

Did you know . . .

First Sunday of Advent

The first Sunday of Advent symbolizes **HOPE** with the Prophecy or Prophet's candle, in remembrance of the prophets, primarily Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ. The first purple candle is lit representing hope or expectation in anticipation of the coming Messiah.

Hope is a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen. Hope, from the Latin *spēs*, is confident that what is desired will certainly be attained. Yet, it is not easily obtained; it requires effort to overcome whatever obstacles stand in the way.

The Bible has a lot to say about hope. The word hope in English often conveys doubt (e.g. I hope I feel better tomorrow), but the biblical hope is a confident assurance based upon a sure foundation for which we wait with joy and full confidence:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11)

“To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27)

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans (5:13)

For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?

But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. (Romans 8:24-25)

Prayer

“Gracious God, as the Advent season begins, we cry out to you. We come to you looking for hope. When everything else we rely on fails us, our only hope is in you. When we do not understand what has happened, we hope in you. We can hope for better days because we trust you. We know you and we know you are here with us no matter what we are facing. Some of us see only darkness this time of year. Some of us find life overwhelming. Some of us are filled with Advent joy. Wherever we find ourselves today, Loving God, remind us that our hope is in you. Be with us on this journey. Amen.” [Liturgylink Nov. 2014]

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