

Getting Ready For the Light!

Advent. Four Sundays, four weeks, a time for getting ready. A time for increasing light! For many the Advent wreath, with its four candles, has a special place in the weeks before Christmas. The first week one, the next two . . . ever increasing the light until Christmas when the fifth candle, the Christ candle, joins the rest to show that the light of the world has come!



At our house, the candles were not always in a wreath, but each week a new candle would join the rest on our dinner table. Our four were not all the same. Each one was special in its own way. Sometimes one would be an ice candle – made by filling a paper milk carton with a colored taper candle in the center surrounded by crushed ice before pouring the hot wax in. Once cooled, the water gone, and having the paper torn away, the colored taper wax would run down through the ice made holes as it burned. Often one would be a homemade taper with wax designs on the sides or maybe a bee's wax candle sent from cousins who live in community. The tapers would sometimes stand in the candleholders with the bright yellow daffodils in them, which were a birthday gift from Papa to Mother long ago. One could also be a special shaped or multicolored candle; or a candle with a special scent one of us found. Some years there might be one with a Christmas treasure buried in the wax to be found after nights of burning a little each time. Often one was made during the church Advent Workshop, and you knew that other families might be burning theirs each night at the same time.

All the candles were special – even unique, but the important thing was that which they shared. *Light!* They helped illuminate the dark winter nights, slowly adding their light until Christmas when all five of them made the kitchen glow, just as the coming of the Christ Child brought his light to our hearts.

As we come to the end of this Advent season and prepare to light the Christ candle, Lord, help us to remember, we are to be like those candles. Each one unique, but special for the light of Christ, the Prince of Peace, we can share with a world so very much in need of His light!

This week, pray for:

- the **COVID-19 pandemic**. Help all of us continue to do all we can to keep each other as safe as we can. The first vaccine is now being given to people here in the U.S. as well as in the United Kingdom. A second is being given now too. Remember those who handle, administer, and receive these new vaccines. Remember those who are caring for the sick & the dying. Remember those who are suffering as the pandemic continues to grow worse.
- **Nigeria**. There is a reason for thanksgiving. 344 of the boys kidnaped from their secondary school in Katsina state on December 11th have been freed! Give thanks with their families. Also, the government says that the kidnappers may not be from Boko Haram. If true, this would mean the activities of this group have not moved into new territory as has been feared. Continue to remember those still missing. Do not forget the nearly 100 school girls still missing from the Chibuk school attack 6 years ago. . .



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