

“A Journey to Christmas”

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Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all Scriptures are from the NKJV Bible.

On this Christmas Eve, we light the final candle in our Advent wreath, the candle that represents Christ.

- HOPE to the doubting and fearful,
- LOVE when we least expect it but need it most,
- JOY to the hurting, and
- PEACE to the broken and storm-tossed.

## HOPE

We began Advent with a journey of hope.

**“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.** It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek” Hebrews 6:19-20 (NIV).

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” Hebrews 13:8 (NIV).

- Let’s place our hope in the God who never changes, whose story is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Our hope in Him will be fulfilled.

## LOVE

The second week of Advent led us on a journey of love.

“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

“And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.” 1 John 4:9-11, 16 (NIV).

- Today love fuels our relationship with God. It is our motivation, and we live out the love of God in us by loving others.

## **JOY**

Our third journey of Advent has been a journey of joy.

Luke 2:8-14 “Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’”

- The good news of great joy was that Jesus, the Savior of the world, was born.

## **PEACE**

The journey of peace has been our fourth and final journey of Advent.

Isaiah 9:6-7a “For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end...”

John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

- Peace is not the absence of conflict or trouble but the presence of God in our lives.

## **CHRIST OUR SAVIOR IS BORN**

Today we light a candle for Christ. The journey of hope, love, joy, and peace has led us to the same place—a manger in Bethlehem where the source of all good gifts lies. Jesus, the Son of God, is our hope, love, joy, and peace!

The star marked Jesus’ arrival, but *He* is the true light of the world!

John 8:12 “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’”