



Fox River Life

Merry Christmas



The proceeding article was written by Ryan Shelton who is the worship director of Winnetka Bible Church in the suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. He is also an

author who has written extensively on Advent. I hope you enjoy his musings on the Seven Potential Benefits of Observing Advent. May the Lord make himself more known to you this Advent season than ever before.

***In His Name & For His Glory,
Pastor Tim***

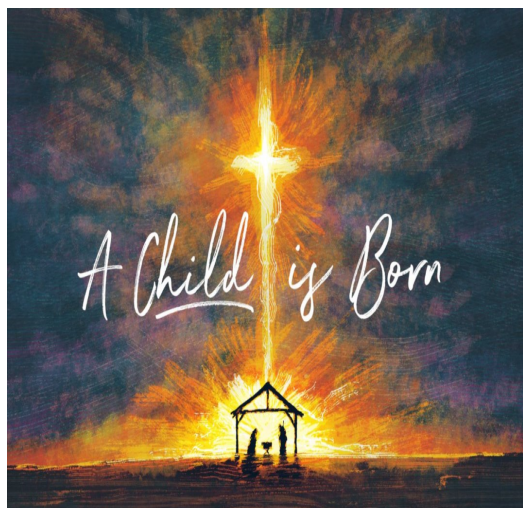
I grew up in one of the branches of the church that did not celebrate Advent. Before the leftover turkey disappeared from the refrigerator, we were in full-blown Christmastide through December 25. I was in my twenties before I was introduced to the tradition of Advent, and it frankly did not have much appeal right away. What was the value of four weeks of longing and expectation? It seems so contradictory to the prevailing atmosphere of festive, cheery glow in the shopping malls. But I have grown to love Advent. And though it is not a mandated observance in Scripture, there are profitable reasons to consider making Advent part of your holiday rhythm. Here are seven potential benefits of observing Advent.

1. Advent reminds us we are not the center of God's plan.

Advent is an opportunity to refresh your perspective that God has a grand plan for history that is so much larger than just you and your

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Micah 5:2

*- But you, O Bethlehem Ephra-
thah, who are
too little to be
among the clans
of Judah, from
you shall come
forth for me one
who is to be ruler
in Israel, whose
coming forth is
from of old, from
ancient days.*

From the Pastor's Desk (cont.)

kin. For all the emphasis on gift-giving and sentimentality that characterizes our cultural holiday, we can tend to focus on our small circles of friends. So in the midst of a season that might shrink our gaze, Advent reminds us to pan the camera back out to the larger scope of God's purposes for history.

Before the foundation of the world, God wrote "the book of life of the Lamb who was slain" (Revelation 13:8), a story culminating in the marriage of the Lamb and his Bride (Revelation 19:7). What a marvel that we are spectacularly included in this grand plan, but we are not individually the main characters in this story. The expectation of Advent points our gaze to a far grander story than our sentimental yuletide inclinations.

2. Advent reminds us of generations of saints longing for the Messiah.

Not long ago, it was a luxury to have two-day shipping for online purchases. Now you can have your purchase show up in just a matter of hours. Do modern people even have a category for longing, pining, and waiting? Advent gives us an opportunity to imagine the long-awaited coming of the Messiah, who was promised thousands of years before his arrival in Bethlehem (John 8:56; Hebrews 11:13). Generations of saints had promises from God in Scripture, and types that heightened their yearning for the coming One.

As we imagine ourselves in this kind of expectation, we begin to see glimpses of how Jesus expected his disciples to see predictions for his ministry in the entire collection of Scriptures (Luke 24:27, 44), not simply a few isolated prophecies. With this kind of yearning, the pages of the Hebrew Bible rustle with Jesus from Genesis to Chronicles.

3. Advent connects us to centuries of church tradition.

Church tradition is not our final authority like Scripture, but we are not the first generation to seek to live faithfully to God's word. We are naïve to blindly disregard a practice that has been fruitful for so many citizens of God's Kingdom. We should remember our leaders, and consider the outcome of their faith (Hebrews 13:7), and celebrating Advent is an opportunity to imitate the faith of many faithful leaders who have gone before us. We can avoid what C.S. Lewis called "chronological snobbery" by letting the voices of seasoned saints offer wisdom



"Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness." Psalm 29:2

Christmas Stockings for Brewster Village

We are once again providing Christmas Blessings to the residents of Brewster Village. Sunday, December 4 is the last day to contribute items to the collection of sweet treats and small, practical items to fill the stockings that will be given to each Villager. Then on Sunday, December 11, after Sunday School, the congregation will gather to fill the stockings.

The activity will also include attaching an enveloped Christmas card to each stocking. The card will have a greeting from "Your Friends at Fox River Baptist Church." The message will read: "May Jesus be the reason for your joy this Christmas season." The envelope will also contain a tract that asks the question, "What would you consider to be the perfect Christmas gift?" After suggesting a few ideas, the tract explains, "...there is one gift to which nothing can compare. It is the perfect gift of eternal life (Heaven)."

The tract continues with a simple explanation of the gift of salvation, covering the points: 1. We have all sinned. 2. Sin has a penalty. 3. Jesus Paid the Penalty. 4. Believe on Jesus Today! After the suggested prayer, the recipient will see our name, Fox River Baptist Church, and how to reach us with any questions or needs.

We thank the Lord for your participation in this evangelistic outreach. May God bless all who receive the cheery stockings and the gift of heaven.

Cookie Exchange

Women of FRBC who like to create sweet treats will gather in the Fellowship Hall at 10:00 Saturday morning, December 10, for a Cookie/Candy Exchange. This fun activity requires a lot of kitchen crafting, but all participant will leave the "party" with a dozen treats from each baker—lots of variety for your Christmas buffet. Yum, yum.

If you are interested in this fun project, please contact Becky Godfrey or Angela Groff right away. We have to know how many ladies are attending so that we know how many dozens of cookies or candy each participant will provide. That day is approaching fast. Hope to see you there.

gifts, families are busy traveling to visit relatives — even social calendars can crowd uncomfortably during December.

Advent provides opportunity to slow the pace, or even comparatively grind it to a halt. Remember the deliberateness of God. He completed his promise “in the fullness of time” (Galatians 4:4). Whether through daily readings, candle-lightings, or other Advent-themed traditions, we resolve to pause and reflect in a season that could otherwise drown out reflection — and be still.

5. Advent teaches us patience.

Patience is a fruit of God’s Spirit (Galatians 5:22). But though it is his work, we may seek out means whereby the Spirit of God can cultivate patience in our hearts. As we observe Advent, God can grow patience in our hearts by demonstrating that God is patient, and not because he is slow (2 Peter 3:9). By remembering the longing for Christ’s first coming, we see God’s mercy. He did not rush into swift destruction of his enemies and triumph of his kingdom — glorious as that will be.

Every moment of God’s patience is an opportunity for repentance for those who would otherwise be destroyed in his final coming (Romans 2:4). During Advent we behold the patience of Jesus, and by beholding him we are transformed more into his likeness by God’s Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18).

6. Advent demonstrates the rarer jewel of Christian discontentment.

Puritan author Jeremiah Burroughs wrote of *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*. And indeed this rare jewel is worth cultivating, especially in view of a mass conspiracy of advertisements designed solely to rob it from you. But not all discontentment ought to be shunned. Where Christian contentment is rare in the vast sea of discontented people, distinctly Christian discontentment may be rarer. How else can the result of the first fruits of the Spirit be groaning inwardly (Romans 8:23)? What are we to make of the souls of martyrs under the altar of God crying out, “How long, O Lord?” (Revelation 6:10)? We do not have to look far to find reasons to grow in righteous discontentment with the sin-broken world around us, and lift up holy cries of lament. Advent uniquely models this in the Christian calendar, as we remember similar cries for the first coming of Christ, and join their refrain for the second coming.

7. Advent fortifies confidence in the promises of God.

Finally, the best application of all of a season of heightened, purposeful remembrance and expectation directs us toward the glorious Second Advent of King Jesus. As we reflect on God’s faithfulness to his promises past, we are reassured in the promises we yet await. Jesus said he is coming soon (Revelation 22:12), and though our concept of soon may seem to have a different calibration than our Lord’s; the Holy Spirit strengthens our faith by tracing the exactitude of God’s faithfulness to the saints long ago. Confidence in the second coming of Christ inspires missions (Matthew 24:14), enables Christian fellowship and mutual encouragement (Hebrews 10:25), and equips us for joyful suffering (Hebrews 10:34).

So if you are like me, and did not grow up with the tradition of Advent in your family or church, consider the benefits to your Christian walk this season by joining many in the Christian faith who have found great benefit in purposefully preparing during Advent for the great celebration of Christmas. Let us join the voices of generations of saints past and present in the refrain, O come, O come, Emmanuel.



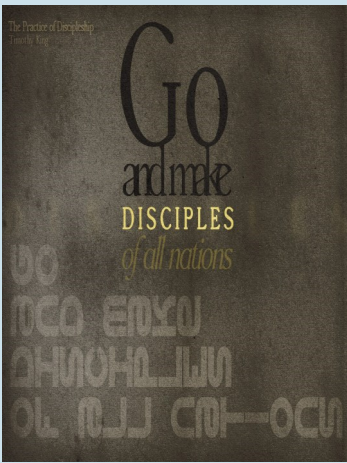
SPECIAL PRAYER REQUEST & PRAISE -

Sofia (5 months old) and Raine (2 months old)

The excitement of the whole shelter could be felt this weekend, as we just admitted two new babies! These are the first children CSC has admitted since before COVID, over two years ago! Government restrictions and closures caused long delays, and we are so thankful for this opportunity to care for these two sweet babies.

They were both referred by the government and were living on the island of Negros. Taking them in at CSC required traveling across the island of Cebu and then taking a boat ride to the other island. It was a long trip for our staff, and they were glad when they arrived back safely at the shelter with the two tired infants! Sofia had a cold with cough when we met her, and she is still dealing with it. Raine is in good health, but he threw up on the doctor when he pressed on his belly!

Will you please pray with us for Raine and Sofia? Please pray for their health and adjustment at CSC. We are so excited to see what God has in store for them



Intentional Discipleship

Sunday School: We have completed the first two lessons of our newest study book, so do not hesitate to join us for Sunday School. We are focusing on the last week of Jesus' life. We will be taking a short break on Christmas and New Year's weekends and picking back up on January 8th. Hope to see you there this month.

Bible Studies: All three of the Men and Women's Bible Studies are going well. Even though we are either in the middle or near the end of the Book of the Bible that each is studying, I would suggest jumping into them if you have been thinking about doing so. Each of the Studies will be breaking for the holidays. Please check with the leader as to when that break will occur. "Come and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." PT

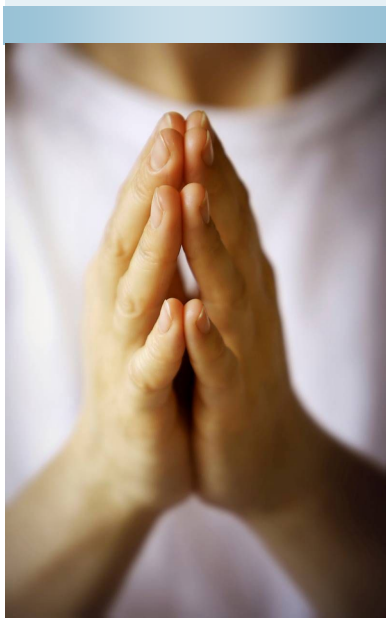
Children's Church

In Children's Church we have finished talking about Noah's Ark. The children built a tower of Babel and acted out the story of Job. Both events show God's faithfulness and sovereignty over all things.

Our focus for the upcoming weeks will be the Saviors birth.

We will be having Children's Church on December 24th 10:00 am.

***We read to know we are not alone. –
C.S. Lewis***



Sunday Evening Services Schedule

December 4— Prayer @5:00pm

December 11—Prayer@ 5:00pm

December 18—Prayer@5:00pm

December 24—10:00 am Christmas Service

December 25— No Service



Financial Update—N, 2022
Budget needed weekly: \$ 2,340.00
Received: \$ 2,244 per week
Contact Mark Wildenberg with questions.



Men's & Women's
Bible Study
Saturdays at 8am

Women's Bible Study
Thursdays at 1:00pm

Women's Prayer
Wednesdays at 9:30am



December 4
Christopher Smith

December 11
Kyle Tubbs

December 18
Ray Rudzinski

December 24
Ryan Smith



Please contact **Carol Smith**
at **(920) 788-9795**
to volunteer for Nursery
ministry. There is a sign-up
sheet at the front desk.

Connect
WITH OUR
CHURCH FAMILY

Missions

“Go Ye into all the World, and preach
the Gospel to every creature.”
Mark 16:15

News from the Missions Board—

We will be working to complete our Policy document as well as discussing the Mission Spotlight, the missions budget, and other miscellaneous items. Members of the board include Ray and Ellen Rudzinski, Mark and Nancy Wildenburg, Steve Krauss, and Rick Hinz.



Young at Heart's December service at Care Partners is **Dec.1**. We lead singing, provide a devotional message, and offer communion the first Thursday of each month. Anyone interested

in joining us in this ministry is welcome to contact Lynn Abitz for more information.

Join us for our next Praise Connection on Friday, **Dec. 2**, 6:30 pm at the Godfrey's home

Matthew 28:19-20

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you

FRBC Vision Statement

We desire that everyone who enters Fox River Baptist Church grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and grow in authentic, loving, familial relationships to make the name of Christ known in our community and world, all for the glory of God and joy of all.



25—Carol Smith

26— Ellen Rudzinski

30—Katie Mlodzik



12—Mike & Samya Johnson's Anniversary

30—Cam & Mary Hurst's Anniversary

Fox River Baptist Church

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baptist.com**

Here at FRBC, we have a prayer chain meant for the sharing of prayer request needs and for sharing praise for the awesome & mighty work God does in our lives. Please feel free to share any praise or request at our new Prayer request email address:

Care to be part of the prayer chain?

Email or call Becky Godfrey at
becl.godfrey@gmail.com —
(920) 277-1526