

Everlasting Light

PRAYERS AROUND
THE ADVENT WREATH



TERENCE HEGARTY

INTRODUCTION

*Your sun shall no more go down, or your moon withdraw itself;
for the LORD will be your ever-lasting light, and your days
of mourning shall be ended. ISAIAH 60:20*

How can we possibly grasp the concept of everlasting light? Even as we celebrate Advent with the regular lighting of candles, and the seemingly magical combination of wax and wick gives us light, we easily see that the candles shrink as the season progresses.

But beyond wax and wicks, beyond our modern electric lights, beyond even what appears to be the endless light of our sun, moon and stars, we know that the light of Christ surpasses them all. There is no winnowing of Christ's light. He is the Light of the World, our Everlasting Light.

As you go on to celebrate that truth throughout the coming weeks, please remember that, when you light one candle from the flame of another, you immediately have twice as much light. And yet the initial flame is not diminished. Sharing the Light of Christ does not weaken the light. Advent calls us to not only experience the Everlasting Light of Christ, but to also share it with others.

With the First Week of Advent, we celebrate hope. With this booklet, I hope that you will learn more about the rich traditions of the Advent wreath. I hope that the Scripture, the prayers and the act of gathering together will strengthen your hope, faith, joy and peace. May the Advent wreath, with its clear steps and clear light, guide you through this season and light your way to a more enriching Christmas season as you welcome our newborn Savior.

Terence Hegarty

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

The following are suggestions for how to best use this resource. You and your family may find your own way to gather and celebrate. The important ingredients are gathering together in prayer and helping each other with your spiritual preparation for Christmas.

If you are using this as a family, try to arrange to gather at approximately the same time each evening. Ideally, gather around the wreath in a dimly lit room. Please be sure to observe all precautions as you light the candle(s) and extinguish them. Never leave a lit candle or candles unattended.

The colors of the four candles (three purple, one rose) have their own significance. Purple is a liturgical color signifying a time of prayer, penance and sacrifice. The rose (or pink) candle is meant to signify joy, reminding us that even as we are in the midst of a penitential time, we have reason to be joyful.

Two pages are dedicated for each week of Advent, featuring Scripture, a candle-lighting prayer and a reflection on the theme of the week. This booklet is designed for families to practice their faith together with suggested actions for each week that relate to the theme. This booklet can serve as either a daily or a weekly resource.

Once Christmas arrives, families may continue to gather around the wreath in celebration and prayer as pages are provided that will guide you through the practice of celebrating Christmas using a Christ Candle, a white candle in the center of the wreath.

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Hope

But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish. 2 PETER 3:13-14

Candle-Lighting Prayer

We say a prayer.

We light a candle.

O Lord, as we light this first candle to begin our observance of this holy season, we ask that you bless us, bless this wreath and bless these candles. May the Advent candles, with their familiar, glowing light, help us turn to you. May we stay alert in these weeks, anticipating the joyful celebration of your Son's arrival into the world. As this Advent light keeps darkness at bay, may it also keep us from wandering from your ways. Help us to wait patiently, in peace, over the coming weeks. And may we hold your mercy deep within our heart, carrying it with us as we prepare for the coming of our infant Savior. Amen.

A purple candle is lit.

This first candle, representing hope, is lit at the start of the season. It is also known as the Prophecy Candle, a reminder of the prophets of the Old Testament who foretold the birth of Jesus and urged people to repent. The faithful people of God so many thousands of years ago had hope. They waited for their Messiah. They hoped because of the promise of God that had been related to them over and over again. They, in turn, related these promises from generation to generation. And Jesus, the Messiah foretold of so long before his birth, is the fulfillment of this promise.

As a Christian symbol since the Middle Ages, the Advent wreath helps us still, today, to hope in the promise that God and the promise that Jesus has made to come again in glory. The wreath itself is an unbroken circle, with no beginning and no end. The circle as well as the evergreens represent the eternal and ever-living nature of God and also are reminders of our own immortal soul. Featuring pine cones on the wreath further represents the promise of life that is held in the pine cone's seeds, a reminder of the new life that we will celebrate at Christmas.

We also hope because we have Christ's promise to bring us salvation. Because of his great love for each of us, Jesus, our Savior, conquered sin and death so that we all may have the chance to enjoy eternal life with him.

It's no wonder we start the season by focusing on hope!

*This Week: Think of a way that you can bring hope to others.
Maybe it's just a kind word or a helpful gesture.*

For Reflection

What does it mean to you to know that God keeps his promises?



FULL OF LIGHTS, COLORS, RICH SYMBOLISM AND REMINDERS OF THE JOYFUL SEASON TO COME, the glittering Advent wreath can itself be a gift to us. Creative Communications author Terence Hegarty presents original prayers, carefully blended with reminders of the long-time faith traditions and symbols that are designed to greatly enrich your practice of this important season of preparation.

Allow the messages of Hope, Faith, Joy and Peace guide you through Advent, all the way to the celebration of the birth of Jesus, our Everlasting Light.

This book, along with many other *Creative Communications for the Parish* products, is available on [amazonkindle](#) and [nook](#)

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