

C5774 Light of Hope Litany

First Sunday – The Gift of Hope

Reponsive Litany

We begin the season of Advent with expectant and believing hearts.

We wait upon the Lord and place our hope in God’s word.

During Advent we confront the darkness that so often exists around us.

We wait upon the Lord and place our hope in God’s word.

During Advent we confront the doubt that so often resides within us.

We wait upon the Lord and place our hope in God’s word.

During Advent we confront the division that so often occurs between us.

We wait upon the Lord and place our hope in God’s word.

This morning we light the **first candle**. The first candle reminds us of the ultimate hope that comes through our Savior’s birth. In a world where we often get overwhelmed by our circumstances, Advent comes as a gentle whisper offering us hope to heal the broken, befriend the lonely, and share the good news of the Gospel. This morning let us begin this Advent season with expectant and believing hearts.

Closing prayer (First Sunday)

Gracious God, as we embark upon another Advent journey, we pray that we would be encouraged by hope, strengthened in unity, and inspired through faith. May our ears be open and our hearts ready to receive the gift of hope embodied in the Word made flesh. We pray this in the name of Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Second Sunday – The Gift of Peace

Responsive Litany

On this Advent journey, we are mindful of the brokenness of the world that surrounds us.

We long for the peace that surpasses all understanding.

As we look around us, we see the hostility that exists between neighbor and nation.

We long for the peace that surpasses all understanding.

As we look beside us, we see fractured relationships and unforgiving hearts.

We long for the peace that surpasses all understanding.

We look within ourselves, we confess the reconciling words we have yet to speak and restoring deeds we have yet to do.

We long for the peace that surpasses all understanding.

This morning we light the first two candles. The **first candle** reminds us of a starry night in a quiet stable when God changed the course of human history. Our hope is firm, for in our Savior’s birth, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The **second candle** symbolizes God’s perfect peace in an imperfect world. The season of Advent calls us to turn our eyes to the Prince of Peace who has come and will come again.

Closing prayer (Second Sunday)

Gracious God, we pray that you will help us to see glimpses of your peace in our fractured world. You alone are the Prince of Peace. Help us to remember this Advent that we can also be agents of peace to those around us and in our world. Help us to seek your perfect peace that surpasses all understanding. We pray this in the name of Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Third Sunday – The Gift of Love

Responsive Litany

Love is more than a flicker within the human heart.

Lord, reveal your love, and make us new.

In a hurried world with little time for others,
Advent calls us to remember that...

Love is patient.

In a world where often we become consumed by our own interests,
Advent calls us to remember that...

Love is kind.

In a world where often we are quick to anger and slow to forgive,
Advent calls us to remember that...

Love is not easily angered, and through love we come to forgive.

This Advent let us behold the love of God embodied in our Savior's birth.

God is love. Whoever lives in love, lives in God, and God in them.

This morning we light three candles. The **first candle** reminds us of the marvelous hope revealed through the Savior's birth. In a time of despair, God shattered the darkness with the hope of a new future. The **second candle** reminds us of the peace that only Christ can instill in the human heart. In a world that abounds with hostility, Christ alone is the One who speaks, "Peace, be still." The **third candle** helps us remember that God's perfect love made flesh can fill our hearts, ignite our souls, and change our lives.

Closing prayer (Third Sunday)

Gracious Lord, as we continue our Advent journey, we pray that being rooted and established in love we may have the power to grasp how wide, how long, how high, and how deep is the love of Christ. True love was not only born at Christmas, but revealed for all to see. May we come to know this love in our lives and share it with those around us. We pray this in Jesus's name. Amen.

Fourth Sunday – The Gift of Joy

Responsive Litany

In a world where we often seek personal happiness, Advent beckons us to a deeper expression of our faith in Christ.

For the Lord our God is with us both now and forevermore.

Advent beckons us to remember God's unconditional love, even when we stumble.

For the Lord our God is with us both now and forevermore.

Advent beckons us to remember God's invitation to the human heart to be still in the face of strife.

For the Lord our God is with us both now and forevermore.

Advent beckons us to remember we always have hope, even when it seems as if our world is caving in around us.

For the Lord our God is with us both now and forevermore.

This morning we light four candles. The **first candle** reminds us of the hope that God's light never ceases to shine. The **second candle** reminds us that in a world of discord, we hear again the calming words of our Savior, "Peace, be still." The **third candle** reminds us of the matchless love God has for us. The **fourth candle** reminds us that our joy abides in God who gently whispers to each human heart, "Come follow me, for I have come that you might have life and have it to the fullest measure!"

Closing prayer (Fourth Sunday)

Gracious God, in a world where the message is "be happy," we are reminded that only you grant the gift of true joy. This morning let us hear again with joyful hearts and proclaim with elated voices the wondrous refrain of your coming. "The Lord our God is with us both now and forevermore." We pray this in the name of Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Christmas Eve – The Gift of a Savior

Responsive Litany

Tonight we celebrate the one moment, the one birth, and the one life that forever changed the world!

O come, O come, Emmanuel.

Because you came to us, we have experienced the ultimate hope to combat even the darkest moments.

O come, O come, Emmanuel.

Because you came to us, we have seen the fullness of love to the highest degree.

O come, O come, Emmanuel.

Because you came to us, we have seen the face of peace in its purest form.

O come, O come, Emmanuel.

Tonight, we celebrate your birth that unleashes hope, love, peace, and joy into the world from now until the day of your return.

O come, O come, Emmanuel.

Tonight is the night we have been waiting for, when waiting is transformed into awestruck wonder. We celebrate Jesus coming into this world and light all five candles. The **first candle** reminds us of the ultimate hope that comes through our Savior's birth. The **second candle** beckons us to the peace of Christ that surpasses all understanding. The **third candle** reminds us of the Good News of great joy that tells us God's love is stronger than human sin. The **fourth candle** invites us to share the joy of the shepherds and angels announcing the Savior's birth. The **Christ candle** reminds us that from the moment he took his first breath until the day of his glorious return, Jesus says to each of us, "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Closing prayer (Christmas Eve)

Gracious God, your Spirit has led us throughout the days and nights of our Advent journey. Thank you for opening our eyes to see more of your presence in our world and in our lives. We rejoice in your ultimate gift of sending a Savior who has taught us the fullness of what hope, love, peace, and joy are all about. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Amen.