

Advent 2020 at home

Advent greetings! In your homes we invite you to light a candle each week of Advent using the Advent readings below. Take some time to read and reflect on the scripture passages. Invite the Spirit to open your heart to new messages in the text this Christmas season.

Introduction:

Jesus was born into a world that, on an elemental level, was much like our own. He felt the earth beneath his feet and the sun on his face, experienced the wind on the water and the rain falling to nourish the soil. The lakes, seas, sun, wind, moon, and stars were all part of his life. He looked up and saw the glory of the night sky just as we do. He gave thanks for trees and growing things, just as we do. In this season of gifts and giving, we recognize the deep blessing of the world around us. With gratitude, we anticipate the birth of Jesus—the One who came to show us the way of hope, peace, joy, and love. *

Advent 1: Sky

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you (Isaiah 60:1).

In the sun, in the stars, in the light of the moon, we see the glory of our God. Soon the one we call the Light of the World will be born again in our hearts, minds, and spirits.

The first candle is lit.

Let us pray:

Wondrous, Holy God, today we begin our time of Advent waiting. Shine the light of your love upon us, we pray, and fill us with **hope** as we make our way toward the stable, the cradle, and the birth that changed everything...the birth of Jesus. Amen.

OT Scripture: Isaiah 64:1-9

NT Scripture: Mark 13:24-37

Psalm: 80:1-7, 17-19

* Intro and Advent candlelight prayers from *Gathering: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany 2020-2021*

Advent 2: Wind

The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit (John 3:8).

We often associate the Holy Spirit with the wildness and unpredictability of wind. May the breath of the Spirit bring us energy and creativity as we continue on our Advent journey toward Bethlehem.

The first and second candles are lit.

Let us pray:

Spirit of God, Energy of Life, hear our prayer as we continue our Advent journey together. Wherever you lead us, wherever you need us, give us **peace** as we seek to trust your guidance—as Mary did, as Joseph did, as the wise ones did. Amen.

OT Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-11

NT Scripture: Mark 1:1-8

Psalm: 85:1-2, 8-13

Advent 3: Earth

Let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy (Psalm 96:12).

By the grace of God, and the wonder of the natural world, the earth provides. As Mary and Joseph made their way to Bethlehem for the census, they had food to sustain them—bread made from grain grown in good soil. There was hay for the stable and grass for the animals to eat while the shepherds watched over them. The goodness of God's creation celebrates with us on our Advent journey.

The first three candles are lit.

Let us pray:

Creator God, we see your grace and goodness in the world around us. In trees and fields and the beauty of creation, we find deep **joy**. Bless us on our Advent way as we await the birth of Jesus. Amen.

OT Scripture: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

NT Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

Psalm: Instead of a Psalm use Luke 1:46b-55

Advent 4: Water

But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream! (Amos 5:24).

Before his birth, Jesus swam in the life-giving waters of Mary's womb. He was baptized in the River Jordan and called his first disciples as they repaired their fishing nets by the lakeshore. When he needed respite, Jesus went to the water for rest and healing. Water, for Jesus, and for all of us, is life. As we come to the final days of our Advent journey, may we be filled with the hope, joy, peace, and love of Jesus.

The four candles are lit.

Let us pray:

Gracious God, giver of life, as we journey to Bethlehem and the manger, we are thankful for the blessing of this season. For all the blessings around us, for the wonder of creation, and for the gift of Jesus—Emmanuel, God-with-us—our spirits soar with praise and thanksgiving for the **love** poured out upon the earth. Amen.

OT Scripture: Isaiah 52: 7-10

NT Scripture: Luke 2:1-14

Psalm: 89:1-4, 19-26

Christmas Day: Light

Jesus is born! On this day we light the four candles representing the sky, wind, earth, and water that embrace us. These elements of creation also embraced Jesus as he became flesh to live among us and know us fully. Today we also light the fifth candle as we rejoice in the light of Jesus, our savior, teacher, and guide.

The five candles are lit.

Let us pray:

God of infinite love, we praise you for the gift of Jesus who brought your **light** to the world. Open our hearts this day to fully receive your light within, so that we might shine your light brightly in our own lives for your glory and for the salvation of this world. Amen.

OT Scripture: Isaiah 9:2-7

NT Scripture: Luke 2:1-20

Psalm: 96