

Family Advent Liturgy 2017



Wycliffe
College

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
5 HOSKIN AVENUE

Preamble

The tradition of lighting Advent candles goes back many generations. Some say it reaches back to pre-Christian Europeans. In the darkness of winter in Northern Europe there were some who would light as many as 24 candles on a wreath, often covered in evergreen branches. It would count time until the sun would return.

Christians borrowed this practice around the 1500's. Naming it the Advent Wreath, they used it as a way to prepare for Christ's coming again, and to acknowledge Him as the Light of the World.

Today we use four candles on the circle of the wreath, and in the centre we place one candle. Three of the candles around the circle are usually blue or purple; one is often pink. The one in the centre is white.

There are a number of ways all of these symbols are interpreted among Christians.

The circular wreath may remind us of the eternal nature of God and of God’s everlasting covenants. The colours of the candles denote royalty, redemption, hope, and joy. The pink candle is often lit on the third Sunday, which is sometimes referred to as Gaudete Sunday—the day of joy. On Christmas day, the white candle in the centre is lit, representing the purity of Christ, the singularity of His incarnation and salvation. There are many different traditions of lighting candles each week of Advent. The following is a short liturgy for families designed with set readings, readings which you may well use in church on Sunday..

You will notice in the section of reading the Scripture that we suggest an ancient practice (revised for this purpose) called [*Lectio Divina*](#) (divine reading). It finds its origins in the early monastic movements. This revised version, you will read the passage three times. After each reading there is a question to help us consider the passage. This is not Bible study. It is a way of praying the Scripture. We have provided an “easy to read” translation online, but you may prefer another version.

Assign readings, lighting of the candles, or singing, depending on the ages of the children in the home. Try to include everyone.

God bless you and yours as you wait with joyful hope for the coming again of our Saviour!

Peace,

Rev. Pilar Gateman

Incumbent, Christ Church, Fort Macleod

Regional Dean, High River Deanery

ACPO Secretary, Province of Rupert's Land

Chaplain, R.C.M.P. Fort Macleod Detachment

Wycliffe College Class of 2010

First Sunday in Advent

Candle: The first blue/purple candle of Prophecy or Hope.

Sing : **“Oh Come Divine Messiah”** or you can choose another hymn you like.

Reader: Today is special because it is the beginning of a new season. We call this season “Advent.” What do you think “Advent” means? (elicit – preparation, to come)

Reader: “Advent” is a word that means “to come.” It is a time when we get ready, preparing ourselves for the coming again of Jesus.

What are some things that we might be doing to get ready? (elicit – thinking about Jesus, about *how we can become those who hope in Him and His return.*)

Reader: *What we are doing right now around our Advent wreath is a way of preparing for Christmas and also expecting Jesus to come again. What are some ways we can prepare our hearts?*

Child: *(Lights the first candle.) I light this candle on the first Sunday in Advent to remind us prepare our hearts for the coming of the Christ Child.*

Read Scripture: Mark 13: 24-37 (ERV)

When Jesus, the Son of Man, Comes Again

24 “During the days following that time of trouble,

‘The sun will become dark,
and the moon will not give light.

25 The stars will fall from the sky,
and everything in the sky will be changed.’

26 “Then people will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

27 He will send his angels all around the earth. They will gather his chosen people from every part of the earth.

28 “The fig tree teaches us a lesson: When its branches become green and soft, and new leaves begin to grow, then you know that summer is very near. 29 In the same way, when you see all these things happening, you will know that the time[b]is very near, already present. 30 I assure you that all these things will happen while some of the people of this time are still living. 31 The whole world, earth and sky, will be destroyed, but my words will last forever.

32 “No one knows when that day or time will be. The Son and the angels in heaven don’t know when that day or time will be. Only the Father knows. 33 Be careful! Always be ready. You don’t know when that time will be.

34 “It’s like a man who goes on a trip and leaves his house in the care of his servants. He gives each one a special job to do He tells the servant guarding the door to always be ready. And this is what I am telling you now.

35 You must always be ready. You don’t know when the owner of the house will come back. He might come in the afternoon, or at midnight, or in the early morning, or when the sun rises.

36 If you are always ready, he will not find you sleeping, even if he comes back earlier than expected.

37 I tell you this, and I say it to everyone: ‘Be ready!’”

Read Scripture the first time then ask:

- 1. What word or sentence stands out to you?** (allow some responses)
2. Read Scripture a second time then ask:
- 3. What do you hear Jesus/God saying to you in this story?** (allow responses)
4. Read Scripture a third time then ask:
- 5. What do you think the Holy Spirit is asking you/us to do in this story?** (allow responses)

Reader: Our first candle is symbolic of the long years of waiting and hoping. The prophets, inspired by God, kept reminding the people to look forward to the coming of Messiah who was to redeem people from their sins. The Hebrew word for Jesus means “salvation.” Before Jesus

left this earth to return to His home in heaven, He told us we should watch and wait for His return.

Prayer time: (Ask God to help us make room for Jesus in our hearts and in our home as we wait for His coming again.)

Second Sunday in Advent

Candle: The Second blue/purple Candle: The Candle of The Way

Sing: [“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”](#) or you can choose another hymn you like.

Reader: This is the second Sunday in Advent. Do you remember why we are taking time to be together in this circle around our Advent wreath?

Child: *(Relight first blue/purple candle)* Last Sunday we lit the first candle, to remember that Advent is a time of preparing and hope. During these days we are getting our hearts ready for the coming again of Jesus and we also celebrate His birth.

Reader: This Sunday we are remembering that Jesus came to earth to show us of the way to God.

Reader: Our family knows that our hope is in Jesus. We know love came on the first Christmas. God came to us in Jesus and He wants to show us the way.

Child: (*Light the second blue/purple candle*) I light this candle on the second Sunday in Advent to remind us that Jesus came to earth to show us of God's way.

Read Scripture: *Mark 1: 1-8 (ERV)*

John Prepares the Way for Jesus

1 The Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, begins

2 with what the prophet Isaiah said would happen. He wrote:

*“Listen! I will send my messenger ahead of you.
He will prepare the way for you.”*

3 “There is someone shouting in the desert:
‘Prepare the way for the Lord.

Make the road straight for him.””

4 So John the Baptizer came and was baptizing people in the desert area. He told them to be baptized to show that they wanted to change their lives, and then their sins would be forgiven.

5 All the people from Judea, including everyone from Jerusalem, came out to John. They confessed the bad things they had done, and he baptized them in the Jordan River.

6 John wore clothes made from camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey.

7 This is what John told the people: “There is someone coming later who is able to do more than I can. I am not good enough to be the slave who stoops down to untie his sandals.

8 I baptize you with water, but the one who is coming will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Read Scripture the first time then ask:

What word or sentence stands out to you?
(allow some responses)

Read Scripture a second time then ask:

What do you hear Jesus/God saying to you in this story? (allow responses)

Read Scripture a third time then ask:

What do you think the Holy Spirit is asking you/us to do in this story? (allow responses)

Talk together about the “way”. How does John the Baptist show us the way? Who else is talked about in the Bible as the “Way”? What are some ways in which we follow Jesus?

Prayer time: Ask God to help us follow Jesus as the Way the Truth and the Life. Ask for help in knowing God’s path and direction and growing closer to Jesus.

Third Sunday in Advent

Candle: The Pink Candle is the candle of Joy

Sing: “[While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks](#)” or you can choose another hymn you like.

Reader: Here we are again to light another candle on this third Sunday in Advent! Let’s review our first two candles.

Child: *(Relight first candle)* On the first Sunday we lit a candle to remind us to get our hearts ready for the coming of Jesus.

Child: *(Relight second candle)* On the second Sunday we lit the candle of love that reminds us Jesus is the way.

Reader: When we open our hearts and let the love of Jesus enter, we know joy! God enjoys us and we can enjoy God too! Today’s candle is for joy.

Reader: Some people who knew the joy right away were the shepherds. After visiting the stable, they went back to their sheep, glorifying and praising God. But a lot of people living in Bethlehem missed it. They slept right through the whole thing and never knew it happened.

Child: (*Light the third candle*) I light the candle on the third Sunday in Advent to remind us that the angels said, “We have news of great joy!”

Scripture Reading: *John 1: 6-8, 19-28*

John 1:6-8 (ERV)

6 There was a man named John, who was sent by God. 7 He came to tell people about the light. Through him all people could hear about the light and believe. 8 John was not the light. But he came to tell people about the light.”

John 1:19-28 (ERV)

John Tells About the Messiah

19 The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent some priests and Levites to John to ask him, “Who are you?” He told them the truth. 20 Without any hesitation he said openly and plainly, “I am not the Messiah.”

21 They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?”

He answered, “No, I am not Elijah.”

They asked, “Are you the Prophet[a]?”

He answered, “No, I am not the Prophet.”

22 Then they said, “Who are you? Tell us about yourself. Give us an answer to tell the people who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

23 John told them the words of the prophet Isaiah:

“I am the voice of someone shouting in the desert:

‘Make a straight road ready for the Lord.’”

24 These Jews were sent from the Pharisees.

25 They said to John, “You say you are not the Messiah. You say you are not Elijah or the Prophet. Then why do you baptize people?”

26 John answered, “I baptize people with water. But there is someone here with you that you don’t know. 27 He is the one who is coming later. I am not good enough to be the slave who unties the strings on his sandals.”

28 These things all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan River. This is where John was baptizing people.

Read Scripture the first time then ask:

What word or sentence stands out to you?
(allow some responses)

Read Scripture a second time then ask:

What do you hear Jesus/God saying to you in this story? (allow responses)

Read Scripture a third time then ask:

What do you think the Holy Spirit is asking you/us to do in this story? (allow responses)

Prayer time: Thank God for all the things that make you joy-filled. Ask God to show you the things that He sends to bring us joy. “How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord. (EHV) (Psalm 144:15).



Resurrection of Christ, Engraving , Bolswert, Schelte, ca. 1586-1659, GRI Digital Collections

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Candle: The fourth Candle is the blue/purple candle of Peace.

Sing: “[Silent Night](#)” or you can choose another hymn you like.

Reader: We are together today to light the fourth candle on our Advent wreath. But before we do let’s relight the other three candles and remind ourselves of each message.

Child: *(Relight first purple/blue candle)* On the first Sunday of Advent we lit a candle to remind us to get our hearts ready for the coming of Jesus.

Child: *(Relight second blue/purple candle)* On the second Sunday we lit the candle of the way reminding us that Jesus is the way.

Child: (*Relight third 'pink' candle*) We lit the third candle to remind us that God brings us joy.

Reader: Today's candle lights up the whole wreath. This candle reminds us of the peace we can only have with God.

Reader: God has given us many gifts. Sometimes we try to count our blessings and the list is always long. But of all His gifts, none is greater than the gift of His Son Jesus. In giving us His Son He gave us himself.

Child: (*Light the fourth candle*) I light this candle on the fourth Sunday in Advent to remind us of God's gift of peace.

Scripture Reading: *Luke 1: 26-28*

(ERV)

The Virgin Mary

²⁶⁻²⁷ During Elizabeth's sixth month of pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to a virgin girl who lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. She was engaged to marry a man named Joseph from the family of David. Her name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel came to her and said, "Greetings! The Lord is with you; you are very special to him."

Read scripture the first time then ask:

What word or sentence stands out to you?

(allow some responses)

Read scripture a second time then ask:

What do you hear Jesus/God saying to you in this story? (allow responses)

Read scripture a third time then ask:

What do you think the Holy Spirit is asking you/us to do in this story? (allow responses)

Prayer time: Ask Jesus to be the Prince of Peace in our lives. Thank God for being able to trust him and be at peace that we are in God's hands.

Christmas Day

Candle: The Candle for Christmas Day is the white candle in the centre.

Sing: “[What Child is This?](#)” or you can choose another hymn you like.

Reader: Merry Christmas! We are joining together to light the last candle. Let’s relight the other 4 and remember all the messages as we waited.

Child: *(Relight first purple/blue candle)* On the first Sunday of Advent we lit a candle to remind us to get our hearts ready for the coming of Jesus.

Child: *(Relight second blue/purple candle)* On the second Sunday we lit the candle of the way reminding us that Jesus is the way.

Child: *(Relight third 'pink' candle)* We lit the third candle to remind us that God brings us joy.

Child: *(Relight the fourth candle)* We lit this candle on the fourth Sunday in Advent to remind us of God's gift of peace.

Reader: Today's candle completes the candle lighting. This white candle reminds us of Jesus birth. It reminds us that He will come again, and it reminds us that Jesus is our light and our life.

Reader: As you think about all the gifts you have opened today, all the gifts we have as a family remember the greatest gift is Jesus who gives us life, love and hope.

Scripture Reading: ***Luke 2: 1-20***
(ERV)

The Birth of Jesus Christ

2 It was about that same time that Augustus Caesar sent out an order to all people in the countries that were under Roman rule. The order said that everyone's name must be put on a list. ² This was the first counting of all the people

while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ Everyone traveled to their own hometowns to have their name put on the list. ⁴ So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in Galilee, and went to the town of Bethlehem in Judea. It was known as the town of David. Joseph went there because he was from the family of David. ⁵ Joseph registered with Mary because she was engaged to marry him. (She was now pregnant.) ⁶ While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have the baby. ⁷ She gave birth to her first son. She wrapped him up well and laid him in a box where cattle are fed. She put him there because the guest room was full.

Some Shepherds Hear About Jesus ⁸ That night, some shepherds were out in the fields near Bethlehem watching their sheep. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord was shining around them. The shepherds were very afraid. ¹⁰ The angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid. I have some very good news for you—news that will make everyone happy. ¹¹ Today your Savior was born in David’s town.

He is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in pieces of cloth and lying in a feeding box.”

¹³ Then a huge army of angels from heaven joined the first angel, and they were all praising God, saying,

¹⁴ “Praise God in heaven, and on earth let there be peace to the people who please him.”

¹⁵ The angels left the shepherds and went back to heaven. The shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this great event the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they went running and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the feeding box. ¹⁷ When they saw the baby, they told what the angels said about this child. ¹⁸ Everyone was surprised when they heard what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ Mary continued to think about these things, trying to understand them. ²⁰ The shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything they had seen and heard.

It was just as the angel had told them.

Read Scripture the first time then ask:
What word or sentence stands out to you?
(allow some responses)

Read Scripture a second time then ask:
What do you hear Jesus/God saying to you in this story? (allow responses)

Read Scripture a third time then ask:
What do you think the Holy Spirit is asking you/us to do in this story? (allow responses)

Sing: “**O Come All Ye Faithful**” (or other known Christmas hymn)

Prayer time: Thank God for all the things that make you joy-filled. Ask God to show you all the ways He has given of His abundant love in our lives. Thank God for giving Himself for us and for being with us always.

Advent Wreath Cake Recipe

This is an easy dessert to make and serve on the first Sunday of Advent or during the season.

1 package yellow cake mix

2 eggs

1/4 cup vegetable oil

1/2 cup flour

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1 cup milk

1 teaspoon vanilla

Beat ingredients for four minutes. Put in greased 12-cup ring mold or bundt pan. Bake 40–50 minutes in 350 degree oven. Frost with green frosting (and green coconut, optional). Red-hots (cinnamon candies) or glazed red cherries may be used for holly-berry decorations. Four candles complete the cake wreath.

About Rev. Pilar Gateman

Prior to completing studies at Wycliffe College with an Master of Divinity in 2010, Pilar worked as an educator for 14 years in the public school system.

She had served as an Anglican minister in the Diocese of Calgary for the last 7 1/2 years as well as serving in the capacity of Regional Dean of 19 parishes.

Currently she is working on a Doctor of Ministry in Spiritual Formation. One of her particular interests is the formation of leadership and particularly in the clergy as they lead others in stretching the boundaries of the Kingdom.



Joseph Paelinck (Belgian, 1781 - 1839), *The Holy Family*, Belgian, J. Paul Getty Museum