



Home  
FOR THE  
Holidays



AN  
ADVENT-AT-HOME  
LITURGY





*Oh, there's no place like home for the holidays  
'Cause no matter how far away you roam  
If you want to be happy in a million ways  
For the holidays you can't beat home sweet home*



While our church family won't be able to come together as we normally would—in our cozy sanctuary with candles aglow—we wanted to bring some of the peace and warmth of St. John's into your home.

This year, you're invited to partake in a special Advent-at-Home ritual.

Gather with just yourself, your family, or your roommates around the candlelight of this mini-Advent wreath every week, and read along with the scripture passages, prayers, and meditations in our Advent liturgy.

In the ancient world, people lit fires to mark the darkness of winter and pray for the return of the light. Today, these candles remind us of the coming light of Christ that illuminates the shadows of our world.

We hope this simple ritual will help each one of us turn our whole selves towards Jesus throughout this Advent season.



# HOPE

*We are the shepherds, tending to the busy-ness of our  
everyday lives and waiting for a glimpse  
of something divine.*

**BEGIN BY LIGHTING THE CENTRAL CANDLE. THEN, SAY TOGETHER:**

We gather in our homes  
Around the Light of Christ  
To wait for the coming of Jesus.

We light candles to warm our hearts  
With the Holy Spirit  
And remember your promises.

**LIGHT ONE OF THE SMALLER CANDLES AND SAY:**

We light this candle in hope.  
This candle burns like our desire for Christ,  
The fullness of God to come close to us now.

**CONTINUE WITH THIS SCRIPTURE READING:**

We remember these words from the prophet Isaiah:

If only you would tear open the heavens and come down!  
Mountains would quake before you  
like fire igniting brushwood or making water boil.  
If you would make your name known to your enemies,  
the nations would tremble in your presence.

When you accomplished wonders beyond all our expectations;  
when you came down, mountains quaked before you.

From ancient times,  
no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any god but you  
who acts on behalf of those who wait for him!

You look after those who gladly do right;  
they will praise you for your ways.

But you were angry when we sinned;  
you hid yourself when we did wrong.

All of us wither like a leaf;  
our sins, like the wind, carry us away.

No one calls on your name;  
no one bothers to hold on to you,

for you have hidden yourself from us,  
and have handed us over to our sin.

But now, Lord, you are our father.

We are the clay, and you are our potter.

All of us are the work of your hand.

Don't rage so fiercely, Lord;

don't hold our sins against us forever,

but gaze now on your people, all of us.

**PAUSE, TAKE A BREATH, AND MEDITATE ON THE CANDLELIGHT.**

**TAKE A MOMENT AND REFLECT ON THESE QUESTIONS ALOUD:**

- **What do you hope for?**
- **For yourself? For your family? For your city? For the world?**

**THEN, PRAY TOGETHER:**

God of Hope,

You are the light

That illuminates our every step

Always moving us forward

Into the world you desire.

Hear our prayers of hope...

**SPEAK YOUR PRAYERS SILENTLY OR ALOUD. THEN, CONTINUE:**

Renew our hope

So that we may be hope for others

In a world that so desperately needs it.

Hallelujah, God. Your hope reigns.

Amen.

**EXTINGUISH THE CANDLES.**



# PEACE

*We pause and listen for the sounds of angels  
whose songs proclaim the forthcoming harmony  
of all creation.*

**BEGIN BY LIGHTING THE CENTRAL CANDLE. THEN, SAY TOGETHER:**

We gather in our homes  
Around the Light of Christ  
To wait for the coming of Jesus.

We light candles to warm our hearts  
With the Holy Spirit  
And remember your promises.

**LIGHT ONE OF THE SMALLER CANDLES AND SAY:**

We light this candle in hope.

**LIGHT ANOTHER AND SAY:**

We light this candle in peace.  
This candle glows with a calm steadiness  
That centers our minds and bodies on Christ.

**CONTINUE WITH THIS SCRIPTURE READING:**

We remember these words from the prophet Isaiah:

A shoot will grow up from the stump of Jesse;  
a branch will sprout from his roots.  
The Lord's spirit will rest upon him,  
a spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
a spirit of planning and strength,  
a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord.  
He will delight in fearing the Lord.  
No one calls on your name;  
no one bothers to hold on to you,  
He won't judge by appearances,  
nor decide by hearsay.  
He will judge the needy with righteousness,  
and decide with equity for those who suffer in the land.  
He will strike the violent with the rod of his mouth;  
by the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked.  
Righteousness will be the belt around his hips,  
and faithfulness the belt around his waist.

The wolf will live with the lamb,  
and the leopard will lie down with the young goat;  
the calf and the young lion will feed together,  
and a little child will lead them.

The cow and the bear will graze.  
Their young will lie down together,  
and a lion will eat straw like an ox.

A nursing child will play over the snake's hole;  
toddlers will reach right over the serpent's den.

They won't harm or destroy anywhere on my holy mountain.  
The earth will surely be filled with the knowledge of the Lord,  
just as the water covers the sea.

On that day, the root of Jesse will stand as a signal to the peoples.  
The nations will seek him out, and his dwelling will be glorious.

**PAUSE, TAKE A BREATH, AND MEDITATE ON THE CANDLELIGHT.**

**TAKE A MOMENT AND REFLECT ON THESE QUESTIONS ALOUD:**

- **What does peace feel like? What does it look like?**
- **Where do we need peace in our own lives, our communities, our world?**
- **How can you be a peacemaker today?**

**THEN, PRAY TOGETHER:**

God of Peace,  
You are the Shalom  
Proclaimed from the heavens  
That grounds us on Earth,  
Coaxing us toward reconciliation and justice.

Hear our prayers of hope...

**SPEAK YOUR PRAYERS SILENTLY OR ALOUD. THEN, CONTINUE:**

Grant us peace  
So that we may be peace for others  
In a world that so desperately needs it.  
Hallelujah, God. Your peace reigns.  
Amen.

**EXTINGUISH THE CANDLES.**





# JOY

*We revel in our promise-keeping God,  
just like Mary who found herself  
at the crossroads of God's glory and greatness.*

**BEGIN BY LIGHTING THE CENTRAL CANDLE. THEN, SAY TOGETHER:**

We gather in our homes  
Around the Light of Christ  
To wait for the coming of Jesus.

We light candles to warm our hearts  
With the Holy Spirit  
And remember your promises.

**LIGHT ONE OF THE SMALLER CANDLES AND SAY:**

We light this candle in hope.

**LIGHT ANOTHER AND SAY:**

We light this candle in peace.

**LIGHT ONE MORE AND SAY:**

We light this candle in joy.  
This candle sparks praise in our souls  
For Christ is with us!

**CONTINUE WITH THIS SCRIPTURE READING:**

We remember these words from the Gospel of Luke:

The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy. He will be called God’s Son. Look, even in her old age, your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son. This woman who was labeled ‘unable to conceive’ is now six months pregnant. Nothing is impossible for God.”

Then Mary said, “I am the Lord’s servant. Let it be with me just as you have said.” Then the angel left her.

Mary got up and hurried to a city in the Judean highlands. She entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. With a loud voice she blurted out, “God has blessed you above all women, and he has blessed the child you carry. Why do I have this honor, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb

jumped for joy. Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her.”

Mary said,

“With all my heart I glorify the Lord!

In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior.

He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant.

Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored  
because the mighty one has done great things for me.

Holy is his name.

He shows mercy to everyone,  
from one generation to the next,  
who honors him as God.

He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.  
He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones  
and lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty-handed.

He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,  
remembering his mercy,  
just as he promised to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to Abraham’s descendants forever.”

**PAUSE, TAKE A BREATH, AND MEDITATE ON THE CANDLELIGHT.**

**TAKE A MOMENT AND REFLECT ON THESE QUESTIONS ALOUD:**

- **When have you felt joy unexpectedly “leap” inside of you?**
- **Like Mary, what promises has God kept in your life?**
- **How can you bring joy into the world today?**

**THEN, PRAY TOGETHER:**

God of Joy,  
You are the fire of life  
That makes our spirits leap,  
Always restoring our sorrows to smiles.  
And our despair to delight.

Hear our prayers of joy...

**SPEAK YOUR PRAYERS SILENTLY OR ALOUD. THEN, CONTINUE:**

Magnify our joy

So that we may be joy for others

In a world that so desperately needs it.

Hallelujah, God. Your joy reigns.

Amen.

**EXTINGUISH THE CANDLES.**



# LOVE

*We look to the birth of Jesus  
whose first breathbeckoned the world  
into a new Way of grace and justice.*

**BEGIN BY LIGHTING THE CENTRAL CANDLE. THEN, SAY TOGETHER:**

We gather in our homes  
Around the Light of Christ  
To wait for the coming of Jesus.

We light candles to warm our hearts  
With the Holy Spirit  
And remember your promises.

**LIGHT ONE OF THE SMALLER CANDLES AND SAY:**

We light this candle in hope.

**LIGHT ANOTHER AND SAY:**

We light this candle in peace.

**LIGHT ONE MORE AND SAY:**

We light this candle in joy.

**LIGHT THE FINAL CANDLE AND SAY:**

We light this candle in love.  
This candle ignites our entire being  
With Christ's tender embrace of all people.

**CONTINUE WITH THIS SCRIPTURE READING:**

We remember these words from the Gospel of John:

In the beginning was the Word  
and the Word was with God  
and the Word was God.

The Word was with God in the beginning.

Everything came into being through the Word,  
and without the Word  
nothing came into being.

What came into being  
through the Word was life,  
and the life was the light for all people.

The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light.

The true light that shines on all people  
was coming into the world.  
The light was in the world,  
and the world came into being through the light,  
but the world didn't recognize the light.  
The light came to his own people,  
and his own people didn't welcome him.  
But those who did welcome him,  
those who believed in his name,  
he authorized to become God's children,  
born not from blood  
nor from human desire or passion,  
but born from God.  
The Word became flesh  
and made his home among us.  
We have seen his glory,  
glory like that of a father's only son,  
full of grace and truth.

**PAUSE, TAKE A BREATH, AND MEDITATE ON THE CANDLELIGHT.**

**TAKE A MOMENT AND REFLECT ON THESE QUESTIONS ALOUD:**

- **What does love feel like? What does it mean to love someone?**
- **What is a moment when you felt someone love you unconditionally?**
- **Who in your life, community, and the world is not experiencing love, and how can you love them?**

**THEN, PRAY TOGETHER:**

God of love,  
You are the light  
That thaws the coldest of hearts  
With a gentle fire of compassion  
That invites us into your kingdom of new possibilities.

Hear our prayers of love...

**SPEAK YOUR PRAYERS SILENTLY OR ALOUD.**

**THEN, CONTINUE:**

Renew our love

So that we may be love for others

In a world that so desperately needs it.

Hallelujah, God. Your love reigns.

Amen.

**EXTINGUISH THE CANDLES.**





What keeps the wild hope of Christmas alive  
year after year in a world notorious for dashing all hopes  
is the haunting dream that the child  
who was born that day  
may yet be born again  
even in us.

*Frederick Buechner*



