

# *Advent At-Home: Candle-Lighting Liturgies Welcome!*

These liturgies are designed to help you set aside time and space for worship in your own home as we journey through the sacred Advent season. While they may not be the formal order of worship you are accustomed to, these simple liturgies invite you to carve out space for reflection, scripture, and prayer—using items you may have at home and in the care packages. It can be used by individuals, couples, or families.

## **Supplies**

- Your Advent wreath with a lighter or matches.
- A cell phone or computer to use briefly to send a message to someone you love.
- Post-It Notes
- A pen or pencil for each person.

## **Set The Space**

A sanctuary can be defined as a place of refuge or safety. It is a space set apart. As you worship in the comfort of your own home, create a space set apart. Be intentional about setting it up every time. Light your Advent wreath if you have one, or a single candle if you do not. Fill up a cup of coffee or tea. Pull out your Bible and a pen. Settle in. Breathe deeply. Trust that God is with you, wherever you are.

## **Tips for Young Families:**

Invite your kids to have a hands-on role in this liturgy by having them collect the supplies from around the house (Post-It Notes, pens, candles and Advent wreath, lighter, etc). They could light the candle, read the scriptures, and write on the Post-It Notes if they're able. Before you begin the liturgy, invite your children to create a special place for you all to sit and reflect. They can make a comfortable fort out of pillows for you to sit on the floor, or gather all the supplies needed around the table!

# *The First Sunday in Advent*

## *those who dream... keep awake*

### **Gather - Share the Peace**

*Share the peace with everyone present in this moment. You can use the traditional words below or make up your own family method. If you are by yourself, take a moment and reflect upon the peace which God offers all of us!*

A: The Peace of the Lord be with you...

B: And also with you!

### **Candle Lighting Liturgy | The Candle of Hope**

*Written for two voices, this liturgy could be adapted for three or four. We hope you will include children in this sacred ritual!*

A: I dream of sunflower fields.

B: I dream of key lime pie with a mile-high meringue.

A: I dream of the days when we could be part of a crowd.

B: I dream of snow days.

A: I dream of empty beds in jail cells.

B: I dream of a world that will let kids be kids.

A: I dream of full tables instead of empty bellies.

B: I dream of schools with enough money to teach.

A: I dream of parents with enough money to feed.

B: I dream to keep awake, because if we don't dream of better days, then we might forget that this is not what God imagined.

A: So today we light the candle of hope, for hope is the very thing that keeps dreams afloat.

*Light the first blue candle...*

B: May this light be an invitation to keep awake.

A: May this light be our invitation to be Advent people—people who dream.

All: Amen.

## **Prayer of Hope**

A: O Great Dreamer,

All: **You dreamed up the stars in the sky.**

**You dreamed up that magic baby smell and the way cream sinks into coffee.**

**You dreamed up the crunch of fall leaves and jazz music.**

**You dreamed up wisteria and evergreen and the pure magic that is a six-foot-tall sunflower.**

**And in the midst of all of that, you dreamed up a dream for your people—  
a dream of hope and justice,**

**a dream for eyes wide open, to both the world's suffering and the world's  
beauty.**

**So today, as we read scripture, we ask that you would plant that same dream in  
us.**

**Pour out your Spirit on our hearts and minds so that we may see what you see,  
and dream what you dream.**

**Gratefully we pray,**

**Amen.**

## **Gospel Reading for the Week - Mark 13:24-37**

*Feel free to split the reading up among all of those who are participating in the gathering.*

<sup>24</sup>“But in those days, after that suffering,  
the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light,

<sup>25</sup>and the stars will be falling from heaven,

and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

<sup>26</sup>Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and  
glory. <sup>27</sup>Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds,  
from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

<sup>28</sup>“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>30</sup>Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. <sup>31</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>32</sup>“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup>Beware, keep alert for you do not know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup>It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. <sup>35</sup>Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, <sup>36</sup>or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. <sup>37</sup>And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

## Questions for Discussion

*These questions are meant to be shared with one another if you are with a partner or family. Or, they may be reflected upon silently by yourself. Write your answers on post-it notes and place them in a highly-visible spot for the whole season. Kids (and adults) can even draw a picture!*

How do you define hope?

What is a hope you have right now?

What is a hope God wants you to have?

## Be the Church

*To close, think of the people who have brought hope into your life. Send those people a message of peace or a short blessing, giving thanks for them. You can call, text, email, or tell them if they are sitting next to you!*

*Tips for Young Families:*

*Invite your kids to film a short video that you can text to friends or family, sharing messages of love*

*and affirmation. Empower your kids to select the people they want to say hello to and what message they want to share.*

# *The Second Sunday in Advent*

## *those who dream... prepare the way*

### **Gather - Share the Peace**

*Share the peace with everyone present in this moment. You can use the traditional words below or make up your own family method. If you are by yourself, take a moment and reflect upon the peace which God offers all of us!*

A: The Peace of the Lord be with you...

B: And also with you!

### **Candle Lighting Liturgy | The Candle of Peace**

*Written for two voices, this liturgy could be adapted for three or four. We hope you will include children in this sacred ritual!*

A: I dream of the first pitch of opening season.

B: I dream of a laundry day, where each sock finds its mate.

A: I dream of family home for the holidays.

B: I dream of good books and homemade meals.

A: I dream of sunset drives with the windows down.

B: These are beautiful dreams, but I also have urgent dreams.

A: I dream of conversations across party lines.

B: I dream of more bridges and less walls.

A: I dream of more laughter and less fear.

B: I dream of more listening and less tears.

A: But most of all, I dream of peace like a river.

B: Today we light the candle of peace.

*Light two blue candles...*

B: May it remind us that there is another way.

**All: Amen.**

## **Prayer of Peace**

God of Peace,

**We must admit, there are a million things on our minds.**

**We would like to be as focused as John the Baptist—preparing the way,  
gathering the crowd,**

**spreading the word of your arrival.**

**Maybe then we'd know peace.**

**However, more often than not, we are a swirling compilation of grocery lists,  
text messages, e-mails, and over-referenced to-do lists.**

**So today, we ask for your help in preparing the way.**

**Could you start with our ears, and then maybe move to our hearts?**

**We'd like to hear you more clearly.**

**Maybe then we'll know peace.**

**Gratefully we pray,**

**Amen.**

## **Gospel Reading for the Week - Mark 1:1-8**

<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

<sup>2</sup>As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way;

<sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight,’”

<sup>4</sup>John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather

belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

## **Questions for Discussion**

*These questions are meant to be shared with one another if you are with a partner or family. Or, they may be reflected upon silently by yourself. Write your answers on post-it notes and place them in a highly-visible spot for the whole season. Kids (and adults) can even draw a picture!*

How do you define peace?

Where do you find peace in your life?

How can you prepare for God’s peace in the world?

## **Be the Church**

*To close, think of the people who have brought peace into your life. Send those people a message of peace or a short blessing, giving thanks for them. You can call, text, email, or tell them if they are sitting next to you!*

*Tips for Young Families:*

*Invite your kids to film a short video that you can text to friends or family, sharing messages of love and affirmation. Empower your kids to select the people they want to say hello to and what message they want to share.*



# *The Third Sunday in Advent*

*those who dream... sow joy*

## **Gather - Share the Peace**

*Share the peace with everyone present in this moment. You can use the traditional words below or make up your own family method. If you are by yourself, take a moment and reflect upon the peace which God offers all of us!*

A: The Peace of the Lord be with you...

B: And also with you!

## **Candle Lighting Liturgy | The Candle of Joy**

*Written for two voices, this liturgy could be adapted for three or four. We hope you will include children in this sacred ritual!*

A: I dream of dance parties in the kitchen.

B: I dream of laughter that is contagious.

A: I dream of birthday candles and another beautiful year.

B: I dream of family game nights and dinner parties with friends.

A: I dream of homemade Halloween costumes and homemade family recipes.

B: I dream of pillow forts, fireflies, and front porch swings.

A: I dream of every thing that brings joy; and I know it comes from God.

B: So today we light the candle of joy as a reminder that God's dream for this world involves the end of all tears.

A: God's dream for this world involves a joy that overflows and is contagious.

B: So may this fire burn bright, and as it does, may we sing.

*Light three blue candles...*

A: May we dance.

B: May we laugh.

A: May we hold onto the people we love.

B: May we sow joy in a hurting world, and may it be an act of holy resistance. Amen.

### **Prayer of Joy**

Creator God,

**Scripture is flooded with dream-like images:**

**the lion lying down with the lamb,  
justice rolling like a mighty river,  
swords being beaten into plowshares,  
the prisoner being set free,  
good news to the oppressed,  
the whole world rejoicing.**

**To our human ears, there are times when these words can sound  
like nothing more than a far-off dream—  
downplaying prophecy to fantasy.**

**However, what we know is that to dream is to hope,  
and to hope is to imagine,  
and to imagine is to wonder,  
and to wonder is to believe,  
and to believe is to live and breathe for your promised day.**

**So give us the strength to listen as we dream, O God.**

**For deep down, we know your words are the very thing we need.**

**Amen.**

### **Gospel Reading for the Week - Luke 1:46-55**

<sup>46</sup>And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup> for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

<sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup> His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

<sup>52</sup> He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;

<sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
<sup>55</sup> according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

## Questions for Discussion

*These questions are meant to be shared with one another if you are with a partner or family. Or, they may be reflected upon silently by yourself. Write your answers on post-it notes and place them in a highly-visible spot for the whole season. Kids (and adults) can even draw a picture!*

How do you define joy?

Name three people or memories that bring you joy...

After reading her words, how do you think Mary would describe joy?

## Be the Church

*To close, think of the people who have brought joy into your life. Send those people a message of peace or a short blessing, giving thanks for them. You can call, text, email, or tell them if they are sitting next to you!*

*Tips for Young Families:*

*Invite your kids to film a short video that you can text to friends or family, sharing messages of love and affirmation. Empower your kids to select the people they want to say hello to and what message they want to share.*

# *The Fourth Sunday in Advent*

*those who dream... are not alone*

## **Gather - Share the Peace**

*Share the peace with everyone present in this moment. You can use the traditional words below or make up your own family method. If you are by yourself, take a moment and reflect upon the peace which God offers all of us!*

A: The Peace of the Lord be with you...

B: And also with you!

## **Candle Lighting Liturgy | The Candle of Love**

*Written for two voices, this liturgy could be adapted for three or four. We hope you will include children in this sacred ritual!*

A: I dream of music that makes my heart swell.

B: I dream of trees that take my breath away.

A: I dream of sunrises that wrap me in light.

B: I dream of family dinners that feel like home.

A: I dream of church services that give me hope.

B: I dream of love as the default.

A: So today, as we draw near to Christmas day, we light the candle of love.

## **Light all four blue candles**

B: May this light burn bright as a reminder that God is here and God is love.

A: We are not alone. Thanks be to God for a love like that.

All: Amen.

## **Prayer of Love**

Holy God,

**Before you could speak, you were speaking—**

**Leaping in wombs, kicking, stretching, jumping for joy.  
You have always found a way to show up in our midst,  
Particularly on our fearful or lonely days.  
So today, as we crack open our Bibles,  
Fluttering through these old beloved pages,  
We ask that you would move again.  
Stir in us.  
Speak to us.  
Fill us with the Holy Spirit.  
And if we are not able to hear your Word clearly,  
Then give us Elizabeths  
Who will point out your presence in delight and joy.  
Before you could speak, you were speaking,  
So here and now, Creator God, we are listening.  
Amen.**

### **Gospel Reading for the Week - Luke 1:26-45**

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup>Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

<sup>39</sup>In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup>where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup>When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup>and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup>And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup>For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup>And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

## Questions for Discussion

*These questions are meant to be shared with one another if you are with a partner or family. Or, they may be reflected upon silently by yourself. Write your answers on post-it notes and place them in a highly-visible spot for the whole season. Kids (and adults) can even draw a picture!*

How do you define love?

Describe the love between Mary and Elizabeth...

Who do you depend on in your life for love?

Name two ways you can spread God's love in this world...

## Be the Church

*To close, think of the people who have brought love into your life. Send those people a message of peace or a short blessing, giving thanks for them. You can call, text, email, or tell them if they are sitting next to you!*

*Tips for Young Families:*

*Invite your kids to film a short video that you can text to friends or family, sharing messages of love and affirmation. Empower your kids to select the people they want to say hello to and what message they want to share.*