

First Week of Advent: Hope

November 29 - December 5

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Let in the Light

The Lord God is a sun and shield;
He bestows favor and honor.
No good thing does the Lord withhold
from those who walk uprightly.
O Lord of hosts, blessed is everyone who trusts in you.
~ Psalm 84:11-12

Let in the Light

Light the candle of hope

Come, my Light, and illumine my darkness.
Come, my Life, and revive me from death.
Come, my Physician, and heal my wounds.
Come, Flame of divine love,
and burn up the thorns of my sins,
kindling my heart with the flame of your love.
Come, my King, sit upon the throne of my heart
and reign there,
for you alone are my King and my Lord. Amen.
~ Prayer by Dimitri of Rostov

November 30: Luke 1:5-25 Zechariah and Gabriel
*Merciful God, you offer me new life.
Help me receive it and believe it.*

December 1: Luke 1:26-38 Mary and Gabriel
*Holy One, reveal my role in your saving work and give me
the courage to say yes.*

December 2: Luke 1:26-38 Mary and the Holy Spirit
*Power of the Most High, overshadow me and make your
home in me.*

December 3: Luke 1:39-45 Mary Visits Elizabeth
*Jesus, fill me with a spirit of hospitality so I may see and
welcome all people as you do.*

December 4: Luke 1:46-56 Mary's Song
*Mighty God, open my lips with a witness to your just and
saving power.*

Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus by Charles Wesley

Second Week of Advent: Love

December 6 - December 12

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Let in the Light

Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God." ~ *John 3:16-21*

Let in the Light

Light the candles of hope and love

Come, my Light, and illumine my darkness.
Come, my Life, and revive me from death.
Come, my Physician, and heal my wounds.
Come, Flame of divine love,
 and burn up the thorns of my sins,
 kindling my heart with the flame of your love.
Come, my King, sit upon the throne of my heart
 and reign there,
 for you alone are my King and my Lord. Amen.
 ~ *Prayer by Dimitri of Rostov*

December 7: Luke 1:57-80 Zechariah's Prayer
Holy Spirit, complete your saving work in my life and fill my mouth with praise.

December 8: Matthew 1:1-17 Genealogy of Jesus
God of the Ages, help me to believe and respond to your plan, even when your plan is far beyond my imagining.

December 9: Matthew 1:18-25 Joseph's Dream
Holy Comforter, you are near when my dream dies. You are near the brokenhearted. Thanks be to you.

December 10: Matthew 1:18-25 God With Us
O come, O come Emmanuel, encourage me with the promise of your steadfast presence and love.

December 11: Luke 2:1-7 No Room
Gift of Heaven, order my desiring and my time so I don't miss you this season.

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray;
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with thee there.
 Away in a Manger by Anonymous

Third Week of Advent: Joy

December 13 - December 19

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Let in the Light

Jesus said, "I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness... I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." ~ *John 12:46, John 8:12*

Let in the Light

Light the candles of hope, love, and joy

Come, my Light, and illumine my darkness.
Come, my Life, and revive me from death.
Come, my Physician, and heal my wounds.
Come, Flame of divine love,
 and burn up the thorns of my sins,
 kindling my heart with the flame of your love.
Come, my King, sit upon the throne of my heart
 and reign there,
 for you alone are my King and my Lord. Amen.
 ~ *Prayer by Dimitri of Rostov*

December 14: Luke 2:1-7 Jesus Is Born
*"O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray.
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today."
 - Phillips Brooks*

December 15: Luke 2:8-14 Angels and Shepherds
Son of Mary, Son of God, bring peace to all on earth.

December 16: Luke 2:15-20 The Shepherds' Visit
*We welcome you O Christ, long awaited Messiah. We
receive you with joy and pray others will as well.*

December 17: John 1:1-18 Jesus, the Word of God
Jesus, make me hungry for you and your word.

December 18: John 1:1-18 Jesus, the Word Made Flesh
*Holy Christ, I sit in wonder before your willingness to be
vulnerable so we might be saved.*

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King,
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
 Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King!"

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King!"
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing by Charles Wesley

Fourth Week of Advent: Peace

December 20 – December 26

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Let in the Light

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. ~ *1 Peter 2:9-11*

Let in the Light

Light the candles of hope, love, joy, and peace

Come, my Light, and illumine my darkness.
Come, my Life, and revive me from death.
Come, my Physician, and heal my wounds.
Come, Flame of divine love,
 and burn up the thorns of my sins,
 kindling my heart with the flame of your love.
Come, my King, sit upon the throne of my heart
 and reign there,
 for you alone are my King and my Lord. Amen.
 ~ *Prayer by Dimitri of Rostov*

December 21: Luke 2:21 Jesus is Circumcised
Heavenly Father, mark me, name me, claim me as your child.

December 22: Luke 2:22-38 Simeon and Anna
Faithful God, grant me a persevering and active faith.

December 23: Matthew 2:1-12 Gift Giving
King of Kings, receive the best I have, with all my adoration and love.

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
 From angels bending near the earth
 To touch their harps of gold:
 "Peace on the earth, good will to men,
 From heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

 And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
 Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!
 It Came Upon the Midnight Clear by Edmund H. Sears

Christmas Eve, December 24

Lighting the Advent Wreath

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.

An Advent candle is lit as each name for the Messiah is read:

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.

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 onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

~ *Isaiah 9:2, 6-7*

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~ *Prayer by Dimitri of Rostov*

For weeks we've been lighting more and more candles on this wreath in preparation to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Tonight we light the final candle, for Jesus, the Light of the World, has come. God has kept the prophetic promise:

"By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." ~ *Luke 1:78-79*

Light the Christ Candle

It's now our turn. Accept the Light, share Christ with others, and carry His peace into the world.

Each person has their own candle. Light the first candle from the Christ Candle and pass the light to one another and then sing.

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light;
radiant beams from thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!
~ Joseph Mohr, trans. John F. Young

Now sing:

Happy Birthday to You
Happy Birthday to You
Happy Birthday dear Jesus
Happy Birthday to You

*Exchange signs of peace and love.
Extinguish your personal candle.*

Christmas Day, December 25

Lighting the Christ Candle

*The four advent candles are removed.
Only the Christ Candle remains.*

Let in the Light

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.
All things came into being through him,
and without him not one thing came into being.
What has come into being in him was life,
and the life was the light of all people.
The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it.
~ John 1:1-5

Let in the Light

Light the Christ Candle

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Epiphany, January 6

Lighting the Christ Candle

Let in the Light

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him. and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean." ~ *Matthew 2*

Let in the Light

Light the Christ Candle

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Ideas for Using This Resource

Make time for a reading before a meal, before bed, or first thing in the morning with your coffee or tea.

Use the Advent Wreath Readings on Sundays or more often. A simple Advent Wreath has four candles surrounding a fifth candle, the Christ Candle. Be creative in making your own.

Gather your loved ones around your Nativity or Advent Wreath for the reading of the day. Wouldn't it be fun to use your Nativity figures to act out the reading! There are five readings per week, plus the Advent Wreath readings, and a Christmas carol.

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