



FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT — HOPE

Sunday, November 28, 2021

Light the first candle on your wreath (or just light a candle in your home) and read together the following meditation:

FIRST READER: This is the first Sunday in Advent. Today we light one candle. This is the candle of hope. Advent is a time of waiting and hoping. We wait for the day when we celebrate again the birth of Jesus. We hope that everyone will come to know God and to worship God.

(Light the first candle)

ALL: Sing or read together
"Come, Thou Long-Expected
Jesus"

SECOND READER: When we look at the first candle we remember God's promise. God promised to send a Savior to the people. When we listen to our Scripture reading, we learn what the prophet Isaiah wrote about God. God fulfills the promises made to care for people. God is loving and just.

God brings peace. This gives us hope. We look forward to the time when everything is fair, when the world is at peace, and all people are treated justly.

FIRST READER: Read Isaiah 2:1-5

DISCUSSION: This Scripture offers us the hope of God's kingdom where there is peace and has the wonderful sentence, "...let us walk in the light of the Lord!"

- ♣Who are the people in our world who need hope?
- ♣What are the hopes we have for our world today?
- ♣How do we help others know that God gives hope?

1) Come, thou long-expected
Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release
us,
let us find our rest in thee.

2) Israel's strength and
consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art:
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

3) Born thy people to deliver,
born a child, and yet a king,
born to reign in us for ever,
now thy gracious kingdom
bring.

4) By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

(Written by Charles Wesley)

PRAYER: Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for the words of the Prophet Isaiah that remind us that you are the source of our hope. Help us to remember to walk in the light of the Lord. AMEN

Monday, November 29, 2021: Today read again Isaiah 2:1-5. Pick one verse and memorize it. How do you think this verse gives hope to people?

Tuesday, November 30, 2021: Is there someone you know who needs to hear words of hope? Make or select a card for that person and mail it today.

Wednesday, December 1, 2021: Hope is something we need in our world. Think about different leaders in the world. Select one world leader. Pray for that world leader today.

Thursday, December 2, 2021: As we get ready to celebrate again the birth of Jesus, we sometimes get very busy. Today, take a ten-minute break. Sit quietly. If it helps you to concentrate, look at your Advent wreath or a candle. Pray, asking God's help to bring quiet and calm to a busy world.

Friday, December 3, 2021: Think about your family. Some may live with you. Others may be far away. Who in your family needs God's hope? Pray for this family member today.

Saturday, December 4, 2021: There are people in our neighborhoods, in our church, and in our community who need to know of God's hope. Select someone to visit today. Visit by phone or in person. Go as a family or by yourself. It doesn't necessarily have to be a visit to a home. Maybe there is someone you always see at the library. Stop by today and talk with that person. Tell the person you visit one way he or she helps you feel hopeful.

SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT — PEACE

Sunday, December 5, 2021

Light the first candle on your wreath (or just light a candle in your home) and read together the following meditation:

FIRST READER: This is the second Sunday in Advent. Today, we light two purple candles. Last Sunday, we lit the candle of hope. This Sunday, we light the candle of peace. Our world is not always a peaceful world. People hurt other people. Countries are at war today. People don't take care of the world. People yell and scream at other people. But God promises peace. During Advent we pray that we, as well as all people, will seek God's peace.

(Light the first and second candles)

ALL: Sing or read together "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

SECOND READER: When we look at the 2nd candle, we remember God's promise of peace. We recall the words of Jesus in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you."

In times of war and hatred, it's hard to remember that Jesus is the One who brings peace. As we approach Christmas, let us remember that God's intention is a place of peace where people join hands instead of shoot one another.

FIRST READER: Read Luke 2:1-20

SECOND READER: The shepherds may have not felt very peaceful when they heard the words of the angel. They were probably scared and confused, but they

followed those words, trusting in God. Sometimes all we see around us gives a message different from the message of peace. Yet we, like the shepherds, can follow God's words and trust in God's promises.

DISCUSSION: This Scripture reminds us that when we are fearful, we are often not thinking of peace. The angels calm the shepherds and send them forward with a task. Who are the people in our world who need God's peace? What are our hopes for peace in our world today? How do we help others know God's desire for peace in our world?

PRAYER: Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for those in our world today who seek to act for peace. Help us look for ways to be peacemakers at home, at church, and at school. AMEN.

Monday, December 6, 2021: Peace seems so difficult for us to achieve in our world. Read again Luke 2:1-20. Think about what peace would look like in your family, in your congregation, in your community, in our nation, and in the world. Pray a prayer of peace, asking God for what you have envisioned for your family, your congregation, your community, your nation, and the world.

Tuesday, December 7, 2021: Perform an act of peace (maybe for a coworker or spouse or sibling) today.

Wednesday, December 8, 2021: Today, remember the leaders of our world. Select one leader and pray that this leader will be guided by God's vision of peace.

Thursday, December 9, 2021: Today, take a ten-minute break. Sit quietly. If it helps you to concentrate, look at your Advent wreath or a candle. Pray, asking God's help to bring peace to a busy world.

Friday, December 10, 2021: In the story of Christ's birth, we often overlook Joseph. How can you pray for those overlooked in society?

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.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering
love.

O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth!

How silently, how silently, the wondrous Gift is giv'n;
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His Heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.

(Written by Charles Wesley)

Saturday, December 11, 2021: Today look at the newspaper and pray God's peace to the situations that arise there.

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT — JOY

Sunday, December 12 , 2021

FIRST READER: This is the third Sunday in Advent. Today, we light two purple candles and a pink candle. The first Sunday, we lit the candle of hope. On the second Sunday, we lit the candle of love. Today, we light the candle of joy. One thing that sometimes happens as we get ready to celebrate Jesus' birth is that we expect to be happy all the time. Joy is not the same as happy. Joy is a deeper feeling created by knowing that God cares for us. Joy is remembering that God sent Jesus so we would always know of God's care. During Advent, we pray that we may remember again God's gift of Jesus to the world and know the joy that gift brings to all people.

(Light the first, second, and third candles)

ALL: Sing or read together
"Joy to the World"

SECOND READER: When we look at the third candle, we remember God's promise of joy. God promised to send a Savior to the people. Today we read from the Gospel of Luke. In the Scripture, we read Mary's song of praise and joy. There must have

been times when Mary was frightened, worried, fearful, and sad. But we have these words of joy even in a time when she was unsure of the future. Her words can guide us to look for the joy of God even when things may be uncertain for us.

FIRST READER: Read Luke 1:46b-55

DISCUSSION: How privileged we are to have this beautiful song of Mary. Can you imagine her singing the words written in Scripture? It is a testimony to her faith and joy at being chosen as God's servant. Who are the people in our world who need God's joy? What are our hopes for joy in our world today? How do we help others know that God gives joy?

PRAYER: Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for the joy remembering Jesus' birth brings to us today. Help us live in such a way that our words and our actions help others know of the joy you give. AMEN.

**Joy to the World , the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing, And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.**

**Joy to the World, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.**

(Written by Isaac Watts)

Monday, December 13, 2021: Today read again Luke 1:46b-55. Make a list together of the things that bring joy to your lives. Write your own song of joy to God, or sing a song that expresses joy to God.

Tuesday, December 14, 2021: Is there someone you know who needs to hear words of joy? Make or select a card for that person and mail it today.

Wednesday, December 15, 2021: Joy is something we need in our city. Think about different leaders of our city. Select one leader of our city. Pray for that leader today.

Thursday, December 16, 2021: As we get ready to celebrate again the birth of Jesus, we sometimes get very busy. Today, take a ten-minute break. Sit quietly. If it helps you to concentrate, look at your Advent wreath. Pray, asking God's help to bring quiet and calm to a busy world.

Friday, December 17, 2021: Think about your family. Some may live with you. Others may be far away. Who in your family needs God's joy? Pray for this family member today.

Saturday, December 18, 2021: There are people in our neighborhoods, in our church, and in our community who need to know of God's peace. Select someone to visit today. Visit by phone or in person. Go as a family or by yourself. It doesn't necessarily have to be a visit to a home. Maybe there is someone you see in a place where you go to eat. Stop by today and talk with that person. Tell the person you visit one way he or she brings joy to you.

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT — LOVE

Sunday, December 19, 2021

FIRST READER: This is the fourth Sunday in Advent. Today, we light all four candles, including, today, the candle of love. One verse that many memorize and remember on this day is John 3:16, "God so loved the world..." some people may not know the love of other people. That makes it harder for them to understand God's love. During Advent, we pray that we may remember again God's gift of Jesus to the world and know that God's love for all people is the reason for this gift.

(Light the four candles.)

ALL: Sing or read together the hymn: "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"

SECOND READER: When we look at the fourth candle, we remember God's love. When we read the words of the psalmist, we know of God's

**It came upon a midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
'Peace on the earth, good will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.**

**For, lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet bards foretold,
when with the ever-circling years, comes round the age of gold,
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world give back the song which now the angels**

greatness and care. We remember God's love at Advent when we remember that God sent Jesus to us to help us know that God is loving and just.

FIRST READER: Read Isaiah 11:1-10

DISCUSSION: When we think of God's love, we might not always think of the words of the prophets. But when we read this picture of the peaceable kingdom, we are amazed by God's love that allows a child to lead. Who are the people in our world who need the message of God's love? What are our hopes for how people today can receive the message of God's love? How do we help others know God's love?

PRAYER: Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for the words found in our Bible that help us remember your love and care. Help us see how we can bring God's message to the people we meet in our schools, at our jobs, and in our neighborhoods. Help us be messengers of God's love for everyone.

Monday, December 20, 2021: Read again Isaiah 11:1-10. Create a poster by drawing pictures of the wondrous things you see in the world around you that God has created. Create your picture of God's kingdom of peace. Give thanks for the world and all people in the world.

Tuesday, December 21, 2021: Is there someone you know who needs to hear words of God's love? Make or select a card for that person and mail it today.

Wednesday, December 22, 2021: Love is something we need in our church. Think about the people in our church. Select one person in our church. Pray for that person today.

Thursday, December 23, 2021: As we get ready to celebrate again the birth of Jesus, we sometimes get very busy. Today, take a ten-minute break. Sit quietly. If it helps you to concentrate, look at your Advent wreath. Pray, asking God's help to bring quiet and calm to a busy world.

Friday, December 24, 2021: Think about your family. Some may live with you. Others may be far away. Who in your family needs God's love? Pray for this family member today.

Saturday, December 25, 2021: Celebrate the birth of Jesus.