

**The Advent Wreath at Home** By: MATT LANEY Adapted: Whitney Bruno

### **A Brief History of the Advent Wreath**

Advent wreaths developed among German Lutherans in the 1700's.

The Advent wreath dates to the early 1800s and to a pastor named Johann Hinrich Wichern, known for his solidarity among poor urban people.

Each December, every day, the children of Pastor Johann's school would ask if Christmas had come. Pastor Johann came up with a creative way to mark the countdown by placing twenty-four candles (twenty red and four white) around the wheel of a cart. Red candles were lit each weekday. White candles were reserved for Sundays.

This was simplified to 4 candles and a small wreath for German Lutherans and Catholics to track the season at home. Sometimes a 5th candle is placed in the centre.

Advent wreaths didn't catch on in North America until the 1930s. But the 1960s children's BBC program "Blue Peter" featured making an advent crown of tinsel and baubles. This became a holiday favourite. Anglicans, Methodist, and other denominations adopted the wreath or crown tradition.

Recently, Eastern Orthodox families have begun adopting the tradition and adapting it to six candles to represent the additional weeks of Orthodox Advent.

### **Your Advent Wreath at Home**

Your advent wreath could be an ornate ringed candle holder dressed with pine and other decorations or something simpler. Truly, all you need are four or five candles, four surrounding, and maybe one in the middle. Traditionally, three of the four outer candles are purple/blue, and one is pink/rose. Each candle represents a virtue associated with this season of expectation and preparation: hope, peace, joy, and love. (Joy is represented by the pink/rose candle.)

We recommend lighting one candle per week, on a Sunday evening after sunset, starting the first week of Advent and continuing until Christmas. You can light them by yourself or with others, in silence or with the short readings and prayers provided in this devotional.

Christ is coming! Hallelujah!

### **FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

#### **- HOPE**

Read Isaiah 2:2-5.

*In the days to come, the mountain of God's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it as a beacon of hope. Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up the holy mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob; that we may learn God's ways and that we may walk in God's paths." God shall judge between the nations, and*

*between many peoples; the people shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!*

As you light the first candle, say: "This is the candle of Hope."

Pray: "May we become people of empowering Hope. Come, Lord Jesus!"

Questions for contemplation or conversation:

What gives you hope?

What challenges your hope?

How does the hope of Christ's birth change your perspective on life?

## **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

### **- PEACE**

Start by re-lighting the first candle, the candle of Hope. Then read Isaiah 11:1-10.

*The Prince of Peace is coming soon. Righteousness and faithfulness shall be the belt around his waist. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*

As the second candle is lit, say, "This is the candle of Peace."

Pray: "May we become people of infectious Peace. Come, Lord Jesus!"

Questions for contemplation or conversation:

What gives you peace?

What challenges your peace?

Why has Jesus become known as the Jesus the Prince of Peace?

## **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

### **- JOY**

Start by re-lighting the first two candles, the candles of Hope and Peace.

Read Luke 1:46b-55.

*Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God our Savior! Holy mercy is for those who honor God from generation to generation! God has shown strength and has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. God has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; God has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. God has helped their servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise made to our ancestors, to Abraham and Sarah and to their descendants forever!"*

As the third candle is lit, say, "This is the candle of Joy."

Pray: "May we become people of contagious Joy. Come, Lord Jesus!"

Questions for contemplation or conversation:

What gives you joy?

What challenges your joy?

How is Mary's joy an act of subversion against dehumanizing, destructive forces?

## **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

### **- LOVE**

Start by re-lighting the first three candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy. Read Matthew 1:18-25.

*Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public dis-grace, planned to dismiss her quietly. An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and they named him Jesus.*

As the fourth candle is lit, say, "This is the candle of Love."

Pray: "May we become people of liberating Love. Come, Lord Jesus!"

Questions for contemplation or conversation:

What do you love most in this world?

When do you experience love or know that you are loved?

How is the love of God revealed in Christ unique or different?

## **CHRISTMAS DAY**

### **- CHRIST**

Start by re-lighting the first four candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Read Luke 2:1-7.

*In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 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.*

As the central Christ candle is lit say, "Christ is born! Glory to God in the highest!"

(Now open presents, or however you celebrate, with deep gratitude for the gift of Jesus!)

## Scripture Readings – Nov. 30, 2025 – Advent 1 – for LCUCPC

**John 1: 1-6, 14 NRSV**

### **The Word Became Flesh**

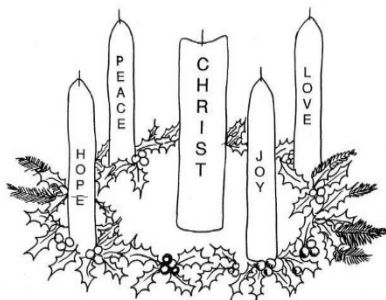
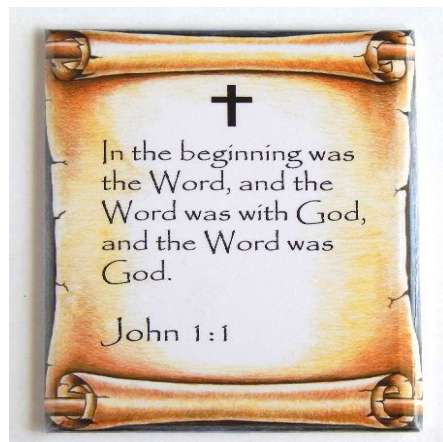
<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. (<sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.)

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

May God's spirit shape our understanding of these words.

**And may they awaken in our hearts.**



**Advent 1 – November 30, 2025**