1st Advent Sunday – The Prophet’s Song

Dec. 1, 2013 - Children’s Ministry

Speaker #1

The Advent wreath is a way for us to remember God’s promises and how they came true when Jesus was born.

Each candle is a symbol of one part of God’s story. It is the story of God’s plan to save, heal, and comfort his people.

The first candle of the wreath means **hope**. The people of Israel heard the songs of the prophets. The prophets were waiting for a king who would rule them faithfully and powerfully.

Speaker #2

This is part of the prophet Isaiah’s song:

**Isaiah 11:1-10** (CEV)

 1Like a branch that sprouts from a stump,

   someone from David's family will someday be king.

    2The Spirit of the LORD will be with him

   to give him understanding, wisdom, and insight.

   He will be powerful, and he will know and honor the LORD.

    3His greatest joy will be to obey the LORD.

   This king won't judge by appearances or listen to rumors.

    4The poor and the needy will be treated with fairness and with justice.

Speaker #3

This is part of the prophet Micah’s song:

**Micah 5: 2-5** (CEV)

2Bethlehem…, you are one of the smallest towns in the nation of Judah.
But the Lord will choose one of your people to rule the nation—
someone whose family goes back to ancient times.
3The Lord will abandon Israel only until this ruler is born,
and the rest of his family returns to Israel.
4Like a shepherd taking care of his sheep,
this ruler will lead and care for his people
by the power and glorious name of the Lord his God.
His people will live securely,

and the whole earth will know his true greatness,

 5because he will bring peace.

Speaker #4

Dear God, you made your prophets sing

About your Son, the coming King.

Your people waited year to year

Hoping Messiah would appear.

At the right time, you made it so

Just as you’d promised long ago.

Give us faith like they had then

To sing until you come again. **[\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ lights the Purple candle]**

2nd Advent Sunday – Zacharias’ Song

Dec. 8, 2013 – Men’s Ministry

Speaker #1

Last week we lit the **hope** candle. Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophet’s songs in the Old Testament – the coming king, God’s anointed one, who would perfectly obey God in all things. **[\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ lights purple candle]**

Today we light the candle that represents **joy**. The parents of John the Baptist were old and did not have any children, but God had planned for joy to enter their lives. Their son would be the forerunner, or herald, of the Messiah Jesus. When Zacharias met an angel in the temple, the angel’s message spoke of the joy to come:

**Luke 1:13-16** (NLT)

13But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. 14You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, 15for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. 16And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God.

Speaker #2

Because Zacharias did not believe the angel, he could not speak until after the child was born. When Zacharias obeyed and named his son John, he regained his speech. This is the song of joy he sang:

**Luke 1:68-70, 78-79 (NLT)**

68 “Praise the Lord, the God of Israel,
      because he has visited and redeemed his people.
 69 He has sent us a mighty Savior
      from the royal line of his servant David,
 70 just as he promised
      through his holy prophets long ago.
**…**

 78 Because of God’s tender mercy,
      the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us,
 79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
      and to guide us to the path of peace.”

**[\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ lights the pink candle]**

3rd Advent Sunday – Mary’s Song

Dec. 15, 2013 – Women’s Ministry

Speaker #1 - **Brenda**

On the first Sunday of Advent we lit the **hope** candle. **[\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ lights the purple candle]** Israel’s hope was in the king promised in the songs of the prophets. That king would rule with justice and peace.

Last week we lit the **joy** candle. **[\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ lights the pink candle]** The birth of John the Baptist was a miracle that brought great joy to his parents and to the faithful of Israel.

Today we focus on Mary’s song, and the **peace** that God was planning through his coming as Jesus.

Speaker #2

The prophet Isaiah foretold that the coming Messiah would be a special kind of ruler:

**Isaiah 9:6-7 (NLT)**

6For a child is born to us,
    a son is given to us.
The government will rest on his shoulders.
    And he will be called:
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
    Everlasting Father, *Prince of* ***Peace***.
7His government and its *peace* will never end.
He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity.
The passionate commitment of the Lord of Heaven’s Armies will make this happen!

Speaker #3

For the Israelites, **peace** (“*shalom*”) did not mean simply the absence of war, but right relationships between God and between people. It was about the “fairness and justice” that Isaiah had prophesied so many years before. Listen for this theme in Mary’s song:

**Luke 1:46-55** (NLT)

46Mary responded,

“Oh, how my soul praises the Lord.
47    How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!
48For he took notice of his lowly servant girl,
    and from now on all generations will call me blessed.
49For the Mighty One is holy,
    and he has done great things for me.
50He shows mercy from generation to generation
    to all who fear him.
51His mighty arm has done tremendous things!
    He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.
52He has brought down princes from their thrones
    and exalted the humble.
53He has filled the hungry with good things
    and sent the rich away with empty hands.
54He has helped his servant Israel
    and remembered to be merciful.
55For he made this promise to our ancestors,
    to Abraham and his children forever.”

**[\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ lights the blue candle]**

4th Sunday of Advent – Simeon’s Song

Dec. 22, 2013 – Youth Ministry

1st Reader:

Today we light four candles: The Hope Candle reminds us that Jesus first coming was a long-awaited event that was foretold in the songs of the prophets.

**[\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ light the purple candle.]**

The Joy Candle reminds us of the joy of Zacharias and Elizabeth as they heard and believed God’s promise of a son.

**[\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ light the pink candle.]**

The Candle of Peace reminds us that in Jesus, God was making peace with his creation, and through Jesus, we can be at peace with one another.

**[\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ light the blue candle.]**

2nd Reader:

Thank you God for the Hope, Joy and Peace that You give. We invite You now, to come and meet with us.

Today we light The Candle of **Love**. The fulfillment of your promises speaks to us of how much you love us.

“Indeed, every one of us has shared in his riches—there is a grace in our lives because of his grace. For while the Law was given by Moses, love and truth came through Jesus Christ. It is true that no one has ever seen God at any time. Yet the divine and only Son, who lives in the closest intimacy with the Father, has made him known.” *[John 1:16-18 (Phillips)]*

3rd Reader:

Simeon, a righteous man of great faith, was waiting for Messiah to be revealed. Hear his song:

**Luke 2:29-32** (NLT)

29“Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace,
    as you have promised.
30I have seen your salvation,
31    which you have prepared for all people.
32He is a light to reveal God to the nations,
    and he is the glory of your people Israel!”

4th Reader:

Father God, we know that the purpose of Jesus’ birth, life, death and resurrection was to communicate your love to us. The Apostle Paul, quoting Hosea, reminds us in his letter to the Romans,

25Concerning the Gentiles, God says in the prophecy of Hosea,

“Those who were not my people,
    I will now call my people.
And I will love those
    whom I did not love before.”

26And,

“Then, at the place where they were told,
    ‘You are not my people,’
there they will be called
    ‘children of the living God.’” [**Romans 9** (NLT)]

If God’s love was fulfilled in his birth, life, death and resurrection as a human being, let us believe and obey through the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus would also be born in us. What shall separate us from God’s love? Nothing!

May our lives of love be the true reflection of our Saviour, the Christ-child, the fulfillment of God’s love.

**[\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ light the red candle]**

Christmas Eve Candle Lighting

December 24, 2013

Reader #1 – Kailyn

Over the past four weeks we have learned of the many songs that are recorded in the Bible that relate to Jesus’ coming to earth. The first was the song of **hope**, the song sung by the prophets. We were also reminded of our **hope** that Jesus will one day return to earth. Speaking of the hope of God’s promises, the Apostle Paul told us that

“20… ***all*** of God’s promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding “Yes!” And through Christ, our “Amen” (which means “Yes”) ascends to God for his glory.”

It is in Jesus that we find our **hope**!

**[Roger lights purple candle]**

Reader #2 - Lynn

The second candle was about the **joy** that came through the angel’s announcement of the birth of John the Baptist to his aged parents. They learned the **joy** of God’s favour.

In the Gospel of Matthew, when the wisemen

10… saw the star, they were filled with **joy**! 11They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him.

It is in Jesus we find our **joy**!

**[Roger lights pink candle]**

Reader #3 - Vern

The third candle is a reminder of **peace**. Jesus is our prince of **peace**, and his Spirit brings **peace**. Mary’s song was all about the right relationships that Jesus’ coming would establish: peace between God and his creation, and peace between human beings.

Jesus said,

“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have **peace**. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” [**Jn 16:33**]

It is in Jesus we know **peace**!

**[Roger lights blue candle]**

Reader #4 - Marty

The fourth candle is the candle of **love**. God’s **love** is his motive for coming into the world as Jesus Christ. His **love** fulfilled the plan of salvation so that we can know him as father, saviour and friend. God’s gift to us at Christmas is himself: What great **love**!

“See how great a **love** the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.” [**1 John 3:1-2**]

**[Roger lights red candle]**

Reader #5

The final candle is the candle of nativity – the birth candle of the Messiah. Jesus came into the world – not in a myth, not in fairytale “once upon a time”, but in the fullness of time, into the history of this real world. God became man and dwelt among us and knew our sorrow, our pain and our weakness. Jesus’ life, teaching, death and resurrection opened our way to know God once more. This is the song we sing through Jesus! Thank you God for pursuing us – coming to us and making a way for us to know you. May our songs tonight be joined with the angels who sang

14“Glory to God in highest heaven,
    and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.” [**Luke 2:14** (NLT)]

**[Roger lights white candle]**