

Lighting the Second Advent Candle

Opening

As we begin, we light the single candle and say, *Jesus Christ is the light of the world. A light no darkness can extinguish.*

Gathering

God of all Creation, what do you require of us?

To do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.

To do justice, seeking peace & reconciliation, standing with those who are forgotten.

To love kindness, showing compassion and unconditional caring for those in need.

To walk humbly, following in the steps of Jesus, not looking for praise for our own work but giving praise to you.

Today we light the second candle, the candle for Peace. It reminds us that Jesus is called the Prince of Peace who brings peace into our hearts and asks us to be people of peace to those around us.

- Light two blue/purple candles and sit for a moment of silence.

Christ our Peace,

Glow brightly in each moment.

Enlighten our vision so that we see beyond all of the trouble and all of the conflict in our world and see the peace that you give.

Relieve us, if just for a moment, of our worries and stress.

We await your coming with quietness.

Amen.

Isaiah 11:1

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

Story

Hello, hello, hellooooo, I'm Gabriel Goat! It's great to get to gallop and gab with you today! I glean from the glen that you got to meet my friend Kawvaw Cow? Good gracious that's grand. Kawvaw's wonderful, but a little laid back. If it's energy and adventure you're after, you should come play with me. Goats are the clowns of the barnyard. We love to run and jump and climb. We are escape artists – we can get out of almost any pen. We love to play and love to laugh. And we are great companions. Good with children, kind to adults, smart and funny. Not to mention we also provide milk, to drink or make into cheese, and all that good dairy food to a family.

We can also work! We pull carts, eat weeds and will even clear a field of poison ivy! So you humans can roam safely when we are around.

We are in my favourite season of the year right now – Advent! I love Advent because there is so much to do while we prepare for the birth of Jesus. And speaking for goat-kind – we love to work! And the more the merrier, so when family comes to visit, that's even better for us.

Speaking of visiting, that's the part of Jesus' story that I'm going to tell. You'll remember from Kawvaw Cow that the angel Gabriel came to visit Mary at the beginning of the story. That's who I'm named after – Gabriel Goat! Gabriel means "God is my strength" and the angel Gabriel is God's messenger, sharing good news. So, I guess that makes me a good news goat!

Here is my part of the story. After the angel Gabriel left Mary, Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was also pregnant. Sometimes it's important, when you are experiencing something new, or something big in your life, to find others who are going through the same thing, so you can talk about it and support each other. Well, when Mary arrived at Elizabeth's, Elizabeth began to laugh. She said, "Mary, as soon as I heard your voice, the baby inside me leaped with joy! Blessed are you."

Now, we goats know all about leaping for joy, don't we? Well, that baby, who leaped for joy when he heard Mary's voice, grew up to be John the Baptist, a great, energetic prophet who travelled from place to place, bringing people joy and peace.

Mary replied to Elizabeth's laughter and blessing with a beautiful song – a song that is sung to this day. It is called The Magnificat – but don't worry, it's not about cats, today is all about goats. This song is about how we become bigger, more joyful, more peaceful creatures when we focus on God. Mary's song reminds us that God lifts up the poor and fills hungry people with good things.

That's what I do – I fill people with good things. Good things like milk and cheese, but also safe fields and good company, and most of all, laughter.