

Advent can be a great season to focus on a time of daily, or weekly reflection. A traditional Advent wreath would have 3 blue or purple candles, one pink, and one white for the center. The colors are nice to have, but you can really use whatever you have on hand; they can all be the same color, even. I would arrange 4 around the one, forming a circle. Light one additional candle each week; all on Christmas Eve and Day.

As you light first the candle, say to yourself, "Peace is born." The following weeks, "Peace is born. Joy is born," etc. Follow that with the same response we say as the candles on our wreath are lit on Sunday mornings:

**Fill us with your peace and light, make the world so calm and bright.**

I would encourage you to just focus on one word a week. There are some suggested, perhaps random, questions included here – they're only a beginning. Many people like to write their thoughts or answers down. Let your imagination go, and be as innovative as you're comfortable being. As you're out and about, you might ask yourself, "Where do I see peace (joy, love, hope)?" each week.

Close your time with: **I go with God into this day/night. May the Spirit guide my way. May I offer [peace, joy, love, hope, light] to all I greet. Like Christ, seeing God in all I meet. Amen.**

Starters – to think or write about.

### **Week 1 PEACE – blue**

- What does peace look like? What makes you feel peaceful?*
- Who might need peace that you can personally reach out to?*
- Listen to one you usually don't. Listen with care. What did you hear between the words. You don't need to share your thoughts about this with them. It's about practicing "listening to really hear".*
- Say a prayer for peace in a place that needs peace.*
- Do something new that makes you feel peaceful. Could this become a habit?*

### **Week 2 JOY – blue**

- What does joy look like? How is joy different from being happy?*
- What causes you to feel joy?*
- What's the most amazing thing you saw today? Was that joyful?*
- Who might need joy? What would help them feel joy?*
- Listen to or sing a song about joy or that makes you feel joyful.*
- Consider doing something that gives unexpected joy to another.*
- What if you were with the shepherds in the field? What would you have said to them? To others? Would you feel joyful?*

### **Week 3 LOVE – pink**

- What does love look like? What or who do you love?*
- God loves you. How do you know that?*
- How could you let others know that they are loved, besides telling them?*
- Call or visit someone you love and let them know you love them.*
- Consciously act with love towards a person you don't know.*
- Think about a person that aggravates you with eyes of care, concern, and love  
What questions or thoughts come to mind? Next steps?*

### **Week 4 HOPE – purple** (hope has to do with things that are possible; wishing is more for things that are impossible or unlikely)

- What do you hope for? Is there something you've had to wait a long time for?*
- Who in the world might need to hear words of hope?*
- Whoin your life? How can you help someone feel hopeful?*
- Write a card to someone giving them hope.*
- How can you be an agent of hope for those in the world you'll never know?  
Can you do something specific?*
- What injustice in the world do you hope can be changed? How can you live  
into that hope?*

### **Christmas Eve - LIGHT – white candle, put it in the center.**

- How are the candles of Advent - hope, love, peace, and joy - all connected?*
- Think about trying to get around in the dark. How do you manage?  
Are there changes your ought/should/could make?*
- What parts of your life feel dark? Wonder, ponder, imagine... now what?*
- Jesus said "You are a light in the world" - how can you shine your light, God's love, for others?*

You're invited to a time of candlelight, readings, and music, December 20, @6pm. This Longest Night Service (about 30 minutes) will be a pause to remember (or lean into) those times in our lives when it feels the light is dim, or even feels gone.

Unexpected changes, sadness, loss and grieving make peace, joy, love and hope difficult to grasp onto. Yet, the days get longer; there are a few more minutes of light each day. Slowly, we can be renewed. God's love in and through us can be rekindled. Grace sustains us. God holds us, even in our darkness.

Christmas Eve Service w/candles, carols and communion is at 7pm in Eagle Grove and 5pm in Goldfield.