?
God in the Highest, and this is He,
A baby asleep on His mother's knee
And with her kisses crowned.

Now is the earth a dreary place,
A troubled place, a weary place.
Peace has hidden her lovely face
And turned in tears away.

Yet the sun, through the war-cloud, sees
Babies asleep on their mother's knees.
While there are love and home—and these—
There shall be Christmas Day.

On the Morning of Christ's Nativity

John Milton

This is the month, and this the happy morn,
Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal King,
Of wedded maid and Virgin Mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring;
For so the holy sages once did sing,
That he our deadly forfeit should release,
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.

II

That glorious Form, that Light unsufferable;
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
Wherewith he wont at Heaven's high council-table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside, and, here with us to be,
Forsook the Courts of everlasting Day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

III

Say, Heavenly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein
Afford a present to the Infant God?
Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn strain,
To welcome him to this his new abode,
Now while the heaven, by the Sun's team untrod,
Hath took no print of the approaching light,
And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons bright?

IV

See how from far upon the Eastern road
The star-led Wisards haste with odours sweet!
Oh! run; prevent them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at his blessed feet;
Have thou the honour first thy Lord to greet,
And join thy voice unto the Angel Quire,
From out his secret altar touched with hallowed fire.

Christmas Morn

Anna de Brémont

There's a holy light like a beacon bright,
Afar over land and sea.
Soft its lambent ray o'er the broad earth plays
With a rosy dancing glee,
And the topmost peak of the mountains bleak
Blush fair in the glowing morn.
Over wood and tarn sweeps the glorious dawn
To herald the Child-Christ born.

White the sea-waves fling like an angel's wing
The foam as their blue crests rise,
While each gallant ship, with a skim and a dip,
In the wind's lap speeding flies;
And the sailor's song is borne along
The breeze of the golden morn,
For joyous he sings as the mast he swings
To herald the Child-Christ born.

In the land of snow where the keen winds blow
And the ice-king holds his sway,
A glittering sheen on the plains is seen,
As tribute to him they pay.
While merrily sing with a peal and a ring
The bells on the crystal morn,
As gayly they chime with silvery rhyme
To herald the Child-Christ born.

Continued

To his sea-girt home, where'er he may roam,
Speed the thoughts of Briton's son.
In city or plain, on the crested main,
The heart of the absent one
Again in his dreams with ecstasy seems
To swell in the happy morn,
As he hears the voice of his loved rejoice,
To herald the Child-Christ born.

In dreams borne along, he joins the glad throng,
The riot and wassail gay;
And the boar's head bold as in Nowel old
Brave crowns the feast of the day;
The holly's red blush 'mid the ivy's crush;
The mistletoe greets the morn
With kisses to claim in love's holy name,
To herald the Child-Christ born.

Then Charity sweet with most gracious feet
Walks forth o'er the smiling land,
To widow's relief, to fatherless grief,
She bringeth a helping hand.
For peace and good-will the whole world doth fill
With the dawn of the Nowel morn.
Let every heart sing a glad welcoming,
To herald the Child-Christ born.

Heaven Cannot Hold Him

Christina Rossetti

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak midwinter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty
Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim
Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk
And a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore.

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air;
But only His mother
In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a Wise Man
I would do my part,—
Yet what I can I give Him,
Give my heart.

The Three Kings of Cologne

John Henry Hopkins Jr

From out Cologne there came three kings
To worship Jesus Christ, their King.
To Him they sought fine herbs they brought,
And many a beauteous golden thing;
They brought their gifts to Bethlehem town,
And in that manger set them down.
Then spake the first king, and he said:
"O Child, most heavenly, bright, and fair!
I bring this crown to Bethlehem town
For Thee, and only Thee, to wear;
So give a heavenly crown to me
When I shall come at last to Thee!"
The second, then. "I bring Thee here
This royal robe, O Child!" he cried;
"Of silk 'tis spun, and such an one
There is not in the world beside;
So in the day of doom requite
Me with a heavenly robe of white!"

Continued

The third king gave his gift, and quoth:
"Spikenard and myrrh to Thee I bring,
And with these twain would I most fain
 Anoint the body of my King;
So may their incense sometime rise
 To plead for me in yonder skies!"

Thus spake the three kings of Cologne,
That gave their gifts, and went their way;
And now kneel I in prayer hard by
 The cradle of the Child to-day;
Nor crown, nor robe, nor spice I bring
 As offering unto Christ, my King.

Yet have I brought a gift the Child
May not despise, however small;
For here I lay my heart to-day,
 And it is full of love to all.
Take Thou the poor but loyal thing,
My only tribute, Christ, my King!

Recipes:



Pistachios – or better known as the Christmas nut – is a great treat for Christmas; their Middle-Eastern origin harkens back to the times of Bethlehem.

Taylor Brandl's Pistachio Coffee Syrup.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup roasted lightly salted pistachios chopped
- ½ teaspoon almond extract or flavoring (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine the sugar, water, and pistachios in a small pan. Bring to a boil, stirring until the sugar is dissolved, then lower the heat to a simmer.
2. Simmer for 8-10 minutes.
3. Remove from heat. Let the syrup rest for 15 minutes to infuse the flavor.
4. Strain through cheesecloth and a fine mesh strainer. Store in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.
5. Add to Coffee and Enjoy.

Recipes:

Pastor Jeff's *Christmas Rouladen*

Ingredients:

- 2 (6 ounce) (1/4 inch thick) slices of beef round
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 4 strips bacon
- paprika, or to taste
- 1/2 onion, sliced into half-rings and separated
- 6 dill pickle spears
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- Gravy: 2 tablespoons butter 1/4 cup all-purpose flour 3 cups beef broth salt to taste



Rouladen is a traditional German dish of thinly sliced meat, typically beef, rolled up with a filling of bacon, onions, and pickles, and then braised in a rich gravy.

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1

Place slices of beef on a work surface, Season both sides with kosher salt and pepper. Spread one side with mustard. Place bacon strips on the mustard and sprinkle with paprika. Arrange onion slices cross-wise on the beef. Then evenly space 3 pickle slices across each slice of beef. Keep about an inch of the narrowest end of the beef slice free of toppings to facilitate rolling it up.

Step 2

Roll each slice of meat, beginning from the wider of the two short ends, working to keep all ingredients inside the roll. Rolls should be nice and tight. Secure the rolls (seam side down) with 3 loops of butcher's twine, one in the middle and one at each end. Trim excess string.

Step 3

Heat vegetable oil over medium-high heat in a large saucepan. Cook beef, turning and browning well on all sides, about 8 minutes. Remove meat from pan. Reduce heat to medium-low. Melt butter in the pan; whisk in the flour, cooking for about 1 minute. Pour in cold beef broth and whisk vigorously to combine. Raise heat to medium-high and simmer until sauce begins to thicken, about 1 minute.

Step 4

Transfer beef rolls to pan along with accumulated juices. Reduce heat to very low. Simmer gently, covered, turning rolls every 20 minutes or so, until beef is tender, about 1 1/2 hours. When the tip of a sharp knife can easily be inserted into the beef roll, the meat is done. Transfer meat to dish to allow it to rest. Raise heat to high and bring cooking liquid to a simmer to thicken slightly to make a gravy, about 1 minute. Serve Rouladen with gravy.

Recipes:

James Turner's Mother's Sweet Potato Pie (Georgia Sweet Potato Pie)

Ingredients:

- Pastry for 1 crust pie
- 1½ cups sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1½ cups mashed sweet
potato
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
flavoring
- 1 stick butter
- 1 small can evaporated
milk
- Cream eggs and sugar.



“My mom’s sweet potato pie recipe was my favorite from childhood. Due to a large family and guests at Christmas, she would bake over a dozen pies for Christmas Day. I could eat a whole pie myself.”

—James

INSTRUCTIONS

Add sweet potato, vanilla flavoring, and melted butter. Last, add milk. Mix well. Put in unbaked pie shell. Bake for 1 hour at 350 degrees F.

Yield: 8 servings.

Recipes:

Jaime Edward's Turkey Meatball Soup



Ingredients:

Meatballs:

- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1 egg
- 1/2 C breadcrumbs
- 1/2 C Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp onion powder
- 1/2 tsp pepper

Soup:

- 1 onion, diced
- 2 large carrots, diced
- 2 large stalks of celery, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 quart chicken broth
- 2 cups of water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 C cooked orzo

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix all meatball ingredients together in a bowl and form into golf ball size balls. Set aside. Sauté chopped veggies in 2 tablespoons of EVOO and salt in a large pot until translucent, 5-7 min. Add broth and water. Bring to a boil and add meatballs. Cook for 30-45 min. Serve with cooked orzo.

Recipes:

Kerri Andrew's Mom's Jiffy Cobbler

Ingredients:

- ¼ Ib. Butter or Margarine
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup flour
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tsp baking powder
- fruit of choice



INSTRUCTIONS

Melt ¼ Ib. of butter or margarine in 9x9 pan. While this is melting – beat together: 1 cup milk, 1 cup flour, 1 cup sugar, 2tsp baking powder, pinch of salt, 1 tsp vanilla. Dump on top of melted butter. On top of this put a large can of sliced peaches drained, or apples (3-4) partially cooked (any fruit of choice is fine.) Bake 375 for 20-25 min.

Recipes:

Taylor Brandl's Chocolate Crinkles

Ingredients:

- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 4 eggs
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 2 cups white sugar
- 1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar



“Christmas isn’t Christmas without something sweet and chocolatey. Crinkles are just that: a perfect wintry treat. Pairs well with coffee.”

–Taylor

INSTRUCTIONS

Cook 12 min. Ready In 5 h. Prep 20 min.

Bake in preheated oven for 10 to 12 minutes. Let stand on the cookie sheet for a minute before transferring to wire racks to cool. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. Roll dough into one inch balls. I like to use a number 50 size scoop. Coat each ball in confectioners' sugar before placing onto prepared cookie sheets. In a medium bowl, mix together cocoa, white sugar, and vegetable oil. Beat in eggs one at a time, then stir in the vanilla. Combine the flour, baking powder, and salt; stir into the cocoa mixture. Cover dough, and chill for at least 4 hours.

Refrigerate 4 hours

Recipes:

Pastor Rachael's Old Fashioned Divinity Candy

Ingredients:

- 2 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 2 egg whites room temperature
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract



This Old Fashioned Divinity Candy Recipe is a wonderful, Southern confection that is perfect for adding to a plate of goodies to share with loved ones during the holidays!

INSTRUCTIONS

Prep Time: 5 mins. Cook Time: 15 mins. Total Time: 20 mins. Servings: 40 pieces

Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper or a silpat mat and set aside. In a large saucepan over medium heat, combine the sugar, water, corn syrup and salt and cook, stirring occasionally, just until the mixture starts to boil. Then clip a candy thermometer to the side of the pan and continue to cook without stirring until the temperature reaches 260°F, about 8-10 minutes. 2 1/2 cups granulated sugar, 1/2 cup water, 1/2 cup light corn syrup, 1/8 teaspoon salt While the sugar mixture is cooking, beat the egg whites on high speed using a stand mixer with a whisk attachment until stiff peaks form. Then switch to the paddle attachment. 2 egg whites Once the sugar mixture reaches 260°F, remove from heat and very slowly pour it in a thin, steady stream, over the egg whites while mixing on high speed. It should take about 2 minutes to pour the hot liquid over the egg whites, so go slow and don't rush this step. Continue to beat on high speed for another 5-8 minutes until the candy loses some of its glossiness and starts to hold its shape. You can stop mixing and test a small amount of candy by dropping a small spoonful of it onto the parchment paper to see if it holds its shape in a nice mound with nice swirls on top or if it melts down into a puddle. Continue to beat a minute or two longer if the divinity doesn't hold its shape yet, test again. Mix in the vanilla and the chopped pecans when the candy stays in a mound instead of melting into itself. 1 cup chopped pecans, 1 teaspoon vanilla extract Using two spoons sprayed lightly with cooking spray, drop tablespoon size scoops of divinity onto the prepared baking sheet, using one spoon to scrape the hot candy off the other spoon. You will want to work quickly while the candy is still hot. Let the candy set, then store for up to 5 days in an airtight container.

Recipes:

Mrs. Tuttle's Bob Evan's Sweet Potatoes

Ingredients

- Butter
- Cinnamon
- Bob Evan's Sweet Potatoes
- Microwave



“Yeah, that’ll do.”

—Anne Tuttle

From the good people at Bob Evan's:

With delicious Bob Evans® Sweet Potato Mashed Potatoes, you'll be ready in no time to put creamy comfort on the table. Ready in just a handful of minutes, they're the no-fuss way to share great taste. Simply add a main, and your meal is complete! You can rest assured you're sharing the very best with your family because Bob Evans Sweet Potato Mashed Potatoes are made with real fresh sweet potatoes and brown sugar. Try our rich, creamy mashed potatoes as a side for an easy heat and eat meal, or make a get-together a bit easier by taking one must-make side off the list. After all, the second you warm them up, they're homemade.

Contains: Sweet Potatoes, Skim Milk, Brown Sugar, Butter (Cream, Salt), Contains 1/2% or Less of the Following: Salt, Spice, Xanthan Gum, Disodium Pyrophosphate (to Maintain Color), Potassium Sorbate and Sodium Bisulfite (to Maintain Freshness).

Warm Regards

From the Gathering Staff to your household, we wish you a very exciting Advent and a very Merry Christmas. Contemplate, Anticipate, and Celebrate more than you ever have before. This is the time to be unashamedly pro-Christmas in all its multi-dimensional facets. Smile warmly, give generously, worship joyfully, fast diligently, feast heartily, forgive liberally, participate vigorously, and, above all, love well.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.