



## 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

**Leader:** The light of Jesus is hope, faith, joy and peace. As we gather around this Advent wreath each week and prepare for the birth of our Savior, we acknowledge His light through Scripture, prayer, song and these candles. May we carry that light everywhere we go as His Missionaries. The first candle, or Prophet’s candle, symbolizes the light of Christ’s hope for the world. It was announced by John the Baptist. *[Light one purple candle.]*

**ALL:** Let our hearts shine with Christ’s hope for all the world.

**Reader:** John 1: 6-9

**ALL:** Thanks be to God.

*Pause for silent reflection*

**Leader:** Good and gracious God, increase our strength and desire for doing good. Help us to reach out to those in need, and those who long for justice in our world. Give us a heart that is open to our baptismal call to serve all of Your people, especially those in need. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### Second Week of Advent: Faith

**Leader:** The light of Jesus is hope, faith, joy and peace. As we gather around this Advent wreath and prepare for the birth of our Savior, we acknowledge His light through Scripture, prayer, song and these candles. May we carry that light everywhere we go as His Missionaries. The second candle, or the Bethlehem candle, symbolizes faith. Mary and Joseph showed great faith in God’s will as they journeyed to Bethlehem. *[Light two purple candles.]*

**ALL:** Let our hearts shine with faith in Jesus for all the world.

**Reader:** Luke 2:4-7

**ALL:** Thanks be to God.

*Pause for silent reflection*

**Leader:** 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.

#### Third Week of Advent: Joy

**Leader:** The light of Jesus is hope, faith, joy and peace. As we gather around this Advent wreath and prepare for the birth of our Savior, we acknowledge His light through Scripture, prayer, song and these candles. May we carry that light everywhere we go as His Missionaries. The third candle, or the Shepherd’s Candle, stands for joy. It was with great joy that the shepherds made known the Good News of the birth of Jesus. *[Light two purple candles and one pink candle.]*

**ALL:** Let our hearts shine with the joy of Jesus for all the world.

**Reader:** Luke 2:16-18

**ALL:** Thanks be to God.

*Pause for silent reflection*

**Leader:** 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.

#### Fourth Week of Advent: Peace

**Leader:** The light of Jesus is hope, faith, joy and peace. As we gather around this Advent wreath and prepare for the birth of our Savior, we acknowledge His light through Scripture, prayer, song and these candles. May we carry that light everywhere we go as His Missionaries. The fourth candle, or the Angel’s Candle, stands for peace. The Angels’ message brought “peace on earth” to all who received it. *[Light all four candles.]*

**Reader:** Luke 2: 10-14

**ALL:** Thanks be to God.

*Pause for silent reflection*

**Leader:** 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. Create in us hearts that strive for goodness. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

## Celebrating the Birth of Jesus in the Missions



Children bring to life the birth of Jesus in Nativity plays in India and Africa.



Making tulle flowers for a Christmas Festival in Vietnam.



Playing games at a village-wide Christmas Celebration in Cambodia.



MCA Member in the parish of Nossa Senhora Aparecida in Zouk Mikael, Lebanon, prepare a welcome for Baby Jesus.