



Lighting the Advent Wreath (Advent Candles)

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.

The Advent Wreath has four purple candles and one of white. The first candle is lit on Advent Sunday; additional ones are lit, one on each Sunday, and the white on Christmas Day.

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

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

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

Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (NRSV)

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, God of our ancestors: to you be praise and glory for ever. You called the patriarchs to live by the light of faith and to journey in the hope of your promised fulfilment. May we be obedient to your call and be ready and watchful to receive your Christ, a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; for you are our light and our salvation. Blessed be God for ever.

(A person lights the first candle here)

Leader: Let us pray:

Lord Jesus we give thanks for our Father Abraham who by faith obeyed your call and became the father of many nations. Give us faith to listen to your voice that our hearts may be filled with the hope of our Lord Jesus. 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

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)

Isaiah Chapter 9

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. (NRSV)

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, just and true: to you be praise and glory for ever. Of old you spoke by the mouth of your prophets, but in our days you speak through your Son, whom you have appointed the heir of all things. Grant us, your people, to walk in his light, that we may be found ready and watching when he comes again in glory and judgement; for you are our light and our salvation. Blessed be God for ever. *(A person now lights the second candle)*

Leader: Let us pray:

All: Lord God you spoke through your prophets and promised a kingdom of peace.

We welcome you Lord Jesus, the Prince of Peace and our hearts long for the establishment of your kingdom of justice and righteousness. Amen.



**Third Candle - The Candle of Love
(Pink 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 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 appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."' (NRSV)

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, just and true: to you be praise and glory for ever. Your prophet John the Baptist was witness to the truth as a burning and shining light. May we your servants rejoice in his light, and so be led to witness to him who is the Lord of our coming kingdom, Jesus our Saviour and King of the ages. Blessed be God for ever.

(A person now lights the pink candle)

Leader: Let us pray:

All: Lord Jesus, your servant John the Baptist called people to prepare for your coming by caring for one another. Give us willing hearts to reach out to all people in need with your love and compassion. Amen.

Fourth Candle - The Candle of Joy 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

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 magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour 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. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.' (NRSV)

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, merciful and gentle: to you be praise and glory for ever. Your light has shone in our darkened world through the child-bearing of blessed Mary; grant that we who have seen your glory may daily be renewed in your image and prepared like her for the coming of your Son, who is the Lord and Saviour of all. Blessed be God for ever. *(Light the fourth pink candle now.)*

Leader: Let us pray:

**All: Alleluia, alleluia. Mary Mother of Jesus,
blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of
your womb. Alleluia!**



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

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 son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' (NRSV)

(Light the white Christ Candle now.)

God our Father, today the Saviour is born and those who live in darkness are seeing a great light. Help us, who greet the birth of Christ with joy, to live in the light of your Son and to share the good news of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who has come into the world.

Amen.

Leader: Let us pray

**All: Holy God you left the glory of heaven to take upon yourself our fragile humanity.
You came to us in love and yet we denied you room and you were laid in a manger.
We have lit candles of hope, peace, love and joy, may these virtues shine brightly in our lives as we welcome you into our hearts this Christmas. Amen.**

Lord Jesus,
Christmas is a season when we are caught up in excitement and preparations for celebrations. In the midst of our rush to see that all is done, forgive us when we put to the back of our minds giving thanks for your birth at Bethlehem.

May the light of your presence within us keep us mindful of your great love for us. In this special season may we spread your Good News, that others may find room in their hearts for you.

