

First Sunday in Advent: Hope

After the greeting in the name of the Lord, the pastor says the following:

Watch and wait for Christ's coming!

Light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, remembering the promises of God with prayer.

Candlelighters say:

We light this candle in hope. *Light the first candle.*

Hear God's promise of hope from Jeremiah 33:14-16:

"The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

Let us pray:

Faithful God, out of death you bring life.

Renew us in hope,

that we may be alert to the burgeoning of Christ's advent among us.

God of promise, God of hope, into our darkness come.

Second Sunday in Advent: Peace

After the greeting in the name of the Lord, the pastor says the following:

Watch and wait for Christ's coming!

Light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, remembering the promises of God with prayer.

Candlelighters say:

We light this candle in hope. *Light the first candle.*

We light this candle for peace. *Light the second candle.*

Hear Zechariah's song of hope for peace to the Christ child.

A reading from Luke 1:76-79:

"You, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Let us pray:

God of hope, Prince of Peace,
You speak peace into the world in the Way of the Christ child.
Help us embody your peace and live as peacemakers
that we may be called children of God.
God of hope, God of peace, into our darkness come.

Third Sunday in Advent: Joy

(This Sunday's Advent wreath candle lighting varies because it is Gaudette (= "rejoice!") Sunday. As a break from the heaviness of Advent's penitential preparations, this Sunday offers a reprise from our dark longings to offer joy's glimmer of light. The Latin word Gaudette is grammatically imperative, reminding us that even in the midst of darkness, we are called to rejoice. This is also why we light a pink candle—the color of joy in the penitential season of blue/purple. Only the Christ candle is white, also a color signifying joy in many cultures, because the fullness of joy is in the Lord.)

After the greeting in the name of the Lord, the pastor says the following:

Watch and wait for Christ's coming!

Light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, remembering the promises of God with prayer.

Candlelighters say:

We light this candle in hope. *Light the first candle.*

We light this candle for peace. *Light the second candle.*

We light this candle in joy! *Light the third (pink) candle.*

To those who live as exiles from home in a dark time, to those enslaved as exiles due to others' oppression, to those who are sin's exiles from their best God-promised selves, the Lord speaks the joy of good news. A reading from Zephaniah 3:14-20.

Reader 1:

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!

The LORD has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.

The LORD, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;

he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival.

Reader 2:

“I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.
I will deal with all your oppressors at that time.
And I will save the lame and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.
At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the
earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes,” says the LORD.

Let us pray:

Surely God is my salvation;
I will trust and not be afraid, for the LORD is my strength and my might;
God has become my salvation.
With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.
And you will say in that day:
Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, Rejoice!
Sing praises to the LORD, for God has done gloriously!

Fourth Sunday in Advent: Love

After the greeting in the name of the Lord, the pastor says the following:

Watch and wait for Christ's coming!

Light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, remembering the promises of God with prayer.

Candlelighters say:

We light this candle in hope. *Light the first candle.*

We light this candle for peace. *Light the second candle.*

We light this candle in joy! *Light the third (pink candle).*

We light this candle with love. *Light the fourth candle.*

Hear again the Word of the Lord drawn from Zephaniah 3:171

The LORD your God . . . will rejoice over you with gladness; God will quiet you with divine love like a child upon the breast. The Lord will exult over you with loud singing.

Let us pray:

God of hope, God of peace,

God of joy, and God of love,

Teach us how to love one another as reflections of your light in the world.

God of promise, God of love, into our darkness come.