

These, of course, can be adapted to your own settings.

ADVENT 2020 CANDLE LITURGY for HOME

This is offered to you, knowing that, while we value coming together in worship, this might not be possible or desirable this year. Here are the materials for an “at-home” Advent wreath and the prayers to go with it. Blessings on the Advent season to you all. -Pastor Tim

Advent candle set

1 white candle

1 purple candle

3 blue candles

Green mat, to be left as is or cut into a “wreath” shape, as you desire

Advent candle prayers

Lighting candles marks festive occasions, such as special dinners, birthdays, holidays. We often light candles in worship. The flame of the candle reminds us that the Holy Spirit is God’s presence with us, even in familiar things. The church has a special season, Advent, the time before Christmas, which is often observed with candles in the setting of a wreath, or shape of a circle, with the colored candles around the circle and the white candle in the center.

Care, of course, should be taken that fire safety precautions are followed in the lighting of the candles of the wreath.

Nov. 29, First Sunday of Advent, light a blue candle

Advent is a time of hope. We light the first blue candle as a sign of that hope. We hope for Christmas, but also know that this time before it can be a good time of prayer and reflection and preparation as we wait for it. We wait, knowing that God came to be with us long ago when Christ was born, and can come into our hearts again in this season. We wait, too, knowing that Christ will return to our world. We wait in hope, knowing that God strengthens our hope with God’s word and God’s faithfulness to us, and hope grows in our hearts.

We hope—

for a joyous and blessed Christmas,

for a better year ahead,

for a return to seeing friends and families,

for more secure employment and daily life,

for the pandemic to be over,

for greater peace in our world and unity in our nation,

for Christmas to be filled with warmth and cheer,

for the other things we name silently now in our hearts to God.

We remember hope in this season—the steadfastness of hope, the hope to which God has called us, faith as the assurance of things hoped for, the hope in God’s steadfast care, the hope of eternal life.

Everlasting God, fill this season with Hope. Amen.

Dec. 6, Second Sunday of Advent, light two blue candles

We remember peace in Advent. It is the time when we prepare to welcome Christ, the Prince of Peace. We recall that he came into the world in a time when tensions and divisions existed. His life changed that world and can change ours. We remember the peace of that first Christmas, when we sing “Silent Night” and see children sleeping and see snowflakes drifting slowly to the ground.

We, too, desire peace—
 in the midst of a pandemic,
 amid the need for racial justice,
 with the many changes in our daily routines,
 in families experiencing division,
 in our nation with its tensions,
 in workplaces challenged by stress,
 in our anxious and weary hearts.

In this season we reflect on peace—peace which results from living in ways that please the Lord, peace, the result of trust in God, the peace that Jesus gives his disciples, the peace of God’s face shining on us, the peace made on the cross for us, the peace that is Christ himself.

Almighty God, fill this season with Peace. Amen.

Dec. 13, Third Sunday of Advent, light two blue candles and the pink or purple one

We pause for joy in the middle of Advent. It is something joyous that we wait for. We think about the Christmases of the past, the joy of family and friends, the good will in our communities, the many ways God touches our hearts and our lives, often coming as surprises. We prepare for a season of joy. It comes to us in Christmas carols and carolers, the sound of bells, the greetings from our loved ones. All these announce, “Joy to the world.”

We think of joy—
 in the Good news of the Gospel,
 in the world’s beauty,
 in the changing seasons of nature and of our lives,
 in the ways God meets our needs,
 for the simple gifts we receive daily,
 in those things in life that still work, despite the pandemic,
 in being loved by family, friends, and community,
 in belonging to a faith community.

In this season joy is around us—the joy of God’s presence, joy on hearing what Jesus says to his disciples which puts his joy in us so that our joy is made complete, the joy we know even when we face trials, the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit, the joy of answered prayer, the joy that enables us to rejoice always, the joy of the lost being found, the joy of each new day given to us by God.

Gracious God, fill this season with Joy. Amen.

Dec. 20, Fourth Sunday of Advent, light the three blue candles and the pink or purple one

We are aware of love today. Love is part of this season, as we remember God sending his Son into the world to save it. We think of love at Christmas time as we gather with loved ones or remember family members far away, and wish the world well. We think of love expressed in gifts and greetings, and in acts of kindness to friends and strangers.

We think of love—
 in that God came to earth to share our lives,
 as we know we are loved by family and friends,
 in the greetings from those near and far away,

in the good news that is told to others,
 as we share the difficulties of those around us,
 as we care for people in our community,
 as we know that God has cared for us all our lives.

Our understanding of Love is deepened—when we think of being patient and kind, of living in God and God living in us, of the perfect love that casts out fear, that God is love, that the greatest commandment is to love, that we are to love God with all our hearts and souls and minds and strength, that we are to love our neighbor as our self, that Christ gave himself for us because of Love.

Eternal One, fill this season with Love. Amen.

Dec. 24, Christmas Eve or Dec. 25, Christmas Day, light all the colored candles and the white one

The white candle is called the Christ candle because it is Jesus that we have been waiting for all through Advent. He is the light of the world and we are glad to be in that light. White, as well as green and red, is a color of Christmas. White reminds us of snow, and angels' wings, and of lives made pure and innocent again by the gift of grace. His light is the biggest because he is the center, the light of God shining in our lives.

We are filled with hope, peace, joy, and love today because—
 we hope to see Jesus someday,
 we follow him in life,
 we know that he is “God with us”,
 we know that he has changed the world,
 we look for him to bring us together in the church and world,
 we have his peace and Spirit within us.

We think of Christ today because he is the First and the Last, our Deliverer, the Bread of Life, the Good Shepherd, the Head of the Church, the Resurrection and the Life, the Way and the Truth, and the True Vine.

Heavenly Father, fill this season with the Light of Christ. Amen.

Advent Candle-Lighting Liturgies

A Ray of Hope (Kathryn Eddy)

Week 1 (Nov. 29)

As we begin our Advent journey,
 our time of eager anticipation,
 our time of waiting ...
 waiting for the arrival of the one who will redeem us from our brokenness:
 brokenness within our lives, our families, our communities, our world.
 We open our hearts and minds to divine Hope as we pray:
 Loving God, our source of Hope, we light this first candle
 trusting that your ray of Hope will come to guide us into wholeness,
 even in our most broken hours.

Week 2 (Dec. 6)

Last week we lit our candle of Hope.
 We light it again as we continue our Advent Journey.
 Our time of eager anticipation continues,
 our time of waiting ...
 waiting for the arrival of the one who will redeem us from our conflict:
 conflict within our thoughts, our families, our communities, our world.
 We open our hearts and minds to divine Peace as we pray:
 Tender God, whose will it is that we live in harmony, we light this next candle
 trusting that your ray of Peace will come to guide us into wholeness,
 even in our most broken hours.

Week 3 (Dec. 13)

Two weeks ago, we began our Advent journey by lighting our candle of Hope.
 We light it again today as we continue to wait in Hope.
 Last week we lit the candle of Peace.
 Our hearts filled with longing, we light it again.
 Our time of eager anticipation seems unending.
 Yet we continue ...
 waiting of the arrival of the one who will redeem us from our sorrow:
 sorrow stifling our lives, our families, our communities, our world.
 We open our hearts and minds to divine Joy as we pray:
 Compassionate God, whose will it is that we share in abundance,
 we light this next candle
 trusting that your ray of Joy will come to guide us into wholeness,
 even in our most broken hours.

Week 4 (Dec. 20)

Three weeks ago, we began our Advent journey by lighting our candle of Hope.
 We light it again today as we continue to wait in Hope.
 Two weeks ago, we lit the candle of Peace.
 Our hearts filled with longing, we light it again.
 Last week we lit the candle of Joy.
 Eager for a world that shares in abundance,
 we light it again.
 Our time of eager anticipation has continued for so long.
 We grow weary in our waiting ...
 waiting for the arrival of the one who will redeem us from our self-centeredness:
 self-centeredness that breaks our relationships
 with our families, our communities, our world,
 our Creator, and yet we continue our journey,
 opening our hearts and minds to divine Love as we pray:
 Creator God, who designed us to live in loving relationship
 with the cosmos and all who share it with us, we light this next candle
 trusting that your ray of Love with come to guide us
 into wholeness, even in our most broken hours.

Christmas

Four Sundays ago, we began our Advent journey by lighting our candle of Hope.
 We light it once more as we continue to wait in Hope.
 Three Sundays ago, we continued by lighting the candle of Peace.
 Our hearts filled with longing, we light it once more.
 Two Sundays ago, we added the candle of Joy.
 Eager for a world that shares in abundance, we light it again.
 Last Sunday we lit the candle of Love and we light it again,
 sharing a vision of our world thriving in a living tapestry of right relationships.
 The time is now. We need wait no longer.
 The one who redeems us from our self-centeredness, sorrow, conflict, and brokenness
 has come among us.
 The way is aglow with Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.
 In thankfulness and praise for God's steadfast presence and glorious gift
 we now light our Christ candle opening our hearts and minds
 to the transformative power of *God with us* and we pray:
 God of awesome mystery, you come into our lives this night.
 Through Jesus, whose arrival we celebrate, you call us into unity with you.
 And so we light the candle in the center of our wreath,
 trusting that your ray of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love can become the center of our hearts,
 the center of our thoughts, and the center of our lives,
 guiding us into wholeness and a world filled with light.

From *Gathering* (Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2010-2011)

Jesus Came Bringing Us Hope (David Sparks)

Week 1 (Nov. 29)

Into the world's shadowed places comes the Advent light of Jesus Christ.
 Jesus came bringing us hope,
 A light of hope for lonely people who want a friend.
 Jesus came bringing us hope,
 A light of hope for those who have no place to call home.
 Jesus came bringing us hope,
 A light of hope for those who are afraid of tomorrow.
 Jesus came bringing us hope.
 We light this Advent candle for we know that God's love shines out in Jesus Christ.
 We will reflect that love in our actions.

Week 2 (Dec. 6)

(The first candle is lit.)

Into the world's shadowed places comes the Advent light of Jesus Christ.

Jesus came bringing us peace,

The light of peace in those areas of our world where conflict rages.

Jesus came bringing us peace,

The light of peace for those in faith communities and local communities who cannot get along.

Jesus came bringing us peace.

A light of peace for our family members, friends, and ourselves when we are anxious and afraid.

Jesus came bringing us peace.

We light this Advent candle for we know that God's love shines out in Jesus Christ.

We will reflect that love in our actions.

Week 3 (Dec. 13)

(The first and second candles are lit.)

Into the world's shadowed places comes the Advent light of Jesus Christ.

Jesus came bringing us joy,

The light of joy, where the laughter of children has been silenced and frowns have replaced smiles.

Jesus came bringing us joy,

The light of joy, which breaks free in singing and celebrates within the faith community

Jesus came bringing us joy,

The light of joy that brings the scattered family together and replaces loneliness with friendship.

Jesus came bringing us joy.

We light this Advent candle for we know that God's love shines out in Jesus Christ.

We will reflect that love in our actions.

Week 4 (Dec. 20)

(The first, second, and third candles are lit.)

Into the world's shadowed places comes the Advent light of Jesus Christ.

Jesus came bringing us love,

The light of love that pierces the shadows and uncertainty of our conflicted world, the love that embraces hope for our planet home.

Jesus came bringing us love,

The light of love which is experienced as gifts exchanged, and as the faith community worshipping and sharing fellowship.

Jesus came bringing us love,

The light of love that is reflected when families are reunited and friendship restored through letters and visits.

Jesus came bringing us love.

We light this Advent candle for we know that God's love shines out in Jesus Christ.

We will reflect that love in our actions.

From *Gathering* (Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2011-2012)

