

**The Sermon - In 10 Sentences or Less**  
Advent 2022 - The Candle of Hope:



1. The Advent candles remind us that when we consider the Advent and Christmas stories in the Bible, we should find hope, peace, joy, and love.
2. And it's important to let those stories define each term for us instead of providing or constructing our own.
3. Though the words "hope" or "hopeful" are never used in the scriptural Advent and Christmas stories, the concept is far from absent: you can find it, for example, in Luke 1.54-55, 1.68-69, and 2.30-32 when we read Mary, Zechariah, and Simeon refer to the "help," "redemption," and "glory" of Israel.
4. As Emmanuelle Katongole, Ugandan pastor who teaches at Duke Divinity School, puts it, this shows us that the first step toward Christian, even Advent, hope is to remember.
5. For the Christian, any hope about the future never supersedes the sure, certain commitments of God in the past, namely as promised by God in the Old Testament (like in Isaiah 9.2-7, 61.1-2, and 65.17-25).
6. Thus, Dietrich Bonhoeffer would tell us to view the entirety of our earthly lives as a kind of "advent," a time of waiting in hope for hope (see Matt. 25.1.-14).
7. The real irony, of course, is that over the course of Jesus' life and ministry many didn't recognize the hope He brought as hope (e.g., the disciples on the road to Emmaus, Lk. 24.21): they had one definition of hope, He offered another...One wonders if we will recognize God's hope as hope when it arrives?
8. Fundamentally what we see in the Advent and Christmas stories is that there is a kind of hope, maybe the deepest and best kind, that must be received...God must give it because we on our own cannot produce or create it.
9. As Rebecca McLaughlin writes in *Is Christmas Unbelievable?*: "If you feel inadequate, I'm glad. This is no self-help book to tell you that you are enough. You're not. And nor am I. We need to know deep down that we are not enough on our own before we can experience the hope only God brings."

10. It's hard not to conclude about Christian hope, as defined by the Advent and Christmas stories, that, in the words of Rev. Jaimie Jarvis (of St. Luke's United Methodist Church—Craigsville, WV) puts it, "What hope do we look forward to that in any way compares to the hope we have in Jesus Christ, the light of the world?"

A P.S. to this summary: during the summer 2022 Q&A sermon series, we devoted a Sunday to how someone can regain hope, which in large part focused on the key psychological differences between "good hope" and "bad hope." You might be interested in revisiting that content, given yesterday's focus on hope in the Advent and Christmas stories: [How Can I Regain Hope? - KirkWood Worship 2022-07-31](#)

### **Advent 2022 Devotionals**

Here are three free Advent devotionals. Any would make a great companion in your personal spiritual life for Advent 2022:

- Brand new from Kate Bowler, church historian at Duke Divinity School: [Advent-2022-printable.pdf](#)
- An interactive, simple devotional guide from The Presbyterian Church of Canada, which might be neat to do with your kids (you can download the PDF from this page): [Advent Devotional for 2022: A Journey to Christmas](#)
- The free daily devotional guide for Advent 2022 from the WV conference of the United Methodist Church: [2022 WVUMC Advent Devotions](#)

### **Interactive Advent Living Room**

Now on our website: INTERACTIVE ADVENT LIVING ROOM

Open the Living Room by clicking on the image on <https://kirkwoodpcusa.org/> Once there, when you click on various items in each Living Room you will be taken to a wonderful collection of stories, devotions for all ages, recipes, outdoor adventures, songs, and crafts. This resource has been created for everyone to have fun while learning and marking our journey to Bethlehem. Check back next week for Advent 2.