

*All:* May we keep the Lord near in hope.

*Reader Five:*

We present this loaf of bread symbolizing the staples of life.

For a tomorrow filled with shining potential and a realization of dreams coming true for all, where no limitations exist for the ability to get an education, adequate clothing, food and water, and where dignity is shared by everyone.

*All:* May we keep the Lord near in hope.

*Reader Six:*

We present this dove a universal symbol of peace.

For the coming of Emmanuel, God-with-us, who is our dearest hope for all great future.

*All:* May we keep the Lord near in hope.

*Reader Seven:*

We present this symbol of faith in Jesus' name.

Let us work towards *peace in our world*. Let us help the disadvantaged, the lonely, the sick in our own communities. Let us answer the call for hope through thoughtful action.

*All:* May we keep the Lord near in hope.

*Reader Eight:*

We present this circle of friends as a symbol of world unified in respect and love for each other.

Let us show respect to all people around us, both our near neighbors and those around the world.

*All:* May we keep the Lord near in hope.

*Reader Nine:*

We present this crib in great anticipation of the coming of Jesus our Savior.

May we share the anticipation of the Advent season as we look to the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

*Closing Prayer*

*All:*

Hope-filled God,

May we pray with hope

for a future of brightness.

May we live up to the potential

You have set for us.

May we answer the call of hope.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.



THE LORD IS NEAR....

HOPE

December - 1st week of Advent



# THE LORD IS NEAR... HOPE

## Reader One:

In the Catholic Church, Advent is the time to slow down and with patience as we await the arrival of Jesus' birth. This Advent and Christmas season bring a special closeness and nearness to our Lord. Yet in today's culture, Advent is

the time to hurry and get ready for Christmas. While it is important to us to be ready with gifts, we also need to be ready in our hearts to receive the greatest gift, the infant Jesus. Let us answer the call to be patient and to wait as Mary waited, with serene and hopeful heart. Jesus is near, take time this Advent to mold your heart into this Christmas season of hope, faith, Joy and love.



The Lord is  
NEAR....  
HOPE

## Preparation:

Prepare an Advent wreath with three purple (for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> week of Advent) and one pink candle (for 3<sup>rd</sup> week of Advent). While the first Advent candle is being lit, read the following prayer.

## Reader Two:

As we light the first Advent candle, we see God's light reflected from the past, shaping our present and shining with hope for the future.

Let us follow God's light of hope. Amen.

## Scripture reading:

*Isaiah 9; 2-4, 6-7: The Righteous Reign of the Coming King*

## Reader Three:

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

Those who lived in a land of deep darkness  
– on them the light has shined.

You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy;

They rejoice before you as with joy at harvest,  
as people exult when dividing their bounty.

For the yoke of their burden,  
And the bar across their shoulders,

The rod of their oppressor,  
You have bridle as on the day of Midian.

For a child has been born for us a son given to us;  
Authority rests upon his shoulders;

And he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually,  
And there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it  
With justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

**Reader Three:** The word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks to be God.

## Symbolic Action & Prayer

Prepare beforehand symbols that will bring hope into the world. As the Litany of Hope is read; after each stanza is read place a symbol that represents hope; for example stanza 1 a plant, spruce bough to represent life and freedom; stanza 2 – an article that represents the staples of life (food, clothing, shelter); stanza 3 – a dove to represent a symbol of peace; and so on...

**Litany:** Hope

**All:** May we keep the Lord near in hope.

## Reader Four:

We present this spruce bough to represent life & freedom. For a future when all share in Christ's vision of peace, where war-torn Nations become friends, where strangers Reach out to help their neighbors, where Kindness abounds.

