

Advent Candle Lighting Readings

Week One: Hope

Today, on this first Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of hope. Romans 8:22-25 says:

All around us, we observe a pregnant creation. The difficult times of pain throughout the world are simply birth pangs. It is not only around us but within us. The Spirit of God is arousing us, and we feel the birth pangs. Our sterile and barren bodies are yearning for full deliverance. That is why waiting does not diminish us any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother.

We are enlarged in the waiting. Of course, we do not see what is enlarging us. But the longer we wait, the larger we become and the more joyful our expectancy.

Advent is a season of waiting and expectation for Christ's coming. We recognize our need for God as we lament our condition and long for God to set things right, to make us better. We are open and ready, praying and watching for signs of His presence. Amid hardship and disappointment, we continue to wait in hope. We believe something significant, light-filled, and life-giving is happening in our world, taking shape in our lives. Even in December's lengthening darkness, this seed of joyful hope grows within us. We are pregnant with it, waiting, and expectant - God is coming! Each week, we light a candle to remember the Light of the World that came to us.

Today, we light the candle of hope, as we say:
"Alleluia, our Messiah is our hope."

Week Two: Peace

On this second Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of peace.

Our hearts long for peace. We long for peace, particularly in the places of our world where there is war or conflict. We long for peace on our continent, peace between races, political rivals, and people who are divided. We long for peace in our hearts, as we feel anxious, restless, or worried.

We live in a time where peace can feel elusive. There has been tension all around us. Do we still dare to claim to be people of peace? We do. We can choose peace because Jesus is our peace.

We share in Zechariah's song from Luke chapter 1:

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them. He has raised a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us — to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our Father Abraham: to rescue us from the hands of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

Today we light the candle of peace, as we say:
"Alleluia! Our Messiah is our peace."

Week Three: Joy

On this third Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of joy.

During Christmas, we often sing a well-known carol called "Joy to the World." The cause of that joy is stated in the first line: "The Lord has come!" The coming of Jesus is the reason for Christmas joy. Although we know this is our true reason for joy at Christmas, we may still struggle with the day-to-day realities that can make joy feel far away. In a world full of trouble, can we live as people of joy? Yes, because our joy is not in circumstance, but in the unshakeable goodness of our God. In this Advent season, the coming of Jesus brings us great joy.

With the angels, we joyfully proclaim: *"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."*

Today we light the candle of joy, as we say:

"Alleluia! Our Messiah is our joy!"

Week Four: Love

On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of love.

John 3:16 reads: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him will not die but have eternal life."*

This famous verse reminds us that Jesus came to earth because of love. God has always loved us and will always love us. There is absolutely nothing we can do that will separate us from His love. There is nothing that will make God stop loving us. God loved us enough to send Jesus. We can remember and rejoice in that love at Christmas.

Like Simeon, we can declare: *"My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."*

Today we light the candle of love, as we say:

"Alleluia! Our Messiah is a gift of love!"

Christmas Eve: Christ Candle

Now we light the Christ candle, as we remember:

*A light came out of darkness,
No light, no hope had we
Til Jesus came from heaven
Our light and hope to be*

Jesus is our Messiah – Immanuel, Man of Sorrows, Prince of Peace. He is the Light of the World. In Him, we find all our hope, peace, joy, and love. Christ is born, and His birth has changed history and our lives. We rejoice because Jesus is with us. He is our light.

Now we light the Christ candle, as we say:

"Alleluia! Our Messiah has come!"