



**2020 Harmony United Methodist Church
Advent Devotional Guide**

First Sunday of Advent: Sunday, November 29



The Candle of Hope

First Reader: This is the first Sunday in Advent. Today, we light one purple candle. This is the candle of hope. Advent is a time of waiting and of hoping. We wait for the day when we celebrate again the birth of Jesus. We hope that everyone will come to know God and to worship God.

Light the first purple candle.

Second Reader: When we look at the first candle, we remember God's promise. God promised to send a Savior to the people. When we listen to our Scripture reading, we hear what the prophet Isaiah wrote about God. God fulfills the promises made to care for people. God is loving and just. God brings peace. This gives us hope. We look forward to the time when everything is fair, when the world is at peace, and all people are treated justly.

First Reader: Read Isaiah 2:1-5 (Common English Bible)

The Lord's Mountain

² This is what Isaiah, Amoz's son, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

² In the days to come

the mountain of the Lord's house
will be the highest of the mountains.

It will be lifted above the hills;
peoples will stream to it.

³ Many nations will go and say,

"Come, let's go up to the Lord's mountain,
to the house of Jacob's God
so that he may teach us his ways

and we may walk in God's paths."
Instruction will come from Zion;
the Lord's word from Jerusalem.
⁴ God will judge between the nations,
and settle disputes of mighty nations.
Then they will beat their swords into iron plows
and their spears into pruning tools.
Nation will not take up sword against nation;
they will no longer learn how to make war.
⁵ Come, house of Jacob,
let's walk by the Lord's light.

Prayer: Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for the words of the Prophet Isaiah that remind us that you are the source of our hope. Help us to remember to walk in the light of the Lord. AMEN.

All: Sing or read together the hymn: "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus," page 196, The United Methodist Hymnal.

Discussion: This Scripture offers us the hope of God's kingdom where there is peace. It includes the wonderful sentence, "...let us walk in the light of the Lord!"

- Who are the people in our world who need hope?
- What are the hopes we have for our world today?
- How do we help others know that God gives hope?

Monday, November 30:

Today read again Isaiah 2:1-5.

Pick one verse and memorize it. How do you think this verse gives hope to people?

Tuesday, December 1:

Is there someone you know who needs to hear words of hope?

Make or select a card for that person and mail it today.

Wednesday, December 2:

Hope is something we need in our world. Think about different leaders in the world. Select one world leader. Pray for that world leader today.

Thursday, December 3:

As we get ready to celebrate again the birth of Jesus, we sometimes get very busy. Today, take a ten-minute break. Sit quietly. If it helps you to concentrate, look at your Advent wreath. Pray, asking God's help to bring quiet and calm to a busy world.

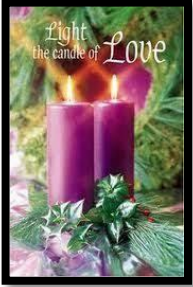
Friday, December 4:

Think about your family. Some may live with you. Others may be far away. Who in your family needs God's hope? Pray for this family member today.

Saturday, December 5:

There are people in our neighborhoods, in our church and in our community who need to know of God's hope. Select someone to contact today. Contact electronically, by phone or send a card. Tell the person you contact one way he or she helps you feel hopeful.

Second Sunday of Advent: December 6



The Candle of Love

First Reader: This is the second Sunday in Advent. Today, we light two purple candles. Last Sunday, we lit the candle of hope. This Sunday, we light the candle of love. One verse that many memorize and remember on this day is John 3:16, "For God so loved the world..." Some people may not know the love of other people. That makes it harder for them to understand God's love. During Advent, we pray that we may remember again God's gift of Jesus to the world and know that God's love for all people is the reason for this gift.

Light two purple candles, beginning with the one lighted last week.

Second Reader: When we look at the second candle, we remember God's love. When we read the words of John 3:16, we know of God's greatness and care. We remember God's love at Advent when we remember that God sent Jesus to us to help us know that God is loving and just.

First Reader: Read Isaiah 11:1-10 (Common English Bible)

A Shoot From Jesse's Stump

11 A shoot will grow up from the stump of Jesse;

a branch will sprout^[a] from his roots.

² 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.

³ He will delight in fearing the Lord.

He won't judge by appearances,

nor decide by hearsay.

⁴ He will judge the needy with righteousness,

and decide with equity for those who suffer in the land.

He will strike the violent^[b] with the rod of his mouth;

by the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness will be the belt around his hips,

and faithfulness the belt around his waist.

⁶The 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.

⁷The cow and the bear will graze.
Their young will lie down together,
and a lion will eat straw like an ox.

⁸A nursing child will play over the snake's hole;
toddlers will reach right over the serpent's den.

⁹They 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.

A signal to the peoples

¹⁰ 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.

Prayer: Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for the words found in our Bible that help us remember your love and care. Help us see how we can bring God's message to the people we meet in our schools, at our jobs, and in our neighborhoods. Help us be messengers of God's love for everyone. Amen.

All: Sing or read together the hymn: "Love Came Down at Christmas," page 242, The United Methodist Hymnal.

Discussion: When we think of God's love, we might not always think of the words of the prophets. But when we read this picture of the peaceable kingdom, we are amazed by God's love that allows a child to lead.

- Who are the people in our world who need the message of God's love?
- What are our hopes for how people today can receive the message of God's love?
- How do we help others know God's love?

Monday, December 7:

Read again Isaiah 11:1-10. Create a poster by drawing pictures of the wondrous things you see in the world around you that God has created. Create your picture of God's kingdom of peace. Give thanks for the world and all the people in the world.

Tuesday, December 8:

Is there someone you know who needs to hear words of God's love? Make or select a card for that person and mail it today.

Wednesday, December 9:

Love is something we need in our church. Think about the people in our church. Select one person in our church. Pray for that person today.

Thursday, December 10:

As we get ready to celebrate again the birth of Jesus, we sometimes get very busy. Today, take a ten-minute break. Sit quietly. If it helps you to concentrate, look at your Advent wreath. Pray, asking God's help to bring quiet and calm to a busy world.

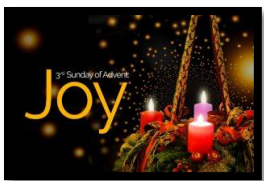
Friday, December 11

Think about your family. Some may live with you. Others may be far away. Who in your family needs God's love? Pray for this family member today.

Saturday, December 12

There are people in our neighborhoods, in our church, and in our community who need to know of God's love. Select someone to contact today. Contact electronically, by phone or send a card. Tell the person you contact one way he or she makes you feel loved.

Third Sunday of Advent — Sunday, December 13



Note: Some Advent Wreaths may have one pink candle. The pink candle is always lit on the third Sunday of Advent and traditionally means "joy." If your wreath has a pink candle, light this as the third candle this week.

First Reader: This is the third Sunday in Advent. Today we light three purple candles (OR two purple candles and the pink candle.) The first Sunday, we lit the candle of hope. On the second Sunday, we lit the candle of love. Today, we light the candle of joy. One thing that sometimes happens as we get ready to celebrate Jesus' birth is we expect to be happy all the time. Joy is not the same as happy. Joy is a deeper feeling created by knowing that God cares for us. Joy is remembering that God sent Jesus so we would always know of God's care. During Advent, we pray that we may remember again God's gift of Jesus to the world and know the joy that gift brings to all people.

Light the three purple, or two purple and one pink, candles.

Second Reader: When we look at the third candle, we remember God's promise of joy. God promised to send a Savior to the people. Today we read from the Gospel of Luke. In the Scripture, we read Mary's song of praise and joy. There must have been times when Mary was frightened, worried, fearful and sad. But we have these words of joy even in a time when she was unsure of the future. Her words can guide us to look for the joy of God even when things may be uncertain for us.

First Reader: Read Luke 1:47-55 (Common English Bible)

Mary Praises God

⁴⁷ In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior.

⁴⁸ He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant.

Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored

⁴⁹ because the mighty one has done great things for me.

Holy is his name.

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

51 He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.

52 He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly.

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

54 He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,
remembering his mercy,

55 just as he promised to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever."

Prayer: Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for the joy remembering Jesus' birth brings to us today. Help us live in such a way that our words and our actions help others know of the joy you give. AMEN.

Discussion: How privileged we are to have this beautiful song of Mary. Can you imagine her singing the words written in Scripture? It is a testimony to her faith and joy at being chosen as God's servant.

- Who in our world needs God's joy?
- What are our hopes for joy in our world today?
- How do we help others know that God gives joy?

All: Sing or read together the hymn: "To a Maid Engaged to Joseph," page 215, The United Methodist Hymnal.

Monday, December 14:

Today read again Luke 1:47-55. Make a list together of the things that bring joy to your lives. Write your own song of joy to God or sing a song that expresses joy to God.

Tuesday, December 15:

Is there someone you know who needs to hear words of joy? Make or select a card for that person and mail it today.

Wednesday, December 16:

Joy is something we need in our city. Think about different leaders of our community. Select one leader of our community. Pray for that leader today.

Thursday, December 17:

As we get ready to celebrate again the birth of Jesus, we sometimes get very busy. Today, take a ten-minute break. Sit quietly. If it helps you to concentrate, look at your Advent wreath. Pray, asking God's help to bring quiet and calm to a busy world.

Friday, December 18:

Think about your family. Some may live with you. Others may be far away. Who in your family needs God's joy? Pray for this family member today.

Saturday, December:

There are people in our neighborhoods, in our church, and in our community who need to know of God's love. Select someone to contact today. Contact electronically, by phone or send a card. Tell the person you contact one way he or she brings you joy.

Fourth Sunday of Advent: Sunday, December 20*The Candle of Peace*

First Reader: This is the fourth Sunday in Advent. Today we light the fourth purple candles. (OR three purple candles and the pink candle). The first Sunday, we lit the candle of hope. On the second Sunday, we lit the candle of love. On the third Sunday, we lit the candle of joy. Today, we light the candle of peace. Our world is not always a peaceful world. People hurt other people. Countries are at war today. People don't take care of the world. People yell and scream at other people. But God promises peace. During Advent, we pray that we, as well as all people, will seek God's peace.

Light the first, second, third, and fourth candles.

Second Reader: When we look at the fourth candle, we remember God's promise of peace. We recall the words of Jesus in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." In times of war and hatred, it's hard to remember that Jesus is the one who brings peace. As we approach Christmas, let's remember that God's intention is a place of peace where people shake hands instead of harm one another.

First Reader: Read Matthew 1:18-25

Second Reader: Joseph may not have felt very peaceful when he heard the words of the angel. He may have felt afraid and confused. Yes, he obeyed the angel's words, trusting in God. Sometimes all we see around us gives a different message from the message of peace. Yet we, like Joseph, can follow God's words and trust in God's promises.

Prayer: Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for those in our world today who seek to act for peace. Help us look for ways to be peacemakers at home, at church and at school. AMEN.

All: Sing or read together the hymn: "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light," page 206, The United Methodist Hymnal.

Discussion: This Scripture reminds us that when we are fearful, we are often not thinking of peace. The angel calmed the Joseph, and send him forward with a task.

- Who are the people in our world who need God's peace?
- What are our hopes for peace in our world today?
- How do we help others know God's desire for peace in our world?

Monday, December 21:

Peace seems so difficult for us to achieve in our world. Read again John 3:16 and Matthew 1:18-25. Think about what peace would look like in your family, in your congregation, in your community, in our nation, and in the world. Pray a prayer of peace asking God for what you have envisioned for your family, your congregation, your community, your nation, and the world.

Tuesday, December 22:

Spend time today thinking about your image of a world at peace. Write your thoughts, or create a picture depicting God's peace in the world.

Wednesday December 23:

Today, try a new greeting to those you see in your home, or at work, or as you shop. Say, "Christmas Peace to you." At the end of the day, when you pray, thank God for each person you saw this day and pray that each person will experience the peace of God.

Thursday, December 24: Christmas Eve

The Christ Candle



This is Christmas Eve. Tonight, we light the four purple candles (OR three purple candles and the pink candle). The first Sunday, we lit the candle of hope. On the second Sunday, we lit the candle of love. On the third Sunday, we lit the candle of joy. Tonight, we light the last candle of the Advent wreath, the Christ candle. We light this candle to show that the waiting is over! Jesus Christ, the Messiah, has been born! The Promise has been given!

Light all the candles, including the center white, Christ candle.

First Reader: The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Isaiah 9: 2, KJV

Second Reader:

The Birth of Jesus According to the Gospel of Luke

2 In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists. **2** This first enrollment occurred when Quirinius governed Syria. **3** Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled. **4** Since Joseph belonged to David's house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David's city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. **5** He went to be enrolled together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant. **6** While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. **7** She gave birth to her firstborn child, a

son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom.

Second Reader: Tonight, we proclaim the hope that inspires us to keep moving forward on our journeys. We recognize the peace that extends from our souls into the world. We celebrate the joy that fills our spirits with excitement. And we herald the love passed between Christ and us and between our neighbors and us. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Prayer: Dear God: This is such a special night. We cannot thank you enough for the birth of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Help us to share the hope, peace, joy, and love that brought into the world. We know this is what Jesus would want us to do. Amen.

Friday, December 25: Christmas Day

First Reader: Today is Christmas, and we light all five candles. The first Sunday, we lit the candle of hope. The second Sunday, we lit the candle of love. The third Sunday, we lit the candle of joy. The fourth Sunday, we lit the candle of peace. On Christmas Eve, we lit the Christ candle. When we look at the Advent Wreath, we remember that God sent Jesus to give hope, peace, joy, and love to all people.

Light all five candles of the Advent Wreath.

Second Reader: Read Luke 2:1-21

All: Sing or read together the hymn: "Joy to the World," page 246, The United Methodist Hymnal.

- What are our hopes on this Christmas Day for our world?
- How can we help people remember God's promises after Christmas Day is over?

Name one thing you are willing to do in the days following Christmas that will help you and others remember God's promises.

Prayer: Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you, God, for sending Jesus for ALL people, not just those in one place at one time. On this Christmas Day, help us remember and rejoice again because Jesus was born. May we live every day remembering your love and care and showing that love and care to others. AMEN

Merry Christmas to you and yours from the staff of Harmony United Methodist Church!

