



Advent Wreath Prayers for Missionary Families

Advent is a four-week period of prayer and preparation, and of looking forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus among us. We are filled with joy and love in the Lord, and compelled to share those with others. As we open our hearts in prayer during Advent, we pray that the “*Good News*” of Jesus is heard throughout the world so that hearts will turn to love and peace.

Praying with the Advent Wreath

The symbolism of the Advent wreath is beautiful. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul and the everlasting life found in Christ. The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent. Their light signifies Christ, the Light of the World. Three candles are purple [or blue] and one is pink. The purple/blue candles symbolize the prayer, penance and preparatory sacrifices and goods works undertaken during Advent. The rose candle is lit on the third Sunday; it symbolizes rejoicing, at this midpoint of Advent, when our preparation is half over and we are close to Christmas. The progressive lighting of the candles symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord’s first coming into the world and the anticipation of the joy in His second coming.

First Week of Advent: Hope

On the first Sunday of Advent, gather the family and bless and light the Advent wreath. Begin by making the sign of the cross.

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

Reading: *Isaiah 2:1-5*

This is what Isaiah, son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In days to come, the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established as the highest mountain and raised above the hills. All nations shall stream toward it; many peoples shall come and say:

“Come, let us climb the LORD’s mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may instruct us in his ways, and we may walk in his paths.”

For from Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and impose terms on many peoples.

They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again.

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

Blessing of the Wreath

Invite everyone to extend a hand in blessing.

Loving God, the time of Advent has arrived. Prepare our hearts for the promise of the Christ Child. As we bless this wreath, we ask You to bless us that we may seek to do Your will during Advent.

Candle-lighting

Light the first purple/blue candle.

As we light these candles let us give thanks for the Child Whom we celebrate this Advent Season — the Child Who came to earth as an infant, died and rose as our Savior, and for Whose coming again we wait with anticipation and love.

Good and gracious God, instruct us in your ways. Help us to walk in the light of Your ways as we reach out to those in need. Help us to build a world where there is no cause for war again. Guide us Lord, as we walk in Your light. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Second Week of Advent: Faith

Begin by making the sign of the cross.

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

Reading: *Isaiah 11:1-10*

On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD, and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD. Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide, but he shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land’s afflicted.

He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips. Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them.

The cow and the bear shall be neighbors, together their young shall rest; the lion shall eat hay like the ox. The baby shall play by the cobra’s den, and the child lay his hand on the adder’s lair.

There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD, as water covers the sea. On that day, the root of Jesse, set up as a signal for the nations, the Gentiles shall seek out, for his dwelling shall be glorious.

Candle-lighting

Light last week’s candle, and one additional purple candle.

As we light these candles let us give thanks for the Child Whom we celebrate this Advent Season — the Child Who came to earth as an infant, died and rose as our Savior, and for Whose coming again we wait with anticipation and love.

God of peace and justice, You faithfully lead Your people to new possibilities. Give us wisdom, understanding, knowledge and strength to build a world where there is no harm or ruin, but only peace and love amongst all of Your creatures. We pray this in the name of the Christ Child. Amen.

Third Week of Advent: Joy

Begin by making the sign of the cross.

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

Reading: *Isaiah 35: 1-6A, 10*

The desert and the parched land will exult;
the steppe will rejoice and bloom.

They will bloom with abundant flowers,
and rejoice with joyful song.

The glory of Lebanon will be given to them,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the LORD,
the splendor of our God.

Strengthen the hands that are feeble,
make firm the knees that are weak,
say to those whose hearts are frightened:
Be strong, fear not!

Here is your God,
he comes with vindication;
with divine recompense
he comes to save you.

Then will the eyes of the blind be opened,
the ears of the deaf be cleared;
then will the lame leap like a stag,
then the tongue of the mute will sing.

Those whom the LORD has ransomed will return
and enter Zion singing,
crowned with everlasting joy;
they will meet with joy and gladness,
sorrow and mourning will flee.

Candle-lighting

Light the two previously lit candles and the pink candle.

As we light these candles let us give thanks for the Child whom we celebrate this Advent Season — the Child Who came to earth as an infant, died and rose as our Savior, and for Whose coming again we wait with anticipation and love.

All loving and powerful God, we rejoice with the glad song You have placed within our hearts. As we continue to celebrate Advent, remove our fears and help us to stand strong in Your ways. We pray for those whose hearts are frightened, whose bodies are weak from lack of the basic necessities in life. Help them to be strong, and to feel You O God even in their sorrow. Remind us that we await a mighty Savior, an infant child that will bring gladness to all. Open the eyes of all who are blind. Open the ears of all who have yet to hear Your Word. We pray this in the name of the Christ Child. Amen.

Fourth Week of Advent: Peace

Begin by making the sign of the cross.

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

Reading: *Isaiah 7: 10-14*

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying:

Ask for a sign from the LORD, your God;
let it be deep as the netherworld, or high as the sky!

But Ahaz answered,

“I will not ask! I will not tempt the LORD!”

Then Isaiah said:

Listen, O house of David!

Is it not enough for you to weary people,
must you also weary my God?

Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign:
the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,
and shall name him Emmanuel.

Candle-lighting

Light all four candles.

As we light these candles let us give thanks for the Child whom we celebrate this Advent season — the Child Who came to earth as an infant, died and rose as our Savior, and for Whose coming again we wait with anticipation and love.

All-powerful God, we wait in anticipation of the arrival of Your greatest sign to us – Your Son. In Jesus, Your Word took flesh on our earth. In these last few days of Advent help us to be fervent in our prayer. Help us to be kind and gentle with one another and with those we meet. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

