

Introduction

Advent is often described as a time of waiting. We wait for Christmas, of course, but Advent invites us to think about something much bigger than simply counting down the days until December 25th.

During these weeks we will be looking at some of the Bible's great Advent themes: hope, promise, waiting, preparation, joy and the coming of Christ. We will hear from prophets who spoke to people facing difficult and uncertain times; from apostles who encouraged Christians to remain faithful and hopeful; and from the Gospel writers as they tell us about those who prepared the way for Jesus.

The readings may sometimes seem to be looking in different directions. Some look back at what God has already done, others forward to what God will do, while others ask us to consider how we live in the present. But they are all part of the same story.

And perhaps that is what makes Advent so special. We look back to Christ's coming at Bethlehem, we look around us for Christ's presence today, and we look forward to the day when Christ will come again.

So, these studies are not simply about getting ready for Christmas. They allow us to pause in the middle of a busy season, listen to God's word, discuss some questions, and allow ourselves to wonder again at a story we may think we know so well.

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