



## PRAYERS AROUND THE ADVENT WREATH

If you don't have a wreath, just gather four candles together. Although Advent candles are traditionally three purple and one pink, any color will do. During the week, sing or recite a verse of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" as you light the candle, or use the table prayer found in today's bulletin.

### THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT: HOPE

**Leader:** Today is the first Sunday of Advent, the Sunday in which we recall the hope we have in Christ. The prophets of Israel all spoke of the coming of Christ, of how a savior would be born, a king in the line of David. They spoke of how he would rule the world wisely and bless all nations. As followers of Christ, we await his return.

We light this candle to remember that as he came to us as humbly in the manger at Bethlehem and gave light to the world, so he is coming again in power to deliver his people. We light this candle to remind us to be alert and to watch for His return.

*(Light Advent Candle One - Purple)*

**Leader:** Let us pray - Loving God, we thank you for the hope you give us. Help us prepare our hearts for the Lord's coming. Bless our worship. Help us live holy and righteous lives. We ask it in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord. Amen.

### THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT: PEACE

**Leader:** The second candle of Advent is the Candle of Peace. It is sometimes called the Bethlehem Candle to remind us of the place in which preparations were made to receive and cradle the Christ child. Peace is a gift that we must be prepared for. God gives us the gift of peace when we turn to him in faith. The prophet Isaiah calls Christ "the Prince of Peace."

Through John the Baptist and all the other prophets, God asks us to prepare our hearts so that he may come in. Our hope is in God, and in his son Jesus Christ. Our peace is found in him. We light this candle today to remind us that he brings peace to all who trust in him.

*(Light Advent Candle Two - Purple)*

**Leader:** Let us pray - Loving God, we thank you for the peace you give us through Jesus. Help us prepare our hearts to receive Him. Bless our worship. Guide us in all that we say and do. We ask it in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord. Amen.

## THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT: JOY

**Leader:** The third candle of Advent is the Candle of Joy. It reminds us of the joy that Mary felt when the angel Gabriel told her that a special child would be born to her - a child who would save and deliver his people. God wants us all to have joy. The angel who announced to the shepherds that Jesus had been born told them: "Do not be afraid. I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people - for to you is born this day, in the City of David, a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." We light this candle to remember that He is the bringer of true and everlasting joy.

*(Light Advent Candle Three - Pink)*

**Leader:** Let us pray - Loving God, we thank you for the joy you bring us. Help us prepare our hearts for this gift. Bless our worship. Help us to hear and to do your word. We ask it in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord. Amen.

## THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT: LOVE

**Leader:** The fourth candle of Advent is the Candle of Love. Its light is meant to remind us of the love that God has for us. Jesus shows us God's perfect love. He is God's love in human form. The Bible says "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Love is patient, love is kind, and envies no one. Love is never boastful or conceited, rude or selfish. Love is not quick to take offense, it keeps no records of wrongs, it does not gloat over other people's troubles, but rejoices in the right, the good, and the true. There is nothing that love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, to its hope, to its endurance. Love never ends. We light this candle today to remind us of how God's perfect love is found in Jesus

*(Light Advent Candle Four - Purple.)*

**Leader:** Let us pray - Loving God, we thank you for your gift of love, shown to us perfectly in Jesus Christ our Lord. Help us prepare our hearts to receive Him. Bless our worship. Help us to hear and do your word. We ask it in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord. Amen

**T**he Advent mystery is the beginning of the end of all in us that is not yet Christ.

*Thomas Merton*