



BETHLEHEM STAR

What do we do with Artificial Intelligence?

The below article was written by ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence platform available for free. I typed in "Write a church newsletter article on Advent practices and this is what it came up with. What do you think? Can you tell it's not my writing? Is it any good? (My comments are on the next page)

Embracing Advent: Practices for a Season of Hope

As the days grow shorter and the air turns crisp, we find ourselves stepping into the sacred season of Advent. This is a time of anticipation, reflection, and preparation—a season that invites us to pause amidst the busyness of life and focus our hearts on the coming of Christ.

The word "Advent" comes from the Latin *adventus*, meaning "arrival" or "coming." It is a four-week journey leading to Christmas, marked by themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. Advent invites us to reflect not only on Christ's birth in Bethlehem but also on His presence in our lives today and His promise to come again.

Here are some meaningful practices to consider as we walk through Advent together:

1. Light the Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is a cherished tradition that uses candles to symbolize the light of Christ breaking into the darkness of our world. Each Sunday, light a new candle, reflecting on the corresponding theme—hope, peace, joy, or love. As the flames grow brighter each week, they remind us that Christ's light is growing in our hearts and in the world.

2. Daily Scripture and Devotionals

Set aside time each day to read Scripture or a devotional that aligns with the Advent themes. Passages from Isaiah, the Gospels, and even the Psalms can deepen your anticipation and joy. Many families or individuals find this time a grounding way to connect with God in the midst of holiday preparations.

3. Practice Generosity

Advent reminds us of the gift of Christ, and it calls us to mirror His generosity. Look for ways to bless others—through acts of kindness, supporting local charities, or helping those in need. Giving of ourselves reflects the heart of God's gift to the world.

4. Create Sacred Space

Transform a corner of your home into a quiet place for prayer and reflection. Include symbols of the season, such as a nativity scene, a candle, or Scripture verses. This sacred space can be a visual reminder of the reason for the season and an invitation to draw near to God daily.

5. Join in Worship and Community

Advent is a communal journey. Participate in our church's worship services, Advent events, or service opportunities. Gather with others to sing carols, share stories, and encourage one another in faith as we prepare to celebrate Christ's birth.

As we move through Advent, let us embrace its invitation to slow down, reflect, and open our hearts. In the waiting, we find hope; in the preparation, we discover peace; and in Christ, we are filled with joy and love.

May this season be a time of renewal for each of us, as individuals and as a church family. Let us prepare Him room—not just in our homes, but in our hearts and lives.

Blessings on your Advent journey,

Pastor Kris

I think it sounds different from how I usually write. I'm curious how many of you think you could tell the difference if you didn't know. The more you've read what someone's written, the easier it is to tell. However, on the whole I like the article well enough. It sounds a little canned, but honestly probably so have some of my articles in the past. And I believe what it says—I hope you will practice some, if not all of these things. Having said that, I like Virg's article—not written by AI—better.

I don't know what to make of AI. This saved me a ton of time—it took maybe 30 seconds to write. And for a newsletter article it's OK. I would never use it to write an article or sermon or anything where it's important to write from my heart. And my writing style can sometimes be a little quirky and I intend to stick with that.

AI will probably be a great tool for businesses and who knows what else. It may be a disaster for education. When it's this easy to write something that's OK, why would students bother spending the time to research the topic? Schools are already working to devise ways to figure out when something is AI generated.

And if you haven't seen it, there's a commercial out now for Gemini AI that is downright creepy. It seems to replace actual human interaction with a device that seems eerily human. Sam said people have even used it as a therapist, sometimes with tragic results.

On the other hand, Daryl said it's also been used beneficially for people, especially older people, who live in isolation. It apparently enables them to have a realistic enough quasi-human interaction that it helps them feel less lonely. I just wish we could mostly find ways for actual people to help others feel less lonely.

So here's my real number one recommendation for an Advent practice—connect with people. Connect with people who may be isolated and lonely. Go visit someone you know in a nursing home—or even someone you don't. Reach out to someone you haven't talked to in a while. Connect with neighbors—take cookies if you bake. Use your imagination. There is apparently an epidemic of loneliness—I hope that the church can help that with actual people instead of AI.

Advent Blessings, from the real Pastor Kris

Advent Connection Opportunities

Caroling at Fallbrook—Wayne and Wanda Nielsen live at Fallbrook. We will plan to carol at Fallbrook on December 22 after worship and choir practice.

Christmas worship at Liberty House—I have been leading worship at Liberty House in Wahoo for the last several months. Liberty House is an assisted living facility for low income residents, some of whom have mental illness or developmental disabilities. We will have Christmas worship there on December 23 at 1:00 pm. I'd like to get a handful of people to go with me. Please either send me a note or talk to me when I get back from vacation.



Advent is a time for waiting and preparation. We are waiting for and preparing our hearts for the coming of baby Jesus. For most people, these 4 weeks before Christmas are a busy time with setting up a Christmas tree and other decorations, baking Christmas cookies, shopping for gifts, planning family get-together's etc. We all have a lot going on, but it's also important to prepare for Jesus's birth in a spiritual way. This, of course, includes coming to church and preparing our hearts and minds by listening to God's words and promises, music, the sermons and fellowship with other anticipating believers. We can also do this in community with others through love, kindness and charitable acts.

Are you planning to pace and focus yourself through Advent with daily reminders or activities? When the kids were home, we would use an Advent calendar and for a few years, I gave them small, daily gifts. This year, I found some National Geographic STEM kits with daily activities through Advent for my grade school age nephews and a book with daily readings from Baby bear for their younger sister. A friend has also invited me to join a Zoom group in which we will be discussing the book "Prepare Him Room" by Darlene Schacht. Also, with our daughter Miranda expecting her baby in late January, I can compare Jesus' coming to that. No, his parents didn't prepare a room, have baby showers, take birthing classes, etc., but Miranda and Sam are doing those things as they "wait for and prepare" for their baby.

I pray that you will sense God's message of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love in your hearts and spirit this Advent and Christmas season!!!

Shared Ministry Update

Over the next several weeks, leadership at all four churches will be meeting to work out details of our shared ministry trial. The plan is to begin that trial period in February.

The biggest difference you will notice is that I will alternate leading worship and preaching between Bethlehem/Zion and Grace/Czech Pres.

Lay worship leaders will be a huge part of our way of being church going forward. We will also need those interested in participating in other parts of ministry.

A Note to Our Online Worship Community

We have two livestream options to participate in worship—Facebook Live and YouTube. Facebook Live is on my phone and YouTube on my laptop.

I am planning to upgrade our laptop, and possibly the microphone, but sometimes our internet isn't quite good enough to do the livestream. Last Sunday, no sound came through. I don't know if that was an internet issue or operator error (me being the operator.) But sometimes I simply can't connect—if Davey gets fiberoptic some day, we'll be golden.

I'm going to be gone Dec. 1, Dec. 8, and January 12, so those days for sure you will only be able to access the Facebook Live stream.

Even if you are not on Facebook, you should be able to watch since it's a public page. Both YouTube and Facebook Live can be accessed through the church webpage:

<https://www.bethlehemdavey.org/>

Worship is at 10:30 am Sundays, in person or online on either YouTube or Facebook. Links to the bulletin and YouTube channel and Facebook page can be found on our website:

<https://www.bethlehemdavey.org/worship-in-person-and-online>

Calendar

- December 1** 10:30 am—Worship—No communion
December 8 10:30 am—Worship
December 15 10:30 am—Worship with Holy Communion
2:30 pm—Combined Council meeting
December 22 10:30 am—Worship
?Caroling at Fallbrook
December 23 1:00 pm—Worship at Liberty House, Wahoo
December 24 9:00 pm—Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship
December 29 10:30 am—Worship.

Pastor Kris will be gone November 29 through December 9. Pastor Dave Maloy will cover for emergencies – 402-306-3828



Pastor Kris—402-499-4993

krisbo90@gmail.com

Church Website—bethlehemdavey.org

[Bethlehem Lutheran Church - Davey](#)

Council president—Charlie Brown—402-525-0040
Council members—Virg Unverferth, Corey Carlson,
Linda Sestak, Jerri Daugherty

December Helpers

Lector—Patty/Corey

Usher—Open

Communion Asst.—Daryl

Altar Setup—Open

Cleaning—Jerri