

Advent Candle Lighting 2021 Year C

These readings coincide with both the Hebrew Scripture and Christian Scripture selections of the Revised Common Lectionary, but can be used on their own.

First Candle: Be Ready! The World Turned Upside Down.

The days are surely coming when the promises will be fulfilled, and the powers of heaven will be shaken. Watch out! Be on your guard! At any moment, all things will change. Tables will overturn. The world will turn upside down. The powerful will become powerless, and the weak will be made strong. The hungry will be filled with good things and the rich sent away empty. In this season of Advent, we are ready for God's work to transform the world, to bring heaven to earth. A new, righteous branch is planted, and we are rooted, ready to grow into God's new creation.

Lighting of the first Advent candle

Prayer

Make haste, O God, and transform our world! Help us to be ready, for Christ is entering our world and our lives in a new way. Prepare us for our world to be turned upside down this Advent season. Amen.

Second Candle: Listen! Prepare the Way.

God sent messengers to prepare the way, messages that we have received as prophecy and prayer, hopes and dreams for a better world, one in which the reign of God is on earth as it is in heaven. Listen! Search! Be ready for what is to come. Not everyone will be happy when God makes all things new. There are those who cling to worldly power and privilege. They must be willing to let go and lose it. In this season of Advent, we prepare for the reign of God, which is at hand, and also drawing near, by listening to the prophets of old and the wise among us.

Lighting of the second Advent candle

Prayer

Make haste, O God, and open our minds to listen! May we be inspired by the words of the prophets and all Your messengers. May Zechariah's song sing in our hearts and Mary's song move us to action, in this Advent season and all year long. Amen.

Third Candle: Rejoice and Repent! Renew your commitment to God.

The ones who came before Jesus called us to turn back to God's ways. Our ancestors in the faith rejoiced when they returned to their home from exile, for God gathered the outcasts and oppressed and raised them up. God is turning our world upside down, and we rejoice that the mighty will fall. Those who were rejected are now included, their shame turned to praise! Our lives have been transformed by God. In this season of Advent, we rejoice in our waiting, for we know God's love always has the last word.

Lighting of the third (pink) Advent candle

Prayer

Make haste, O God, and may we rejoice! For we know You fulfill your covenant and Your steadfast love endures forever. May we sing Your praise, now and always. Amen.

Fourth Candle: Break Open! Blessed are the ones who have waited.

God always chooses the smallest, the youngest, the weak and the unknown. God chose an unknown unmarried young woman, who said yes to bearing God into this world. God chose her cousin who waited a long time for the fulfilment of promises to bring forth blessings. God chooses us. We are the nobodies, the powerless, the weak of the world, to bring good news for the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, and proclaim that Christ is here, among us, now, and we wait for the reign of Christ to break forth anew in our world and in our lives.

Lighting of the fourth Advent candle

Prayer

Make haste, O God, and break forth something new in us! Bless us and call us to bless one another, to seek those who are pushed to the margins, those whose voice is ignored, and to center them in Your reign on earth as it is in heaven, for this is our Advent story. Amen.

Fifth Candle (Christ Candle): Peace! The Time Is Now.

On this Christmas Eve, the time has come. It is now. Christ has always been among us, and Christ is in our hearts, and Christ is coming again into our world and lives in a new way. This is your choice, right now: to live into God's reign forever. The Prince of Peace has come. We can choose to live differently now. The angels, the heavenly host, the army of God proclaimed peace on earth and goodwill to all. The weapons of war are beaten into plowshares and pruning hooks. The cries of violence have given way to the cries of a newborn God. This is your choice—it is time to make it, to take it, to become the people of God's peace on earth by caring for one another as you would care for this Christ-child. That's it. That's all that's required, is to love one another as you would love our helpless, vulnerable God, who became one of us.

Lighting of the fifth (white) Advent candle

Prayer (can be read or sung)

O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray. Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell. O come to us, abide in us, our Lord Emmanuel!