

## **Lighting the Advent Candles**

### **First Sunday of Advent (Focus: Isaiah 64:1–9)**

*Reader 1:* O God, we light the first candle of Advent.  
(A member of a family lights the first candle.)

*Reader 2:* We kindle it with hope. We long for you to come to our world, to break through and reign with compassion, justice, and peace.

*Reader 1:* The prophet Isaiah also cried to God to tear open heaven and come down. He called God's people to do right. Isaiah called them to be refashioned like clay by God, the potter. This Advent, we call out to God.

Mighty God, creator of the world, break through all that keeps us from you. We ask for your mercy and reform us in your image. This Advent, visit us with your justice, love, and peace. Amen.

### **Second Sunday of Advent (Focus: Isaiah 40:1–11)**

*Reader 1:* O God, we light the second candle of Advent.  
(With the first candle already burning, a family member lights the second candle.)

*Reader 2:* We seek your comfort. Both mighty and tender, you come. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you.

*Reader 1:* Isaiah announced God's coming to a people exiled in a broken and parched wilderness. He declared that God's redemption would make a highway in the desert and change the rough places into plain. God would come as a shepherd—feeding, leading, and cradling the weary flock. This Advent, we seek such a God.

Saving God, look upon your world and heal your land and your people. Prepare us to be changed. This Advent, teach us to be tender and just, as you are. Amen.

### **Third Sunday of Advent (Focus: John 1:6–8, 8–11)**

*Reader 1:* We light the third candle of Advent.  
(With the first two candles burning, a family member lights the third candle.)

*Reader 2:* We look to John, the one you sent, to point us to your light. The light will come into our world and enlighten everyone.

*Reader 1:* God sent John the Baptizer to prepare the people for the coming of Jesus Christ, the true Light of the World. John called for people to repent of their sins and to live faithfully. He baptized with a cleansing water and proclaimed the new life that Christ, the one who would follow him, would bring. This Advent, we ask for God's mercy and a joyful new beginning.

Merciful God, we give thanks that you send messengers like John to call us to greater faith. We ask that in these days we prepare for you in prayer and acts of holy compassion. Forgive us and

lead us to your light. Amen.

#### **Fourth Sunday of Advent (Focus: Luke 1:26–38)**

*Reader 1:* O God, we light the fourth candle of Advent.

(With the first three candles burning, a family member lights the fourth candle.)

*Reader 2:* We hear your angel Gabriel and witness the faith of Mary. Fill us with your grace and light.

*Reader 1:* Mary was a young, strong, spiritual woman. Even though her life was not easy, she heard God's voice and said yes. Her song was a prayer that would uplift those who were downtrodden. Her lyrics shattered the proud and called the world to change. She would bear within her the promised child, Jesus, the Light of the World. This Advent, we respond to God's beckoning to us as well.

Revealing God, visit us and fill us with your Spirit. Bring your good news to life within us. Give us courage to carry your light into the injustices and shadows of this world. Amen.

#### **Christmas Eve or Day (Focus: Isaiah 9:2–7, Luke 2:1–14, or John 1:1–14)**

*Reader 1:* Rejoice, people of God! The light has come into the world.

(A member of a family lights the four Advent candles.)

O God, now we light the candle of your nativity!

(With all Advent candles lit, a member of the family lights the centre white Christ candle.)

*Reader 2:* With the company of heaven and with sounds of great joy, you come to us. This is the time of light and resplendent joy.

God has been born among us. We remember...(a member or members of a family describe a time, at Christmas or some other time, when God has been joyfully and powerfully revealed to family, church, community, or world).

*Reader 1:* The prophet Isaiah proclaimed a time when those who walked in the shadows would see a great light. A light would shine and a child would be born to us. The evangelist Luke painted the nativity sky and repeated the heavenly song of the angels, "Glory, peace on earth and goodwill!" John declared that this great light is Christ, the Word made flesh. This great light lives among us. By it we behold God's glory—full of grace and truth. At Christ's nativity, we now rejoice.

God, our Life and Light, thank you for coming this night (day) to us. Thanks for touching all heaven and earth with your splendour. In every corner of the world, shine (this night) with your peace. In every corner of our hearts, shine (this night) with your grace. Amen.