

## **A prayer for the first week of Advent on the theme of Hope**

Nothing is too difficult, too messy, or too dirty and off-putting for you, God.

Your son, Jesus came to give us the gift of eternal life through the salvation that only you, our Heavenly Father, can give when we believe on your Son, repent of our sins, and confess Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.

All-powerful God, your eternal Word took flesh on our earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of your plan. Lift our minds in ever-watchful hope to hear the voice which announces his glory and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for his coming. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Hope is a central theme, along with joy, love and peace, to the four week long season of Advent. Hope requires reflection throughout the next four weeks which end on Xmas eve. It is a foundation for our belief that Jesus is coming into our hearts and into the world. This first week prepares us to be people of hope and to believe that darkness will not prevail, but the light of the world will overcome it.

The four advent candles we light at this season Each represents something different— hope, joy, love and peace; there is beauty and great comfort in reflecting upon how Jesus delivers these virtues to the world and to our lives.

During this first week of Advent we call to mind the gift of hope we have in Christ. The prophets of Israel all spoke of the coming of Christ, of how a saviour would be born, a king in the line of David. They spoke of how he would rule the world wisely and bless all nations. As followers of Christ, we wait - with hope - for his return. As we light our advent candles, we remember that it was from the manger at Bethlehem that he came and gave light to the world. This week, As we light the candle representing hope, we are reminded to be alert and to watch for the light of Christ even in the most unlikely places and the least likely people.

At this time there is so much conflict and corruption in the world that maintaining hope is challenged constantly. Wars in Ukraine, the Middle East, several countries in Africa and elsewhere are a test of love for the omniscience of our Loving God; as is the ever present scourge of grand corruption, yet we thank you for the hope you give us. Help us prepare our hearts for the Lord's coming by being open , by seeing the light of Christ in others. We ask this , during the season of hope in his second advent, in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord and Saviour.

Amen.