

**Foothills United Methodist Church**  
**www.FoothillsUMC.org**

**Do Not Be Afraid -- Advent Candle Liturgy**

*NOTE: The "Reader 1" and "Reader 2" are referred to in the script to indicate where/when you alternate the readers, but you can divide up the reading however you'd like. You also need to determine who will light the candles.*

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**Week 1 – November 29, 2020**

Reader 1: As Advent begins, the scriptures speak to us of waiting. We are waiting for God, for the birth of hope, for the arrival of new life.

Reader 2: "Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven" (Mark 13:26-27).

Reader 1: As we wait, we prepare our hearts to receive the gifts God brings. We ask God to shape us, so that our lives may be ready for the coming of the Son of Man.

Reader 2: We watch for the signs that tell us that God is near.

Reader 1: In our waiting, we will not be afraid to open our hearts to God's presence.

Reader 2: We will hold on to hope that God's love breaks in over and over again.

All: On this first Sunday of Advent, we light a candle of hope that burns brightly in the darkness. Do not be afraid to hold hope.  
(Light 1 purple candle.)

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**Week 2 – December 6, 2020**

Reader 1: Signs of hope and peace come from many places.

Reader 2: They can come from family, angels, and answered prayer.

Reader 1: "When Zechariah saw the angel Gabriel, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard'" (Luke 1:12-13).

Reader 2: Elizabeth and Zechariah's courageous prayer for a son is finally answered.

Reader 1: Their son, John, will prepare the way for the peace of Christ to enter the world.

Reader 2: We join with them as courageous peacemakers who aren't afraid to bring peace into the world.

All: On this second Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of peace, to show that we extend the peace of Christ to all people. Do not be afraid to bring peace.  
(Light 2 purple candles.)

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### **Week 3** – December 13, 2020

Reader 1: As we draw near to the year's end, we may be fearful of what comes next. We often fear the unknown.

Reader 2: Fear can prevent us from experiencing hope, peace, and joy.

Reader 1: Joy seems like a luxury this year, but joy will help us get through the perplexing times.

Reader 2: When Mary saw the angel Gabriel, she was perplexed, and he said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God."

Reader 1: Mary found joy in the nearness of the Lord. Even though she was unsure about the future, she cultivated joy by trusting that "nothing will be impossible with God."

Reader 2: We will not be afraid to trust God to bring joy into our lives.

All: On this third Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of joy to remind us that God's presence brings joy. Do not be afraid to practice joy.  
(Light 2 purple candles and the pink candle.)

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### **Week 4** – December 20, 2020

Reader 1: Mary makes the journey to share her news with Elizabeth, a family member whom she loves.

Reader 2: Elizabeth joins in with Mary's hope, peace, joy, and love.

Reader 1: Mary responds to the Lord with praise: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."

Reader 2: When she faces what seems to be an impossible task, she chooses to love and responds with praise to God.

Reader 1: She was not afraid to open her heart to receive the love that is about to come.

Reader 2: We will not be afraid to respond to God's love with praise.

All: On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of love to show that we open our hearts to God's love. Do not be afraid to choose love.  
(Light 3 purple candles and the pink candle.)

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### **Christmas Eve – December 24, 2020**

Reader 1: On this holy night, we will hear a story that changes our lives, yet change can be terrifying.

Reader 2: The shepherds were terrified when the glory of the Lord shone around them. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people."

Reader 1: The candles on our wreath also remind us to not be afraid. This one reminds us to not fear the bad news around us and put our hope in the promise that a better world is coming.  
(Light a purple candle.)

Reader 2: This one reminds us to not be afraid of the tough choices and changes that need to come before we have peace in the world.  
(Light a second purple candle.)

Reader 1: This pink candle reminds us that we do not have to fear the unknown future. We trust the joy that Christ brings.  
(Light the pink candle.)

Reader 2: This last candle reminds us that when we work past the fear by choosing love, we can see God's love fill the world. (Light the last purple candle.)

Reader 1: We light the Christ candle as a sign that Christ brings hope, peace, joy, and love into the world to heal our past, to calm our present fears, and to give us a future.  
(Light the center candle.)

All: Do not be afraid. God is with us.