

Sundays, November 29, December 6, December 13, December 20

Supplies needed:

- Plain (undecorated) Advent wreath ring:
- Four taper candles: three candles of one color, one candle of another color. Traditional Advent wreath candle colors are three dark blue or purple candles and one pink candle. Feel free to use the colors that you enjoy!
- Four “ordinary” objects from your home that symbolize *hope, love, joy, and peace* to you. Some examples could be: a gift, a picture, a rock, toy, etc.
- One candle for the center (the “Christ” candle)

Instructions:

Begin with the Advent wreath ring and no candles.

Each Sunday, place one taper candle in the ring. On the third Sunday - December 13 - place the candle of a different color in the ring (the “joy” candle).

After the candle has been placed, place an object that reminds you of the theme for each Sunday (*hope, love, joy, peace*) on the outside of the wreath next to the candle. Make sure they are “ordinary” objects only. Each family member can find an object, or they can decide on an object together.

After the object has been placed, engage in the question/prompt for each day below. The lighting of the candle will take place during the question/prompt.

The Prayers that accompany each week’s Activity are by Karen Ware Jackson, 2020 – Permission is granted for home and congregational use.

November 29: Hope

Hope is more than an emotion or optimism. Hope is a discipline. Light the candle and play a song that encourages you to feel hope in the midst of chaos or uncertainty. If you want to hear songs with Advent themes throughout the week, there are many Advent playlists available on the music website [Spotify](https://www.spotify.com), which is free for use.

Prayer for the week of Nov 29: Light one candle for hope. Because the world is broken and the wait is long, but hope just won’t let go. Hope holds space for all our longings lingers on the edge of harsh reality like the dawn gently awakening the sky. “Keep awake,” she whispers, “for the world is being made new.” So we light one candle, because it only takes one: Christ with us.

December 6: Love

Name one person who has shown you unconditional love. Make a plan to connect with that person in the coming week in some way. If they have died, reach out to one of their family members or a mutual friend and share a story or favorite memory. As you light the candle, offer a prayer of thanks for their love and ask God to show you how to love more deeply.

Prayer for The week of December 6 Light one candle for peace. Because the world is broken and the wait is long, but we refuse to be frozen by fear. Peace comes in fits and starts a deep breath a courageous truth a humble heart. "Prepare the way," she whispers, "for the Lord comes to make the broken whole." So we light one candle, because it only takes one: Christ with us.

December 13: Joy

Often we are told that we should only invest in activities in which we can show our success or skill. Yet, if we are afraid to engage in a new hobby or art due to pressure on the outcome, we miss out on the joy that comes from simply *doing*. Perhaps you started a new hobby or began baking more this year with more time at home. As you light the candle, name one activity or hobby you will try this week to cultivate joy.

Prayer for the week of December 13 Light one candle for joy. Because the world is broken and the wait is long, but our joy cannot be contained. Like a toddler, toppling the thrones of power with a gleeful swipe, Joy pierces our silence with song interrupts our sighing with laughter unshackles our fumbling feet to dance. "My soul magnifies the Lord," she whispers, "and my Spirit rejoices in God my savior." So we light one candle, because it only takes one: Christ with us.

December 20: Peace

What is one experience from this year that has given you peace when you least expected it? What did you learn from that experience?

Prayer for the week of December 20 Light one candle for love. Because the world is broken and the wait is long, but love never ends. Love faithfully goes about the work of casting out fear speaking truth healing the deepest wounds crossing the divide from this world to the next and back again. "Here i am," she whispers, "the servant of the Lord." So we light one candle, because it only takes one: Christ with us.

Closing

After spending a few minutes with each question or prompt (either individually or as a family) then decorate 1/4 of the wreath with whatever material you like - it can be completely non-traditional material or colors. *Leave the remaining sections for other*

Sundays. You can choose different materials for each section. For example, if you crocheted a blanket that you made for a friend, you could use some of the leftover yarn for the “joy” Sunday. Kids could use their favorite Play-Doh for one section. Feel free to be creative!

Leave the objects for each Sunday around the wreath as you progress throughout Advent as a reminder of the ways you have seen God in your life.

On Christmas Day, add the Christ candle to the center. The incarnation teaches us that God is present with us in intimate ways - even in the details of our “ordinary” stories. In the midst of uncertainty and sickness, God calls us to be people of healing and love. We invite you to take a picture of your completed Advent wreath and email it to the church office so that we can celebrate with you! We also invite you to share your pictures on Facebook.

Prayer for The Season of Christmas (Dec 24-Jan 6)

Light one candle for Christ. Because the world is broken and the wait is long but Christ is with us through it all. In humble manger in a back-water town - a baby. On a convict's cross - a king. In every heart and every home where hope, peace, joy, and love endure - Christ with us. “Glory to God in the Highest heaven,” she whispers, “and peace to all on earth.” So we light one candle, because it only takes one: Christ with us.