

SEEKING THE KINGDOM

CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

ADVENT READINGS, REFLECTIONS
AND ACTIONS ON HOPE, PEACE, JOY
AND LOVE

WEEK ONE, **HOPE**
NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 5

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Advent Week 1: Hope

Sunday, November 29

Day 1 : PRAYER - Light your HOPE candle.

Reading [Isaiah 9:2,6-7](#)

Prayer

God our Father,

you gave to Zechariah and Elizabeth in their old age
a son called John.

He grew up strong in spirit,
prepared the people for the coming of the Lord,
and baptized them in the Jordan to wash away their sins.

Help us, who have been baptized into Christ,
to be ready to welcome him into our hearts,
and to grow strong in faith by the power of the Spirit.

We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the light who is coming into the world.

Amen.

Response:

Lord Jesus, light of the world,
John told the people to prepare,
for you were very near.

As Christmas grows closer day by day,
help us to be ready to welcome you now.

Amen.

Monday November 30 Light your HOPE candle.

LEARNING

What does the first candle represent? It represents the hope of the people of Israel that someone would come save them, and the period of waiting for the birth of Christ. The first candle reminds us of the prophets' hope for God's salvation to come, as Isaiah prophesied.

THINK: If you were talking to someone who had never heard of hope, how would you describe it to them?

Try these sentence starters:

Hope is...

Hope is not...

Hope feels...

I have had hope when...

WATCH: To help us understand the significance of hope in faith, check out this video about the word hope in the bible:

<https://youtu.be/4WYNBjJSYvE>

READ: Isaiah 11:1-5

We wait, like the people of Israel, and we hope (or try to).

The people of Israel waited, and waited and....waited for God to come and make things better.

They (sometimes) put their hope in God because God had shown that he was faithful. 'Faithful' means being there for again and again, like how parents and good friends are there for us, everyday. God doesn't always do things the way we want. We know that the people of Israel sometimes got very frustrated and tired of waiting for God. It was the prophets--like Isaiah--who faithfully reminded the people that God would help them. They had Isaiah's words that a 'shoot would come up from the stump of Jesse'. Something new would emerge from something finished.

Today we are also waiting. Jesus, the Messiah, did come and yet, everything is not made right. Can you think of something that has not been made right?

We, like the people of Israel, need to be reminded to wait upon the Lord, that the Lord will help us. We need to hope.

In order to hope, we need to be clear about what hope is NOT.

Hope is not positivity, it is not pretending that everything is good when it's not. It's not wishing really hard for what we want. It's looking right at the things that are bad, looking at the things we're sad and mad and scared about, and trusting that God is still with us and will help us.

Hope is also not just waiting. Hope is something we work for and participate in. We can join in God's work here on earth--by loving people, by trying to make things right in our relationships with one another, by caring for people who need our help, and for the earth. We work to repair those things that make us sad and mad. We do this with others, because we can't do this on our own. We do it without any guarantee that it will turn out the way we want it to, but because we trust that God's vision for the world is one of peace and love. We act, in hope that people and our planet are becoming who we were created to be. That God is alive and moving us on to something better.

NOTICE: There are many examples in the Bible and in history and today of people who work in hope. Below are many examples. Can you add some?

Refer back to the prophets. How did they participate in hope for the Messiah? How did Jesus show us hope?

Our community garden was created and is maintained by members of our community who embody hope.

Other examples of practicing hope in our everyday lives include:

- runners in a marathon
- students studying math
- being at the beginning of a new lego project, new video game or art project
- In Lord of the Rings, Frodo and Sam and the others setting out to get the ring to Mount Doom.
- Harry, Ron and Hermione trying to find all seven horcruxes.

Hope propels us, pushes us forward, moves us to what's next. And when we set out to do something in hope, we are vulnerable. Hope does not guarantee an outcome. But hope is in trying, and in trusting that God is present in our hope.

BOOKS (please add your own suggestions)

I Am One, Susan Verde and Peter H) Reynolds
(check it out on youtube: <https://youtu.be/yLGdhvXuSUw>)

Tuesday December 1 Light your HOPE candle.

REFLECT ON HOPE

For today's reflection time on hope, gather paper, a pencil, markers or pencil crayons.

Begin by closing your eyes and taking 3 deep breaths, in through your nose and out through your mouth.

In your mind, think back to the day before. What do you remember about your discussion, what you heard or read? Did you see hope in a different way than you have before?

Take a blank piece of paper and write the word HOPE in the middle. What images come to mind? Draw pictures or write words to describe your thoughts. Provide a quiet space for each other to think and draw or write. Share your thoughts with the people with you or show your picture to someone at another time if you are on your own. What words or images did you include and why? How would you define the word? Write or talk about a definition. Consider taking a photo and posting your 'hope' pictures on the virtual scrapbook.

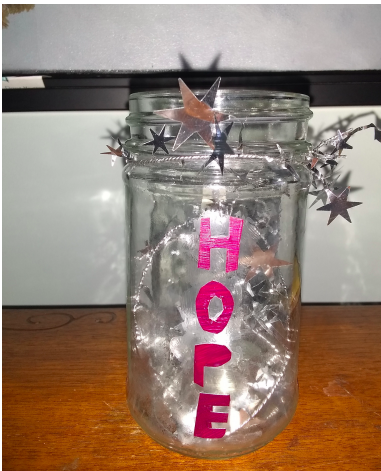
What's missing from your picture? Where are you having trouble finding hope? Is there a problem that seems unsolvable? Think about the world, your community, your family and yourself. Share those thoughts too.

How does your family 'do' hope? What do you do to solve problems or bring healing to people or the planet? Think about another person in your family. What do you notice about what they do? Tell them what you observe. Is there a new project or activity you would like to begin? Brainstorm some ideas.

As you finish, take 3 more deep breaths. Imagine breathing in the hope that the kingdom of God offers and as you breath out, imagine it pouring out into the world around you.

Wednesday December 2 - Light your HOPE candle.

CREATE - A HOPE LANTERN



Instructions for HOPE Lantern

Trace the letters for HOPE onto your magazine paper or coloured card stock (I used purple cardstock but magazine paper is easier to glue onto the jar).

Apply each letter to the jar with Mod Podge (it dries clear) or paper glue.

Cut a length of decorative, sparkly wire and twist into the jar. Drop a battery tea light into the jar.

If you wish, you can make a wire handle for your lantern by wrapping plain wire around the jar neck and attach another piece of wire to each side for the handle.

At night during Advent place your Hope Lantern in a window or on your porch and turn on the tea light as a reminder to your neighbours of the hope we have as we wait to celebrate Jesus's birth over 2000 years ago!

Thursday December 3

MEDITATE

Join us on Zoom for a live meditation at 7.30 pm (it will be about 15 minutes)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6590297609>

Or

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAgTmtul15RVEcFjsV99_dg

For a pre-recorded version

Or

Spend some time meditating on hope (you could use Isaiah 11:1-5 or another scripture passage) on your own or with your family.

Friday December 4 / Saturday December 5

ACTION

Plant an amaryllis bulb (or two, consider planting two and giving one to someone who needs a little hope). Amaryllis bulb kits can be purchased at grocery stores and markets. Plant the bulb and care for it over the next month (follow the directions on the box). Hopefully you will have a blossom by Christmas Day! As you watch the Amaryllis shoot up out of the bulb, sprout buds and blossom into a flower, let it remind you to continue your search for glimmers of hope in the world.