

Renaming the Advent Candles Liturgy

Week one - Hope & Spaciousness



Each year many churches celebrate advent by lighting the advent wreath. Each week a different candle is lit until we arrive at Christmas eve when we light the center candle which is the Christ candle.

The candles around the wreath each represent a different aspect of our faith journey. The traditional candles are hope, peace, joy, and love. This year we are renaming each candle to encourage us to embody these traditional aspects of our faith in new ways this advent season.

The candles will be:

- Spaciousness** - helping us to embody *hope*
- Contemplation** - helping us to embody *peace*
- Commitment** - helping us to embody *joy*
- Imagination** - helping us to embody *love*

The first candle is the candle of **Spaciousness**.

Spaciousness is making space for others.

When we are spacious we say: **There is space in myself for you. (Light Candle)**

Each day we have many opportunities to be spacious, to sacrifice our time, to sit in suffering with others, to set aside our agenda, or to freely offer forgiveness when we have been hurt.

When we create space for others in ourselves we also create the place of hope where real relationships can be formed.

This is exactly what God has done through Jesus for us.

God makes space in God's self for us in the Christ.

In Jesus we experience the fullness of God's love and grace.

This is our deepest hope as Christians.

In Jesus we experience the Spaciousness of a God who says

There is space in myself for you.

Consider how you can live into Spaciousness as we begin advent this week.

Prayer - Gracious God may we celebrate who we are as we celebrate who you are this advent season. Thank you for the hope that comes to us in the space you have made for us in you through Jesus the Christ. May we in turn offer that same hope to others as we seek to be more spacious in our own lives. May we always be willing to say: There is space in myself for you.

Week Two - Peace & Contemplation

Each year many churches celebrate advent by lighting the advent wreath. Each week a different candle is lit until we arrive at Christmas eve when we light the center candle which is the Christ candle.

The candles around the wreath each represent a different aspect of our faith journey. The traditional candles are hope, peace, joy, and love. This year we are renaming each candle to encourage us to embody these traditional aspects of our faith in new ways this advent season.

The candles will be:

Spaciousness - helping us to embody hope
Contemplation - helping us to embody peace
Commitment - helping us to embody joy
Imagination - helping us to embody love

The first candle is the candle of **Spaciousness**.
Spaciousness is making space for others.
When we are spacious we say: **There is space in myself for you. (Light Candle)**

This week we light the second candle. The candle of **Contemplation**.
In Contemplation we slow ourselves and take a long loving look at the real.
When we contemplate we say: **Let me be still and know God. (Light Candle)**

Each day we have many opportunities to be contemplative. Every moment of our day is infused with the divine. From nature that surrounds us with beauty, to intimate moments we share with those we love, to the mysteries of the cosmos. When we slow ourselves and become still we are aware of what is before us and awakened to the possibilities that are all around us.

Contemplation is what God has modeled for us through Jesus.
Jesus took time to see and to experience the divine all around him.
Jesus took time to slow, to be still, and to know God.

It is in Contemplation that we begin to experience the 'peace of God that surpasses understanding' and that guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

In Contemplation we say: **Let me be still and know God.**

Consider how you can live into Contemplation throughout this upcoming week.

Prayer - Gracious God may we celebrate who we are as we celebrate who you are this advent season. In this season that is often filled with the busyness of obligation teaches us to take a long loving look at the real. Teach us to know the divine that is around us and within us. Thank you for the peace that comes to us through Jesus the Christ when we take time to slow and be still and to know you.

Week Three - Joy & Commitment

Each year many churches celebrate advent by lighting the advent wreath. Each week a different candle is lit until we arrive at Christmas eve when we light the center candle which is the Christ candle.

The candles around the wreath each represent a different aspect of our faith journey. The traditional candles are hope, peace, joy, and love. This year we are renaming each candle to encourage us to embody these traditional aspects of our faith in new ways this advent season.

The first candle is the candle of **Spaciousness**. Spaciousness is making space for others. When we are spacious we say: **There is space in myself for you. (Light Candle)**

The second candle we light is the candle of **Contemplation**. In Contemplation we slow ourselves and take a long loving look at the real. When we contemplate we say: **Let me be still and know God. (Light Candle)**

This week we light the candle of **Commitment**. Commitment represents our willingness to participate in the unfolding grace all around us. When we commit we say: **I will run the race with perseverance.**

While grace is always God's gift to us, God's then invites us to participate in a life of grace when we commit ourselves to Christ.

Everyday there are opportunities for us to intentionally commit ourselves to participate in the grace of God that surrounds us. Our actions embody grace when we give of ourselves to others, work for justice in the world, or seek to love the forgotten.

The fruit of this commitment is joy. That just as Jesus endured the cross 'for the joy set before him' we too will experience joy when we work to unfold grace in the lives of others.

Consider this week where you can participate in the unfolding grace of God that is all around us. Where will you respond to the invitation from Jesus and say: **I will run the race with perseverance.**

Prayer - Gracious God may we celebrate who we are as we celebrate who you are this advent season. The acts of grace that surround us are all your gifts to us. Encourage our hearts to participate in the unfolding of this grace as we seek to run with perseverance the race you set before us. May we commit ourselves to participate in your love and may your living Spirit guide us in joy as we do.

Week Four - Love & Imagination

Each year many churches celebrate advent by lighting the advent wreath.

Each week a different candle is lit until we arrive at Christmas eve when we light the center candle which is the Christ candle.

The candles around the wreath each represent a different aspect of our faith journey.

The traditional candles are hope, peace, joy, and love.

This year we are renaming each candle to encourage us to embody these traditional aspects of our faith in new ways this advent season.

The first candle is the candle of **Spaciousness**.

Spaciousness is making space for others.

When we are spacious we say: **There is space in myself for you. (Light Candle)**

The second candle we light is the candle of **Contemplation**.

In Contemplation we slow ourselves and take a long loving look at the real.

When we contemplate we say: **Let me be still and know God. (Light Candle)**

The third candle we light is the candle of **Commitment**.

Commitment represents our willingness to participate in the unfolding grace all around us.

When we commit we say: **I will run the race with perseverance.**

This week we light the candle of **Imagination**.

Our Imagination helps us to envision what does not exist.

When we Imagine a better future we say: **Love is stronger than hate.**

It takes imagination to begin to envision a world where acts of unspeakable violence born out of fear and hatred are no longer an everyday part of life.

God invites us to envision such a world by sending Jesus to be with us.

It is Christ who endures the pain, suffering, and violence of this world in order to redeem it.

It is Christ who invites to use our imagination to build bridges of love rather than walls of hate.

Let us imagine a new world where we love each other as Christ has loved us.

Let us imagine a new world where all are welcome and know their own belovedness.

Let us imagine a world where we can truly say: **Love is stronger than hate.**

Prayer - Gracious God may we celebrate who we are as we celebrate who you are this advent season. As Jesus taught us to love each other as he has loved us may your Living Spirit ignite our imaginations to find new ways to live out this love each and every day of our lives. Help us to imagine a new way of being that ushers in your Kingdom of love. Thank you for Jesus. Thank you for how he shows us this way of love and calls us to be love for each other. Amen.

Christmas Eve: Christ Candle

Each year many churches celebrate advent by lighting the advent wreath. Each week a different candle is lit until we arrive at Christmas eve when we light the center candle which is the Christ candle.

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The first candle is the candle of **Spaciousness**.
Spaciousness is making space for others.
When we are spacious we say: **There is space in myself for you. (Light Candle)**

The second candle we light is the candle of **Contemplation**.
In Contemplation we slow ourselves and take a long loving look at the real.
When we contemplate we say: **Let me be still and know God. (Light Candle)**

The third candle we light is the candle of **Commitment**.
Commitment represents our willingness to participate in the unfolding grace all around us.
When we commit we say: **I will run the race with perseverance.**

The fourth candle we light is the candle of **Imagination**.
Our Imagination helps us to envision what does not exist.
When we Imagine a better future we say: **Love is stronger than hate.**

Tonight we light the last candle. The center candle. The Christ Candle.
When we light the Christ candle we say: **God is with Us. (Light Candle)**

For a child has been born unto us, a son is given.
Authority rests upon his shoulders and he is named: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, Immanuel. God with us. (Isaiah 9:6)

Christ is the image of the invisible God. All things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together and in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell that he might reconcile himself to all things. (Colossians 1:15-20)

Jesus shows us how to be Spacious and say: **There is space in myself for you.**
Jesus teaches us to slow down and say: **Let me be still and know God.**
Jesus invites us to commit to God and say: **I will run the race with perseverance.**
Jesus ignites our imaginations that we can believe: **Love is stronger than hate.**

In Jesus we are reminded that no matter what we may face in this life - whatever burdens we bear, joys we experience, suffering we endure- no matter what we can know: **God is with Us.**

Prayer: A time of silence.

Liturgy Created by Jeff Eddings

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Candle names were inspired by the book 'Field of Compassion' by Judy Cannato