

Good Shepherd Episcopal Church



The Village of Pine Grove, Virginia



Lighting the Advent Candles* (A Four-Week Liturgy)

*Adapted from a liturgy used at the Episcopal Church of the
Resurrection, Roslyn, Washington

Advent 1

The Gospel of John speaks of Christ as the true light coming into the world. In commemoration of that coming, we light candles for the four weeks leading to Christmas and reflect on the coming of Christ. It is significant that the church has always used that language—the *coming* of Christ—because it speaks to a deep truth. Christ is coming. Christ IS ALWAYS coming, always entering a troubled world, a wounded heart. And so we light the first candle, the candle of HOPE, and dare to express our longing for peace, for healing and the well-being of all creation.

The 1st candle is lit.

Let us pray. *(The congregation prays in unison)*

Loving God, as we enter this Advent season we open all the dark places in our lives and memories to the healing light of Christ. Show us the power of HOPE. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.

The Celebrant continues

Take time, in the busyness of this season, for quiet reflection, for the light of God's love is discernible everywhere. Welcome Christ into your heart this season and live with the knowledge that Christ is coming and is our HOPE.

Advent 2

This Sunday we light the second candle, the candle of PEACE. We light it knowing full well that peace is elusive, and so often, around the world, absent. Yet in this season of Advent, we trust that God is never absent from us. God is always preparing something new. Even where there is war and discord, whether between countries, within families, or within our own hearts, God is present, gently leading us to new possibilities.

The 2nd candle is lit.

Let us pray. *(The congregation prays in unison)*

Loving God, in this time of preparation and planning, we thank you for the HOPE and PEACE you unfailingly offer us. Show us the creative power of HOPE. Teach us the PEACE that

comes from justice. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.

The Celebrant continues

Welcome Christ into your heart and live in HOPE and PEACE.

Advent 3

We have lit the first two candles, one for HOPE and one for PEACE. Today we light the third candle, the candle of JOY. This should be the easy one, because JOY is all around us – in the children, the lights, the music, the gathering together. But how often do we let our preparations – or our memories – push JOY to the side? JOY is like an underground spring that wells up within us, but JOY is also a choice, an attitude. Like a muscle, it needs to be exercised. So today we open ourselves to JOY trusting that God has already planted it in us . . . all we need to do is give it care and offer to share.

The 3rd candle is lit.

Let us pray. *(The congregation prays in unison)*

Loving God, we open ourselves to you, trusting that this is how you made us: you created us for JOY-filled hearts and lives. Show us the creative power of HOPE. Teach us the PEACE that comes from justice. Fill us with the kind of JOY that cannot be contained, but must be shared. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.

The Celebrant continues

Rejoice in God always, rejoice. For God has created you with the capacity for JOY. Trust in God's will for all of creation and open yourself to God's gentle, transforming love. Live in HOPE, PEACE, and JOY.

Advent 4

The first three candles we lit were for HOPE, PEACE, and JOY. Today we light the fourth candle – the candle of LOVE. With this flame we signify the love of God that surrounds and fills us all the time, but that we recognize in a special way in the Christmas story. There is no greater power than LOVE. It is stronger than rulers and

empires, stronger than grief or despair, stronger than even death. We can LOVE because GOD LOVES us.

The 4th candle is lit.

Let us pray. *(The congregation prays in unison)*

Loving God, we open ourselves to you. Light our lives with your imagination. Show us the creative power of HOPE. Teach us the PEACE that comes from justice. Fill us with the kind of JOY that cannot be contained, but must be shared. Magnify your LOVE within us. Prepare our hearts to be transformed that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.

The Celebrant continues

Live your lives with the certain knowledge that God is always coming into the world. Seek God not only in a long ago stable or ancient manger, but also in the people you meet and in the depths of your own hearts. May God's blessing of Christ in you make you a blessing to others.

Christmas Eve

HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE. Four candles, four promises continually offered to us by God, and each of them manifest in this one we light tonight: **The Christ Candle**. In Christ we find the HOPE of transformation, the PEACE that follows justice, the JOY of self-fulfillment in community, and the LOVE that encompasses us in all our diversity, empowering us to make our own contributions to the world. In Christ we find light and life, and the courage and will to be like him, answering his call and following in his footsteps.

The Christ Candle is lit.

Let us pray. *(The congregation prays in unison)*

We rejoice in God's steadfast presence in our lives, and in God's unique presence in the life of Jesus of Nazareth – born of Mary, growing through childhood into an adult ministry, in all his life manifesting the PEACE, LOVE, and justice of God; his voice undimmed by the centuries, his call and his promise as clear to us as it was to his disciples so long ago. Come to us, Lord Jesus. Be born in us this night, in our hearts, our minds, our lives. May the light of your life be kindled in us, and lead us to the shining truth of GOD WITH US. Amen.