

# A New Year of Awakening

Study Guide for Small Group Discussion and Personal Application  
Lynn Haven UMC – November 29, 2020 – Pastor Craig Carter

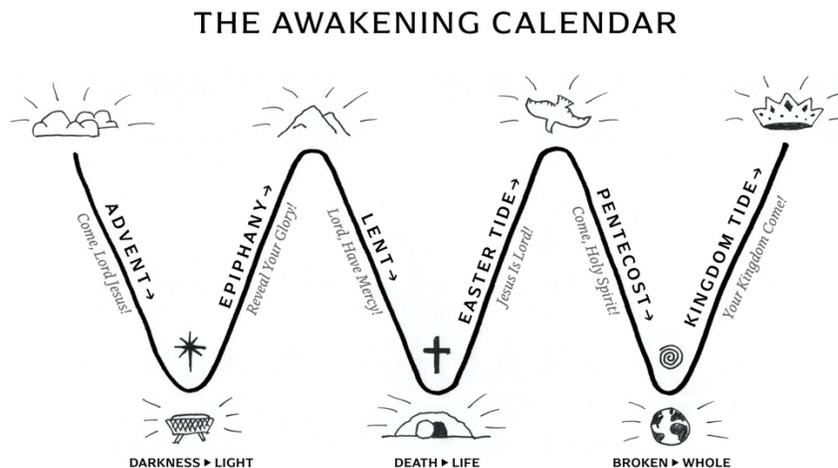
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Today is the first Sunday in Advent, the four Sundays that lead up to Christmas. During the Advent season Lynn Haven UMC is reading a devotional titled “The Christian New Year” by J.D. Walt. For more information visit [LynnHavenChristmas.com](http://LynnHavenChristmas.com).

The Old Testament prophet, Isaiah, announced the coming of the Messiah with these words: “*Wake up, wake up, O Jerusalem! Arise! Shine! Your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has dawned.*” (Isaiah 51:17a NLT; 60:1 GWT) In a similar fashion, the Apostle Paul wrote, “*Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.*” (Ephesians 5:14 NIV) Advent is a time of awakening for God’s people.

## Exploring the Calendar

We use a twelve month calendar to keep track of our days and what is important to us. The Christian Church also uses a liturgical calendar to mark different seasons of the year. Today we are exploring what J.D. Walt has called “The Awakening Calendar” – divided into three epic journeys of ascent and descent in the life of Jesus Christ.



Today we stand at the beginning of Advent, on the threshold of a Christian New Year. Advent means “arrival” or “coming” and reminds us that Jesus came as a baby in a manger in Bethlehem, and that Jesus will come again in power and glory in the future.

## How Are We to Celebrate Advent?

1. Wake Up - the new year is a time for new beginnings, but first we must wake up.

*And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. (Romans 13:11-12 NIV)*

2. Live in the Light – choose not to justify bad behavior, busyness, or indulgences.

*Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires. (Romans 13:13-14 NLT)*

3. Clothe ourselves with the Light of Jesus – behold Christ and become like Him.

*Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12 NIV)*

*So all of us...can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord – who is the Spirit – makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image. (2 Corinthians 3:18 NLT)*

## Conclusion

Wake up! It's time to get up and get going! Don't sleep the day or season away!  
Wake up! Christ has come...Christ is coming again...but Christ is also here right now!

⇒ Are you ready for the year 2020 to be over? What are some of the craziest, most stressful things that have happened to you and your family this past year?

⇒ What are some positive things you and your family could do to help you focus on Jesus and the real reason for this holiday season? How could you be intentional about this?

⇒ What negative things do you and your family need to let go of this Advent season? How could you step away from "the darkness" of the world and live more "in the light" of Christ?

*Father in heaven, thank you for this season of Advent and this new year in Christ. Make it be for us a time of awakening. Help us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Forgive us for allowing our own calendar to steal from us what is of ultimate importance. By the power of your Holy Spirit, enable us to wake up and be embraced by your love and light so we can share it with others. This we pray in the name of Jesus the Messiah, the One who has come, who is here, and who is coming again. Amen.*