

Lighting the Advent Wreath 2010



Advent comes from the Latin word 'adventus' meaning 'Coming.' Advent begins the church year starting four Sundays before Christmas. The season of Advent has been set aside as a time of preparation since the 6th century. Advent is also a time for preparing for Christ's second coming, even as we remember and celebrate his first coming at Christmas. This is why the colour of the season of Lent is used, purple or blue, the colours also of Lent, of forgiveness and repentance.

Traditions vary from church to church, but usually one week, in Advent, is set aside as more celebratory than others. Rose is the colour of this week rather than purple, which is why a rose candle is used.

In our churches we will celebrate this week on the fourth Sunday of Advent, when we remember Mary, the mother of Jesus to whom is attributed that great song of joy, the Magnificat.

Week One
The Candle of Hope

The Patriarchs

We hear the message of hope told to Abraham

Week Two
The Candle of Peace

The Prophets

We hear from Isaiah of one
who will be born Prince of Peace

Week Three
The Candle of Love

John the Baptist

John the Baptist spoke bravely
that we should share what we have with others,
treat each other kindly and show God's love

Week Four
The Candle of Joy

Mary the Mother of Jesus

Mary was filled with Joy when she knew
that she would become the mother of Jesus

Christmas Day
The Birth of Jesus

First Candle - The Candle of Hope (Purple Candle) The Patriarchs, Abraham, the Old Testament Ancestors of Jesus

Leader: May your hearts be filled with hope as you hear the promises God made to bless all the peoples on earth through Abraham, the father of our faith.

All: Thanks be to God

Leader: Today is the First Sunday of Advent, we will light a candle to remember the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the ancestors of our faith.

Genesis Chapter 12

The LORD had said to Abraham, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.

"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you;

I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Abraham was obedient to God and left his home to go to a distant land. God told Abraham that through him all the nations of the world would be blessed. This blessing would come because he trusted and put his hope in God. The Gospel writer Matthew traces the ancestry of Jesus back through the Old Testament to Abraham. So it was that the promise was fulfilled, that all the nations of the world were blessed through the obedience of Abraham.

(A person lights the first candle here)

Leader: Let us pray:

All: God of Abraham, Jacob and Isaac and the ancestors of our faith, you are our Father too. Help us as we await the coming of Jesus, to show the same obedience and willingness as Abraham. May we seek always to follow your path for our lives.

We ask this prayer in the name of Jesus our Saviour, the babe of Bethlehem. Amen.

Second Candle - The Candle of Peace (Purple Candle) The prophets who foretold the birth of Jesus

Leader: May your hearts be filled with peace as you hear the words of the prophet Isaiah who told of one who would be born the Prince of Peace.

All: Thanks be to God

Leader: Last Sunday we lit the First Candle of Hope in our Advent Wreath, and celebrated the patriarchs. We light it again as we place our hope in Jesus the blessing of God for all nations.
(A person now lights the first candle)

The prophet Isaiah said

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Today, as we light the Second Candle of Advent, we remember the prophets who spoke of the coming of Christ. They told of how a Saviour would be born, a king in the line of King David. The prophet Isaiah called Christ "the Prince of Peace" and told us how he would rule the world wisely and bless all the nations.
(A person lights the second candle)

Leader: Let us pray:

All: Lord Jesus, Light of the World, the prophets said you would bring peace and save your people. Give peace in our hearts and in our troubled world this Christmastide.

We ask this prayer in the name of Jesus our Saviour, the babe of Bethlehem. Amen.

Third Candle - The Candle of Love (Purple Candle) John The Baptist

Leader: May your hearts be filled with God's love towards all people as you consider the life of sacrifice and encouragement of John the Baptist.

All: Thanks be to God

Last Sunday we the lit the Candles of Hope and Peace.
(A person now lights the Candles of Hope, and Peace.)

Today is the Third Sunday of Advent and we light the Candle of Love and remember John the Baptist.

Matthew Chapter 3

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: 'A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'

In their old age God gave to Zechariah and Elisabeth a son called John. John spoke to the people bravely in the desert denying his own comforts and was prepared to die for what he believed. John taught that we should share what we have with others, treat each other kindly and show God's love. He did this because he cared for people and wanted them to repent and find God's forgiveness.
(A person now lights the third candle)

Leader: Let us pray:

All: Lord God, help us to follow the example of your servant John the Baptist that we would be witnesses and spread the good news of your love.

We ask this prayer in the name of Jesus our Saviour, the babe of Bethlehem. Amen.

Fourth Candle - The Candle of Joy (Pink candle) Mary the Mother of Jesus

Leader: May your hearts be filled with joy as you hear the song of Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

All: Thanks be to God

Leader: Last Sunday we lit the Candles of Hope, Peace and Love
(A person now lights the Candles of Hope, Peace, and Love)

Today we light the Fourth Candle of Advent, the Candle of Joy, as we remember Mary the mother of Jesus

Luke Chapter 1 And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors."

Mary had been told by the angel Gabriel that she would bear Jesus, a holy child, the Son of God. We are told that Mary rejoiced and sang a song which glorified God. Just as the birth of Jesus gave great joy to his mother, so his presence in the world gave joy to those who had none before. He healed them and gave them hope and peace when they believed in him.

(Light the fourth pink candle now.)

Leader: Let us pray:

All: Lord God, may we follow the example of Mary and serve you in joyful obedience. In all circumstances give us trust in your promises and help us to faithfully serve you, all of our days.

We ask this prayer in the name of Jesus our Saviour, the babe of Bethlehem. Amen.

The Last Candle - The Birth of Christ (White Candle) Jesus is born on Christmas Day

Leader: Today we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ
our Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Leader: Today is Christmas Day the day on which we
celebrate the gift to us of the birth of Jesus and
recall the hope we have in Christ. Today we light
again the Candles of Hope, Peace, Love and Joy.

(Each candle will be lit as the reader speaks)

First Candle - We speak of hope - because God keeps his
promises to us.

Second Candle - We work for peace - because Jesus is the 'Prince
of Peace' and he calls his children to work for peace in his name.

Third Candle - We show love - because Jesus gave everything for
us and led us to know the forgiveness of God.

Fourth Candle - We share joy - because the Holy Spirit fills our
hearts and minds with the presence the God

Last Candle Now we light our last candle to remember the birth of
our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ which we celebrate this
Christmas Day.

Luke 2

*And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in
cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest
room available for them. And there were shepherds living out in the
fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of
the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around
them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be
afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the
people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you;
he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a
baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."*

(Light the white Christ Candle now.)

Leader:

Let us pray

Lord Jesus, you come as a tiny, fragile baby; yet we know that you are God and you are with us. May the flame of this candle remind us that you are the light of the world and that if we follow you, we will never walk in darkness, but will have the true light of life.