

Inclusive, At-Home Advent Practice



In Pagan and witchy communities there's an ancient Yule time practice of making wreaths from evergreens. These wreaths are symbolic of the Wheel of Life, the cyclic nature of seasons unfolding and the celebrations (re)visited with each turn of the year. These wreaths, reminders of the eternal, the evergreen, were hung on doors or laid horizontally and decorated with candles. Maybe you've seen these before or made one yourself? This witchy practice is the root of what later became known as the Advent Wreath in Christian communities.

Whatever holidays and celebrations of light are central to your own life of practice this December, we invite you to light a candle each week and to wonder at that which you understand as the eternal, the evergreen. Some additional weekly words of wisdom, practices, and questions are included below. May this bring more joy and more peace to your heart and home this season and to the world we love and share.

For the Evening of Sunday December 3rd and the week that follows:

This week we engage with HOPE within our monthly theme of MYSTERY

As you light a candle in your home, you might offer these words aloud:

“Look well to the growing edge! All around us worlds are dying and new worlds are being born; all around us life is dying and life is being born. The fruit ripens on the tree, the roots are silently at work in the darkness of the earth against a time when there shall be new leaves, fresh blossoms, green fruit. Such is the growing edge! It is the extra breath from the exhausted lung, the one more thing to try when all else has failed, the upward reach of life when weariness closes in upon all endeavor. This is the basis of hope in moments of despair, the incentive to carry on when times are out of joint and men have lost their reason, the source of confidence when worlds crash and dreams whiten into ash. The birth of the child — life’s most dramatic answer to death — this is the growing edge incarnate. Look well to the growing edge!”

From the Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman

(Mystic, Scholar, Theologian, Activist, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “wacky uncle”)

You might ask yourself, your family, or those gathered at your table:

Where does hope come from? Does hope have a source?

You might draw a picture of the source of hope as you imagine it.

For the Evening of Sunday December 10th and the week that follows:

This week we engage with PREPARATION within our monthly theme of MYSTERY

As you light a candle in your home, you might offer these words aloud:

AUM MANI PADME HUM

Translation/Interpretation: Through practice, transformation becomes possible

You might ask yourself, your family, or those gathered at your table:

What are you getting ready for? What are you practicing in your life right now?

You might turn inwards and use your imagination:

Imagine that all of your preparations have been made, everything that needed doing has been done, and you can just be here in the present moment – no lists, no worries. How do you feel? What do you notice?

For the Evening of Sunday December 17th and the week that follows:

This week we engage with JOY within our monthly theme of MYSTERY

As you light a candle in your home, you might offer these words aloud:

Admit something:

Everyone you see, you say to them, "Love me."

Of course you do not do this out loud, otherwise
someone would call the cops.

Still, though, think about this, this great pull in us
to connect.

Why not become the one who lives with a
full moon in each eye that is always saying,

with that sweet moon language, what every other
eye in this world is dying to hear?

“With that Moon Language” by Hafiz

You might ask yourself, your family, or those gathered at your table:

Remember a time when you felt really full of joy? What are you remembering? How do you like to
spread joy to others?

You might practice the Breath of Joy that we’ve practiced together in the sanctuary. It goes like this:

Take three inhales through your nose (three little sips of air to fill your lungs), and then one big exhale
through the mouth (feel free to include some audible sighing)

- First Inhale, swing your arms forward and straight up with elbows by ears
- Second Inhale, swing your arms out wide to the side until the elbows are by ears
- Third Inhale, swing your arms forward and straight up with elbows by ears
- On the Exhale, let your arms float down very slowly

Repeat

For the Evening of Sunday December 24th and the week that follows:

This week we engage with LOVE within our monthly theme of MYSTERY

As you light a candle in your home, you might offer these words aloud:

All day long a little burro labors, sometimes
with heavy loads on her back and sometimes just with worries
about things that bother only
burros.

And worries, as we know, can be more exhausting
than physical labor.

Once in a while a kind monk comes
to her stable and brings
a pear, but more
than that,

he looks into the burro's eyes and touches her ears
and for a few seconds the burro is free
and even seems to laugh,
because love does
that.

Love frees.

“Love Does That” by Meister Eckhart

You might ask yourself, your family, or those gathered at your table:

What do you know about love? How do you know it?

May we all know the love we are made from and made for.

May we be blessed, and may we be a blessing.