

DECEMBER 2/18
The First Sunday of Advent: HOPE

LEADER: Today, on this first Sunday of Advent, we will light the candle of Hope in the Advent wreath. Advent reminds us that we are waiting for God to come to us anew. The circular wreath is a symbol of God's endless love and mercy and the greenery represents the hope of renewal and eternal life.

ALL: The prophets of the Old Testament called the people to repent and return to God. They also foretold the coming of the Redeemer and said: "the mere sound of His name will signal hope".

LEADER: Hear the words of Isaiah: "Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." The good news of Advent is that Christ is coming! The 'true light' of the world!

ALL: Let us welcome Him into our hearts, let us be guided by His ministry and let us go forward in hope.

LEADER: Let's pray together.

ALL: God, as we begin this Advent season, we open all of the dark places in our lives and memories to the healing light of Christ. Show us your hope. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, so that we may walk in the light of Christ. AMEN

DECEMBER 9/18
The Second Sunday of Advent: PEACE

LEADER: Last Sunday we lit the candle of Hope. Today, we will also light the second Advent candle – the candle of Peace. We light it knowing full well that peace is elusive and, in some parts of the world, it is almost completely absent.

ALL: Yet, we know that God is never absent from us. Even where there is war and discord... whether between countries, within families, or within our own hearts... God is present – gently leading us to new possibilities.

LEADER: God promises that, one day, fighting will end. “Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore”. The peacemakers will be blessed indeed!

ALL: We are a people who long for Jesus. We long for the peace of God for ourselves, our families, our communities, and for the whole world.

LEADER: Let's pray together.

ALL: Merciful and loving God, in this time of preparation and planning we thank you for your hope and peace. As we wait for Jesus' coming again, we pray for those who live in conflict, that they will be protected. We pray for situations that create conflict, that they will be resolved peacefully. Help us to be peacemakers in your name. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, so that we may walk in the light of Christ. AMEN

DECEMBER 16/18
The Third Sunday of Advent: JOY

LEADER: Today is the third Sunday of Advent. We will relight the candles of Hope and Peace and then light the candle of Joy.

ALL: The pink Joy candle reminds us of the joy that Mary felt when the angel Gabriel told her that the child born to her would be the Saviour.

LEADER: Hear the Good News from the Gospel of Luke: "Do not be afraid. I am bringing you news of great joy for all people. For to you is born this day, in the City of David, a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord."

ALL: And the angels sang for joy: "Glory to God in the highest".

LEADER: Jesus said: "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

ALL: Come, thou long-expected Jesus! Hope of all the earth thou art. Dear Desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart.

LEADER: Let's pray together.

ALL: Loving God, we open ourselves to you, trusting that you created us with the capacity for joy. Show us your hope, send us your peace, and teach us your joy. May we do our part to bring your good news of great joy to all. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, so that we may walk in the light of Christ.

AMEN

DECEMBER 23/18
The Fourth Sunday of Advent: LOVE

LEADER: On this fourth Sunday in Advent, we will light the last purple candle. After relighting the candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy, we will add the gift of God's love to the circle. There is no greater power than love. It is stronger than rulers and empires, stronger than grief or despair, stronger even than death.

ALL: **We love – because God loves us. “For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”**

LEADER: 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 record of wrongs, it does not gloat over other people's troubles, but rejoices in the right, the good, and the true.

ALL: **There is nothing that love cannot face. There is no limit to its faith, to its hope, or to its endurance. Love never ends.**

LEADER: Let's pray together.

ALL: **Loving God, we open ourselves to you this Christmas season. Light our lives with your Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Magnify your love within us. May we reflect the light of your love as we wait for you to come again. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, so that we may walk in the light of Christ. AMEN**

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP
CHRISTMAS SUNDAY - DECEMBER 30/18

LEADER: Christmas has come!

ALL: Christ has come!

LEADER: We gather to celebrate His birth. This morning we relight the Advent candles: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love to remind us of the gifts of our Saviour. We light the Christ candle in the centre because Jesus is the Light of the World.

**** (the five candles are lit) ****

ALL: We have explored what it is to wait expectantly for the best Christmas gift the world has ever seen. We acknowledge that the world needs the hope, peace, joy and love of Jesus Christ now more than ever.

LEADER: Christ is our hope and our salvation. May every knee bow before the newborn Saviour. May every tongue sing.

ALL: The Prince of Peace has come! His name is Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. Our waiting is over.

LEADER: Jesus Christ is born!

ALL: O come, let us adore him!