



PREPARING TO BECOME THE  
**BELOVED  
COMMUNITY**

**ADVENT-YEAR A**

# Preparing to Become the Beloved Community

Year A

Advent 2025, 2028, 2031

Session One: Advent 1 – Proclaiming the Dream of Beloved Community

Session Two: Advent 2 – Practicing the Way of Love in the Pattern of Jesus

Session Three: Advent 3 – Repairing the Breach in Society and Institutions

Session Four: Advent 4 – Telling the Truth about Our Churches and Race

Session Five: Christmas Eve or Christmas Day – Lighting the Candle

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815 2nd Ave

New York, NY 10017

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## **ABOUT THE ADVENT WREATH LITURGY**

The Advent wreath is believed to have originated with a Lutheran pastor working among the poor in Germany in the late 1800s. Tradition states that the children would ask every day if Christmas had arrived, so he arranged candles (four large candles for the weeks and then smaller ones for the days) to help the children mark time and journey with Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem without leaving Germany. The wreath came to appear as it does today through the adoption of the practice by German Catholics, who decreased the wreath to just the candles we use today. Different traditions attribute different meanings to the candles, and even use different colors, but the purpose remains the same: to provide Christians with a way of marking time through the season of anticipation until we reach the birth of Jesus. For some, the wreath is a visual pilgrimage through Advent, similar to the idea behind the recreation of the creche in churches and homes started by St. Francis of Assisi as a way of helping the poor experience holy sites from home. For many, this Advent will be spent at home and lighting the Advent wreath will serve as a method for journeying with Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. Our liturgy comes from a place of social justice and Becoming Beloved Community. It is our hope that the prayers throughout this document will help you journey through this time of waiting and anticipation for when Christ is born again in our hearts and in our world. This liturgy is written for a literacy level of 5th grade and up. For smaller children, you can adapt the liturgy by saying the “Reader 1” section and lighting the candles.

# WELCOME

*In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God...  
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together.*

*- Isaiah 40:3, 5*

Advent is a season of preparation: shopping for gifts, decorating our homes and sanctuaries. Advent is also a time to prepare our hearts and communities for the coming of Christ, the Almighty God who came among us poor and homeless, a stranger and a child. There may be no better time to reflect on how we as the Episcopal Church embrace the Holy One who continues to draw near in the neighbor, the stranger, the refugee, or the one who seems most “other” to you. It is the ideal season to commit to becoming Beloved Community and growing loving, liberating, life-giving relationships across the human family of God.

The journey is framed around the labyrinth. Why? In the ministry of racial healing and justice, none of us walks a straight line. We enter the labyrinth wherever God has provided an opening – telling the truth about our church’s story around race; discerning and proclaiming God’s dream of Beloved Community where we are; learning and practicing Jesus’ way of healing and love; and bravely working to transform systemic racial injustice. We keep moving from one quadrant to another and back. No one is ever really finished. That is the way of ongoing spiritual formation.

As you “walk” sections of this labyrinth, gather a group, and together engage the scriptures, reflections, and activities. Designate a facilitator who will carefully preview the session. Set aside at least 45 minutes for each session, and consider these **Conversation Tips**:

*Speak from your own experience. Be genuinely curious about what others share. Imagine you can disagree without someone being wrong. Avoid debate and stay with the story. Seek Christ in others and seek to embody his loving, liberating, life-giving way.*

May God bless and grow us into vibrant embodiments of the Christ we welcome and follow, this Advent and always.

Prayerfully offered,

The Episcopal Church’s Racial Reconciliation Team  
[www.episcopalchurch.org/reconciliation](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/reconciliation) - [reconciliation@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:reconciliation@episcopalchurch.org)

# ADVENT I

## Proclaiming the Dream of Beloved Community

### Pray the Collect for This Sunday

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

### Read the Scripture Together: Romans 13:11-14

**13** <sup>11</sup> You know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; <sup>12</sup> the night is far gone the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; <sup>13</sup> let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

### Reflection

As we light the first candle on the Advent wreath we do so in hope—the sure hope of Jesus, whose coming into the world we proclaim and prepare to celebrate. Against this backdrop a number of things jump out from Romans 13:11-14: Now is the time to wake up. Salvation is ever nearer. What is it we need to leave behind? Let us cover ourselves in the light. How should we live? What does it mean to “put on” the Lord Jesus Christ?

As we proclaim and prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, let us focus too on proclaiming the dream of beloved community—the community that loves as God intends, where truth is told, lamenting our past actions and inaction (individual and collective) that relate to the sin of racism. Guided by the light of Jesus, the dream calls us to embody justice, notably racial justice, and to pray, advocate, engage, and interact in ways that offer the same welcome that Jesus offers. It means that our welcome, whether as an individual or church, is a true welcome, with respect and dignity for all.

The Scripture invites us to question who we are and how we live. It calls us to act. This Advent let us do just that. Confident in hope, as we set our eyes on the manger, let us respond by welcoming the people of God’s creation as Jesus welcomes us and proclaiming the dream of beloved community.

***David Case** is a member of the Racial Justice and Beloved Community ministry team of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe and parishioner of the Church of the Ascension, Munich, Germany.*

### In the Labyrinth: Proclaiming the Dream

In Romans, the armor of light is God’s love and truth. How can you and your church proclaim God’s love and truth? How can you shine the light of truth on the injustices in your community and the world? What is your congregation doing to share hope, especially in marginalized communities?

## **Make It Real: Talk Story and Sharing Tea**

**Setup:** Have enough tables so that no more than six people are at a table. Place butcher-block paper on the tables and tape it down so that folks can write on it. Put pens and pencils on the tables for participants. Place various individually wrapped tea bags in the center of the tables.

**Instructions:** Please remember to be respectful of each other. Listening to the other person is the most important thing you are going to be doing, and there are no right or wrong answers.

Ask each participant to introduce themselves, taking no more than 20 seconds per person. Then, ask each participant to share a story or their thoughts using one of the nine prompts below. Limit sharing to three minutes per person. Once a prompt has been answered, it is done and no longer available to be answered. The youngest person at the table starts first. On the butcher paper, you are free to write thoughts or notes about what you hear others saying.

### **Prompts for Group Sharing:**

1. To me, Beloved Community looks like...
2. I was especially aware of my race when I...
3. To foster Beloved Community, I hope to...
4. To me, hope looks like...
5. This is what it looks like when we put on the “armor of light” in our neighborhoods / community...
6. I feel we could fight the “works of darkness” in our neighborhood / community by...
7. I feel this church / parish could proclaim the dream of Beloved Community by...
8. When I look at our neighborhood/community, I dream of...
9. I believe we can shine God’s loving truth on the injustices in our community by...

**Next:** Once everyone has had the opportunity to answer one of the questions, go around and respond to something you heard someone say.

- What did you like or appreciate about what someone said?
- How could you build on what someone else said?
- Where did you hear hope?

The oldest person at the table starts. Again, you are free to use the butcher paper to record thoughts, ideas, or suggestions.

When everyone has had the opportunity to respond to what someone else has said, take a moment to look around your table first, then the room. Ask your table this question:

- Who is not here that we should have a conversation with? Name that individual(s) and write them on the butcher paper under the title, **“Who Isn’t Here.”**

**Continuation for the week ahead:** Participants who are willing can take two tea bags for each person they are willing to have a similar conversation with. Contact them, letting them know you would like to have a cup of tea and a conversation about Beloved Community and hope. If the other person is willing, set a date, time, and place on how you are going to meet. Will it be by phone, Zoom, or in person? Bring or mail the tea bag and on the appointed date and time, gather together, make your tea, and start your conversation.

What did you learn? What can you take back to your faith community and share? What might you build on?

## Lighting the Candle

Readings can be said by one or two people depending on the needs of your family or congregation.

All:           Light of the world, in grace and beauty,  
                Mirror of God's eternal face,  
                Transparent flame of love's free duty,  
                You bring salvation to our human race.<sup>1</sup>

Reader 1:     Sacred mystery, we light the first candle of Advent for hope and light.

*The first candle is lit.*

Reader 2:     We kindle it with love and hope. As we await your coming, Jesus, help us to shine forth your light of love and truth.<sup>2</sup>

All:           Sacred mystery, fill us with your Spirit, that with your armor of light we can shine God's love, truth, and justice out into the world, giving hope to those on the margins and in all in your world. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the liturgy, the prayer said at the beginning is slightly adapted from the "Phos Hilaron" on page 23 of "Enriching Our Worship I": the word "human" was added before "race."

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the liturgy, the prayers said by Reader 2 and at the end have been adapted from the "Liturgy for Lighting Advent Candles" from the United Church of Christ.

# ADVENT II

## Practicing the Way of Love in the Pattern of Jesus

### Pray the Collect for this Sunday

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

### Read the Scripture Together: Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

- 1 Give the King your justice, O God, \*  
and your righteousness to the King's Son;
- 2 That he may rule your people righteously \*  
and the poor with justice;
- 3 That the mountains may bring prosperity to the people, \*  
and the little hills bring righteousness.
- 4 He shall defend the needy among the people; \*  
he shall rescue the poor and crush the oppressor.
- 5 He shall live as long as the sun and moon endure, \*  
from one generation to another.
- 6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown field, \*  
like showers that water the earth.
- 7 In his time shall the righteous flourish; \*  
there shall be abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.
  
- 18 Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, \*  
who alone does wondrous deeds!
- 19 And blessed be his glorious Name for ever! \*  
and may all the earth be filled with his glory.  
Amen and Amen.

### Reflection

Liberation and justice are not one-time events in human life. They are spiritual practices. And as with any spiritual practice, they require intentionality and regularity. Practicing liberation and justice involves making intentional decisions at the right time and place, often in the face of fear. The more often we do this, the more inclined we become toward justice, and the more often our liberation and that of our siblings becomes a deep desire of our hearts. These practices beget a particular wakefulness and sensitivity toward the presence of Jesus in ourselves and others.

Jesus is the embodiment of justice and liberation. From the beginning of his earthly life with Mary to his walk with the apostles and disciples, Jesus taught that following him involves seeking out the poor and the oppressed and serving one another. If we want to be followers of the Way, then a practice of justice is how we are Christ to one another.

Psalm 72 describes justice as an integral part of God's nature. It is how God gives of God's self, bringing about righteousness and deliverance of those who suffer injustice. The justice from God's own self can be found in the world around us, raining down upon us, refreshing us, blessing us, and causing us to flourish.

In this season of Advent, as we practice and prepare, we pray that God gives us God's justice. We pray that God gives us and our leaders the grace to always walk in the Way of justice and peace.

***The Rev. Jo Ann Lagman*** serves as missioner for Asiamerica ministries for The Episcopal Church and is an assisting priest at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Downers Grove, Illinois.

### **In the Labyrinth: Practicing the Way of Love in the Pattern of Jesus**

The psalmist uses some words almost interchangeably. Think about what each word means. Can we have righteousness without peace? Can we have peace without justice? Can people live in true justice if there is not justice for the earth?

### **Make It Real: Labyrinth Reflection**

Go to a labyrinth if you are able. You may also find a handheld labyrinth, an online labyrinth (such as <https://labyrinthjourney.app/>), or a paper labyrinth to trace or color (such as the cover of this booklet). As you travel into the center, reflect on the first part of each prompt—*where does peace need to be made?* As you travel out from the center, reflect on the second part of each prompt—*how will I show up?* Remember, there are ways to be present to others whatever our physical abilities or life responsibilities. Think expansively about how you can show up.

- Where does my life need peace to be made? How will I show up?
- Where does my church need peace to be made? How will I show up?
- Where does my community need peace to be made? How will I show up?
- Where does my country need peace to be made? How will I show up?
- Where does our world need peace to be made? How will I show up?

Afterward, gather together. Share a story of a time that you acted as a peacemaker or were inspired by a peacemaker. Listen to each other.

Make a list of ways your community can act as peacemakers. Pin this list in a place you can all see it, reflect on it, and revisit it throughout the season. As the reflection reminds us, we will never be perfect, but we can always strive to return to the goodness in which we are created. Remember to keep showing up throughout the year.



## Lighting the Candle

Readings can be said by one or two people depending on the needs of your family or congregation.

*The first candle is lit.*

All:           Light of the world, in grace and beauty,  
                Mirror of God's eternal face,  
                Transparent flame of love's free duty,  
                You bring salvation to our human race.<sup>3</sup>

Reader 1:     Sacred mystery, we light the second candle of Advent for peace.

*The second candle is lit.*

Reader 2:     We kindle it with your peace. We await the coming of Christ who gives us a pattern for peace and beloved community through his example of righteousness and justice.<sup>4</sup>

All:           Saving God, look upon your world, heal your land, and your people. Prepare us to be changed. Teach us to be righteous and just, as you are. Amen.

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<sup>3</sup> Throughout the liturgy, the prayer said at the beginning is slightly adapted from the "Phos Hilaron" on page 23 of "Enriching Our Worship I": the word "human" was added before "race."

<sup>4</sup> Throughout the liturgy, the prayers said by Reader 2 and at the end have been adapted from the "Liturgy for Lighting Advent Candles" from the United Church of Christ.

# ADVENT III

## Repairing the Breach in Society and Institutions

### Pray the Collect for This Sunday

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

### Read the Scripture Together: Canticle 15 (Luke 1:46-55)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; \*  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed: \*  
the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him \*  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm, \*  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, \*  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things, \*  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has come to the help of his servant Israel, \*  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
The promise he made to our fathers, \*  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \*  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

### Reflection

Mary stands at the threshold singing. Unmarried, carrying news that could inhibit her standing in public—yet her voice rises clear and unafraid. She sings against empire, against religious authority that would condemn her, against every voice saying this cannot be.

I think of my Indigenous ancestors who also sang songs of resistance and hope—those Choctaw hymns that still resound in country churches today. A people who held fast to truth when institutions—church and state alike—demanded their silence, their land, their children. Who knew what Mary knew: that God's vision often contradicts the world's arrangements, and speaking that truth requires a courage that costs everything.

The Magnificat isn't a song of safety. It proclaims that God scatters the proud, brings down the powerful, lifts up the lowly. Mary doesn't wait for institutional permission to declare God's justice. She simply opens her mouth and lets the truth pour out.

We face our own thresholds now. Our institutions—beloved and broken—sometimes uphold what God would overturn, protect what God would challenge. Whether it's injustice wrapped in tradition or power masquerading as faithfulness, we recognize the gap between what is and what God desires.

Mary teaches us the bravery we need. Not the courage to storm institutions, but the deeper courage to speak truth when institutions fail us. To say yes to God's vision even when structures say no. To trust that the Light coming into the world will expose what needs exposing and heal what needs healing.

Can we, like Mary, sing our yes?

Come, Lord Jesus.

**The Rev. Joe C. Williams** serves as succentor at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, California, and is a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

### **In the Labyrinth: Repairing the Breach in Society and Institutions**

God came among us in Jesus because of the deep, divine longing to heal the brokenness of this world with love. What institutions and systems are broken? How will we participate in the repair, restoration, and healing of people, institutions, and systems?

### **Make It Real: The Far by Faith Exercise**

Repairing the breach in our institutions and societies begins with an understanding of where the breach exists and how our group or family may become involved in the repair. Gather in groups of no more than eight people or as a family at home, forming circles so that everyone is able to see and hear one another. Take turns sharing from your own experiences and perspectives for each of the prompts listed below, allowing everyone to have an opportunity to share. Please be respectful of those who choose not to share. A suggested timeframe is to allow about 10 minutes for each of the prompts. Once everyone has spoken, enter into conversation to understand one another's perspectives more fully.

### **Conversation Tips:**

*Speak from your own experience. Be genuinely curious about what others share. Imagine you can disagree without someone being wrong. Avoid debate and stay with the story. Seek Christ in others and seek to embody his loving, liberating, life-giving way.*

- How are you aware of brokenness in the policies and practices of social institutions with which your community, your family and/or you, personally interact?
- Institutions and societies are composed of connected individuals. How may your community, your family, and/or you, address the brokenness through the sharing of your faith with the people you encounter each day?
- How may your community, your family, and/or you, begin, continue, or join the work of repairing the breach in such a way that your intentions become concrete action?

## Lighting the Candle

Readings can be said by one or two people depending on the needs of your family or congregation.

*The first and second candles are lit.*

All:           Light of the world, in grace and beauty,  
                  Mirror of God's eternal face,  
                  Transparent flame of love's free duty,  
                  You bring salvation to our human race.<sup>5</sup>

Reader 1:     Sacred Mystery, we light the third candle of Advent for faith and courage.

*The third candle is lit.*

Reader 2:     We kindle it with joy. We hear the joy of Mary's song and witness her faith. Give us faith and courage so that we may repair the breach created through oppression and injustice.<sup>6</sup>

All:           Sacred Mystery, visit us and fill us with your Spirit. Bring your Good News to life within us. Give us faith and courage to walk in the way of the Beloved Community that you set before us. Amen.

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<sup>5</sup> Throughout the liturgy, the prayer said at the beginning is slightly adapted from the "Phos Hilaron" on page 23 of "Enriching Our Worship I": the word "human" was added before "race."

<sup>6</sup> Throughout the liturgy, the prayers said by Reader 2 and at the end have been adapted from the "Liturgy for Lighting Advent Candles" from the United Church of Christ.

# ADVENT IV

## Telling the Truth about Our Churches and Race

### Pray the Collect for This Sunday

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

### Read the Scripture Together: Psalm 80: 1-7, 16-18

- 1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; \*  
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
- 2 In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, \*  
stir up your strength and come to help us.
- 3 Restore us, O God of hosts; \*  
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
- 4 O Lord God of hosts, \*  
how long will you be angered  
despite the prayers of your people?
- 5 You have fed them with the bread of tears; \*  
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.
- 6 You have made us the derision of our neighbors, \*  
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.
- 7 Restore us, O God of hosts; \*  
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
- 16 Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, \*  
the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.
- 17 And so will we never turn away from you; \*  
give us life, that we may call upon your Name.
- 18 Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; \*  
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

### Reflection

“Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved” (Psalm 80:7).

This cry of lament echoes across generations of those who have been wounded by systems that were meant to bless. Psalm 80 voices a collective pain: a community that feels broken, abandoned, scorched by the very soil that once nurtured them. And yet, it does not end in despair. It pleads for restoration, not a return to comfort, but a return to truth and God’s shining presence.

In this fourth quadrant of the Becoming Beloved Community labyrinth, we are called to tell the truth about how our churches have participated in racial injustice, silence, and exclusion. It is a hard truth, but not a hopeless one. Just as the psalmist names the burning of the vineyard, so too must we name the burning of trust, dignity, and inclusion in our ecclesial histories.

Telling the truth is an act of holy courage. It invites God’s face to shine—not on our perfection, but on our vulnerability. It allows the church to become a place not of performative repentance, but of deep transformation, a site where confession leads to communal healing.

As we draw near to the birth of Christ, the light of the world, we are invited to shine a light on the truths we have hidden. Not to shame or blame, but to set free. For only in truth can we be fully restored. And only in truth can we prepare room for Emmanuel, God with us.

**The Rev. Miguel Bustos** serves as The Episcopal Church's manager for racial justice and reconciliation. He is an archdeacon in the Episcopal Diocese of California.

### **In the Labyrinth: Telling the Truth about Our Churches and Race**

We cannot become who God created us to be unless we also examine who we have been and who we are today. Who are we as a church community? Which voices are heard? Which ones are silent or absent? What are the prophetic voices among us saying? What opportunities are there for bridges to be built?

### **Make It Real: Placing Yourself in the Story**

Break into groups of four to six people:

Listen as one member of the group reads the following portrait of courageous truth-telling, then hold space for silent reflection before continuing.

When she first started telling her story, the faces of the others in the room looked surprised. Could she keep going and tell the truth about what had been happening? She could feel the tears rising. Would anyone take her seriously? Would the others laugh or ridicule her? Would telling the story of what happened make a difference? She wondered, "How long, O Lord, must I bear this burden?" She knew what needed to change to make things fair for everyone. She breathed in "Yah" and out "weh," then continued telling her story ... naming the truth of her lived experience. Soon others in the room were nodding. They were listening. Afterward, one person said, "I thought I was the only one that had happened to." Another said, "I had no idea that was happening." Another said, "Your story changed the way I think about that issue." Still others continued to reflect for days afterward, recognizing the sharing of the story as a gift.

After time for silent reflection, invite people to name which character(s) in the story they found themselves identifying with, and—if they are comfortable talking about it—why.

Review the **Conversation Tips**:

*Speak from your own experience. Be genuinely curious about what others share. Imagine you can disagree without someone being wrong. Avoid debate and stay with the story. Seek Christ in others and seek to embody his loving, liberating, life-giving way.*

Now reflect as a group:

- How does our congregation or community encourage or discourage expressions of truth?
- Name three things that this congregation or community could change or embrace to help create space that would make you more comfortable sharing the truth of your experience?
- What are some truths that no one speaks about in this congregation or community?

## Lighting the Candle

Readings can be said by one or two people depending on the needs of your family or congregation.

*The first, second, and third candles are lit.*

All:                   Light of the world, in grace and beauty,  
                          Mirror of God's eternal face,  
                          Transparent flame of love's free duty,  
                          You bring salvation to our human race.<sup>7</sup>

Reader 1:       Sacred mystery, we light the fourth candle of Advent for love and truth.

*The fourth candle is lit.*

Reader 2:       We kindle this flame with love and the hope for the truth that is the light you brought into the world.<sup>8</sup>

All:               Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; show the light of your countenance and we shall be saved. Amen.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Throughout the liturgy, the prayer said at the beginning is slightly adapted from the "Phos Hilaron" on page 23 of "Enriching Our Worship I": the word "human" was added before "race."

<sup>8</sup> Throughout the liturgy, the prayers said by Reader 2 and at the end have been adapted from the "Liturgy for Lighting Advent Candles" from the United Church of Christ.

<sup>9</sup> Repeated antiphon from Psalm 80:3, 7, 18

# CHRISTMAS EVE OR CHRISTMAS DAY

## Lighting the Candle

Readings can be said by one or two people depending on the needs of your family or congregation.

*The first, second, third, and fourth candles are lit.*

*All:* Light of the world, in grace and beauty,  
Mirror of God's eternal face,  
Transparent flame of love's free duty,  
You bring salvation to our human race.<sup>10</sup>

*Reader 1:* Rejoice, people of God. The Light has come into the world. Sacred Mystery, we now light the candle of your nativity.

*The Christ candle is lit.*

*Reader 2:* With the company of heaven and with sounds of great joy, you come to us. Now is the time of celebration and joy.

*All:* Blessed Jesus, our Life and Light, thank you for coming this night (day) to us. Fill us with joy at your coming and make us instruments of your love. Help us to love those you loved, the least, the last, and the lost. Amen.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Throughout the liturgy, the prayer said at the beginning is slightly adapted from the "Phos Hilaron" on page 23 of "Enriching Our Worship I": the word "human" was added before "race."

<sup>11</sup> Throughout the liturgy, the prayers said by Reader 2 and at the end have been adapted from the "Liturgy for Lighting Advent Candles" from the United Church of Christ.