A Liturgy for Lighting the Candles of the Advent Wreath



In the ancient world, various peoples lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter's season and to pray for the return of the light. As followers of Christ, we practice the lighting of the Advent wreath. To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all fullness into the darkness of our world. Until the dawning of that Great Day, we watch and wait in the Holy Spirit for Christ's coming into the darkness of our world, lighting candles of hope, peace, joy, and love; and remembering the promises of God with prayer.

First Sunday in Advent: Hope



Read: Watch and wait for Christ's coming!
We light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love.
We remember the promises of God with prayer.
We light this candle in hope. (Action: Light the first candle.)

Read: God's promise of hope from Isaiah 2:2-4

2 In the days to come
the mountain of the LORD's house
will be the highest of the
mountains.
It will be lifted above the hills;
peoples will stream to it.
3 Many nations will go and say,
"Come, let's go up
to the LORD's mountain,
to the house of Jacob's God
so that he may teach us his ways
and we may walk in God's paths."
Instruction will come from Zion;
the LORD's word from Jerusalem.
4 God will judge
between the nations,
and settle disputes
of mighty nations.
Then they will beat their swords
into iron plows
and their spears
into pruning tools.
Nation will not take up
sword against nation;
they will no longer learn
how to make war.

Pray: Faithful God, out of war's chaos, you bring the order of peace.
Renew us in hope, that we may work toward Christ's advent of peace among all nations. God of promise, God of hope, into our darkness come. Amen.
Let us walk in the Light of the Lord!

Second Sunday in Advent: Peace



Read: Watch and wait for Christ's coming!
We light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love.
We remember the promises of God with prayer.
We light the first candle in hope. (Action: Light the first candle.)
We light the second candle for peace. (Action: Light the second candle.)

Read: God's promise of peace from Isaiah 11:1-10

1 A shoot will grow up
from the stump of Jesse;
a branch will sprout from his roots.
2 The LORD's spirit will rest upon him,
a spirit of wisdom and understanding,
a spirit of planning and strength,
a spirit of knowledge and fear of the LORD.
3 He will delight in fearing the LORD.
He won't judge by appearances,
nor decide by hearsay.
4 He will judge the needy
with righteousness,
and decide with equity
for those who suffer in the land.
He will strike the violent
with the rod of his mouth;
by the breath of his lips
he will kill the wicked.
5 Righteousness will be the belt
around his hips,
and faithfulness the belt around his waist.
6 The wolf will live with the lamb,
and the leopard will lie down
with the young goat;
the calf and the young lion
will feed together,
and a little child will lead them.
7 The cow and the bear will graze.
Their young will lie down together,
and a lion will eat straw like an ox.
8 A nursing child will play
over the snake's hole;
toddlers will reach
right over the serpent's den.
9 They won't harm or destroy
anywhere on my holy mountain.
The earth will surely be filled
with the knowledge of the LORD,
just as the water covers the sea.
10 On that day, the root of Jesse
will stand as a signal to the peoples.
The nations will seek him out,
and his dwelling will be glorious.

Pray: Faithful God, you are at work to restore all of creation in its intended harmony. Give us your shalom that we may be reconciled to all enemies in the peace that passes all understanding through Christ Jesus our Lord. God of promise, God of hope, into our darkness come. Amen.
Let us walk in the Light of the Lord!

Third Sunday in Advent: Joy



Read: Watch and wait for Christ's coming!
We light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love.
We remember the promises of God with prayer.
We light the first candle in hope. (Action: Light the first candle.)
We light the second candle for peace. (Action: Light the second candle.)
We light the third candle in joy! (Action: Light the third - pink, if there is one - candle.)

Read: God's promise of joy from Isaiah 35:1-10

[1] The desert and the dry land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice
and blossom like the crocus.
[2] They will burst into bloom,
and rejoice with joy and singing.
They will receive the glory of Lebanon,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon.
They will see the LORD's glory,
the splendor of our God.
[3] Strengthen the weak hands,
and support the unsteady knees.
[4] Say to those who are panicking:
"Be strong! Don't fear!
Here's your God,
coming with vengeance;
with divine retribution
God will come to save you."
[5] Then the eyes of the blind will be opened,
and the ears of the deaf will be cleared.
[6] Then the lame will leap like the deer,
and the tongue of the speechless will sing.
Waters will spring up in the desert,
and streams in the wilderness.
[7] The burning sand will become a pool,
and the thirsty ground, fountains of water.
The jackals' habitat, a pasture;
grass will become reeds and rushes.
[8] A highway will be there.
It will be called The Holy Way.
The unclean won't travel on it,
but it will be for those walking on that way.
Even fools won't get lost on it;
[9] no lion will be there,
and no predator will go up on it.
None of these will be there;
only the redeemed will walk on it.
[10] The LORD's ransomed ones will return and enter Zion with singing,
with everlasting joy upon their heads.
Happiness and joy will overwhelm them;
grief and groaning will flee away.

Pray: O Lord, our redeemer, you lead us from languishing in sorrow's shadows into laughter's joy over your abundant restoration. Thank you that you are coming for us to lead us home along your Way, Jesus Christ. God of promise, God of hope, into our darkness come. Amen.
Let us walk in the Light of the Lord!

Fourth Sunday in Advent: Love



Read: Watch and wait for Christ's coming!
We light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love.
We remember the promises of God with prayer.
We light the first candle in hope. (Action: Light the first candle.)
We light the second candle for peace. (Action: Light the second candle.)
We light the third candle in joy!
(Action: Light the third - pink, if there is one - candle.)
We light the fourth candle with love (Action: Light the fourth candle.)

Read: God's promise of love from Isaiah 7:14
14 The Lord will give you a sign.
The young woman is pregnant
and is about to give birth to a son,
and she will name him Immanuel (which means, "God with us").

Pray: God of hope, God of peace, God of joy, and Lord of love,
your goodness is beyond our wildest imaginings.
You give us more than we can think to ask,
coming to us with impossible possibility
in the union of flesh and spirit.
Teach us to love this world and all people
as you love us in Jesus Christ, our Lord.
God of promise, God of hope, into our darkness come. Amen.
Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Christmas Eve / Christmas Day



Read: We have watched, we have waited
in hope. (Action: Light the first candle.)
for peace. (Action: Light the second candle.)
in joy! (Action: Light the third - pink, if there is one - candle.)
with love (Action: Light the fourth candle.)
Now Christ has been born! (Action: Light the final candle.)

Read: the poem of love's coming from Isaiah 9:2-7

2 The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light.
On those living in a pitch-dark land,
light has dawned.
3 You have made the nation great;
you have increased its joy.
They rejoiced before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as those who divide plunder rejoice.
4 As on the day of Midian, you've
shattered the yoke that burdened
them,
the staff on their shoulders,
and the rod of their oppressor.
5 Because every boot
of the thundering warriors,
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned, fuel for the fire.
6 A child is born to us,
a son is given to us,
and authority will be on his shoulders.
He will be named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.
7 There will be vast authority
and endless peace
for David's throne
and for his kingdom,
establishing and sustaining it
with justice and righteousness
now and forever.
The zeal of the LORD of heavenly forces
will do this.

Pray: All glory to you, great God, for the gift of your Son, whom you sent to save us. With singing angels, let us praise your name, and tell the earth his story, that all may believe, rejoice, and bow down, acknowledging your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Let us walk in the Light of the Lord!

1.) Silent Night
Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright.
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

2.) O Holy Night
O holy night,
the stars are brightly shining,
It is the night
of the dear Saviour's birth;
Long lay the world
in sin and error pining,
'Till he appeared
and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope
the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks
a new and glorious morn;
(Chorus) Fall on your knees,
Oh hear the angel voices!
O night divine!
O night when Christ was born.
O night, O holy night, O night divine.

3.) We Three Kings
We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and
mountain, following yonder star.
(Refrain) O star of wonder,
star of light,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.

4.) Once in Royal David's City
Once in Royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her Baby
In a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little Child.

5.) O Come All Ye Faithful
O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem
Come and behold Him
Born the King of Angels
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord!

6.) While Shepherds Watched
While shepherds watched
their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground,
the angel of the Lord came down
and glory shone around.

7.) Good King Wenceslas
Good King Wenceslas looked out
On the feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about
Deep and crisp and even;
Brightly shone the moon that night
Though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight,
Gath'ring winter fuel.

8.) Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,
With th'angelic host proclaim:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

9.) God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen
God rest ye merry gentlemen
Let nothing you dismay
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas Day
To save us all from Satan's pow'r
When we were gone astray
O tidings of comfort and joy
Comfort and joy
O tidings of comfort and joy

10.) Away in a Manger
Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little lord Jesus
laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky
looked down where he lay,
The little lord Jesus
asleep on the hay.

11.) The First Nowell
The First Nowell the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds
in fields as they lay;
In fields as they lay,
keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night
that was so deep.
(Chorus) Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel

12.) O Come, O Come Emmanuel
O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

13.) O Little Town of Bethlehem
O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight

14.) In the Bleak Midwinter
In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan;
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter long ago.

15.) Joy to the World!
Joy to the world, the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King!
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven,
and heaven and nature sing,