

Week 1 - HOPE

Reader: Today marks the first Sunday of Advent. In this season, we look forward to Christmas, when He who holds all creation took our humanity upon Himself, and we look forward to when He will return to bring His kingdom in fullness.

Each week in Advent, we light a candle and hear God's Word. With each candle, we will remember one of the great gifts that we have in Jesus Christ. This week, we remember that Christ is our Hope.

Now tell me: what is hope? *(discuss before moving on)*

Hope is the confident expectation of a good future. Our hope is that the same God who has always been faithful to His people will continue to be faithful to His people, for our God has promised us wonderful and beautiful things. He has promised us a great future.

Light the first purple candle

Sing: **Lo How A Rose E'er Blooming**

This hymn, "Es ist ein Ros entsprungen" first appeared in print in the year 1599, and then in English as "Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming" in 1894. The first verse describes a rose sprouting from the stem of the tree of Jesse, and the second verse explains that Mary, as the Mother of Jesus, is the rose that has sprung up to bring forth the Christ child.

The lyrics refer to Isaiah 11:1:

*There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.*

What do you hear about HOPE?

Read: **Revelation 21:3-5**

This future is earned for us by Jesus Christ. It is sealed by the Holy Spirit. God has given us hope as an anchor to our souls.

Read: **Lamentations 3:21-24**

Today, we remember the hope that Christ has given His people: the hope of eternal life spent before the throne of our most wonderful God.

Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming

Music by Michael Praetorius
Lyrics translated by Theodore Baker
Performed by Fernando Ortega

Lo how a rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung
Of Jesse's lineage coming,
As seers of old have sung
It came a flower bright
Amid the cold of winter
When half-spent was the night

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
The rose I have in mind
With Mary we behold it,
The Virgin Mother kind
To show God's love aright
She bore to us a savior,
When half-spent was the night

This Flower, whose fragrance tender
With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels in glorious splendor
The darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God,
From sin and death He saves us
And bears our every load

Poem:

A DIALOGUE - ANTHEM

by George Herbert

(A conversation between a Christian and Death)

Chr. Alas, poore death! where is thy glorie?
Where is thy famous force, thy ancient sting?
Dea. Alas, poore mortal, void of storie,
Go spell and reade how I have kill'd thy King.
Chr. Poore death! And who was hurt thereby?
Thy curse being laid on him makes thee accursed.
Dea. Let losers talk, yet thou shall die;
These arms shall crush thee!
Chr. Spare not, do thy worst.
I shall be one day better then before:
Thou so much worse, that thou shalt be no more.

Art Reflection: **Leaf Excised from a Psalter: The Annunciation**, c. 1325–50, England

Look at the painting for 1-2 minutes. What do you notice? What does it say about HOPE?

The picture is a leaf taken from a Psalter (prayer book) from the Middle Ages. The image shows the Annunciation, when the archangel Gabriel told Mary that she would bear a son through a virgin birth and become the mother of Jesus. Between them, a plant is growing. What do you notice about the plant? What do you think Mary felt? What would you feel in this situation?

A Collect for Strength to Await Christ's Return

O God our King, by the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ on the first day of the week, you conquered sin, put death to flight, and gave us the hope of everlasting life: Redeem all our days by this victory; forgive our sins, banish our fears, make us bold to praise you and to do your will; and steel us to wait for the consummation of your kingdom on the last great Day; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Week 2 – PEACE

Read: Today is the second Sunday of Advent. In this season, we look forward to Christmas, when Jesus, to whom all creation bows in worship, was born: a baby in a feeding trough. We look forward to when He will return again in glory.

Each week in Advent, we light a candle and hear God's Word. With each candle, we will remember one of the great gifts that we have in Jesus Christ. This week, we remember that Christ is our Peace.

What is peace? (*discuss before moving on*)

When two armies at war stop fighting and begin rebuilding what was lost in war, that is peace. But we do not just war against or struggle against other people. We war with ourselves as we try to live in obedience to God, but are unable. Our sin is our war against God. But Christ has secured for us peace. Upon the cross, He paid the price of all our wars. Now, we can live at peace with others, and we can live at peace within ourselves. Most importantly, we now have peace with God.

Light two purple candles

Sing: In The Bleak Midwinter

The words in this carol come from Christina Rossetti's poem of the same title. Her poem was originally published in 1872 under the title "A Christmas Carol." In her complete poem, she describes the physical circumstances of Christ's birth in the first verse, and contrasts his first and second comings in the second. The third verse focuses again on Christ's birth and the humble surroundings in which it took place. If you'd like to read the full poem:



What about this carol speaks to you of peace?

Read: Romans 5:1-5

The peace that Jesus has given us is something deeper than the peace of two armies putting down their weapons. His peace exists even in the midst of struggle. The Holy Spirit has been given to us, and God is near to us, even when our lives are nothing but chaos.

Read: John 14:25-27

Today, we remember the peace that surpasses all understanding that our Triune God has showered upon us.

In The Bleak Midwinter

From the poem by Christina Rossetti

Music by Gustav Holtz

Arranged and performed by Brandon Heath, copyright 2013

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow on snow
In the bleak midwinter, long ago

Angels and archangels may have gathered there
Cherubim and seraphim floating on the air
But His mother Mary, in her maiden bliss
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss

Heaven cannot hold Him, nor can earth sustain
Heaven and earth shall flee away when He comes to reign

What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part
Yet what can I give Him, I would give my heart
Yet what can I give Him, I would give my heart

“O Day of Peace and Gladness”
by Christopher Wordsworth (1862)

O day of peace and gladness,
O day of joy and light,
O balm of care and sadness,
Most beautiful, most bright;
On you the high and lowly,
Through ages joined in tune,
Sing, “Holy, holy, holy,”
To the great God triune.

Today on weary nations
The heav’nly manna falls;
To holy convocations
The silver trumpet calls,
Where gospel light is glowing
With pure and radiant beams,
And living water flowing
With soul-refreshing streams.

On you, at the creation
The light first had its birth;
On you, for our salvation
Christ rose from depths of earth;
On you, our Lord victorious,
The Spirit sent from heav’n;
And thus on you, most glorious,
A three-fold light was giv’n.

Art Reflection: The Nativity, Gari Melchers, 1891

Look at the image for 1-2 minutes. What do you notice? What does it say about PEACE?

In the painting, we see Mary and Joseph gazing at the baby Jesus. There is no one else around. Is this painting different than others you’ve seen of The Nativity? What do you notice about their expressions? What else do you see?

A Collect for Peace

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



The Nativity, Gari Melchers, 1891

Week 3 - JOY

Reader: Today is the third Sunday of Advent. In this season, we look forward to Christmas, when He who knew perfect and eternal joy came to be born on earth, fully God and fully man, to share with us that same joy. We look forward to that joyous day when He will return to us.

Each week in Advent, we light a candle and hear God's Word. With each candle, we will remember one of the great gifts that we have in Jesus Christ. This week, we remember that Christ is our Joy.

Can you tell me what joy is? (*discuss before moving on*)

Joy is the happiness of the soul. It is more than being happy at whatever may be happening in our lives. It is the gladness that comes when we know that God loves us with a love that never fades or dims. His love for each of us burns brighter any sun

(Light the three purple candles)

Sing: Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

This hymn by a Lutheran pastor comes from 17th Europe during the 30 Years' War between the Catholic Emperor and the Protestant princes of Bohemia. The people of the land suffered greatly from famine and disease. Do you think you would write a hymn of joy and hope during a war? What do you hear about JOY?

Read: Psalm 16:7-11

In Jesus Christ, we have a never-ending fount of joy. For upon His resurrection from the dead, He has given us abundant life and shown us the way of life. In His unmeasurable grace, He withholds no good thing from those who are in Christ (Ps. 84:11).

Read: John 15:9-11

Today, we remember the gospel of Christ, the "good news of great joy that will be for all people" (Lk. 2:10)

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

George Weissl

Translated by Catherine Winkworth

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates
Behold the King of Glory waits
The King of Kings is drawing near
The Savior of the World is here.

Fling wide the portals of your heart,
Make it a temple set apart
From earthly use for heaven's employ
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.

So, come my Sovereign, enter in
Let new and nobler life begin
The Holy Spirit guide us on,
Until our glorious goal is won.

Advent @ Trinity

“All is Joy”

by Daniel S. Warner (1893)

Jesus, Thou a fountain art,
Springing up within my heart;
Fount of joy and happiness,
Source of everlasting bliss.

Savior, Thou dost shine within,
Since my heart is free from sin;
Holy pleasures now abide,
And my soul is satisfied.

Refrain:

*All is joy, all is peace,
With my Jesus in my breast;
All my soul can wish I find,
O my Lord, in Thee combined.*

Jesus, tune my heart to sing
All the glory Thou dost bring;
While Thy name and throne endure,
Every good to me is sure.

Precious rest I've found in Thee,
Rest from care and trouble free;
While eternal ages roll,
Nothing can disturb my soul.

Lord, my life, the truth, the way,
In my heart the light of day;
Thou my hope and portion be,
Jesus, all in all to me.

Art Reflection: Seeing Shepherds, David Bonnell, 2011

Look at the painting for 1-2 minutes. What do you notice? What does it say about HOPE?

In the painting, we see a mighty host of angels singing to shepherds. Do you ever express joy through singing? What do you think the shepherds might have been thinking or feeling? What else do you notice?

From the Palm Sunday Liturgy

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Advent @ Trinity



Seeing Shepherds, Daniel Bonnell, 2011

Advent @ Trinity – Week 3 – JOY

Week 4 - LOVE

Reader: Today is the fourth and last Sunday of Advent. In this season, we look forward to Christmas, when Christ came down to be born on earth so that we might have Life. We look forward to that day when our heavenly Groom will come for His bride.

Each week in Advent, we light a candle and hear God's Word. With each candle, we will remember one of the great gifts that we have in Jesus Christ. This week, we remember Christ's love.

How great is God's love? (*discuss before moving on*)

It is truly unmeasurable. It's so big that if it was a canvas and you spread all of creation upon it, the whole universe would be less than a speck. Smaller even than that. This is the kind of love that God pours upon us. Because of this love, the Father sent His Son so that those who believe in Him might spend all eternity in God's presence.

Light all four candles

Sing: Of The Father's Love Begotten

This hymn has made quite a journey: the lyrics are a Latin poem from a Catholic Spanish poet in the fourth century, with a tune from Italy in the 11th century, a translation from an Anglican in 19th-century England and a harmonization in the 20th century by an American Episcopal musician. We learn of the divinity of Christ, and then his birth, and then we sing words of praise and adoration. What does this hymn tell you about LOVE?

Read: Ephesians 3:14-19

That love is for each of us, given to us by name. This love is for you, _____ (***say the name of every person in your family***). This is how we know that God's love is for each of us: it was not given after some great accomplishment, or after we had obeyed Him. It was given to us "while we were still sinners."

Read: Romans 5:6-11

Today, we remember and celebrate God's great love for us, by which the Father sent His Son down to us to rescue us back to Him.

Of The Father's Love Begotten

Author: Aurelius Prudentius,
Translated by J.M. Neale, H. W. Baker
Tune: Divinum Mysterium

Of the Father's love begotten,
Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the Source, the Ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see
Evermore and evermore!

O that birth forever blessed,
When the Virgin, full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving,
Bore the Savior of our race;
And the Babe, the world's Redeemer,
First revealed His sacred face,
Evermore and evermore!

O ye heights of heav'n, adore Him;
Angel hosts, His praises sing:
Pow'rs, dominions, bow before Him
And extol our God and King;
Let no tongue on earth be silent,
Every voice in concert ring,
Evermore and evermore!

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LOVE

by George Herbert

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
 Guilty of dust and sinne.
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
 From my first entrance in,
Drew near to me, sweetly questioning,
 If I lacked anything.
A quest, I answer'd, worthy to be here:
 Love said, you shall be he.
I the unkinde, ungrateful? Ah my deare,
 I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
 Who made the eyes but I?

Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them: let my shame
 Go where it doth deserve.
And know you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame?
 My deare, then I will serve.
You must sit down, sayes Love, and feast with me:
 So I did sit and eat

Art Reflection: Adoration of the Shepherds, Gerard van Honthorst, 1622

*Look at the painting for 1-2 minutes. What does it say about
 LOVE?*

*In this painting, we see Mary, Joseph and shepherds all standing
 over the infant Christ. The baby seems to be the source of light.
 What do you notice about their expressions? What else do you see?*

Collect of the First Sunday of Christmas

Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate
Word: Grant that this light, kindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our
lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the
unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Adoration of the Shepherds, Gerard van Honthorst,, 1622



Advent @ Trinity – Week 4 – LOVE