



## Pandemic Lighting of the Advent Wreath

This liturgy for the lighting of the candles of the Advent wreath was written to be shared by multiple voices. It is the hope that those sharing in lighting the candles would offer a vision from their shared experience in the group as prompted in the liturgy.

### First Sunday of Advent

Our expectation begins now.  
It starts here after so much  
has happened but we still  
expect more.

We begin our journey, like Joseph  
and Mary,  
in darkness. We cannot see the  
way ahead.  
We cannot know what hope will  
come but  
we trust God to journey with us,  
beckoning along with the prophets,

"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.  
It is coming." This is our hope  
today as we light the  
first candle of Advent.

*[First Candle is lit.]*

We light this candle  
to remember what was promised

and every dream we dared to  
dream  
about what could be. We light this  
candle full of hope because  
we know the days are surely  
coming as we have seen signs  
of God's hope in...

*(name a vision of hope  
you've recently seen  
in your daily life,  
in your relationships,  
or in the news).*

With this hope, we know  
that the days are surely coming  
and so we pray together:

O God, who gave us the Light,  
thank you for giving us hope  
in the form of a child at Bethlehem.  
As we prepare to celebrate  
the birth of this holy child,  
may we see signs of your hope  
in the darkness of despair. Amen.

## Second Sunday of Advent

When so much feels uneven  
and unsteady, we push  
into the wild possibility  
that change will come.  
We imagine the peace  
how the world might  
shift in the hope  
John the Baptizer  
dares us to dream,

"Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain  
and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked  
shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth;  
and all flesh shall see  
the salvation of God."  
It is in this wild possibility  
that we light  
the second candle of Advent.

*[Second Candle is lit.]*

We light this candle  
in search of your peace.  
We look forward to the days  
when all the rough places are  
smooth, but for now  
we seek your comfort...

*(name a time when  
you have recently  
been found comfort  
in words, in a kindness,  
or even in an idea).*

With this possibility, we believe  
our rough places will be made  
smooth  
and so we pray together:

Prince of Peace, you came to us  
in the innocence of an infant.  
Comfort us when  
the world feels too rough.  
Give us the courage to find friends  
in unlikely places  
as we work together  
toward your peace. Amen.

## Third Sunday of Advent

We come find warmth  
together in the light  
of God's love. We have  
often felt so misunderstood  
and even unloved, but today  
we marvel in the love that  
begins in God. We celebrate  
the love we have known  
in the words of the Apostle Paul,

"And the peace of God,  
which surpasses all understanding,  
will guard your hearts  
and your minds in Christ Jesus."  
It is in this peace that  
our guarded hearts break  
open to welcome the light  
of this third candle of Advent.

*[Third Candle is lit.]*

We light this candle  
to celebrate your love  
that unites all people.

In the warmth of  
this shimmering hope,  
we dream of that all people  
might experience this kind of love  
that surpasses all understanding.

*(Share a brief story about  
how you've experienced love  
together. Begin this story  
with the words, "I dream...")*

With this love made real,  
we find new understanding  
of what love could change  
and so we pray together:

Loving God, pour into our hearts  
this day the light of your love,  
warming us to one another,  
enlightening our understanding of  
others, and revealing the love  
that guards our hearts and minds.  
Amen.

## Fourth Sunday of Advent

We might not feel quite ready,  
still we praise God. There is  
joy in the inexplicable and  
the extraordinary. We celebrate  
wonder of what could be just as  
Mary sang,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices  
in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor  
on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on  
all generations will  
call me blessed."

It is with this joy that  
our souls unite to magnify  
the good news so full of blessing  
in the lighting of this  
fourth candle of Advent.

*[Fourth Candle is lit.]*

We light this candle  
to celebrate our joy for the world.  
Like Mary, we might hesitate  
and be cautious with our praise  
but when we remember how  
what God has done, we  
can only sing with joy.

*(Share a brief story about  
you've been surprised by joy..  
Begin this story with  
the words, "I remember...")*

With this deep joy,  
our hearts join together  
in prayer to God:

Eternal God, who magnifies  
each of our souls,  
surprise us this joy  
in these last few days  
before Christmas. Warm our hearts  
to feel the joy of your presence  
in our lives and in your world.  
Amen.

## Christmas Eve

In the silence of this night,  
we celebrate the tiny hope  
of birth in Jesus, our Christ.  
As we wonder what this  
birth means to us, we recall  
all that we have found  
on the way to Bethlehem.

We remember every bit of  
hope, peace, love and joy  
we have shared in sacred story.  
These lights shine bright  
as the work of Christmas begins.  
*(Reader pauses as each candle is  
lit in order.)*

The light of hope ... *(Candle is lit.)*  
The light of peace ... *(Candle is lit.)*  
The light of love ... *(Candle is lit.)*  
The light of joy... *(Candle is lit.)*

Now, as the shepherds worship  
and the cattle low, we sing  
with the angels that  
God has come into the world.  
We join in that song, singing,

"Glory to God in the highest  
heaven, and on earth peace  
among those whom he favors!"  
It is in this glory and awe  
that we light the candle of our  
Savior.

*(Christ candle is lit.)*

We light the Christ candle  
to celebrate our Savior.  
We join the chorus of angels  
with our glad tidings and great joy.  
God has been made real  
again. God has come close.  
We add our praise,  
remembering...

*(name a time, at Christmas  
or some other time,  
when you've been  
able to see God  
in another person.)*

As God becomes known  
again in human flesh  
and ordinary wonder,  
we join our hearts  
to pray together:

Holy God, we rejoice  
in your presence!  
The birth of this baby at Bethlehem  
gives us wonder and delight.  
The birth of your holy child  
is your answer to our unrest,  
our confusion and our sorrow.  
Tonight we live in Hope,  
we pray for Peace,  
we share your Love,  
as we are filled with your Joy.  
Thank you for sending  
your Child to be our Immanuel.  
Amen.