



# Advent Conspiracy

Reclaiming Christmas

## WORSHIP FULLY

**It starts with Jesus.** It ends with Jesus. This is the approach God had in mind for Christmas. It's a season where we are called to put down our burden and lift a song up to our God. It's a season where love wins, peace reigns, and a king is celebrated with each breath. It's the party of the year. Entering the story of advent means entering this season with an overwhelming passion to worship Jesus to the fullest. [Matthew 2:1-12]

## SPEND LESS

Before you think we're going all Scrooge on you, keep reading. How often have you spent money on Christmas presents for no other reason than obligation? How many times have you received a gift out of that same obligation? Thanks, but no thanks, right? We're asking people to consider spending less this Christmas (*maybe buying one less gift*). Sounds insignificant, yet many who have taken this small sacrifice have experienced something nothing less than a miracle: They have been more available to celebrate Christ during advent.

## GIVE MORE

God's gift to us was a relationship built on love. So it's no wonder why we're drawn to the idea that Christmas should be a time to love our friends and family in the most memorable ways possible. Time is the real gift Christmas offers us, and no matter how hard we look, it can't be found in any store. Time to make a gift that turns into the next family heirloom. Time to write mom a letter. Time to take the kids sledding. Time to bake really good cookies and sing really bad Christmas carols. Time to make love visible through relational giving. Sounds a lot better than getting a sweater two sizes too big, right?

## LOVE ALL

When Jesus loved, He loved in ways never imagined before. Though rich, he became poor to love the poor, the forgotten, the overlooked and the sick. He played to the margins. By spending less at Christmas we have the opportunity to join Him in giving resources to those who need help the most. Advent Conspiracy has grown over the last two years into a global movement of distributing millions of dollars around the world to bring life and hope to the places in need. We offer light in the darkness, hope in the midst of despair.



# Rethink Church Reclaim Christmas

## WHEN KINGDOMS COLLIDE

### ► Be in **pursuit** of a vision

*"Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." Mt 2:1*

What am I pursuing ~ What is the purpose of My Life's Journey?

- Find the Star of Discontent, "I know there must be more"
- Make Christmas last! – Choose to take the journey

### ► Become a **learner and a seeker**

*To follow a star you need to know something of astronomy,  
To find a Savior, you need to know something of Extravagant Grace.*

- Read your Advent Devotional Daily
- Participate in a Sunday School Study group, or Wkly Bible Study!

### ► Learn to recognize **God's Voice** over the noise

*"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me" Jn 10:27*

*"When you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him" v8*

- Commit to regular worship
- Join a ministry team

### ► Share the gift of **Faith**

*"They opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of Gold [King] and Incense [Priest] and Myrrh [Sacrifice]." v11*

- Give to a Mission Project
- Put up your "It's a Boy" sign



## Welcome to First Church

The story of Christ's birth is a subversive story of an upside-down kingdom. It's a story of promise, hope, and a revolutionary love that is still changing the world to this day. So, what happened? What was once a time to celebrate the birth of a savior has somehow turned into a season of stress, traffic jams, and shopping lists. And when it's all over, many of us are left with presents to return, looming debt that will take months to pay off, and this empty feeling that we somehow missed its purpose.

Is this what we really want out of Christmas?

What if Christmas became a world-changing event again by turning our focus back to the birth of Christ? What could happen to your family if this focus was celebrated in loud, bold and totally unexpected ways? What if you could actually trade your season of stress for a season celebration and unbelievable memories with your friends and family? What if all of this could save a life at the same time? It can

## Matthew 2:1-12 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup>and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east<sup>[b]</sup> and have come to worship him."

<sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup>When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ<sup>[c]</sup> was to be born. <sup>5</sup>"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

<sup>6</sup>" 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'<sup>[d]</sup>"

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

<sup>9</sup>After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east<sup>[e]</sup> went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. <sup>11</sup>On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

