

## Hope: An Advent/Christmas Journey

### *Candle Lighting Liturgies*

#### **Week One – Anticipating the Reveal (Hope) (Purple or Blue)**

**Reader One:** Wow, they are *really* excited about the little one coming into their lives! I know that when we asked them what they wanted they said, “We don’t really know, we don’t have a preference, we just want the little one to be here”.

**Reader Two:** I think it’s bigger than that. Just LOOK at all the people they invited to this reveal party.

**Reader One:** Excited cannot begin to explain this big reveal! They have been talking about this little one FOREVER it seems.

**Reader Two:** You do realize this is going to be their first and only, don’t you? That magnifies how excited and hopeful they are, of course.

**Reader One:** Say, did you get a look at that list of names they have for the baby ...Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. That is a LOT to live into and up to.

**Reader Two:** Where did you hear that?

**Reader One:** Isaiah told me a long time ago, he even wrote it down. He said,

“A child is born to us, a son is given to us,  
and authority will be on his shoulders.

He will be named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.”

*[Isaiah 9:6 -C.E.B]*

**Reader Two:** Big hopes, indeed.

**Reader One:** Let’s say a prayer and light a candle on our wreath symbolizing hope. I can’t wait for the big reveal.

**Reader Two:** Please pray with me (*as a unison prayer or one voice*)

**God of promise, thank you for calling us in hope as we lean upon your faithfulness. Keep our hearts and minds open and our lives ready for you. Come precious Jesus, come and reveal your everlasting love. Amen.**

(Light the First Purple (or Blue) Advent Candle)

## Week Two – What’s the News (Faith) (Purple or Blue)

**Reader One:** Did you see the news, today? Why can’t the headlines lead with some Good News every now and then?

**Reader Two:** I know what you mean. Every time I turn on the television, glance a headline, look at my chats on the computer and phone, it’s there – chaos and division.

**Reader One:** I feel like I’m on the edge all of the time and it’s not just the big things like the pandemic, or racism, environment or the economy. The other day I heard two people hollering at each other. From a distance, I thought they were going to come to blows. I came closer and heard a snatch of their conversation; they were yelling about who should go first through the door in front of them.

**Reader Two:** Where is the Good News, the forgiveness, the kindness, the grace?

**Reader One:** Hey, listen to this. It sounds like this is what we are looking for...

The LORD God’s spirit is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me.  
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim release for captives, and liberation for prisoners,  
to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor  
and a day of vindication for our God. *[Isaiah 61:1,2 -C.E.B]*

**Reader Two:** I think your right. That sounds like someone who knows the way to make a true difference. Where did you get that?

**Reader One:** It’s from Isaiah’s writings, but later Jesus claims it as his own.

**Reader Two:** Now that is GOOD NEWS. News I want to hear and follow. News I want to be a part of as I anticipate what’s to come.

**Reader One:** Let’s say a prayer and light the second candle on our wreath. The candle symbolizing light on a path of faith that liberates us.

**Reader Two:** Please pray with me *(as a unison prayer or one voice)*

**God of hope filled liberation, thank you for calling us in hope as we lean upon your faithfulness. Keep our hearts and minds open and our lives ready for you. Come precious Jesus, come and reveal your everlasting love. Amen.**

(Light the Second Purple (or Blue) Advent Candle)

## Week Three – Special Delivery (Joy) (Pink)

**Reader One:** U.P.S. and Amazon are on a roll. Look... there goes another truck. We have to be getting close to Christmas...the trucks are everywhere. Someone's going to have a great Christmas to be sure.

**Reader Two:** I was surprised by the Christmas gift that arrived from my Dad today. It's so beautifully wrapped. I already put it under the tree.

**Reader One:** I'm not like you, I guess that my curiosity might get the best of me.

**Reader Two:** I'm excited, but I don't want to spoil the wrapping. What if the gift is a disappointment?

**Reader One:** Hey, I thought you said the gift is from your Dad. I know him and it has to be amazing. I'll bet it's something so great that you can't even imagine it.

**Reader Two:** Well, I have to say, the minute that I saw it, I wondered what it was and was so filled with joy. He went to a lot of effort to get it to me at just the right time.

**Reader One:** Being so close to Christmas, it reminds me of the unexpected wonder and joy of the Shepherds when they received THE MOST amazing gift from their Heavenly Father, remember?

**Reader Two:** I surely do. Luke says tells it like this:

“Nearby shepherds were living in the fields,  
guarding their sheep at night.  
The Lord's angel stood before them,  
the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.  
The angel said, “Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—  
wonderful, joyous news for all people.  
Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord.

*[Luke 2:8-11-C.E.B]*

**Reader One:** A beautiful gift beyond measure. It's really what this time is all about Let's say a prayer, and light the third candle that reminds us of the joy-filled anticipation of the greatest gift EVER given.

**Reader Two:** Please pray with me *(as a unison prayer or one voice)*

**Generous, Giving, God, thank you for calling us in hope as we lean upon your faithfulness. Keep our hearts and minds open and our lives ready for you. Come precious Jesus, come and reveal your everlasting love. Amen.**

(Light the Third Candle (Pink) )

## Week Four – Message in the Middle (Peace) (Purple or Blue)

**Reader One:** What are you doing?

**Reader Two:** Reading this book.

**Reader One:** Hey, you just started it, why are you going to the end of the story?

**Reader Two:** Well, I figure these are the important parts. If I read this, I'll know what the author intended, right?

**Reader One:** There is so much more to the story. so much more that the author wants you to experience as the story unfolds.

**Reader Two:** But not everything in the story is pleasant and it can be scary. Sometimes it makes me so confused and even sad.

**Reader One:** And sometimes you'll laugh, and ponder, and grow. You'll know that the author is with you every step of the way.

**Reader Two:** I experience that as I read the Christmas story. God, the Author of life, is in the beginning and the end. But the gift of Jesus shows us God is with us throughout our life's journey.

**Reader One:** You are right. The Author says in Matthew's Gospel:

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"  
which means, "God is with us." [Matthew 1:23 NRSV]

**Reader Two:** That brings a soul deep peace. In Jesus, God is with us from the beginning THROUGH to the end and beyond.

**Reader One:** Let's say a prayer and light the fourth candle. The light of this candle reminds us that, in this time of anticipation, there is peace in knowing Emmanuel – God is with us.

**Reader Two:** Please pray with me *(as a unison prayer or one voice)*

**Ever present God, thank you for calling us in hope as we lean upon your faithfulness. Keep our hearts and minds open and our lives ready for you. Come precious Jesus, come and reveal your everlasting love. Amen.**

(Light the Fourth Advent Candle - Purple (or Blue) )

## Christmas Eve – Claiming the Light (Christ) (White Christ Candle)

**Reader One:** It's here. I see the Advent candles of hope, faith, joy, and peace are lit.

**Reader Two:** Say, that unlit white candle in the center really stands out.

**Reader One:** Ah yes, the white candle is the Christ candle. You are very observant when you say that it is in the center of everything can you guess why that might be?

**Reader Two:** I would think it is because Jesus is the center of everything.

**Reader One :** Well done! Jesus is surrounded by the light that the Advent candles represent ... the light of Hope, Faith, Joy and Peace ...but no light is as pure and powerful as the light of Christ

**Reader Two:** Did you know, that in the Gospel of John, we don't hear about the events surrounding Jesus' birth – Mary and Joseph, the stable, shepherds and angels and all? Instead John introduces us to Jesus as the Light of the World. Let's listen to the way John talks about Christmas:

**Reader One:** 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. *[John 1:9-14:-NRSV]*

**Reader Two:** Let us light the Christ candle and offer an earnest prayer that our hearts be open to claiming the amazing gift of Jesus as the center of our lives.

**Reader One:** Please pray with me *(as a unison prayer or one voice)*  
**Jesus, you are the Light of the World and we are drawn to your light. On this holiest of holy nights, may your light be born in our hearts, that we might reflect your love so others are drawn to you. To you be all honor and glory and praise. Amen and Amen.**

(Light the Christ Candle)