

Advent One

(focusing on just the Advent candle? with music in the background? 2 verses of O Come, O Come, Emmanuel?)

The first candle of the Advent wreath is the candle of **HOPE**. With Christians around the world, we use this light to help us prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of God's Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness — a LIGHT has dawned."—Isaiah 9:2

For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we WAIT for it patiently. – Romans 8:24-25

Faith is being sure of what we HOPE for and certain of what we do not see. - Hebrews 11:3

Let us pray:

Lord as we prepare for the celebration of the birth of our Savior, grant us the hope of faith in your promises and a longing for Christ's coming. Replace the darkness of our hearts with the light of hope in our Savior's perfect life and innocent death in our place. And fill us with such light and hope that we in turn become lights in the lives of those around us. Amen.

Luke 1:26-38 – *Announcement to Mary who is chosen purely by God's favor, by God's grace.*

²⁶In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷For no word from God will ever fail."

³⁸"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

SONG: Rejoice, Rejoice Believers

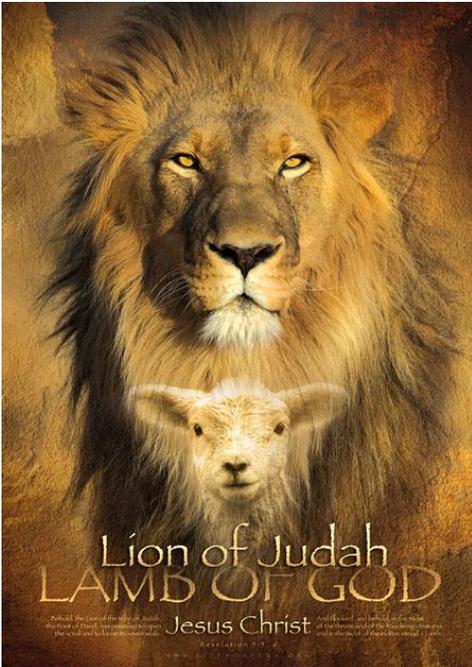
**¹ Rejoice, rejoice, believers, And let your lights appear;
The evening is advancing, And darker night is near.
The Bridegroom is arising And soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; At midnight comes the cry.**

**² The watchers on the mountain Proclaim the Bridegroom near;
Go forth, as he approaches, With alleluias clear.
The marriage feast is waiting; The gates wide open stand.
Arise, O heirs of glory; The Bridegroom is at hand.**

**³ You saints, who here in patience Your cross and suff'rings bore,
Shall live and reign forever When sorrow is no more.
Around the throne of glory The Lamb you shall behold;
In triumph lay before him Your shining crowns of gold.**

**⁴ Arise, Desire of nations; O Jesus, now appear,
The Hope and Expectation Of ev'ry Christian here.
With hearts and hands uplifted We plead, O Lord, to see
The day of earth's redemption That sets your people free.**

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660–1722, abr.; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823–1907, alt.



The message of Christmas and our Savior is a great mystery,

- *for in the manger we find a child, yet the Son of God;*
- *a servant, yet a King;*
- *a Lion, yet the Lamb;*
- *the Son of David, yet the Ruler whose kingdom never ends.*

Here's how one of Jesus' disciples described him in the book of Revelation:

"Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed... Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne."

Revelation 5:5,6

Using accounts from the Old Testament, our focus this Advent season then, is on this child who is The Lion of Judah, The Root of David, and The Lamb of God.

Tonight we see him as the Lion of Judah who makes us Beautiful.

1. Genesis 29:31-35 - The Lion of Judah Who Makes Us Beautiful

³¹ When the LORD saw that Leah was not loved, he enabled her to conceive, but Rachel remained childless. ³² Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, "It is because the LORD has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now."

³³ She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "Because the LORD heard that I am not loved, he gave me this one too." So she named him Simeon.

³⁴ Again she conceived, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "Now at last my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." So he was named Levi.

³⁵ She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "This time I will praise the LORD." So she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children.

EVENING PRAYER

O Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes and the busy world is hushed and the fever of life is over and our work is done. Then in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging and a holy rest and peace at the last. Amen.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Optional closing: (#589) Now the Day is Over

**¹ Now the day is over; Night is drawing nigh.
Shadows of the evening Steal across the sky.**

**² Jesus, give the weary Calm and sweet repose;
With your tend'rest blessing May my eyelids close.**

**³ Comfort ev'ry suff'rer Watching late in pain;
Those who plan some evil, From their sin restrain.**

**⁴ Through the long night watches May your angels spread
Their bright wings above me, Watching round my bed.**

**⁵ When the morning wakens, Then may I arise
Pure and fresh and sinless In your holy eyes.**

Text: Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834–1924, abr., alt.

2. 1 Samuel 16:1-13 - The Root of David Who Rules
3. Genesis 22:1-14 - The Lamb of God Who Provides

Will use with some editing...

Second Sunday of Advent

Today we relight the candle of **HOPE**. Now we light the candle for the second Sunday in Advent. This is the candle of **PEACE**. As we prepare for the coming of Jesus, we remember that Jesus is our hope and our peace. From the prophet Isaiah:

“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” —[Isaiah 9:6-7](#)

From the Gospel of John:

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”—[John 14:27](#)

Let the peace of Christ rule...

Let us pray:

Gracious God, Grant that we may find peace as we prepare for our Lord’s birth. May divisions in ourselves and in our families be peacefully resolved. May there be peace in our cities and in the countries of our world. Help us to see the paths of peace in our lives, and then give us the courage to follow them. Lord, let us remember that you only are the giver of lasting peace and that you are always with us. Amen.

Third Sunday of Advent

Today we relight the first two candles of the Advent wreath. The candle of **HOPE** and the candle of **PEACE**. Now we light the third candle of Advent. This is the candle of **JOY**. As the coming of Jesus, our Savior, draws nearer, our joy builds with our anticipation of his birth. From the Book of Isaiah we read the words of our Lord:

“But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight.”—[Isaiah 65:18](#)

From the New Testament, the words of Paul to the people of the church at Galatia:

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.”—[Galatians 5:22-25](#)

That your joy may be complete...

Let us pray:

We joyfully praise you, O Lord, for the fulfillment of your promise of a Savior and what that means in our lives. Thank you for the gift of salvation through the birth of your son, Jesus. Create us anew as we wait, and help us to see your glory as you fill our lives with your living Spirit. Amen.

And if we do a fourth another I'll need another lesson...

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Today we relight the first three candles of the Advent Wreath — the candles of **HOPE**, **PEACE**, and **JOY**. Now we light the fourth candle of Advent. This is the candle of **LOVE**. Jesus demonstrated self-giving love in his ministry as the Good Shepherd. Advent is a time for kindness, thinking of others, and sharing with others. It is a time to love as God loved us by giving us his most precious gift. As God is love, let us be love also. In the Book of Deuteronomy, we find these words:

“For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”—[Deuteronomy 10:17-19a](#)

From the Gospel of John we hear:

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”—[John 13:34-35](#)

This is love for God...

Let us pray:

Teach us to love, O Lord. May we always remember to put you first as we follow Christ's footsteps, that we may know your love and show it in our lives. As we prepare for our celebration of Jesus' birth, also fill our hearts with love for the

*world, that all may know your love and the one whom you have sent, your son,
our Savior. Amen.*