# Candle-Lighting Liturgy

For our Advent candle-lighting ritual, here is an invitation to consider our world that God so loves beyond the familiar and where our familiar may meet and engage with the not so familiar. It is an invitation to celebrate and fund the imagination and the multiplicities we each embody and bring.

* Alongside the traditional colours we are accustomed to name, why not consider a variety of colours? Give some thought to colour-filled candles catching both multi-, inter-, and a fusion of colours.
* Alongside candles, how about pieces of ice (besides a lighted candle) that thaws out and melts with the warmth? Or a lighted symbol of fire surrounded by snow or something representing snow?
* Besides the traditional naming of the candles for each Sunday in Advent, we may wish to consider accompanying descriptors. For instance: solidarity, dreaming, imagining, caring, planning, embodying, prophetic, courage, resilience, generosity, kindness, tender compassion
* Consider moving the location of the candle and the candle lighting around your gathered space to perhaps identify with north-south-east-west or all the directions in-between. Some buildings/spaces may be better suited for this, yet it is possible in all spaces. Imagine!
* Rather than putting words in the mouths of the community, we may wish to consider input from voices in the gathered community briefly sharing their own stories of hope, peace, solidarity, courage, generosity, etc. Can our candle lighting and liturgical work (of the people) become more like a “living epistle”?

Hence, what follows here is not intended to be prescriptive, especially if you decide to take up the last consideration.

## Advent 1

### We gather

One: Arise and be bold, good news of hope is here!

**All: The warm glow of the Divine lightens our hearts.**

One: Here we are together, not alone. We join with the cloud of witnesses here, there, elsewhere, and everywhere. On this first Sunday in Advent, we will dream and imagine a different future, a rising-up and life-flourishing one. We are witnesses to hope. (*The first candle is lit.*)

### We listen

*Invite someone to testify/tell their story of hope dreamt/imagined and how it took shape or became real (or is becoming). After their brief testimony invite all to respond:*

**All: Our habit of hope and hoping finds sustenance and meaning in God’s promise of fullness of life**

### We pray

God-of-righteous-dreaming, lighten our hearts with an enlarged imagination to dream new possibilities: to imagine a world where transformation will happen, where creation is mended and restored, and where exiles and strangers will find a home. Become in our lives the way to what we need, to what we can become, and to what we can do.

## Advent 2

### We gather

(*Candle from previous week is lit.*)

One: Arise, take courage, and catch a glimpse of peace!

**All: The warm glow of the Divine lightens our hearts.**

One: We are together, not alone. In spirit and in community we gather on this second Sunday in Advent in solidarity and with courage to partner for a world full of peace where all of creation will flourish. Our witness is to and for peace.

### We listen

*Invite someone to testify/tell their story of solidarity and courage in working for peace: how it took shape or became real (or is becoming). After their brief testimony invite all to respond:*

**All: Peace is real and possible. In solidarity we pray, work, and wait for its blossoming.**

### We pray

God-of-peace-and-possibility, kindle in the hearts of all compassion and love so that goodness, just deeds, the common good, and trust may flourish. Bless and gift all with hope for a future of peace built on justice for all. In the name of the Child, the peaceful one.

## Advent 3

(*Candles from previous week are lit.*)

### We gather

One: Arise and celebrate, good news of deep joy is here!

**All: The warm glow of the Divine lightens our hearts.**

One: Here we are together. We are not alone. We gather on this third Sunday in Advent with gratitude and overflowing generosity, blessed multiple times by our give-away God. We are witnesses to joy.

### We listen

*Invite someone to testify/tell their experience of delight, generosity, and joy and what such meant for them and others. After their brief testimony invite all to respond:*

**All: The Joy of Christ is good news, unexpected and surprising in its overflowing.**

### We pray

God-who-lights-up-life give us joyful, generous, and courageous hearts. As we lean on your love may your joy well up in us so that our joy may overflow and flourish, witnessing to a life of constant gratitude, full of grace, cathartic hilarity, and goodness.

## Advent 4

(*Candles from previous week are lit.*)

### We gather

One: Love abundant overflows, pouring into our midst: (a)Rise, take heart, and love deeply.

**All: The glow of God the Divine Lover lightens our hearts.**

One: We are together and never alone. Gathered on this fourth Sunday in Advent we witness to God’s deep love and tender compassion for the whole world. Our witness is love.

### We listen

*Invite someone to testify/tell their experience of deep tenderness and, compassion and what such overflowing meant for them and others. After their brief testimony invite all to respond:*

**All: God’s love comes to ground, and like an arc, large to hold, embrace, heal, and restore.**

### We pray

God-who-never-ceases-to-love, kindle our hearts that we may burn anew with your love. Bless us with the flame of lively living and believing. Take our words and release them to speak of you; take our minds and broaden them to reflect your overflowing love; take our hearts and set them alight with your desire for goodness. In the name of the One full of love.

## Christmas Eve/Christmas Day

### We gather

(*All candles are lit.*)

One: Arise and celebrate: God loves the world, a child is born.

**All: The glow of the Divine lightens our hearts like an infant stepping to love.**

One: Here we are together in a world caught between anxiety and hope, celebrating what God has done in Christ. We will never be alone. May our remembering and celebrating change how we live and open our hearts and communities, so that all can together live and share in fullness of life.

### We listen

*Invite someone to testify/tell their experience of being surprised in a moment or period of anxious waiting and what this meant for them and others. After their brief testimony invite all to respond:*

**All: Because God loves, holiness continues to break into the messiness of our lives.**

### We pray

God-always-with-us, we thank you for your love that keeps faith with and encourages us to imagine a world where the power of love can loosen the grip on restrictive ways to embrace a new life of flourishing possibilities. Through Jesus ,stir us by the light of your love so that we may return to your way of fullness of life you intend for all.

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