

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

First Week of Advent - Candle of Expectation



L: "In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it" (Isaiah 2:2, NRSV).

We begin the first week of Advent with hope in God's promised arrival. A favorite Advent hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (UMH 211) was written by Anglican priest John Mason Neal in the mid-1800s. This beautiful hymn reflects the hope we celebrate today. The hymn's sixth verse speaks to hope, "O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by Thine advent here; disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight."

Lighting the Candle of Expectation

L: It was Jesus Christ himself that told us to be ready at any time. So, today we remember that call. The call to look for God, in unexpected places, at unexpected times. And even though we wait, we can expect our Savior to show. This morning, we light the Candle of Expectation.

Let this fire remind us that while we wait for the Lord, truly the Lord is already here. Hope is here. Love is here. Family is here.

(Light one purple candle)

L: Let us pray.

P: Lord of Hope, we await your coming with great anticipation and expectation. Our lives are marked by hope, even when our circumstance might prove to the contrary that we are without hope. Set us free from our fears and from our sins release us. Let us see you now in all the unexpected places, at unexpected times, in the faces of our children, of the homeless around us, in the immigrants who struggle, as they serve even us. Forgive us, we pray, and make us ready, to greet you, in everyone we see on the street, as we leave this place. Amen.