

## **Advent Grace EPC 2016**

### **Lighting the Advent Wreath candles in the Tradition of Hope, Peace, Joy, Love, and Christ!**

**About Advent:** *Many Protestant churches light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love during Advent and the Christ candle on Christmas Eve. Anglicans and Presbyterians follow an order of lighting candles in hope, peace, joy, love, and then the Christ candle. Methodists often change the middle order to joy, love, and peace. Other Christians light them in different orders entirely. The meaning of what each candle lighting signifies, scripture reading, and prayer is what is important regardless of the order. Even the smallest children can participate by announcing why we light the various candles.*

**History of Advent:** In the ancient world, various peoples lit fires to mark the shortening season of the light in to winter's season of darkness and to pray for the return of the light. The church created the Advent wreath as a method of outreach to show how Jesus is the eternal Light of God. To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all God's radiant fullness into the darkness of our world. Until the dawning of Jesus return, we watch and wait in the Holy Spirit for Christ's coming. We light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love in the weeks leading to Christmas time and on Christmas Eve light the Christ candle.

### **First Sunday in Advent: Hope**

*After the greeting in the name of the Lord, the pastor says the following: Watch and wait for Christ's coming!*

*Light the first candle. We light this candle in the name of hope.*

**Hear God's promise of hope from Jeremiah 33:14-16:**

**"The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."**

**Let us Pray:** *(pray the following prayer or whatever the Lord puts upon you to pray.)*

**Faithful God, out of death you bring life. Renew us in hope, that we may be alert to the coming celebration of Christ's advent among us. God of promise, God of hope, into our darkness come. Amen.**

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### **Second Sunday in Advent: Peace**

*After the greeting in the name of the Lord, the pastor says the following: Watch and wait for Christ's coming!*

*We light this candle in hope. Light the first candle. **We light this candle for the promise of peace.** Light the second candle.*

**Hear God's promise of peace from Luke 1:57-60 "You, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. 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."**

**Let us Pray:** *(pray the following prayer or whatever the Lord puts upon you to pray.)*

**God of hope, Prince of Peace, You speak peace into the world in the Way of the Christ child. Help us embody your peace and live as peacemakers that we may be called children of God. God of hope, God of peace, into our darkness come. Amen.**

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### **Third Sunday in Advent: Joy**

*This Sunday's Advent wreath candle lighting varies because it is Rejoice (Gaudette) Sunday. The first week of hope and peace are longings for the light to come at Christ birth. As a break from the longing of waiting during the Advent season of preparation, this Sunday offers a reprise from our longings to offer joy's glimmer of light. The Latin word Gaudette is grammatically imperative, reminding us that even in the midst of darkness, we are called to rejoice. This is also why we light a pink candle—the color of joy in the penitential season of purple. Only the Christ candle is white, also a color signifying joy in many cultures, because the fullness of joy is in the Lord. After the greeting in the name of the Lord, the pastor says the following: Watch and wait for Christ's coming!*

*Light candles of hope and peace, and say **We light this third candle to celebrate joy!** Light the third (pink) candle.*

**Hear God's promise of joy from Zephaniah 3:14-20.**

**Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! 15 The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. 16 On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. 17 The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love, he will exult over you with loud singing. 18 I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach. 19 Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. 20 At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortune before your eyes," says the Lord.**

**Let us Pray:** *(pray the following prayer or whatever the Lord puts upon you to pray)*

**God of hope and peace thank you for joy especially in periods of waiting! We rejoice in you! We rejoice that you save us, that you rejoice over us in gladness, that you quiet our anxiousness with your love, that you sing over us, that you invite us to enjoy life with your Son, that in your timing you handle our enemies and oppressors, that you heal us from our infirmities, and that you make your name great amongst the Earth. May we rejoice in you. Amen.**

## **Advent Grace EPC 2016**

### **Fourth Sunday in Advent: Love**

*After the greeting in the name of the Lord, the pastor says the following: Watch and wait for Christ's coming!*

*Light candles of hope, peace, joy, and say we light this candle for God's unending love!*

**Hear again the Word of the Lord drawn from Zephaniah 3:17, "The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing." Let us hear the word of God written in Romans 5:5. "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."**

**Let us Pray:** *(pray the following prayer or whatever the Lord puts upon you to pray)*

**Father God, thank you for the hope we have in Jesus! Thank you for your peace and joy! Thank you for your unfailing love that quiets our hearts in a season where it is easy to be distracted from your loving presence. We thank you for the coming of your son Jesus, we thank you for your sacrificial love of sending your Son to die for us while we were yet sinners. We thank you for the indwelling of your Holy Spirit who is a sign of your love for us!**

### **Christmas Eve**

*Greetings in the name of the Lord! We have watched, we have waited in hope. Light the first candle. We have hoped for peace. Light the second candle. We have celebrated in joy! Light the third (pink) candle. We have been reminded of your love. Light the fourth candle is lit. Now our redemption draws near! Say **We now light the Christ candle** (the center white candle) is lit.*

**Hear the Word of the Lord from Isaiah 9:2-7 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. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son is 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. Glory to God in the highest!**

**Aleluia! Amen!**