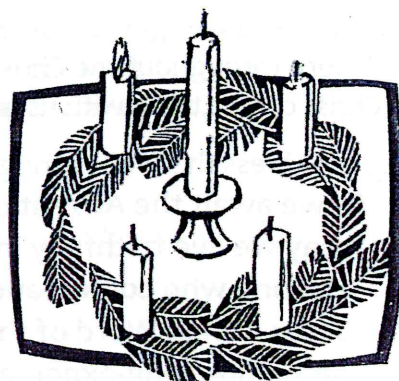


## The Tradition of the Advent Wreath and Lighting Its Five Candles: Liturgies for Church and Home



BLESSING OUR ADVENT WREATH AND  
LIGHTING THE FIRST CANDLE, THE LIGHT OF HOPE

Advent means “Coming”, and for us as Christians,  
it means *Jesus' Coming!*

And how shall we prepare for this wonderful visitor into our world and our lives?

**With a wreath made from earth's elements,  
to show surrounding warmth, beauty, and welcome!**

The Wreath is one of the oldest and best-known sights  
in this season we call “Advent”. Look how interesting it is –  
It is round, with no beginning or ending, like God, Who was and is and will be:  
**God is *always!***

It is round, with no edges or seams where they may be joined together;  
round like a wheel, a clock! – helping us get through our days and world.

It is furred in pine, holly and fir – evergreens –  
ever-green, long-living like eternal life, forever – onward.

It is lighted with candles, brilliant points of light,  
reminding us of Jesus, “the True Light”.

There are five candles, five lights of Jesus' brightness in our lives and world.

The candle we light first, today is called the Light of Hope,  
because God's prophet speaks to us of how we can look forward  
to Christ's coming to bring us a life full of his love. Who wouldn't hope for that?!

***The children sing:* “Light one candle for Hope. . .”**

The second candle we light, next Sunday, December 8, is called the Light of Love,  
because the messenger of God named John tells us about Jesus,  
so that we can prepare room for him and welcome him into our lives.

***The children sing:* “Light one candle for Love. . .”**

The third candle we light, December 15, is called the Light of Joy.  
Now what could possibly make us any more joyful  
when we think we have everything we want, already?

***The children sing:* “Light one candle for Joy. . . .”**

The fourth candle we light, December 22, is called the Light of Grace.  
Just as Mary wondered at the mystery of being the mother of God's Son,  
we marvel that God loves us enough to send His Son, Jesus, to share that love.

***The children sing:* “Light one candle for Grace. . . .”**

***Service continues on the next page. . . .***

The fifth candle we light, Christmas Eve, is the Christ Candle, the Light of Peace. It will burn throughout the Christmas Season and into the new year ahead as Christ comes to be with us and as he calls us to share in his mission.

Let us now bless this endless ring of light that illuminates God's future for us:

**As we await the Advent of our Savior,  
may we live faithfully into God's promises of the one who has come,  
the one who comes, and the one who will come, again,  
Jesus Christ, Word of the Father, Now-In-Flesh-Appearing.  
Come, thou long-expected Jesus, come!**

Now it is time to light our first Advent Candle, the Light of Hope.  
First, listen to the promise of God of which the prophet Jeremiah speaks:

*"Days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Jacob. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called:  
"The Lord is our Righteousness." Jeremiah 33:14-16 (appointed for today)*

**The first Advent candle is lighted, then:**

When we light this first candle, may its brightness rouse us up and excite us to welcome Jesus Christ when he comes!

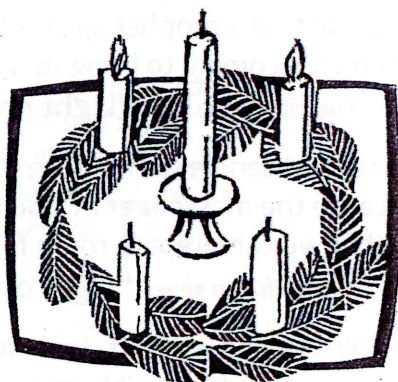
**May the light sent from God shine in our hearts and homes,  
that he might enter and abide with us for ever,  
bringing his blessing upon us.**

**Having received his light for ourselves, may we be a light to others,  
reflecting the splendor of the One-Who-Comes, Christ the Lord!**

#### LIGHTING THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE, THE LIGHT OF LOVE

The autumn wanes, the sky grows gray, the harvest is done – Earth, too, seems empty, waiting, anticipating the One who comes to bring new life.

**How shall we receive you, Lord,  
how greet you a-right?**



This Second Sunday of Advent anticipates not only the Coming of Christ, it announces his coming and calls us to put our spiritual house in order: preparing to receive him and making room for him in our lives.

**O come, o come, Emmanuel!**

*"And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God."* Philippians 1.9-11



And so, we light this second candle of our Advent Wreath, the Light of Love, that, amid the darkness and emptiness and frailty of our lives, Christ the True Light shines in us and illumines a better way to live.

We greet you, Lord, as we. . . . . \*

Sing!  
Be kind  
Feed the Birds  
Hang Up Mistletoe  
Pray  
Wrap Gifts  
Share Some Recipes  
Send Out Christmas Cards  
Smile!  
Make Fudge  
Hang Some Pine Boughs  
Go Caroling in Nursing Homes  
Pray for the Grieving, Lonely and the Sick  
Sing  
Pray  
.....Smile!.....

#### LIGHTING THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE, THE LIGHT OF JOY

I look from afar and lo! I see the power of God coming down, as in a cloud covering the whole earth.

**Tell us, are you He Who is to come  
or shall we expect another?**

*"John answered them, 'I baptize you with water; but one mightier than I is coming. He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.'" Luke 3*

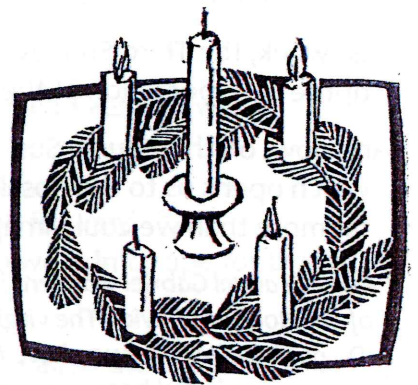
**How shall we receive you, how greet you a'right?**

*"Sing aloud, daughter of Zion; shout, all Israel! Know, all peoples: the Lord takes away all judgments against you, turns away your enemies! The Lord is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day, it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion! Do not let your hands grow weak. He will exult over you as on a festival day, and rejoice over you in his love. At that time I will bring you home and gather you, says the Lord!"*  
Zephaniah 3

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!**

And so, today, we light the Third Advent Candle, the Light of Joy – Gaudete – from the Latin meaning “Rejoicing”, which speaks of gladness, not disaster or reproach, and exultation, not a faint spirit.

**The third Advent candle is lighted, then:**

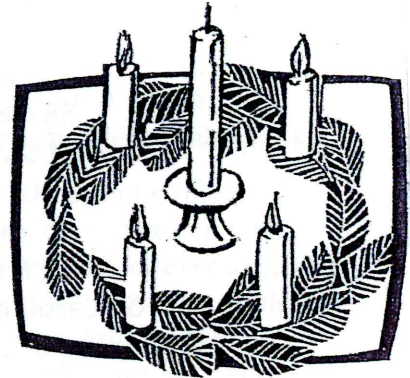


*"Surely it is God Who saves me; I will trust in Him and not be afraid,  
for the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense; He will be my Savior!  
With joy you shall draw water from the wells of salvation,  
and on that day you shall say, 'Give thanks to the Lord, call on His name;  
make known His deeds among the nations, exalt His name!'"* Isaiah 12

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!**

**LIGHTING THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE,  
THE LIGHT OF GRACE**

*"People, look East! The time is near  
of the crowning of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able,  
trim the hearth, set the table.  
People, look East and sing today:  
Love, the Lord, is on the way!"* Besancon, UMH 202



Remember that on the First Sunday of Advent  
we lighted the Candle of Hope,  
for the prophet promised us the Coming – the Advent – of the Lord.

On the Second Sunday of Advent we lighted the Candle of Love, as we  
prepare our hearts to make room for the Lord in our humble lives –  
wherein he chooses to live!

Last week, the Third Sunday, we lighted the Candle of Joy, for we are on the  
tiptoe of expectation at the arrival of our special guest, the Lord Jesus!

And now, on this Fourth Sunday of Advent, we light the Candle of Grace,  
which opens us to the possibilities of wholeness in all our human moments,  
far more than we could imagine if left only to ourselves. Listen!

*"And the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph,  
of the House of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel said to her,  
'Do not be afraid, for you have found favor with God. You will conceive  
in your womb and bear a son, and you will call him Jesus. He will be great,  
and will be called the Son of the Most High. He will reign over the House of Jacob  
forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom.'" Luke 3*

**The fourth Advent Candle is lighted, then:**

At last, at last! Emmanuel comes – God-Is-With-Us! –  
truly the One Who is to come and redeem his people!

Let us welcome him with our gladness and make room for him  
in our common days, that we, being born anew by his grace,  
may be renewed daily by his Holy Spirit  
to live in peace and goodwill with all!  
Come, thou long-expected Jesus!

**The Christ Candle Lighting is on the Insert**



LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE,  
THE LIGHT OF PEACE

*"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined.*

*For a child has been born to us, a Son given us;  
authority rests on his shoulders; and he is named  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,  
Prince of Peace.*

*Isaiah 9*



At last, at last! Night is ending –  
**The Day is drawing near!**

The peoples living in the night See the long-awaited Light –  
Rising in the darkness from afar – it shines on them: this Morning Star!  
At last! At last! Night is ending –  
**The Day is drawing near!**

In Winter, when trees appear dead, We have hope to look ahead  
To the green branch that will appear When Spring's new life draws near.  
At last! At last! Night is ending –  
**The Day is drawing near!**

God With Us Is a living name; God will not be put to shame  
If we open to receive This Son in whom we believe.  
At last! At last! Night is ending –

**The Day is drawing near!**

*From the poetry of Sir John Betjemann*

The Lord be with you!  
**And with you also.**

Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Please take away the hindrances of  
our seasonal preoccupations, that we may make ourselves ready  
for the celebration of your birth – to receive you in great joy  
and to give you in great joy as we serve others;  
for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and to all ages!

*The Christ Candle is now lighted for the first time, then:*

Behold the glory of Christ: Glory as of the only-begotten Son of the Father!  
**God so loved the world, He gave His only Son to save us.**

Was ever there given to anyone a greater gift than this?  
**May the shadows vanish which make us timid heralds,  
so that we may announce with the angels' joy  
the glorious reign of our newborn King:  
Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, His Peace to all!**