



# Your (Unofficial) Guide to Advent

## The Basics

### WHAT IS ADVENT?

Happy New Year! Advent is the start of the Christian Church Calendar. Advent traditionally starts four Sundays before Christmas Day. The word “Advent” is a mash-up of two Latin words: *adventus* (arrival) + *venire* (come). This makes sense because during Advent we anticipate and prepare for the arrival of the coming (or more accurately the second coming) of Christ and reflect on what that means for us.

### WHY IS EVERYTHING IN CHURCH BLUE OR PURPLE INSTEAD OF CHRISTMAS RED AND GREEN?

Blue is used to symbolize Mother Mary, hope, and anticipation. Purple is often linked to penance and Lent, another time of waiting in the church year.

### WHAT SCRIPTURE IS LINUS QUOTING IN *A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS*?

In *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, Charlie Brown cries: “Isn’t there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?” Linus, with his security blanket, takes center stage and recites the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 2, verses 8–14. During his recital Linus drops his blanket (like a mic) and at the end, picks up his blanket, returns to Charlie Brown, and says: “That’s what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown.” Linus is speaking truth!

### CAN YOU TALK ABOUT SANTA CLAUS IN CHURCH?

Santa Claus and “small c Christmas” go together like hot chocolate and marshmallows. Santa isn’t as good a fit for “big C Christmas”, but Jolly Old Saint Nicholas is! December 6 is Saint Nicholas Day, a wonderful time to celebrate the life of the early Christian bishop. Just like Santa Claus, there is more legend about Saint Nicholas than fact. He is consistently known for his kindness and generosity, especially to the less fortunate.

### WHY DO I GET GIFTS IF IT IS JESUS’ BIRTHDAY?

That’s a good question. What do you think?



*For more facts about the season and ways to prepare for Advent, check out our Advent Unwrapped resources and blogs at the United Church website, or search #adventunwrapped, #uccan on social media channels.*