

First Week of Advent – Hope

First Sunday of Advent – Sunday, December 3, 2017

Pailet: This is the first Sunday in Advent. Today, we light one blue candle. This is the candle of hope. Advent is a time of waiting and hoping. We wait for the day when we celebrate again the birth of Jesus.

(Light the first candle)

Hill: When we look at the first candle, we remember God's promise to send a Savior to the people. When we listen to our scripture reading, we hear what the prophet Isaiah wrote about God. God is the potter who molds us. When we read the gospels, we see that God is loving and just. God brings peace. This gives us hope. While we wait for Jesus' birth on Christmas day, we remember that Jesus helps us know God's love for us.

Pailet: [Isaiah 64:8](#).

Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.

Discussion: Think about a potter and how he or she takes clay & forms it in a way that is pleasing. That is what God does with people. We are reminded that we are all the work of God's hands. How are we formed by God? How are we pleasing? How do we use these gifts God formed in us?

Hill reads this Prayer: Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for the words of the Prophet Isaiah that remind us that you are the source of our hope. Help us to live each day, allowing you to form us in a way that brings about your kingdom here on earth. Amen.

Monday, December 4, 2017: Today read again Isaiah 64:8. Memorize this verse. How do you think this verse gives hope to people?

Tuesday, December 5, 2017: Is there someone you know who needs to hear words of hope? Make or select a card for that person and mail it today.

Wednesday, December 6, 2017: Hope is something we need in our world. Today, pray for the president and congress. Pray for their leadership for our country and for the world.

Thursday, December 7, 2017: As we get ready to celebrate again the birth of Jesus, we sometimes get very busy. Today, take a 10-minute break. Sit quietly. Pray, asking God's help to bring quiet and calm to a busy world.

Friday, December 8, 2017: Think about your family. Who in your family needs God's hope? Pray for this family member today.

Saturday, December 9, 2017: There are people around us who need to know of God's hope. Select someone to visit today by phone or in person. It doesn't have to be a visit to a home. Maybe there is someone you always see at the library. Stop by today and talk with that person. Tell the person you

visit one way he or she helps you feel hopeful.

Second Week of Advent – Love

Hill: This is the second Sunday in Advent. Today, we light two blue candles. Last Sunday, we lit the candle of hope. This Sunday, we light the candle of love. Some people may not know the love of other people. That makes it harder for them to understand God's love. During Advent, we pray that we may remember again God's gift of Jesus to the world and know that God's love for all people is the reason for this gift.

(Light the first and second candles.)

Pailet: When we look at the second candle, we remember God's love. When we read the words of the bible, we know of God's greatness and care. We remember God's love during Advent when we remember that God sent Jesus to us to help us know that God is loving and just.

Hill: [Isaiah 40:1-8](#).

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

Discussion: When we think of God's love, we might not always think of the words of the prophets. The image of God comforting people is a loving image. The image of God making the rough way smooth is one of love. When have you felt comforted by God's love? What makes you feel that rough times are made easier because of God's love?

Pailet: Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for the words found in the bible that help us remember your love and care. Help us see how we can share God's love with people we meet in school and at work. Help us be messengers of God's love for everyone. Amen.

Monday, December 11, 2017: Read again Isaiah 40:1-8. Create a picture that shows God's comforting love. Include words or prayers that help you remember God's love. Give thanks for the world and all people in the world. Mail this picture to your godparents.

Tuesday, December 12, 2017: Is there someone you know who needs to hear words of God's love? Make a card for that person and mail it today.

Wednesday, December 13, 2017: Love is something we need in our church. Think about the people in our church. Select one person in our church. Pray for that person today.

Thursday, December 14, 2017 – repeat from last week

Friday, December 15, 2017 - repeat from last week

Saturday, December 16, 2017 - repeat from last week

Third Week of Advent – Joy

Pailet: This is the third Sunday in Advent. Today we light two blue candles and the pink candle. The first Sunday, we lit the candle of hope. On the second Sunday, we lit the candle of love. Today, we light the candle of joy. One thing that sometimes happens as we get ready to celebrate Jesus' birth is we expect to be happy all the time. Joy is not the same as happy. Joy is a deeper feeling created by knowing that God cares for us. Joy is remembering that God sent Jesus so we would always know of God's care. During Advent, we pray that we may remember again God's gift of Jesus to the world and know the joy that gift brings to all people.

(Light the first, second, and third candles.)

Hill: When we look at the third candle, we remember God's promise of joy. God promised to send a Savior to the people. Today, we read from the Gospel of John and hear that John was sent by God not to be the light, but to testify to the light. This reminds us that Jesus brings light to the world. And where there is light, there is joy and peace and assurance. When the world seems dark, scary, and frightening, we are reminded that Jesus brings light, and that brings joy.

Pailet: [John 1:6-8.](#)

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

Discussion: Think about a time or a situation when things were dark. This could mean things were literally dark – in the middle of the night when a noise scares us. Or it could be we *felt* darkness, such as times when we are frightened and feel alone and hopeless. Share a time of darkness. Now remember how it feels to have light – either physically experiencing light that breaks through darkness or feeling comforted and joyful because our feelings of darkness ended. How would you describe those feelings? Is *joy* a word that you would? Who in our world need God's joy? What are our hopes for joy in our world today? How do we help others know that God gives joy?

Hill: Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for the joy remembering Jesus' birth brings to us today. Help us live in such a way that our words and our actions help others know of the joy you give. Amen.

Monday, December 18, 2017: Today read again John 1:6-8. Make a list together of the things that bring light to our lives and make us joyful. Paint or draw a picture of something that makes you joyful. Mail it to someone you love.

Tuesday, December 19, 2017: Is there someone you know who needs to hear words of joy? Make or select a card for that person and mail it today.

Wednesday, December 20, 2017: Joy is something we need in our city. Think about different leaders of our city. Select one leader of our city. Pray for that leader today.

Thursday, December 21, 2017 - repeat from last week

Friday, December 22, 2017 - repeat from last week

Saturday, December 23, 2017 - repeat from last week

Fourth Week of Advent – Peace

Hill: This is the fourth Sunday in Advent and Christmas Eve. Today, we light four candles. The first Sunday, we lit the candle of hope. On the second Sunday, we lit the candle of love. On the third Sunday, we lit the candle of joy. Today, we light the candle of peace. Our world is not always a peaceful world. People hurt other people. Countries are at war today. People don't take care of the world. People yell and scream at other people. But God promises peace. During Advent, we pray that we, as well as all people, will seek God's peace.

(Light the first, second, third, and fourth candles.)

Pailet: When we look at the fourth candle, we remember God's promise of peace. We recall the words of Jesus in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." In times of war and hatred, it's hard to remember that Jesus is the one who brings peace. As we approach Christmas, let's remember that God's intention is a place of peace.

Allison & Pailet: This is Mary's song.

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Hill: In the Scripture, we hear Mary's song of praise. There must have been times when Mary was frightened, worried, fearful, and sad. She may not have felt very peaceful as she considered her future. Yet her words help us see the peace that comes when we trust in God.

Discussion: Can you imagine her singing the words written in Scripture? It is a testimony to her faith at being chosen as God's servant. And because she embraces God's future for her, she faces the future with the assurance of God's peace. Who are the people in our world who need God's peace? What are our hopes for peace in our world today? How do we help others know God's desire for peace in our world?

Pailet: Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for those in our world today who seek to act for peace. Help us look for ways to be peacemakers at home, at church and at school. Amen.