

# Advent Candle Lighting Year A

A Star Wars-referencing (though subtle enough that non-Star Wars fans won't feel anything is amiss) set of Advent Candle lighting litanies for Year A in the Revised Common Lectionary. Each week has 2 or 3 references – can you find them?

## First Sunday in Advent

### \*Advent Candle Lighting

Reader 1: Today is the first Sunday of Advent, so we light the first candle on our Advent wreath: the candle of Hope.

Reader 2: Twenty-five centuries ago, in a time not much different than our own, when the Israelites had little hope for the future of their country or their people, the Jewish prophets called to God to come to the people and make things right. They told the people—and us—that a messiah would come as a new hope in the midst of suffering.

Reader 1: Their prayers were answered with the birth of Jesus, also called Emmanuel, a Hebrew word which means “God is with us.”

Reader 2: Today begins our Advent journey of waiting for the birth of the one who is called the Light of the World and the Hope of the Nations.

Reader 1: As we light the candle of Hope we give thanks for the prophets of today who dare to speak words of hope for liberation, who say “No” to the evil in the world, and who call us to overcome our comfortable fears so we may let go of faulty ways of thinking and doing, and explore new realms of unimagined visions of how things could be.

Reader 2: Let us pray.

**All: So many in your world, Holy God, have lost hope or put their hope in false promises. Sometimes it feels you aren't with us but are far, far away. We pray that you come into our world again. Be Emmanuel for us so we may notice where you are already present. Enter our hearts to see in new ways the creative power of hope. Help us live into your hope so we may be your light shining in the dark places of our world. We pray this in the name of the one who was born in Bethlehem and whose return we await. Amen.**

\*Opening Hymn 116 Verse 1

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

## Second Sunday in Advent

### \*Advent Candle Lighting

Reader 1: We began Advent last Sunday by lighting the first candle, the candle of Hope. We light it again today to remind us that Christ is coming to fulfill God's promises.

Reader 2: Today we light the second candle, the candle of Peace. The prophet Isaiah said, “Comfort, comfort my people” to a nation anxious about invasion and exile, as he

foretold the coming of the Prince of Peace. Our world is still filled with violence and abuse, where families are torn apart by war and children are used as soldiers. Isaiah's words continue to speak to us that Jesus will bring us to an everlasting peace.

Reader 1: Mary and Joseph found no room in the inn to give birth to Jesus, but we can heed John the Baptist's command to make room in our hearts. Wherever there is war or mistrust between peoples, families, or our own hearts, God is present and leading us to imagine new ways of living in peace.

Reader 2: Christ is our only hope, and our peace is found through him. We light this candle to remind us of Jesus' life-giving peace to all who trust in him. We light it in honor of those who live the Gospel truth that war does not make one great: the peace workers who risk much so that others may live free of fear.

Reader 1: Let us pray:

**All: We're in trouble, Holy God. So many in the world do not know peace in their countries or in their hearts. We use weapons of steel and barbed words to wound one another. We seek balm for our restless hearts in things that only make us more wounded. Open our hearts to Jesus so we may have the peace of his holy presence and live it in our unpeaceful world. Save us from outside violence and inner turmoil. We need you. Come, peaceful God, come. Amen.**

**\*Opening Hymn 116** Verse 1 & 2

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

## Third Sunday in Advent

### **\*Advent Candle Lighting**

Reader 1: We have lit the candles of Hope and Peace, and relight them now to remind us that our hope is in Christ and that he will come again to bring peace to the world.

Reader 2: Today begins the third week in our Advent journey, and so we light the third candle, the candle of Joy. In ancient times, the prophet Isaiah said, “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.” Many suffer from despair, anxiety, or holiday blues. Others experience only the dark side of human nature. Christ's light has power to overcome all dark places in our society and our souls.

Reader 1: The Psalmist tells us to “make a joyful noise to the LORD, for the Lord is God who made us and whose we are, whose steadfast loves endures forever and faithfulness to all generations.”

Reader 2: Now we light the third candle, the candle of Joy, as we remember the angel's words to the shepherds, “Do not be afraid. I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people.” We light it so that all who reap blue harvests from seeds of sadness may know the joy of Jesus Christ. We light it in honor of those who show us the joy of following Christ.

Reader 1: Let us pray:

**All: God of Good News, as we await your coming we give you thanks for the joy we have in Christ Jesus. May all who seek such joy find it. For all who have**

ceased to believe in its possibility, may you work through us to show your joy already present. Come, God of Joy, come. Amen.

**\*Opening Hymn 116** Verses 1, 2, 6

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

## Fourth Sunday in Advent

### **\*Advent Candle Lighting**

Reader 1: On our journey to Christmas we have lit the candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy on our Advent Wreath. We relight them now to remind us of the hope that Christ will come again, bringing everlasting peace and joy.

Reader 2: This is the fourth Sunday of Advent so we light the last candle, the candle of Love. To a world of empires and despots, war and greed, grief and apathy, we proclaim that love is strong enough to overcome all evil and that compassion is more powerful than fear.

Reader 1: The angel Gabriel reassured Mary that “nothing will be impossible with God.” The power of love is the power to overcome what we think is impossible. Love tells us God doesn’t want our excuses for why we dare not try, but our faithfulness to do.

Reader 2: As we light the candle of Love, we remember that God so loves this world that he sent his only son, Jesus, to save us. We do so in honor of those who have shown us how to love even when doing so is not convenient or sensible. We remember those who show us that compassion— unconditional love— is central to a Christian’s life.

Reader 2: Let us pray:

**All: All-loving God, break into our world and our hearts again. Magnify your love in us until it overflows to our neighbors. Renew our faith to relive the wonder of your love. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you that we may shine the light of your compassionate love. Come, God of Love, come. Amen.**

**\*Opening Hymn 116** Verses 1, 2, 6, 7

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

## Christmas Eve

### **Advent Wreath Lighting**

For Christmas Eve, we did snippets from a music/narration piece called “Candles and Carols” by Pamela Martin that is a 20-or so minute long piece for choir, musicians, and narrators that guides through lighting the four Advent candles and then the Christ candle. Available at <http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?pid=692659>. To hear our version of it, go to [http://www.pcucc.com/sermons/mp3/111224\\_christmas\\_eve.mp3](http://www.pcucc.com/sermons/mp3/111224_christmas_eve.mp3). This is a recording of the whole Christmas Eve worship, that begins with a short opening prayer and then the “Candles and Carols”, which ends about 10:07. The rest of the service is lesson and carols.

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