



Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy 2022

BY DEREK WEBER



First Sunday of Advent, Year A: November 27, 2022

UP TO RESTORATION

Isaiah 2:1-5, Psalm 122

Reader One: "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'" (Psalm 122:1 NRSV)

Reader Two: We are glad. Whether we drove in or climbed up, whether we logged on or tuned in. We are glad to be here in this community, with this family. It is a place of joyful hope, of radical welcome. It is a place where, together, we can wait in wondrous anticipation of the kingdom to come.

Reader One: "Many peoples shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that God may teach us God's ways and that we may walk in

Gods paths'” (Isaiah 2:3 NRSV).

Reader Two: We light this candle as a sign of our hope, our joyous hope that we can be restored – our faith restored, our strength restored, our confidence restored, our joy restored as we watch and wait with all God’s people for the promise to be fulfilled.

Light the first candle on the Advent wreath.

Second Sunday of Advent: December 4, 2022

STAND AS A SIGNAL

Isaiah 11:1-10, Romans 15:4-13, Matthew 3:1-12

Reader One: “They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious” (Isaiah 11:9-10 NRSV).

Reader Two: We are the followers of that root of Jesse Isaiah spoke of. We are the ones who are now called to stand as a signal to the world, to all of creation, that peace is the will of the one who created us. Peace is the knowledge of the Lord that we proclaim from sea to shining sea.

Reader One: “In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea proclaiming. “Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” And “bear fruit worthy of repentance” (Matthew 3:1,2, 8 NRSV).

Reader Two: We light these candles, the candle of joyful hope and the candle of proclaimed peace, in part to remind ourselves that we are a people rising toward God’s promise. But we also light them as a sign to the world, an announcement there are some who hold on to hope and there are some who work the ways of peace. We stand as a sign that Emmanuel is still our fervent prayer.

Light two candles of the Advent wreath.

Third Sunday of Advent: December 11, 2022

THE LORD’S HIGHWAY

Isaiah 35:1-10, Psalm 146:5-10

Reader One: “The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing . . . A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray . . . And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Isaiah 35:1-2, 8, 10 NRSV).

Reader Two: The prophet Isaiah tells us about the joy of ascending to God’s house. The prophet tells us to imagine being set free, being unburdened, being released to live, to fully live in the grace and wonder of life itself, surrounded by those who love us like no one else. And then he tells us that the journey to get there is just as much a joy.

Reader One: The Psalmist says “Happy are these whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord . . . who made heaven and earth . . . who keeps faith . . . who executes justice . . . gives food . . . sets prisoners free . . . opens eyes . . . lifts up . . . watches over . . . upholds . . . The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!” (Psalm 146 NRSV)

Reader Two: We light these candles, the candle of joyous hope, of proclaimed peace, and of deep and everlasting joy, as a sign that we are those who walk with a skip in our step because we can see the destination, and it is pure joy. We are ascending to God’s promise.

Light three candles on the Advent wreath. If using a rose or pink-colored candle in the wreath, this is the time to light that one.

Fourth Sunday of Advent: December 18, 2022

GIVE YOU A SIGN

Isaiah 7:10-16, Matthew 1:18-25

Reader One: Isaiah said that the Lord spoke to the king and said, “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven” (Isaiah 7:11 NRSV). But when the king refused, God would not be stopped. “Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14 NRSV).

Reader Two: God wants us to know, even when we aren’t sure ourselves. God wants us to experience God’s presence, even when we think we can handle life on our own. God sends us signs of God’s presence with us; all we need to do is keep our eyes open and look.

Reader One: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, 'God is with us.'" When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus (Matthew 1:23-25 NRSV).

Reader Two: We light these candles, the candle of joyous hope, of proclaimed peace, of deep everlasting joy, and today of presence that speaks of love, as a sign that no matter our circumstance, we know we are not alone.

Light all four candles of the Advent wreath.

Christmas Eve, Year A: December 24, 2022

This year, we are offering two Christmas Eve Candle-lighting liturgies. The first is written for general use on Christmas Eve. The second is written for use alongside the preaching notes for Christmas Eve that are part of the "God of the Dark and the Light" worship series.

OUR CHRISTMAS AFFIRMATION

Advent hope moves us; Advent love leads us; Advent joy stirs us; Advent peace stills us, that we might affirm our King Jesus.

It is time we set flame to this Advent affirmation by lighting the Christ Candle.

We believe that Jesus is the Son of God. He was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judea. He was the long-awaited Messiah whose coming was prophesied. The same Jesus lives today in our hearts. He deserves our highest loyalty and total commitment. In Jesus Christ, our hope is fulfilled; our love is consummated; our joy is complete; and our peace is sealed.

Rejoice, a Savior is born.

A savior is born, indeed. Joy to the world!

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLE-LIGHTING LITURGY

We have heard the call to keep watch. But what are we keeping watch over? Maybe we're looking for something that will define us, something that will remake us, transform us. Some relationship, some hope, some love that will make us new. Maybe we're looking for the gift we remember this night.

O holy Child of Bethlehem / Descend to us, we pray / Cast out our sin and enter in / Be born to us today / We hear the Christmas angels / The great glad tidings tell / O come to us, abide with us / Our Lord Emmanuel (*sung or said*)

What we go out to see in the muddle of our world is not necessarily the Christ child or the light that glows within. No, I think what we watch over is the world that he came to save: the masses of humanity who think they can find salvation in the stuff of this life, like we know we do sometimes. When we forget. A world that has room for a Savior, even when we've forgotten it. And part of what we're keeping watch for is to see whether we can make room—room for grace, room for joy, room for peace, even at our worst. At our most needy. And most helpful, and grace-filled. Keep watch.

Let us light these candles and complete this circle as we rejoice in the light that shines in the darkness and declare with joy and with hope –

Joy to the world, the Lord has come! Hallelujah. Amen.

Advent & Christmas

Liturgy

Rev. Dr. Derek Weber, Director of Preaching Ministries, served churches in Indiana and Arkansas and the British Methodist Church. His PhD is from University of Edinburgh in preaching and media. He has taught preaching in seminary and conference settings for more than 20 years.

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Two New Advent Pieces for Choir and Congregation

Sally Ahner has a B.A. in Music from Salem College (Winston-Salem, North Carolina), where she studied piano and organ, and an M.A. in music theor. . .