

Readings for Lighting the Advent Candles (Option 3)

Week One: HOPE

(This is written for two voices or could be adapted for three or four. You are encouraged to include children in this sacred ritual, as all are written with simple language and repetition.)

A: I dream of sunflower fields.

B: I dream of key lime pie with mile-high meringue.

A: I dream of the days when we could be part of a crowd.

B: I dream of snow days.

A: I dream of empty beds in jail cells.

B: I dream of a world that will let kids be kids.

A: I dream of full tables instead of empty bellies.

B: I dream of schools with enough money to teach.

A: I dream of parents with enough money to feed their families.

B: I dream to keep awake because if we don't dream of better days, then we might forget that this is not what God imagined.

A: So today we light the **candle of hope**, for hope is the very thing that keeps dreams afloat.

"Light" the first Advent candle.

B: May this light be an invitation to keep awake.

A: May this light be our invitation to be Advent people -- people who dream.

A and B: Amen.

Prayer:

Original Dreamer, over and over again in scripture, we hear your dream for a beautiful world. We hear your dream for peace and reconciliation. We hear your dream for harmony and togetherness. We hear your dream for community and hope. We hear your dreams, and yet we do not open our eyes. We continue to live with the curtains drawn the covers pulled tight, eyes shut to the realities of the world. Forgive us. Kindle a hope in us that will burn through the darkest nights. Give us the strength and the will to keep awake in this sleeping world. With hope we pray, amen.

Hymn 266 Moravian Book of Worship

** Option to play recording by the Rev. Brad Bennett*

People with sickness are praying for health,
come, come, come Jesus Christ;
people in poverty want to have wealth,
come, Lord Jesus Christ.

These days of adventure when all people wait
are days for the advent of Hope.

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Week Two: PEACE

A: I dream of the first pitch of opening season.
B: I dream of a laundry day, where each sock finds its mate.
A: I dream of family home for the holidays.
B: I dream of good books and homemade meals.
A: I dream of sunset drives with the windows down.
B: These are beautiful dreams, but I also have urgent dreams.
A: I dream of conversations across party lines.
B: I dream of more bridges and less walls.
A: I dream of more laughter and less fear.
B: I dream of more listening and less tears.
A: But most of all, I dream of peace like a river.
B: Today we light the **candle of peace**.

“Light” the second Advent candle.

A: May it remind us that there is another way.
A and B: Amen.

Prayer:

Holy God, I wish that peace was something I could buy. I wish that peace could be ordered in a subscription service, found on a map, downloaded in an app, or voted for in a ballot. I wish that peace was as easy as a one-time choice when I was feeling my best. However, what I have found is that peace involves everyday decisions over and over, whether or not I am feeling my best. So today I confess, that I need your help in this Advent season. Prepare the way for greater peace and teach me how to be a part of it. Amen.

Hymn 266 Moravian Book of Worship

** Option to play recording by the Rev. Brad Bennett*

People in trouble would like to be free,
come, come, come Jesus Christ;
people with arguments want to agree,
come, Lord Jesus Christ.
These days of adventure when all people wait
are days for the advent of Peace.

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Week Three: JOY

A: I dream of dance parties in the kitchen.

B: I dream of laughter that is contagious.

A: I dream of birthday candles and another beautiful year.

B: I dream of family game nights and dinner parties with friends.

A: I dream of homemade Halloween costumes and homemade family recipes.

B: I dream of pillow forts, fireflies, and front porch swings.

A: I dream of every little thing that brings joy; and I know it comes from God.

B: So today we light the **candle of joy** as a reminder that God's dream for this world involves the end of all tears.

"Light" the third Advent candle.

A: God's dream for this world involves a joy that overflows and is contagious.

B: So may this fire burn bright, and as it does, may we sing.

A: May we dance.

B: May we laugh.

A: May we hold onto the people we love.

B: May we sow joy in a hurting world, and may it be an act of holy resistance.

Prayer:

O Great Writer, with a sky full of stars and a world full of flowers, there should be no end to my joy. And yet, instead of decorating my very being with joy, I let it slip away like loose change. Instead of singing like Mary, or dancing like David, I pass by remarkable beauty and love most days, unfazed. Forgive me. Teach me the ways of children, who laugh and dance and sing as if joy is the very thing that keeps them alive. Maybe they have joy figured out. Gratefully we pray, amen.

Hymn 266 Moravian Book of Worship

** Option to play recording by the Rev. Brad Bennett*

People in sorrow are yearning to sing,
come, come, come Jesus Christ;
people in misery want bells to ring,
come, Lord Jesus Christ.
These days of adventure when all people wait
are days for the advent of Joy.

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Week Four: LOVE

A: I dream of music that makes my heart swell.

B: I dream of trees that take my breath away.

A: I dream of sunrises that wrap me in light.

B: I dream of family dinners that feel like home.

A: I dream of church services that give me hope.

B: I dream of love as the default.

A: So today, as we draw near to Christmas day, we light the **candle of love**.

“Light” the fourth advent candle.

B: May this light burn bright was a reminder that God is here, and God is love.

A: We are not alone. Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.

Prayer:

God of Good News, you say to me, “you are highly favored,” but I struggle to see how that could be. You say to me, “Do not be afraid,” but I am afraid all the time. You say to me, “Even the impossible is possible, just look at Elizabeth!” But hope slips through my hands like water. The impossible still feels impossible. So today I pray, today we pray: teach us to sing like Mary. Teach us to laugh like Elizabeth. Teach us to trust like the angels. Forgive us when we can only do one at a time, or none at all. Amen.

Hymn 266 Moravian Book of Worship

** Option to play recording by the Rev. Brad Bennett*

People in darkness are looking for light,
come, come, come Jesus Christ;
People with blindness are longing for sight,
come, Lord Jesus Christ.
These days of adventure when all people wait
are days for the advent of Love.

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