

Candle Lighting Liturgies for Worship

First Sunday of Advent: Hope

Scripture reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16 (NIV)

¹⁴ “‘The days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah.

¹⁵ “‘In those days and at that time
I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line;
he will do what is just and right in the land.

¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved
and Jerusalem will live in safety.

This is the name by which it will be called:
The LORD Our Righteous Savior.’”

Responsive Reading:

Leader: Today we mark the beginning of the Advent season, entering into a season of Hope. In celebration we light the candles of the advent wreath, one each time we gather for worship. Every week, we add to those lit the week before, and as the light grows brighter, our hope draws nearer.

Congregation: The first candle is a candle of hope. Our hope is in the long-awaited Jesus, who first came to us as a baby. As we reflect on the ways and the whys of our hope, instill in us, Lord, a joy that knows no bounds. The joy that comes in welcoming new life.

Leader: On this first Sunday, we reflect on the reasonableness of our hope. We long for the coming savior, and we need the hope he brings. As a tender shoot emerges from the stump of a tree that has been felled, we can see the hope of new life that comes from meeting Jesus in our Advent journey.

Congregation: God, meet us in the midst of our hoping. Give us the assurance that what you have promised us will come to pass. Forgive us for those times when we are tempted to despair, and light the fire of your hope in our hearts once more!

Leader: Every promise God has made is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. In him, our hope is sure! (2 Corinthians 1:20)

Hymn: “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus,” verse 1¹

Original:

Come thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free
From our sins and fears release us; let us find our rest in thee
Israel’s strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth thou art.
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Optional:

Jesus, we are ready for you, free us from this web we’re in
Stuck in patterns of wrong-doing, tired and weary from our sins
Promised leader from David’s family, bring hope to all the world
Each race and people sing your praises, joy to every boy and girl!

¹ Words by Charles Wesley, 1744. Music by Rowland H. Pritchard, 1830, harmony from The English Hymnal, 1906. Alternative words by Rev. Chris Haughee, 2021.

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1. Come, thou long - ex - spect - ed Je - sus, born to set thy
2. Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and

peo - ple free; from our fears and sins re - lease us,
yet a King, born to reign in us for - ev - er,

let us find our rest in thee. Is - rael's strength and con - so -
now thy gra - cious king - dom bring. By thine own e - ter - nal

la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art; dear de - sire of
spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone; by thine all suf -

ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
fi - cient mer - it, raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

WORDS: Charles Wesley, 1744
MUSIC: Rowland H. Prichard, 1830; harm. from *The English Hymnal*, 1906

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Second Sunday of Advent: Faith

Scripture Reading: Malachi 3:1-4 (NIV)

“I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.

² But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, ⁴ and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.

Responsive Reading:

Leader: Today we continue our journey towards Christmas, steadily moving closer to birth of the Christ child, the source of our hope and the subject of our deep longings. In Christ we place our faith

Congregation: The second candle is a candle of faith. Our faith shines brightly in the midst of the darkness of our doubt. Our faith affirms that in the middle of our wondering, our questioning, God’s love for us is constant.

Leader: God loved us enough to send his one and only son, born to us, the Savior of the world! God’s initiative in seeking us out in love, finds us, refines us, as makes our doubts and fears the fertile soil in which our faith grows.

Congregation: Jesus, your grace extends to meet us wherever we are today. Thank you. We trust in you, and in your love our faith is secure.

Leader: Help us, God, to live into greater relationship with you as we draw nearer to Christmas morning. Amen.

Hymn: "Come, Thou long expected Jesus," verse 2

Original:

Joy to those who long to see thee, Dayspring from on high, appear
Come, thou promised Rod of Jesse, of Thy birth we long to hear!
O'er the hills the angels singing news, Glad tidings of a birth
"Go to him, your praises bringing; Christ the Lord has come to Earth."

Optional:

John came to prepare your way, Lord, opening both our hearts and minds
Align our lives with holy purpose, leaving selfish ways behind
Singing, sharing, hoping, telling, finding ways to share the news
Dear promised child, you're coming quickly! May we all make room for you.

Third Sunday of Advent: Joy

Scripture Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-20

¹⁴ Sing, Daughter Zion;
shout aloud, Israel!
Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
Daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵ The LORD has taken away your punishment,
he has turned back your enemy.
The LORD, the King of Israel, is with you;
never again will you fear any harm.

¹⁶ On that day
they will say to Jerusalem,
“Do not fear, Zion;
do not let your hands hang limp.

¹⁷ The LORD your God is with you,
the Mighty Warrior who saves.
He will take great delight in you;
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,
but will rejoice over you with singing.”

¹⁸ “I will remove from you
all who mourn over the loss of your appointed festivals,
which is a burden and reproach for you.

¹⁹ At that time I will deal
with all who oppressed you.

I will rescue the lame; I will gather the exiles.
I will give them praise and honor
in every land where they have suffered shame.

²⁰ At that time I will gather you;
at that time I will bring you home.
I will give you honor and praise
among all the peoples of the earth
when I restore your fortunes^[a]
before your very eyes,”
says the LORD.

Responsive Reading:

Leader: Today we light the third candle along with the others we have lit in weeks now past. The first was hope, the second faith, and now we celebrate our joy in Christ.

Congregation: This third candle, the candle of joy, is an expression of both our hope and faith. Even when life is hard and the days are dark, our joy is in the Lord.

Leader: This Kingdom of God is breaking into our darkness, the light of Christ dispelling our fear. We trust in something more than what our eyes can see, in that which faith holds dear.

Congregation: God, you gather your people from among all the nations and you replace our shame with gladness. In you we have found our home, our safe place. Our rest in you is our everlasting joy!

Hymn: "Come, Thou long expected Jesus," verse 3

Original:

Come to earth to taste our sadness, He whose glories knew no end;
By His life He brings us gladness, Our redeemer, Shepherd, Friend.
Leaving riches without number, born within a cattle stall
This the everlasting wonder, Christ was born the Lord of all.

Optional:

Come to earth to feel our hurting, his love and power have no end
Jesus' way brings healing gladness, redeems us and now calls us friends
Set aside the feasts of heaven, came to dine with me and you
Holy baby in the manger, come to the world making all things new.

Fourth Sunday of Advent: Peace

Scripture Reading: Micah 5:2-4 (NIV)

² “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times.”

³ Therefore Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,
and the rest of his brothers return
to join the Israelites.

⁴ He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they will live securely, for then his greatness
will reach to the ends of the earth.

Responsive Reading:

Leader: As we light the fourth candle we recall our journey thus far. Our hopeful longing led to our faith in the Light of the World: our savior, Jesus. In the birth of this baby, we find the joy of new life. Now, we celebrate the peace and rest we find in Jesus.

Congregation: Our peace remains throughout each trial because our hope rests in a love that lasts forever. We know what love is because God has loved us, sending his son to live among us. God’s love is our peace.

Leader: This love compels a response. We have seen the promise of peace in the child of Bethlehem. We have seen our God reward the humble and exalt the weak.

Congregation: God, we respond to your invitation. God, we open our hearts to your gift of grace. Meet us in our weakness and our humility and be our strength. Make us new and fill us with the peace that rests in your love which lasts forever and ever.

Leader: Lord, receive our praise today. Hear our hearts as we sing of our love for you.

Hymn: "Come, Thou long expected Jesus," verse 4

Original:

Born thy people to deliver, Born a child and yet a king
Born to reign in us forever, Now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thy own eternal spirit; rule in all our hearts alone
By thine all sufficient merit, Raise us to thy glorious throne.

Optional:

Born for us and for our neighbor, born a child but still our king
Born to rule in love and justice, now with praise your people sing
With the presence of your Spirit, take first place in heart and mind
You alone unite us to heaven, where perfect peace and joy we find.

Christmas Eve

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7 (NIV)

²The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

³You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.

⁴For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.

⁵Every warrior's boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.

⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.

Responsive Reading:

Leader: Our journey of hope, faith, joy and peace brings us here. Our searching for light and life culminates with the birth of our Savior, Jesus the Christ. Tonight we light the Christ candle.

Congregation: Jesus Christ is our hope. God has kept his promise and renewed our faith. Our hearts are filled with joy and our souls are at peace. The promise of a Savior is fulfilled this night!

Leader: Because Christ has come, we can live beyond mere circumstance. Now we live into the truth that the Light of the World has come. By this light we see the way.

Congregation: God, in Jesus we see the Word made flesh. In knowing Jesus, we find our rest. We set our burdens aside and kneel at his manger bed.

Leader: Born to us and the whole world is the long-expected Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. In Jesus we have security and the assurance that God keeps his promise of love to us. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! (2nd Corinthians 9:15)

Hymn: "Come, Thou long expected Jesus," Verses 1-4

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3. Come to earth to taste our sadness, He whose glories knew no end;
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This the everlasting wonder, Christ was born the Lord of all.
4. Born thy people to deliver, Born a child and yet a king
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By thy own eternal spirit; rule in all our hearts alone
By thine all sufficient merit, Raise us to thy glorious throne.

Optional wording by Rev. Chris Haughee:

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Each race and people sing your praises, joy to every boy and girl!
2. John came to prepare your way, Lord, opening both our hearts and minds
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