

The Christmas Wreath and Jesse Tree:

A guide for family reflections 2020



What do the symbols on the Jesse tree represent?

What do the 4 coloured candles represent this year?

Advent 2020: Introduction

One of the most comforting aspects of our Catholic faith is the rock-solid yearly routine as reflected by the liturgy; we know what to expect and when. Every year at the very end of November, or the beginning of December, we celebrate the first Sunday of Advent, the beginning of our preparation for Christmas. This year it is the 29th of November. In this respect nothing has changed; but at the same time everything has changed.

This year; as we the Parish, country and world; navigate the uncharted waters of the coronavirus pandemic, everything has changed. Everyone has been affected in some way. Some have lost their lives or a loved one, some have a reduced income or lost their employment altogether, many face expenses that far exceed their available resources. We have all lost our peace of mind to some extent. In many households there will be little celebration this Christmas by way of expensive gifts; nor will there be large gatherings with spontaneous interactions. Some people are planning virtual zoom gatherings instead of a Christmas dinner. Our individual family Christmas traditions and rituals are disrupted; the very fabric of our year end activities is frayed and torn. Yet here we are anyway, it is Advent.

Advent, the herald of what is to come, Christ our Redeemer. As foretold by Isaiah the prophet. "Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel "(Isaiah 7, 14); Emmanuel meaning "God with us". This has not changed; He is with us.

Advent is still a time of preparation and reflection. A time of waiting, with hopeful, joyful expectation of the coming of Jesus, our promised redemption. A time of remembrance, but also expectation of the celebration of His birth with everything that means. Advent is a time of renewed hope as we anticipate the return of Jesus, his promised

second coming. A fulfilment of all that we have been promised. This too has not changed.

As signified by the liturgical colour purple, Advent is a time of prayer, penance, preparation, and sacrifice. A time to reconsider and reflect while there is still time. A time of personal and family devotion to prepare ourselves for the coming of the King, the King of all Kings, our King. It is a time to look towards God rather than this uncertain world where so much has changed.

There are many ways to prepare during Advent. The Jesse Tree and Advent Wreath are two ways to mark the passing of Advent. These physical signs help us to focus on that which has not, and will never change: Emmanuel (Isaiah 7, 14), Saviour (Luke 2, 11), Son of the Most-High (Luke 1, 32), the list goes on.....

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government will be upon his shoulder,
and his name will be called
“Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9, 6)

This is what we are preparing for. The fulfilment of this promise is what we will again celebrate this Christmas, this has not changed. During these very difficult times, let us try to focus on this eternal truth using the Jesse Tree and/or an Advent Wreath to help us pray and prepare.

First Sunday of Advent

You will have had your candles blessed at Mass but now the leader (head of the household/group) will say a prayer to bless the wreath in the home. Some families have a special teatime around this ceremony or do this before the main meal of the day. The candle burns during the meal. You can make your own family tradition. Depending on the age of children or preference of individual groups, turns can be taken to read out the commentaries.

Blessing of the Advent Wreath in the Home

Leader: Heavenly Father, we look forward to the celebration of Christmas and to the coming of the Lord in glory,
Bless this Advent wreath and all of us as we pray daily around it,
Fill us with your life and strengthen us for our daily tasks.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen

A member of the family is chosen to light the first candle, traditionally the youngest/oldest child. Traditionally this child/person will always light the first candle. You can make your own family tradition around candle lighting.

*The first candle is sometimes called the “Prophecy Candle” in remembrance of the prophets, especially Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ. It represents the expectation felt in anticipation of the coming Messiah. **The first violet/purple candle is lit.***

The first candle of Advent is the candle of hope.

As we light this candle, we remember that all our hope is in Christ. It is often very difficult to have hope, especially during times of crisis such as we are facing. As we begin our journey to Christmas, we open our hearts and lay bare before our God all our fears and concerns and ask for hope. In hope and expectation, we look towards Christmas and the birth of the Messiah.

We spend some time together thinking/talking about what we hope for and how we can extend this hope to people around us, perhaps a call to a lonely person.

Prayer: God of hope be with us in our Advent journey to the stable and beyond, be with us in our meeting and in our travelling together, be with us in our worship and our praying together, be with us in our Advent journey to the stable and beyond, our God of hope.
Amen

Leader: Lord, you are the light of our world.

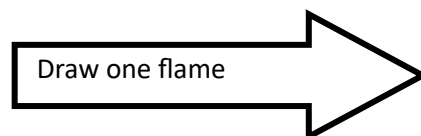
All: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Leader: O gracious God of promise, we prepare to worship together as we wait the fulfilment of our wondrous plan. Help us to grow as we hear your word and live in your love.

All: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Leader: May the light of your love always shine in our hearts.

All: Amen.



Weekdays of the First Week of Advent

On each day of the first week of Advent the same first violet/purple candle is lit by the elected family/group member followed by a prayer (below) and some time can be spent considering the meaning of the symbol of the day. The candle burns throughout the designate time, for example the main meal.

Light the candle

Leader: All-powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at his coming and call us

to his side in the kingdom of heaven, where he lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit one God, for ever and ever, Amen.

Monday

The birth of life: The marvel of creation, all life in all its beauty, complexity and splendour comes from God. (Genesis 1).

Just looking around outside, let us take note of creation and remember our responsibility to creation, this gift of a beautiful world we have been given. Jesus the redeemer, born out of and into this world to redeem it and us.

Tuesday

Adam and Eve: Our earliest ancestors through whom God gave humankind life. (Genesis 2)

With Jesus we trace our human ancestry to earliest man. Let us remember that the same God gave us all life, in our diversity, similarity and complexity. Lord, help us to love our neighbours as ourselves.

Wednesday

Noah built an ark to preserve his family from the flood: The Ark is a symbol of refuge for mankind and creation, a haven for all life. We too should preserve and defend all of God's creation. (Genesis 7,8)

Thursday

Abraham obeyed God's call to move to a new land: Leaving behind the known, embarking on a journey into the unknown, to fulfil God's purpose in his life and salvation history.

Abraham gives us courage to embrace all of life's challenges and tread purposefully on unknown paths trusting our life and all we have and hold dear to God. (Genesis 12)

Friday

Jacob's Ladder: As we think about this ladder in Jacob's vision where angles ascend and descend between heaven and earth, let us too remember God's word to Jacob, "Behold I am with you and will keep you." This came at a time of great crisis in Jacob's life, he had deceitfully taken his brothers rightful blessing and was now 'on the run'. God did not abandon him, God's purposes prevailed. Let us remember that our lives too are connected to heaven, regardless of circumstances. Lord, help us to be like Jacob and dedicate the place/space we are in to build God's house. (Genesis 28, 10-22)

Saturday of the First week of Advent

Light the first violet/purple candle representing HOPE.

Leader or all together recite the following prayer.

Leader/All

Lift our minds in watchful expectation and hope,
to hear the voice which announces his glory,
and open our minds and hearts to receive the Spirit,
who prepares us for his coming.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

During this first week of Advent we have remembered creation, Adam and Eve, Noah and the ark, Abraham and his call to leave his home and Jacob with the ladder full of angels. From the whole of creation, through our earthly human ancestors, we have travelled via Noah and his ark and are left with the saved part of humanity after the great flood. Here nature and creation, in the form of all the saved living creatures, was saved and went on to repopulate the earth. Out of this population we meet a very particular man, Abraham. God chose Abraham and called him, out of all the peoples at the time, to establish ultimately the nation of Israelites, and a bumpy ride it turned out to be.

We meet Abraham at the point where God asks him to leave it all behind and go somewhere else and Abraham did not know exactly what the plan was or where he was going. But Abraham obeyed and not only to a new physical land but on the journey to establish God's chosen nation on this earth, a nation that was to be God's people in the world, a nation that would give us the greatest gift of all, Messiah, saviour, redeemer, Jesus Christ.

We also meet Jacob the grandson of Abraham, Jacob the younger twin brother of Esau, Jacob the son of Isaac and Rebecca, the same Isaac that God asked Abraham to sacrifice. Jacob the unlikely candidate for such a wondrous revelation of angels, considering he was running for his life having just defrauded his older brother out of his birth-right with the help of his mum. Yet this is the man that proclaims on waking that "Surely the Lord is in this place" (Genesis 28, 16b) taking the stone that had been his pillow he sets it up and says, "and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house..." (Genesis 28, 22)

From creation we are now at the place where the foundations of the nation of Israel as a physical people are being established. The people of God, inhabiting God's plan on earth and claiming the ground as God's place and house on earth.

There are still many empty spaces on our Jesse Tree. Tomorrow at Mass we will be introduced to the next 5 symbols in this journey. We close in prayer.

Leader: God our Father, you loved the world so much that you gave your only Son to free us from the ancient power of sin and death. Help us who wait for his coming and lead us to true liberty. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen

Second Sunday of Advent

On this Second Sunday of Advent we continue our journey towards Christmas. It is a time of reflection and prayer where we think about Jesus as we await His birth and reaffirm our faith in His return. It is a time to refocus our attention on the Light that is about to shine into our darkness. It is during this time we repent of our sins as we prepare ourselves to have Jesus re-birthed in our hearts when we celebrate His birth at Christmas. During this time, we take stock of our lives. Without preparing ourselves in this way Christmas will have lost its true meaning and we will not be truly ready to receive Jesus, our Christmas gift.

Another member of the group/family is chosen to light the second violet/purple candle.

*The second candle, also purple, represents faith. It is sometimes called the "Bethlehem Candle" as a reminder of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem. **The first and second violet/purple candles are lit.***

The first candle is the candle of hope;
the second candle today is for faith.

Prayer: Give us, O God, the vision which can see Your love in the world in spite of human failure.
Give us the faith to trust Your goodness in spite of our ignorance and weakness.
Give us the knowledge that we may continue to pray with

understanding hearts.

And show us what each one of us can do to set forward the coming of the day of universal peace. (Frank Borman, Apollo 8 space mission, 1968)

The light or flame of the candle drives back the darkness. In the same way faith brings hope and light into our own personal darkness. Just as the father of the sick child that was brought to Jesus for healing cried out, “I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9, 24). We can also cry out to Jesus for faith when bringing our most desperate needs to Him.

We spend some time together thinking/talking about our faith, need for faith and experiences of faith. How can we build the faith of those around us? How has faith helped us; do I need more faith?

We thank God for our faith and the faith of others in our lives.

Leader: Lord, you are the light of our world.

All: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Leader: O gracious God of promise, we prepare to worship together as we await the fulfilment of your wondrous plan. Help us to grow as we hear your word and live in your love.

All: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Leader: May the light of your love always shine in our hearts.

All: Amen.

Draw two flames



Weekdays of the Second Week of Advent

On each day of the second week of Advent the same first and second violet/purple candles are lit by the selected family/group member followed

by a prayer (below) and some time can be spent considering the meaning of the symbol of the day. The candle burns throughout the designate time.

Light the candles

Prayer: God of power and mercy open our hearts in welcome. Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy so that we may share his wisdom and become one with him when he comes in glory, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Monday: Joseph and his Coat: The beautiful coat, a princely symbol that Jacob had made for his beloved son Joseph became the focus of the jealousy of his 11 brothers and was the trigger that caused them to sell Joseph into slavery in Egypt. Lord, keep us from provoking others to jealousy. We pray Lord, help us to remember that everything we have is by your grace and all things and situations are covered by your grace just as they were in Joseph's day. (Genesis 37,12-36)

Tuesday: The Burning Bush: The manifest presence of God in the form of a burning bush that was not consumed by the fire. Moses heard the Lord call him, "Moses, Moses!" and Moses answered, "Here I am." Let us too answer God in the same way, "Here I am"; and be filled with the fire of God's love in our lives and remember that he calls each of us by name too. (Exodus 3)

Wednesday: Moses and the Law: Moses receives the Ten Commandments from God on Mt Sinai. The first 3 govern our relationship with God and the remaining 7 regulate our living together in society. The Ten Commandments are Gods instructions for our daily lives for our own good and, for the good of all. Help us Lord to uphold these God given principles in our daily interactions with everyone we meet. (Exodus 19, 20)

Thursday: The Prophet Samuel: Here we have a lamp which represents the light of the Word of God coming into the world through the voice of His prophets. Samuel is considered Israel's first prophet, and his prophecies speak of the creative and redemptive voice of God making religion relevant to daily life. As a young boy in the temple Samuel hears God call and responds, "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening. O Lord, help us to keep our religion relevant to the needs of the world, may we too hear you and say, "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening". (1 Samuel 2, 1-4)

Friday: A Sheaf of Wheat: Ruth collected sheaves of wheat in the fields following behind the reapers so that she could have enough food for her mother-in-law Naomi and herself. After Ruth's husband died, she returned with Naomi to Naomi's land and was allowed to collect the leftovers in the fields of a wealthy man named Boaz. Boaz came to love Ruth and married her; they had a son named Obed; who had a son named Jesse, the same man we name our Jesse tree after. Ruth, who was not an Israelite, is listed in the genealogy of Jesus. Gods saving grace and inclusion into his family extends to all people who trust in Him. (Ruth 1, 2, 3, 4)

Saturday of the Second week of Advent

Light the first and second violet/purple candles and leader or all together recite the following Prayer

Leader/All: Stir up our hearts, O Lord,
 to prepare the paths of your Only-begotten Son:
 that we may worthily serve you
 with hearts purified by His coming:
 Who lives and reigns with God the Father in the unity of the
 Holy Spirit ever one God, world without end.
 Amen.

During this second week of Advent we have met Joseph and his coat, Moses, Samuel and Ruth. Joseph, the son of Jacob who had the dream of angels.

Joseph and his brother Benjamin were the sons of Jacobs's beloved wife Rachel. The other eleven brothers were born to Jacob's other wife Leah and two concubines Bilhah and Zilpah. Joseph was Jacobs favourite son and this favouritism, we read in the bible, was expressed. One thing Jacob did was to make Joseph a beautiful coat. This set Joseph apart from his brothers in a very visible way resulting in his brothers wanting to be rid of him, so they sold him into slavery. From being a cosseted favourite, he became a slave but was ultimately elevated to great power in Egypt.

Moses was also originally in a position of great privilege as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, then reduced to a fleeing murderer who could flee no longer when encountering God in the burning bush. Moses became the man to whom God spoke on Mount Sinai and we have the Ten Commandments directly from God through Moses. An extraordinary personal journey. Samuel was a young boy at the temple, there to serve God and Eli the priest. **Samuel** hears God call him. God did not speak to the priest, but to this boy, who as he grew up, became the voice of God to the people, speaking directly into their daily lives.

All three of these men are descendants of Abraham, part of the chosen people of God. Joseph, having been sold into slavery in Egypt and raised to power was able to save his people many years later when his brothers came looking for food in Egypt and eventually settled the whole Israelite nation there. Moses was born of these people but raised in Pharaohs house. He flees, but is sent back to help deliver the people from slavery and gives them the Ten Commandments from God, a crucial step in the people becoming Gods people, a nation with a distinct identity, apart from the rest.

But we also meet **Ruth**, not a descendant of Abraham, a widowed daughter-in-law to a widowed Naomi who is today listed as one of the few women mentioned in the Gospel of Mathew chapter 1, the Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah. This woman who was nothing became the mother of Obed, by Boaz who married her, and this same Obed is the Father of Jesse after whom we name the Jesse Tree, tracking the family of Jesus. Ruth, a foreigner, searching for leftover food in the fields, is the great, great..... great grandmother of Messiah.

Lord, help us to remember that no one, regardless of their rank, status, race or current circumstances is insignificant or outside of the reach of God. Just like Ruth may we be faithful in the daily little things and may God use these for His glory and His purposes.

Leader: Lord, let your glory dawn to take away our darkness.
May we be revealed as children of light at the coming of your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God,
forever and ever,
Amen.

Third Sunday of Advent

On this third Sunday of Advent, Gaudete Sunday we light the third candle, the rose/pink coloured candle on our advent wreath. The rose candle on this third Advent Sunday, Gaudete Sunday reflects the liturgical colour of the day. Today the imminent arrival of the Christ child is joyfully anticipated as well as His second coming. Today the penitential nature of the advent season is suspended, today is a day of joyful expectation, 'The Lord who is now nigh and close at hand'. Just like little Johnny, who keeps asking from the back seat of the car on the way to the beach, "Are we nearly there yet?" Yes, indeed we are nearly there!!

The reading today, from the book of Isaiah (Isiah 61, 1-2a 10-11) is full of promises of liberation, healing and restoration. It is worth spending some time reading this passage. Today we celebrate, full of joy and gladness that the fulfilment of Gods promise to His people is now close at hand. The waiting is almost over. The rose candle calls us to think about these things and prepare our hearts.

Traditionally Mum lights this candle...

*The third candle is pink and symbolizes joy. It is sometimes called the "Shepard's Candle," Luke 2 verse 10 tells us the angel appeared to shepherds outside Bethlehem and said "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people". Pink or rose is a liturgical colour for joy. **The first and second violet/purple candles and the rose/pink candle are lit.***

The first candle is the candle of hope; the second is the candle of faith; **the third candle today is the candle of joy.**

This candle represents our joyful expectations of Christ's birth and His return. We joyfully contemplate our passing from the darkness of sin into the fullness of His light and forgiveness. So, as we light this candle, we remember that Christ is the bringer of true and everlasting joy.

Prayer: Loving God,
We thank you for the joy you bring us.
Through your Son we have found joy in living as your children.

Help us to prepare our hearts for this gift.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Today we celebrate with joyful expectation the imminent arrival of Jesus, our Saviour.

Leader: Lord, you are the light of our world.

All: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Leader: O gracious God of promise, we prepare to worship together as we await the fulfilment of your wondrous plan. Help us to grow as we hear your word and live in your love.

All: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Leader: May the light of your love always shine in our hearts.

All: Amen.



Weekdays of the Third Week of Advent

On each day of the third week of Advent the same first and second violet/purple candle and the rose/pink candle are lit by the elected family/group member followed by a prayer (below) and some time can be spent considering the meaning of the symbol of the day. The candle burns throughout the designate time.

Light the candles

Prayer: Lord God may we, your people, who look forward to the birthday of Christ, experience the joy of salvation and celebrate that feast with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.



Monday

The Harp of David: The harp reminds us of all the beautiful poetry and psalms that are attributed to David. Of his many achievements these are of the most enduring; recited at every mass, used in private and collective prayer, in praise and devotion daily throughout the world. Many psalms are a joyous praise of God and His creation. Lord, we pray that we too may use our creative talents to make this world more joyful, beautiful and peaceful. (Psalms)

Tuesday

The Wisdom of Solomon: Solomon is remembered for the great temple he built, the splendour of his court and for his administrative wisdom. Solomon asked God for the gift of wisdom; this request was granted. Lord, give us this gift too for all people in leadership in our church, especially Pope Francis, in governments, civil society, business and in every home. (1 Kings 1-11)

Wednesday

Elijah and the Ravens: Elijah the great prophet who called down fire from heaven on Mount Carmel to consume an offering doused liberally in water, Elijah who revived the widow's son, the same Elijah we find here, hiding from King Ahab and depending on God to have ravens to bring him food, morning and evening. We pray for all people who are struggling to find enough to eat. Help us all to depend on you Lord. (1 Kings 17,18)

Thursday

Jonah and the Whale: Jonah spent 3 days in the belly of the whale as a consequence of trying to run from God. Jesus spent 3 days in the tomb after His death to atone for our sins. Lord, just like Jonah we make mistakes and run away from you. We thank you that through Jesus we can come back. Thank you, Lord, that you are ever patient with us your children and that you rejoice over us when we return to you. (Jonah 1,2,3)

Friday

Isaiah and Prophecy: It is Isaiah who said, "From the root of Jesse a branch shall spring forth, out of his roots a flower shall blossom" thereby proclaiming the coming of the Messiah from the lineage of Jesse. A message filled with hope and joy as the people awaited their liberation. Today we too find comfort, hope and joy in the birth of Christ and His promised return. (Isaiah 11)

Saturday of the Third week of Advent

Light the first and second violet/purple candles and leader or all together recite the following Prayer

Leader/All: Lord, you challenge us this Advent time, this season of preparation; to put aside our pride and understand our need for repentance, forgiveness and mercy; less of self, more of you. In preparation for our journey to the stable and beyond, purify our hearts; sanctify our lives that we might serve you faithfully this day and all days.
Amen.

During this third week of Advent we have looked again at some well-known people in the Bible. David of the harp, also well known for his many exploits such as slaying Goliath as a young man and eventually becoming the second King of a united Judah and Israel. David was the youngest of many brothers; his father did not even present him initially when Samuel, the prophet we remembered last week, came by to anoint the next King. Despite being a great warrior David was a skilful musician, he was a man with a creative, tender soul. David's music transcends time, cultures and to this day evokes joyful praise. David's son Solomon asked for wisdom and received this remarkable gift and put it to good use. Elijah, the great prophet who ultimately leaves this earth in chariots of fire is at this point totally dependent on a raven, and God's good will, to bring him food. Jonah's whale exploits are well known. Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Messiah, was an evangelical prophet to Israel, giving them renewed hope. Isaiah also brings us in Isaiah 6, 3, speaking of the angels, "And one called to another and said, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!'" In the presence of these celestial beings Isaiah realizing the holiness of the Lord, cried out, "Woe is me!" [Isaiah 6, 5](#) He was appalled by his own unholy state.

All of the above are extraordinary characters, David and Solomon in the building and governing of the nation of God's people, Jonah in eventually bringing the message for repentance to Nineveh and Elijah's and Isaiah's prophecies defending and proclaiming the spiritual kingdom of God. Yet all these people were also flawed as we well know from scripture. Not all had

the insight to proclaim as Isaiah did, “Woe is me!” [Isaiah 6, 5](#), yet all were loved and used by God, picked up when they fell, forgiven and restored when they repented. We too can return to God with all our flaws and wounds and He will embrace us joyfully and restore us to Himself and complete wholeness as we embrace Christ as our Saviour.

We look towards Christmas with joyful anticipation and renew our hope in the return of Christ.

Leader: All-powerful Father, guide us with your love as we await the coming of your Son. Keep us faithful that we may be helped through life and brought to salvation. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives, and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever,
Amen.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Today we light the last of our four Advent candles, indicating that the time of waiting, reflection and preparation is almost over. As this difficult year comes to an end let us also reflect on the new beginning we can have in Christ, the hope of salvation and redemption, a chance to start again, renewed and forgiven, dwelling in the Light of Christ. We await Christ’s birth and remember His promised return with joyfully, hopeful expectation.

In our Gospel reading today (Luke 1, 39-45) we read how the angel Gabriel visits Mary and greets her with that extraordinary greeting that we all know, “Hail, full of Grace, the Lord is with you!” but continues to tell Mary that she will bear a Son. The reading ends with Mary’s wonderful words, “Behold, I am the handmaiden of the Lord, let it be according to your word”. What a glorious example of surrender and trust in God.

Traditionally it is Dad who lights this candle.

*This final candle, the “Angel’s Candle,” symbolizes peace. It reminds us of the message of the angels: “Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men”. **The first and second violet/purple candles, the rose/pink candle and then the last violet/purple candle are lit***

The first candle is the candle of hope; the second is the candle of faith; the third candle is the candle of joy;
the fourth candle is the candle of peace.

On this last Sunday of Advent, we are reminded that Christmas is almost upon us and the waiting is almost over, we open our hearts with renewed hope, in joyful expectation of the promised birth of Messiah and everlasting life in Him.

Prayer: Almighty God, we bless and thank you for our lives, we give you praise for the abundant mercy and grace we receive. We thank you for your faithfulness even though we are not that faithful to you. Lord Jesus, we ask you to give us all around peace in our mind, body, soul and spirit as we look toward Christmas and your return. Amen.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called “Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace.**”
(Isaiah 9, 6)

Draw four flames



Leader: Lord, you are the light of our world.

All: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Leader: O gracious God of promise, we prepare to worship together as we await the fulfilment of your wondrous plan. Help us to grow as we hear your word and live in your love.

All: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Leader: May the light of your love always shine in our hearts.

All: Amen

Weekdays of the Fourth Week of Advent

On each day of the fourth week of Advent the same first and second violet/purple, the rose/pink and the last violet/purple candle are lit by the elected family/group member followed by a prayer (below) and some time can be spent considering the meaning of the symbol of the day. The candle burns throughout the designate time.

Light the candles

Prayer: Lord, fill our hearts with your love, and as you revealed to us by an angel the coming of your Son as man, so lead us through his suffering and death to the glory of His resurrection, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Monday

Nehemiah the Builder: When the Jewish people returned from exile in Babylon Nehemiah organised the rebuilding of Jerusalem and of the temple, and helped to restore the regular worship for the whole community. Once again, the temple became the centre of the people's lives. In this way too our church today is the centre of our parish community, more than just a building. The church community gives us an identity that reflects Jesus. (Nehemiah)

Tuesday

John the Baptist: Special messenger from God who announced the coming of the Messiah, calling people to repentance.

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.” Mathew 3, 2 and 3.

Wednesday

Carpenters Tools: These are the tools of the carpenter’s trade, of Joseph to whom God entrusted the care of Mary. Joseph who was the faithful and devoted protector of Mary and the Christ child. Let us honour our own fathers, husbands, uncles, brothers who labour to provide for their children.

Thursday, Christmas Eve

The Virgin Mary: The lily represents Mary. Mary who submitted to the Lord’s will, who is the mother of our Lord. We give her special honour for her obedience to God and example of motherhood. Mary through the ages continues to inspire and influence all who love her. Let us honour Mary and all our mothers, wives, aunts and sisters and all those who have shown us Mary’s love and comfort. (Luke 1)

Christmas 2020

CHRIST IS BORN



The eternal Word, born of the Father before time began, today emptied himself for our sake and became flesh.



Angels: Special messengers from God, sent to bring very important news; in this case to Mary. The Angel Gabriel came to bring a message. The fulfilment of this message changed everything, not just for Mary, but all people. A message that she is to conceive in her womb a child and this child was to be called Jesus, a message of salvation and eternal hope as prophesied many years before.

On the night Christ was born angels appeared to shepherds in the field outside of Bethlehem, “Then an angle of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them,

‘Do not be afraid; for see I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord..... and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, praising God saying, Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours! Luke2, 9-14

Lord, may we too hear your message of hope, during this Christmas season, may we too then rejoice with the angels and bring this message of salvation, along with the angels to others who need to hear your message.

Prayer:

God our Father, we are filled with new light by the coming of your word among us. May the light of faith shine in our words and actions. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen

To us is Born this day a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

*O sing a new song to the Lord;
Sing to the Lord, all the earth.
O sing to the Lord, bless his name.*

*Proclaim his salvation day by day,
Tell among the nations his glory,
And his wonders among all the people.*

*Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad;
Let the sea and all within it thunder praise.
Let the land and all it bears rejoice.*

*Then will the trees of the wood shout for joy,
At the presence of the Lord, for he comes,
He comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the earth with justice;
He will govern the people with his truth.*

To us is Born this day a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

(Psalm 96, 1-2a.2b-311-12.13/R Luke 2, 11)