Lighting of the Advent Candles

Reader 1: Today we begin Advent—a season of waiting, watching, and preparing. We bring with us a world marked by conflict, grief, uncertainty, loneliness, and weariness.

Reader 2: We do not pretend the darkness is gone. We trust, instead, that darkness will not overcome the light. The prophet Isaiah speaks of people walking in darkness who see a great light, and the Gospel calls us to stay awake and watch for God's coming. We light the first candle, the candle of hope. *(The first purple candle is lit.)*

Congregation: We light this candle trusting that God is at work—in our communities, among those who are overlooked, and wherever compassion and courage take root.

Reader 1& 2: May this light help us recognize signs of hope, however small, and remember that we do not wait alone.

Congregation: God of hope, steady our hearts when the way feels uncertain. Give us courage to keep watch, strength to care for one another, and faith to follow your light. Amen.

Call to Action: This week, reach out to someone who may be carrying a burden. Offer your attention, encouragement, or practical help—and let your hope become a source of hope for someone else.

Candle Lighting Music "Light the Advent Candle" *(1st stanza)*

Light the Advent candle one
Now the waiting has begun
We have started on our way
Time to think of Christmas day.

Chorus:
Candle, candle burning bright
Shining in the cold winter night
Candle, candle burning bright
Fill our hearts with Christmas light.

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