

FULLY ALIVE

Advent 2023



ST. PETER CHANEL

Roswell, GA • stpeterchanel.org/advent



From the Pastor

My Dear Parish Family,

The phrase "Fully Alive" prompts us to consider its meaning. As our faith deepens and our relationship with Jesus grows, we face the question: "Do we want to please God or trust God?" This choice between doing (pleasing) and being (trusting) is not unlike the contrast between Martha and Mary. Both answers are good, but one is distinctly different. Trusting God is the result of a deeper relationship, a challenging yet transformative experience.

As we embark on Advent, we are being invited to grow in our trusting of God, into a deeper relationship with Jesus. Just like Mary and Joseph trusted God and his plan for them to bring Jesus into the world, how then are we being called, as individuals, and as a community, to bring Christ into the world - in our families, amongst our friends, in the workplace, to our neighbors, and on the sports fields. It is in this understanding that we will uncover what it means to live "fully alive."

The action of bringing Christ to others is the result of having an ever deepening relationship with Jesus and an understanding that He has a unique and specific plan for each of us, no matter what stage of life we are in.

Therefore, I Invite you to intentionally reflect on the question, "What does being fully alive mean to me?" during the Advent season and to then act on what you discern.

Monsignor Peter J. Rau

Why do we celebrate Advent?

Advent is a time of spiritual reflection, penance, and expectation. It is a season of waiting, with a focus on the coming of Christ in three different ways:

- The First Coming: Reflecting on the historical event of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, which is celebrated on Christmas Day.
- The Second Coming: Reflecting on the belief in the future return of Christ at the end of time to judge the living and the dead.
- The Daily Coming: Reflecting on the presence of Christ in the lives of believers through the Holy Spirit, the Eucharist, and the Church.

Advent is marked by various traditions and practices, such as the lighting of Advent candles in an Advent wreath, special Scripture readings, prayers, and hymns that focus on the themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. The liturgical color associated with Advent is purple, symbolizing penance and preparation. A rose-colored candle is lit on the third Sunday of Advent, known as Gaudete Sunday, to signify a sense of joy and anticipation.

Advent is a time for believers to prepare their hearts and minds for the celebration of Christ's birth while also considering the deeper meaning of Christ's coming.

As a parish community we're inviting everyone to an intentional opportunity to prepare for Christmas. Just like Joseph and Mary brought Jesus into the world, God is asking us to prepare to bring Jesus into the world, to others, by the way we live our lives - as His followers.



Advent Themes

Week before Advent begins • The Big Picture

St. Peter Chanel parish, guided by the Holy Spirit, seeks to live out the Great Commission by empowering its members to bring Jesus into their daily lives, inviting others into a relationship with Christ. Our vision is to see people fully alive, rooted in Christ, and reflecting His love and mercy.

Week 1 of Advent • Fully Alive

Being fully alive varies for each person and encompasses: understanding one's identity as a child of God, living the sacramental life, recognizing the Holy Spirit's work, answering a unique calling, serving others, exuding joy and confidence, radiating peace, being welcoming, and showing genuine care for those around them.

Week 2 of Advent • Rooted in Christ

To be Fully Alive, we must acknowledge our identity as God's children and the love of Jesus Christ. Being Rooted in Christ involves walking in a relationship with Jesus, both individually and within the Church. It means recognizing God's presence in all life's moments, living a sacramental life, growing in faith, and manifesting the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Rooted in Christ applies to both individuals and the community.

Week 3 of Advent • Reflecting His love and Mercy

Jesus is love and mercy. As His followers, we're called to mirror the Father's love and mercy to others. Pope Francis noted, "The beloved cannot help but speak of the lover." Encountering Christ leads us to reflect His love and mercy, sharing it with others in God's mission. Being rooted in Christ helps us better demonstrate love, show mercy, and be empathetic to all.

Week 4 of Advent • The Power of The Holy Spirit

When we know that God has a plan for us, or has us right where He wants us, there is freedom. In that freedom, there is peace and reassurance because we know He is the divine guide, protector, and builder. This week we'll hear about the reassuring presence of God in our lives.

Praying through...



When we meditate on scripture, we let go of our own thoughts and ideas and open ourselves to what God is trying to say to us. This intentional reading of scripture is called *Lectio Divina*, or Divine Reading.

During Advent, we're encouraging you to join us as a parish in reflecting on the weekly Sunday Gospel. First, we suggest using this for individual prayer time, then invite others (family, friends, pew-mates, ministry colleagues, small groups) to discuss with you.

Read • *Lectio*

Carefully read and listen. Let the scripture soak in. Re-read it slowly.

Meditate • *Meditatio*

What stands out? Maybe an image, phrase, or single word? Focus on what God is trying to show you.

Pray • *Oratio*

Ask God to show you what He wants you to see in this Scripture. Dialogue with God about what is revealed to you.

Contemplate • *Contemplatio*

Rest with God. Be aware of God's presence with you. Listen for His voice.

Setting the tone...

- **Dedicate** a consistent time to enter into prayer.
- **Pick** a space that is right for you and allows you to focus.
- **Ask** the Holy Spirit to open your mind and heart.



Learn more!
"How Do You Pray with the Bible?"

Resources



A digital version is available by scanning the QR Code - share with your family and friends.



St. Peter Chanel's Podcast, *The Narthex*, will break open each weekly theme with special guests and answer your questions as we navigate Advent. Search "The Narthex SPC" on all your favorite podcast platforms.



Here is access to an Instrumental worship music playlist to help focus your prayer time.



Complimentary access to a digital library of catholic faith resources, (movies, books, podcasts, and faith studies. Search "Advent" on your free **Formed.org** account.



The Examen is a daily prayer to reflect upon God's presence in your day.



We want to hear from you! How's your experience going? What is God doing in your heart? Do you have a question that you'd like an answer to? Let us know!



Being Intentional

This Advent, we're asking God to expand our vision to better see His desires for us as individuals and as a community of faith. Let's take some time to reflect and discern the following questions:

- *What does it mean to be an intentional church?*
- *What does it mean to be intentional with my own faith?*
- *Thinking of the world we live in today, why is this important?*

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Preview Week | 11.26 & 11.27

The Big Picture

Jesus said to his disciples: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.' Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Matthew 25:31-46 | The Judgement of The Nations

The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Reflection

Preview Week • The Big Picture

Read the scripture, let it soak in. Meditate on it. What is a word, image or phrase that stands out? Focus on that. Pray on it. Ask God to show you what He wants you to see in the scripture. Rest with it. Be aware of God's presence and listen. Use this space or a journal to help you.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

- What did God reveal to me in this prayer time?
- How can I go from pleasing God to trusting God?
- Ask God: How do you see me?



Jesus, you are the One True King and when I allow you to be the King of my life, it changes everything. How can I be more open to you?



Week 1 | 12.2 & 12.3

Fully Alive

Jesus said to his disciples: “Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come. It is like a man traveling abroad. He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his own work, and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch. Watch, therefore; you do not know when the lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning. May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: ‘Watch!’”

Matthew 13:33-37 | The Need for Watchfulness
First Sunday of Advent

Reflection

Week 1 • Fully Alive

Read the scripture, let it soak in. Meditate on it. What is a word, image or phrase that stands out? Focus on that. Pray on it. Ask God to show you what He wants you to see in the scripture. Rest with it. Be aware of God's presence and listen. Use this space or a journal to help you.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

- What did God reveal to me in this prayer time?
- What does Fully Alive mean to me?
- If the church was Fully Alive, how would that impact our community?



How can I begin to live "Fully Alive"
(keeping watch) as part of the church?



Rooted in Christ

Week 2 | 12.9 & 12.10

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way. A voice of one crying out in the desert: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."

John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.

John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He fed on locusts and wild honey. And this is what he proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Mark 1:1-8 | The Preaching of John the Baptist

Second Sunday of Advent

Reflection

Week 2 • Rooted in Christ

Read the scripture, let it soak in. Meditate on it. What is a word, image or phrase that stands out? Focus on that. Pray on it. Ask God to show you what He wants you to see in the scripture. Rest with it. Be aware of God's presence and listen. Use this space or a journal to help you.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

- What did God reveal to me in this prayer time?
- In the last week have I encountered someone who is Fully Alive? If so, what was it that made me notice them?
- What does Rooted in Christ mean to me?
- Understanding that people are in various stages of the spiritual journey, and in preparing the way for the Lord, how can I be more open to Him?



Serving others should come from our relationship with Jesus. What do I put between Jesus and I that prevents me from growing in deeper relationship with Him?



Reflecting His love and mercy

Week 3 | 12.16 & 12.17

A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.

And this is the testimony of John. When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to him to ask him, "Who are you?" He admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, "I am not the Christ." So they asked him, "What are you then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?" He said: "I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'make straight the way of the Lord,'" as Isaiah the prophet said."

Some Pharisees were also sent. They asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie." This happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

John 1:6-8,19-28 | The Word & The Son of God
Third Sunday of Advent

Reflection

Week 3 • Reflecting His Love and Mercy

Read the scripture, let it soak in. Meditate on it. What is a word, image or phrase that stands out? Focus on that. Pray on it. Ask God to show you what He wants you to see in the scripture. Rest with it. Be aware of God's presence and listen. Use this space or a journal to help you.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

- What did God reveal to me in this prayer time?
- When have I experienced Jesus' unconditional love and mercy?
- In what relationships should I be more loving and merciful?
- What is preventing me from allowing myself to experience His love and mercy more fully?



If I am not reflecting His love and mercy what am I reflecting?



The Power of The Holy Spirit

Week 4 | 12.23 & 12.24

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God."

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:26-38 | The Annunciation of the Birth of Jesus
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Reflection

Week 4 • A Role in God's Vision

Read the scripture, let it soak in. Meditate on it. What is a word, image or phrase that stands out? Focus on that. Pray on it. Ask God to show you what He wants you to see in the scripture. Rest with it. Be aware of God's presence and listen. Use this space or a journal to help you.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

- What did God reveal to me during Advent?
- How have I seen (or encountered) the Holy Spirit move during the dedicated times of prayer during Advent?
- How is God calling me to bring Christ into the world?



Just as Mary leads us closer to Jesus, who in our lives are we being called to lead closer to Him?

Advent Opportunities

Christmas Outreach Campaign

Help make an impact on a family or individual in need this Christmas. See display in Narthex. Gifts are due back 12.7, 5-8p.

Pack the Food Pantry

Drop off non-perishables at the drop box at the main entrance of church. Questions? contact svdp@stpeterchanel.org.

12.1 "Tune In" Family Advent Event

5:30p-7:30p. We're building a remote control to find Christ in our favorite Christmas specials. All families preK-5 (and siblings) are welcome.

Advent Mini-Retreat

Join us for a mini-retreat on either 12.2 at 9a-11a or 12.18 at 7p-9p. which will include small group discussion, presentation and meditation - breaking open our Advent theme.

Youth Ministry Sundays

Middle and High school teens are invited to join us on Sundays (12.3, 12.10, 12.17) from 6p-8p. Dinner provided. Bring a friend!

12.8 Immaculate Conception Holy Day of Obligation

12.7: 5:30p • 7p
12.8: 6:45a • 8:30a • 12p (no 7p)

12.10 Breakfast w/ St. Nick

Following morning Mass times, come have breakfast with your parish community!

12.13 Christmas Pageant & Family Social

6p-7p All families are welcome as we retell the Christmas story with music and pageantry. A social will follow.

12.15 Men's Morning of Reflection

All men are invited to breakfast, a speaker, and discussion. Following 6:45a Mass. Monthly on 3rd Friday.

12.17 Advent Night of Worship

Join us for an evening of live praise and worship, reflection, prayer and adoration at 6:30p.

12.21 Deck the Halls

Come help us decorate for Christmas from 9a-12p, we'll have donuts and hot cocoa. Email Christy@stpeterchanel.org.

Christmas Mass Schedule

Dec. 24

3p* • 5p* • 8p** • 11:30p**

**Mass in Church, Blessed Trinity & McNamee Hall*

***Mass in Church*

Dec. 25

7:30a • 10a • 12p (No 5p Mass)

Mass in Church