

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy



First Week in Advent



Reader: *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness -- on them light has shined... For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:2, 6)*

Reader: Today we remember the prophets of old, who demanded to be heard, who dared to speak of a child to come, unexpected liberator of the people, vulnerable incarnation of the Holiest of Holies, a new name for God.

People: Today we give thanks for the prophets among us, who bring to us surprising new visions of hope, who challenge us to think outside the box, who show us a future we never anticipated.

Reader: in this first Week of Advent, we light this candle as a symbol of the prophets who renew our faith and remind us of what may be.

(Light a purple candle.)

Hymn: O Come O Come Emmanuel

***O come, O come, Emmanuel! Redeem thy captive Israel
That into exile drear is gone, Far from the face of God's dear Son.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.***

Second Week in Advent



Reader: "In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people'" (Luke 2:8-10).

Reader: Today we remember the shepherds, workers for the common good, steadfast watchmen isolated and alone, far from the warmth of home, doing the job no one wants. And yet God saw them, God valued them, and God declared the greatest news of all to them alone.

People: Today we give thanks for the shepherds among us, back-breaking laborers on whom our economy stands, those we overlook or rarely see, yet rely on for our very survival, the ones who have much to teach us about watching for God in the darkness.

Reader: On this second Sunday in Advent, we light the second candle as a symbol of the shepherds, agents of the gospel and redeemers of the world.

(Light two purple candles.)

Hymn: "O Come O Come Emmanuel"

**O come, thou Branch of Jesse!
Draw the quarry from the lion's claw;
From the dread caverns of the grave,
From nether hell, thy people save.**

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.***

Third Week in Advent



Reader: *"And Mary said, '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; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name'" (Luke 1:46-49).*

Reader: Today we remember Mary, innocent and powerful, sacred and scared, worried and waiting as the Savior of all grows in her womb. She sings boldly when she might be meek; she bears her role in history with the confidence of a warrior; she is the beginning of a mighty revolution as the proud are brought down and the lowly lifted up.

People: Today we give thanks for the Marys among us, who step out of the roles society has planned; unintended pioneers determined to do as God asks; fearless and fearfully stepping out in faith, and beckoning us to do the same.

Reader: On this third Sunday of Advent, we light this candle as a symbol of Mary, mother of God, bearer of the Way.

(Light two purple candles and one rose candle.)

Hymn: "O Come O Come Emmanuel"

**O come, O come, thou Dayspring bright!
Pour on our souls thy healing light;
Dispel the long night's lingering gloom,
And pierce the shadows of the tomb.
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.***

Fourth Week in Advent



Reader: *"In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David" (Luke 2:1,3-4).*

Reader: Today we remember Joseph, worn-out traveler and worried husband, doing what was necessary for the sake of his family, the burden of poverty stifling his hope in the promise of God. There was no room for him, yet he knows to whom he belongs.

People: Today we give thanks for the Josephs among us, migrating far from home when there is no choice, fiercely devoted to the ones they love, unwavering in their belief that there is room for all in the kin-dom of God.

Reader: On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we light this candle as a symbol of Joseph, who knocks at the door, ready to take his place among royalty.

(Light two purple candles, the rose candle, and the last purple candle.)

Hymn: "O Come O Come Emmanuel,"

**O Come, thou Lord of David's Key!
The royal door fling wide and free;
Safeguard for us the heavenward road,
And bar the way to death's abode.
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.***

Christmas Eve



Reader: "While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger"

(Luke 2:6-7).

Reader: Tonight, angels far and near sing tender lullabies; well-worn fabric full of years holds in the warmth of parental love; animals and shepherds crowd in tight, glowing with adoration, while a muffled cry squeezes out to greet the world.

People: Tonight we give thanks for every child among us. Each new birth -- regardless of circumstances -- reminds us of the preciousness of life, the potential of tomorrow, the promise of God.

Reader: On this Christmas Eve, we light the Christ candle for the child-King, the infant-Redeemer, the lowly-Lord.

And now we know . . .

He is born and nothing will ever be the same!

(Light all candles.)

Hymn: Joy to the World

***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.***