



**“Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter. Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord, invincible in battle.”**

(Psalm 24:7-10)

Sisters and Brothers,

In a few days, we begin the season of Advent. Derived from the Latin word “adventus,” which means “coming or arrival,” Advent is marked by expectation, anticipation, waiting, and longing. Despite what many people think, Advent isn’t just an extension of Christmas, but a season that links the past, present, and future. Advent offers us the opportunity to share in the ancient longing for the Messiah, as we intentionally focus on the coming of Jesus—not just in His first advent—as a baby in Bethlehem—but also in His second coming, as King of glory; and His coming into our hearts each and every day through His Holy Spirit.

Advent is a time to open doors. We countdown the days until Christmas with great expectation by opening the doors on a daily Advent Calendar, and peeking inside to find a picture, Scripture, or chocolate. Like Mary and Joseph on the road to Bethlehem, Advent is a time for us to travel, and we open car doors, as we visit family and friends to share in the joy of Christmas together. The doors of stores and malls are flung wide open, as people do their holiday shopping—looking for the perfect gift for that special someone. We open the doors of our homes to welcome friends and family and offer them the gift of our hospitality and love. Oven doors are opened and closed in the weeks leading up to the holidays, as kitchens are filled with the smells of Christmas—sugar cookies, gingerbread, and fruit cake. We open mailboxes to send and receive Christmas cards and holiday greetings to people, both near and far. Church doors are opened, as people gather for special services in anticipation of the celebration of Jesus’ birth. Most importantly, Advent is a time for us to open the door of our hearts and welcome Jesus into our lives anew.

The above passage from Psalm 24 is one of the oldest Advent prayers. First prayed 3,000 years ago in the time of King David—1000 years before Jesus’ birth—this psalm anticipates the coming of a great king who would rescue and redeem God’s people—bringing to completion God’s plan of salvation. Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem, is this King of Glory, and in His birth we celebrate the fulfilment of this psalm, which culminates in Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, His death, and resurrection. The cradle and the cross go together, and our Advent journey celebrates the reality that the light of Christ, which burst into the world 2000 years ago, is the fulfilment of all of God’s promises, bringing love, joy, hope, peace, and life. This is the reason for the season! This is what we celebrate!

As we journey through Advent, I encourage you to make time each day to prepare for the coming of Jesus. I invite you to participate in our Advent and Christmas programs—not as one more thing to do before Christmas—but as an opportunity to reflect on, and enter into, the true meaning of the season. I commend to you the Advent Calendar of Daily Scripture and Reflections on the reverse side of this letter, and the attached list of activities and services, to assist you in your preparation.

Jesus says in Revelation 3:30; “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.” I pray that this Advent and Christmas will be a time for all of us to open the door of our hearts and to welcome Jesus in anew!

Kathy, Jonah, Gracie, Annie and I wish you and your family a blessed Advent and a joy-filled Christmas!

Faithfully,

The Rev. Christopher R. Doering  
Rector & Lead Pastor

