

# Advent Candle Readings – Future, Justice, Joy, Peace

## First Sunday of Advent

### *The First Candle – for the Future*

We look forward to Christmas and to a new and better world beyond. We are called to care for and protect this fragile earth, to bring joy where there is sadness, justice where there is despair, peace where there is discord. These are our Christmas gifts to a troubled world.

As we look forward to Christmas **we light this first candle** in expectation of the coming of Christ and as a promise that we will never forget the task he gives, to be stewards of this world and friends to its people.

*The first candle is lit*

Prayer: Lord, as we prepare for this Christmas help us to take each opportunity to make our world a better place. Amen.

**Second Sunday of Advent**  
*The Second Candle – for Justice*

We look forward to Christmas and to the justice of Christ. This Christmas as we eat and drink there will be many less fortunate. But Christ comes for all, regardless of age or sex or nationality or religion or wealth. He comes to bring justice to an unjust world, and he calls us to help.

As we look forward to Christmas **we light this second candle** in the hope of justice and as a promise to work with Christ to bring it.

*The second candle is lit*

Prayer: Lord, in all that we do this Christmas help us to remember those who are waiting for justice. Amen.

**Third Sunday of Advent**  
*The Third Candle – for Joy*

We look forward to Christmas and to the joy that it brings. Some of us may not be feeling the joy yet – we have too much to do and too little time. Some find Christmas an unhappy time. And some are just overexcited! But now is the time to rely on the deeper Joy that comes from Christ alone.

As we look forward to Christmas **we light this third candle** in thanks for the joy that springs from Christ, that flows through us, and that warms the whole world.

*The third candle is lit*

Prayer: Lord, as we prepare to celebrate your coming let joy well up inside us and touch the world around. Amen.

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
*The Fourth Candle – for Peace*

We look forward to Christmas and to the peace of Christ. There has been so much to do, so much to prepare, and some of us are still madly rushing about trying to get it all ready. But as Christmas approaches we know that there is not much more we can do.

As we look forward to Christmas **we light this fourth candle** in the knowledge that the coming of Christ takes everything out of our hands. This is God's world.

*The fourth candle is lit*

Prayer: Lord you are coming, and we open our hearts to receive all that you have for us, and to give you all that we are. Amen.

**Christmas Day**  
*The Christ Candle*

Christmas has come! Christ is here! Time to enjoy whatever the day has brought us, time to reach out and show God's love to all around us.

**We light this Christ candle** because words can't adequately express that Christ is the light that banishes all darkness from our world and our hearts.

*The final candle is lit*

Prayer: Lord who casts out our deepest darkneses and lights our way to the future, who brings the gift of joy to the despairing and warmth to a cold world, burn brightly in our hearts, our town, our world today. Amen.

The colours of the candles and the way they are arranged will vary from church to church. Mostly they are arranged with the first four candles surrounding the final candle, which represents Christ and is usually white. In many older traditions the other candles are often purple or blue apart from the third week which is pink, representing Joy. I have also seen four reds and a white, five reds and five whites. If you have a tradition of your own that is different from these, stick with it! And if you don't have one – make one up, perhaps according to your readings! Go with a symbolism that works for you.

Usually the candles that have been lit in previous weeks are lit in each subsequent week's service. So for instance in week three candles one, two and three are lit. Sometimes the previous weeks' candles are lit just beforehand, to show that they are already lit and so that the candle lighter only has one candle to light.

**Please let me know what traditions you have! Share with us on the DramatisDei Facebook page.**

These readings were written for year A of the lectionary cycle but would work well in any year.