



ADVENT IN THE VALLEY

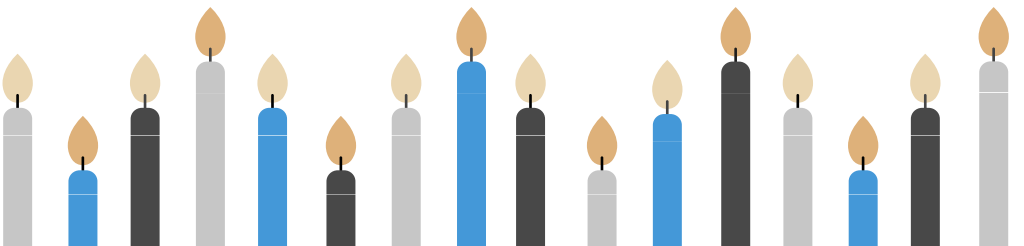
WEEK 2: PEACE

As we begin, we light the first and second Advent candles and say,

**Jesus Christ is the light of the world.
A light no darkness can extinguish.**

Today we light the second candle, the candle for Peace. It reminds us that Jesus is called the Prince of Peace who brings peace into our hearts and asks us to be people of peace to those around us.

Let us pray,
Christ our Peace,
Glow brightly in each moment.
Enlighten our vision so that we see beyond
all of the trouble and all of the conflict in our world
and see the peace that you give.
Relieve us, if just for a moment,
of our worries and stress.
We await your coming with quietness.
Amen.



*Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.
Wait for the Lord: Be strong, take heart!
- Taize chant*

Week Two Reflections from Rev. Gillian Hoyer

December is a busy month. Full of Christmas parties, plans for travel to see loved ones or for them to come to us, shopping to do, and Christmas baking and preparations. It is a wonder we ever have time to stop! Into that busy-ness comes the season of Advent, a season permeated with waiting and watching for the coming of Christ.

I'm sure many of us struggle with waiting and watching. We don't want to sit around and watch - we'd rather hurry things up! If God isn't going to bring the kingdom in a timely manner, we're likely to try and bring it along ourselves! Even John the Baptist, in the gospel for the Second Sunday of Advent quotes the prophet Isaiah in such a way as to make us think that all we need to do to prepare the way of the Lord is to make the paths straight. So let's get straightening those paths!

What we are left with is trying to find some balance between waiting for the Lord and hastening the day until his coming.

This is our Advent challenge. No one can bring about the coming of Jesus except God. We wait. We wait with strength and hope. But we also hasten the day and prepare the way. We pray with expectation, we watch the world around us and see where we can add our light to the darkness, and we join our voices with those who have come before us as we say, "Maranatha: Come, Lord Jesus."

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

Questions for further reflection:

1. How am I being challenged to wait and watch for the coming of Jesus this Advent?
2. How am I being challenged to prepare the way of the Lord's coming this Advent?