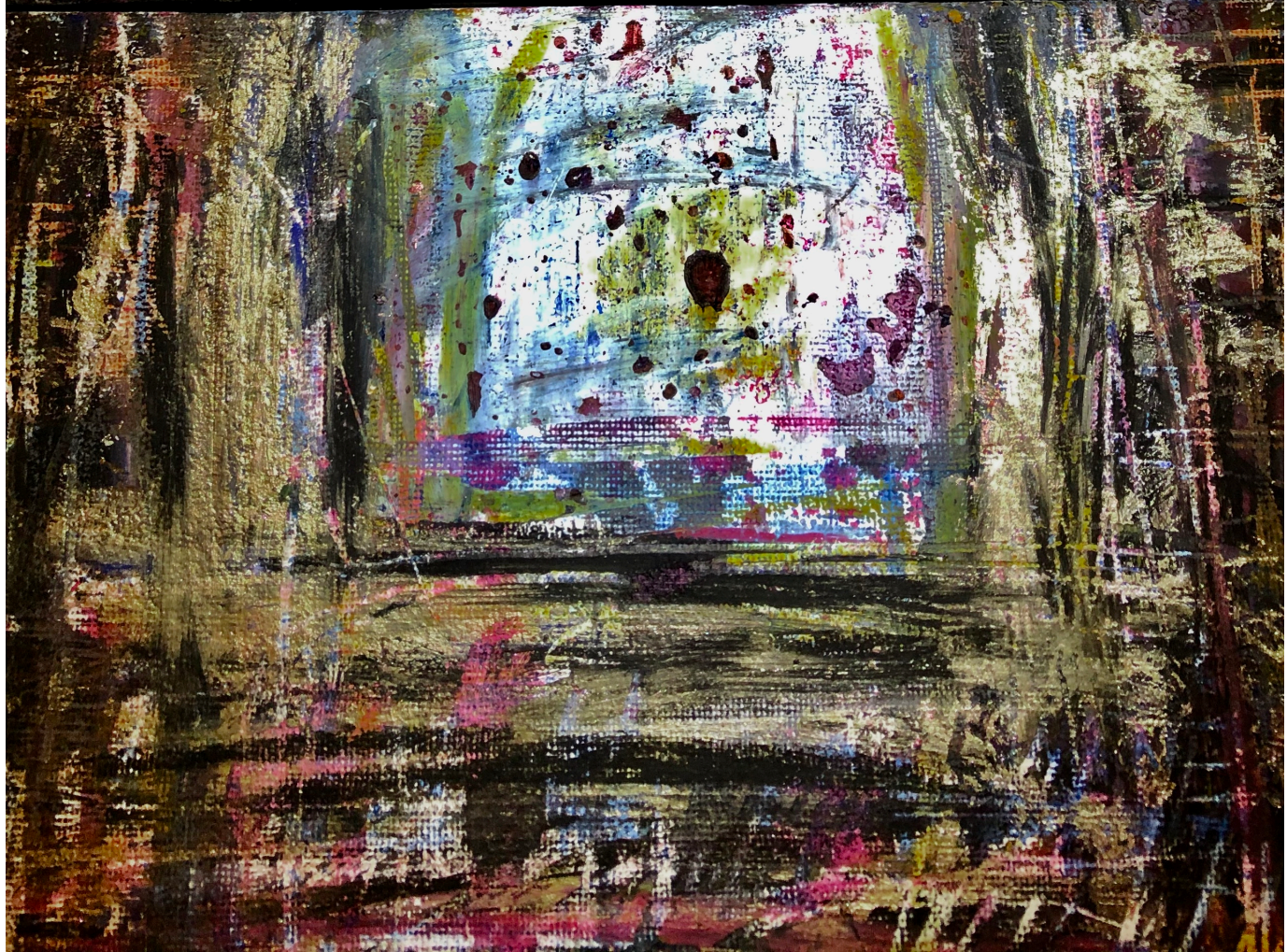




ADVENT at HOME 2020



Cover image:

Currie, C. *Wilderness Homecoming*. 2020. Mixed media on canvas. 10 in. x 16 in.

Sunday Prayer & Advent Collects:

Adapted from the rite found in *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* (2005),
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Advent Wreath Introductory Material:

Adapted from *Second City Church Advent and Christmas Prayer Guide* (2013).

Advent “at Home” in this Pandemic Season

This Advent, we enter the season under “safer at home” protocols in Philadelphia that limit our connection with others outside our respective households. This year, perhaps more than ever before, the themes of Advent - longing, hoping, waiting, preparing - resonate with all of us in profound and personal ways. We are longing to be with loved ones we miss, hoping for the health and safety of those who are at risk, waiting for a vaccine or the next economic stimulus, and preparing for an uncertain future. We are more aware than ever that the way things are is not the way things ought to be, so we wait expectantly and longingly for a better day.

Advent is a season of expectant waiting and hopeful preparation, as the Church prepares to celebrate the coming (*adventus*) of Christ in his incarnation at Christmas, and looks ahead to Christ’s final advent when he will come again to judge the world and make all things new. Fleming Rutledge describes how the Advent season draws us into an intentional practice of waiting that essential for our growth as disciples of Jesus:

In a very real sense, the Christian community lives in Advent all the time. It can well be called the Time Between, because the people of God live in the time between the first coming of Christ, incognito in the stable in Bethlehem, and his second coming, in glory, to judge the living and the dead.... Advent contains within itself the crucial balance of the now and not-yet that our faith requires.... The disappointment, brokenness, and pain that characterizes life in this present world is held in dynamic tension with the promise of future glory that is yet to come. In that Advent tension, the church lives its life.

The readings, liturgies, prayers, and reflection questions in this guide are designed to draw us into a practice of waiting expectantly for Christ and preparing ourselves for his return.

As we wait at home this Advent, let us hold our weariness, loneliness, anxiety, and grief in tension with the hope, glory, and mystery of Christ, in whom God comes to make his home with us on earth. He is God-with-us, Emmanuel, and he is nearer to us than we know, even as we engage this Advent season in our own homes this year.

God is with you. Christ is coming. *Let every heart prepare him room.*

How To Use This Guide

This guide is designed to be used by individuals, families, or groups that can gather (even virtually) during this time. For some of us, praying “us/we” prayers alone can feel strange - especially those of us who have been shaped inside of a Western, individualistic culture! But as we read and pray together with the global church, we join our voices to the chorus of God’s people around the world, so we are never truly praying alone. Rather, we offer our individual prayers as part of the total prayer of Christ’s church - doing our part of the Body’s work, so to speak - as we wait expectantly for God to meet us, together, this Advent season.

Daily Prayer Format: This guide follows a simplified morning/evening prayer format that has parts for a leader (normal font) and responsive parts for the group (bold font). If you are using the guide with your friends, roommates or family, appoint someone to lead each day. If you are using the guide by yourself, simply read both parts.

Bible: To use this guide, you will need a Bible for the daily readings.

Advent Wreath: This guide includes directions for incorporating an Advent wreath into your observance of the season, should you care to do so. The Advent wreath is made of evergreen boughs encircling five candles. Four candles represent each week of Advent, and the fifth (placed in the center of the four), represents the birth of Christ at Christmas. One new candle is lit on each of the four Sundays of Advent (for example: on the Third Sunday of Advent, two candles would already have been lit before beginning the liturgy, and the third candle would be lit at the appointed time during the liturgy), and then the Christ candle is lit on Christmas Eve (or Christmas Day, if preferred). Using the Advent wreath can be a meaningful practice for disciples of all ages, but it can be especially helpful for teaching young children about the story of Christ.

Advent Antiphons: For December 17-23, the daily prayer begins with an “Advent Antiphon.” These seven antiphons, dating back to the medieval era, invoke seven titles of Jesus Christ that highlight his fulfillment of Israel’s hope in the coming Messiah: Wisdom (*Sapientia*), Lord of Israel (*Adonai*), Root of Jesse (*Radix*), Key of David (*Clavis*), Morning Star (*Oriens*), King of the Nations (*Rex*) and God with Us (*Emmanuel*). These antiphons emphasize our growing sense of expectation of Christ’s coming at Christmas. Today, these antiphons are preserved most familiarly in the Advent hymn, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” in which each verse corresponds to an antiphon from the medieval Church.

Sunday, November 29, 2020

The First Sunday of Advent

Preparation

Reveal among us the light of your presence
that we may behold your power and glory.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 146

Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.**

Advent Readings

Isaiah 1:1-9; Matthew 25:1-13

*The first Advent candle is lit.
Silence is kept.*

Reflect & Discuss

What do you long for, and why is it so hard to wait for it?

Prayer

**Lord Jesus, light of the world, born in David's city of Bethlehem,
born like him to be a king: be born in our hearts at Christmas,
be King of our lives today. Amen.**

Personal prayers are offered.

The First Collect of Advent

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Monday, November 30, 2020

Preparation

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 2

Gloria Patri

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.

Advent Readings

Isaiah 1:10-20; Luke 20:1-8

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

What do you think preparing for the return of King Jesus would look like for you (or us) today?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, our King. All authority in heaven and on earth is yours. Reign over our lives, this home, your church, this city, this nation, and all your world, so that your justice, goodness, and peace may shine forth in us. Make your home here among us, and help us to prepare ourselves to be your dwelling. Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord, when he comes,
find us watching and waiting.

Amen.

Tuesday, December 1, 2020

Preparation

O God, reveal among us the light of your presence
that we may behold your power and glory.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 5

Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.**

Advent Readings

Isaiah 1:21-31; Luke 20:9-18

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

Why do you think the religious people of Jesus' day failed to recognize and receive God's Son when he came? Do you see any of the same tendencies in yourself? How can we prepare ourselves to receive Jesus and recognize the movement of God's Spirit among us today?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, our merciful Savior. You who were rejected by your own people have now become the firstborn of God's family and the cornerstone of God's home on earth. May we know your nearness today and experience your gracious embrace. Restore us by your love, and help us to return to you today. Amen.

Conclusion

May Christ our redeemer bring us healing and wholeness.
Amen.

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

Preparation

O Lord, open our lips
and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 119:1-24

Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.**

Advent Readings

Isaiah 2:1-11; Luke 20:19-26

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

Where in your life do you feel a need to be in control? What do you think it would look like (and what would it cost you) to surrender that to God and entrust that part of your life to God's provision and care?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, our King and our God. All things belong to you, and every good gift comes from your hand. Give us grace to open our hearts and hands in trust, generosity, and a sincere desire to seek first your kingdom above all else. Help us to live out of the abundance of your provision instead of being overcome by the scarcity we so often feel these days. Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord make us ready for his coming in glory.
Amen.

Thursday, December 3, 2020

Preparation

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 18:1-20

Gloria Patri

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.

Advent Readings

Isaiah 2:12-22; Luke 20:27-40

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

What does the resurrection of Jesus (and our resurrection in and with Jesus) have to do with our Advent practice of expectant, watchful waiting in hope?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, our deliverer from sin and death. You are the risen Son of God, for whom we watch and wait in hope. Help us to place our hope in you and your promised kingdom, so that as we endure the sufferings of life, we may grow in resilience, compassion, patience, and wisdom as bearers of your light and life in a world marked by darkness and death. Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord, when he comes,
find us watching and waiting.

Amen.

Friday, December 4, 2020

Preparation

O Lord, open our lips
and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 16

Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.**

Advent Readings

Isaiah 3:8-15; Luke 20:41-21:4

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

Where, and with whom, do you tend to invest more time and energy in *looking* good (image/reputation) as opposed to *becoming* good (character)? What would change in your life if you paid less attention to what other people said and thought about you and instead sought to live more intentionally beneath the loving, all-seeing, liberating gaze of Jesus?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, our humble king. You resisted the temptations of wealth, fame, power, and security and chose instead to live in obedience to your heavenly Father and in sacrificial love toward even those who reviled you. Help us to become more like you, even when imitating your humility and goodness feels too risky to be worth it. Be with us, and give us courage. Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord make us ready for his coming in glory.
Amen.

Saturday, December 5, 2020

Preparation

O God, reveal among us the light of your presence
that we may behold your power and glory.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 20

Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.**

Advent Readings

Isaiah 4:2-6; Luke 21:5-19

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

What unhealthy desires or habits do you think God might be calling you to put to death this Advent season, so that you may become more alive in Christ?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, destroyer of evil, injustice, and hatred. Overthrow in our hearts and lives all that stands in opposition to your justice, beauty, truth, and love. Prepare us even now to be a people fit for your coming kingdom, and help us to bear witness, not only with our lips but also with our lives, to the goodness of your life-giving reign. Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord, when he comes,
find us watching and waiting.
Amen.

Sunday, December 6, 2020

The Second Sunday of Advent

Preparation

Lift up your heads, O gates; be lifted up, you everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 148

Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.**

Advent Readings

Isaiah 5:1-7; Luke 7:28-35

*The second Advent candle is lit.
Silence is kept.*

Reflect & Discuss

Where in your life do you most need or desire God's help right now?

Prayer

**Lord Jesus, light of the world, the prophets said you would bring peace
and save your people in trouble. Give peace in our hearts at Christmas
and show all the world God's love. Amen.**

Personal prayers are offered.

The Second Collect of Advent

**Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and,
because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy
speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with
you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.**

Monday, December 7, 2020

Preparation

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 25

Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.**

Advent Readings

Isaiah 5:8-12, 18-23; Luke 21:20-28

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

How have you experienced God's presence and faithfulness during the COVID-19 pandemic? What questions, struggles, or crises have come to the surface during this time? Ask God to be with you and to comfort you as you contemplate, grieve, question, and seek understanding and peace.

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, our comforter and keeper. Meet us in our weariness, stress, frustration, disappointment, loneliness, and grief. Have mercy on us, and draw us nearer to yourself. Give us eyes of faith to see not only the difficulty of our present circumstances but also your abiding love and faithful presence with us every step of the way. Give us grace for today, we ask. Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord, when he comes,
find us watching and waiting.

Amen.

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

Preparation

O God, reveal among us the light of your presence
that we may behold your power and glory.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 28

Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.**

Advent Readings

Isaiah 5:13-17, 24-25; Luke 21:29-38

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

What do you think it looks like to be “awake” in anticipation and readiness for Christ’s coming? What are some ways that you have grown spiritually sleepy over the past several months? What practice, habit, or attitude could you take up today to help you wake up to God’s presence and prepare for Christ’s return?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, our strength and shield. Protect us from harm, and prepare us for glory. Awaken us by the power of your Spirit, and help us to live daily with a keen awareness of your presence and a deep sense of your persistent love. Help us to ready ourselves for whatever act of love, compassion, faithfulness, or self-sacrifice you have prepared for us to do next. Amen.

Conclusion

May Christ our redeemer bring us healing and wholeness.
Amen.

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Preparation

O Lord, open our lips
and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 38

Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.**

Advent Readings

Isaiah 6:1-13; John 7:53-8:11

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

What is something you believe God is calling you to do that you have been reluctant to do? What ruptured relationship do you believe God is calling you to reconcile? Ask God for courage, wisdom, and help. Then do the same with a trusted friend whose life of faith you admire.

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, friend of sinners. You are our help and our salvation. Have mercy upon us. Help us to answer you when you call and to rise to the occasion of loving those you have given us to love. We love because you first loved us. Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord make us ready for his coming in glory.
Amen.

Thursday, December 10, 2020

Preparation

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 37:1-18

Gloria Patri

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.

Advent Readings

Isaiah 7:1-9; Luke 22:1-13

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

Think about what it's like to prepare thoroughly for something, whether it's an event (like an exam, performance, interview, or elaborate meal you're making) or a longer season (like a career, marriage, or retirement). What does such preparation entail? Now, think about preparing yourself for God's promised, everlasting kingdom. What might that entail?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, our teacher and guide. Lead us in the way of life everlasting.

Help us to prioritize faithfulness over success in all we do, and grant us

diligence, focus, and perseverance in preparing ourselves for you. Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord, when he comes,
find us watching and waiting.

Amen.

Friday, December 11, 2020

Preparation

O Lord, open our lips
and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 31

Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.**

Advent Readings

Isaiah 7:10-25; Luke 22:14-30

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

Why do you think Jesus established the Eucharist (or Communion) meal as the central practice for his disciples to do together? What does this meal have to do with our understanding of Jesus as “God with us” (Emmanuel)? How have this prolonged pandemic and the “safer at home” protocols challenged, or perhaps even enriched, your experience of communing with God?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, Emmanuel, our living water and bread of life. Feed us with your life-giving presence, even as we feel stuck at home and isolated from the people and places we used to rely on for sustenance and strength. You are our home. Help us to believe and experience that reality even now. Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord make us ready for his coming in glory.
Amen.

Saturday, December 12, 2020

Preparation

O God, reveal among us the light of your presence
that we may behold your power and glory.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 30

Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.**

Advent Readings

Isaiah 8:1-15; Luke 22:31-38

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

What is it about Jesus and the way he works that transforms our deepest wounds and failures into our sources of greatest power for healing others? What is it about our shame and pride that keeps us from letting Jesus do that transforming work? What would it look like for you to take a step toward transformation today?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, our Great Physician. Heal our shame, and deliver us from pride, so that we may know the freedom and power of your transforming love. Bring us into the joy that dawns in the morning of your glorious light and dispels the darkness of our long night of weeping. Heal us, Emmanuel. Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord, when he comes,
find us watching and waiting.
Amen.

Sunday, December 13, 2020

The Third Sunday of Advent

Preparation

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 98

Gloria Patri

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.

Advent Readings

Isaiah 13:6-13; John 3:22-30

The third Advent candle is lit.

Silence is kept.

Reflect & Discuss

How might you decrease so that Jesus may increase through you?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, light of the world, John told the people to prepare,
for you were very near. As Christmas grows closer day by day,
help us be ready to welcome you now. Amen.

Personal prayers are offered.

The Third Collect of Advent

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance
and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings
and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our
Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now
and forever. Amen.

Monday, December 14, 2020

Preparation

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 41

Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.**

Advent Readings

Isaiah 8:16-9:1; Luke 22:39-53

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

When you contemplate Jesus's prayer on the night of his arrest, "Not my will, but yours, be done," what thoughts and feelings arise in you? When would it be most difficult for you to pray those same words sincerely?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, O Gracious Light! You are the pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven, and you are worthy to be praised and glorified throughout all the world. Dawn in the darkness of our hearts, and deliver us from evil, so that we may shine forth into your world the truth and love that we have beheld in the glory of Christ. Deliver us, we pray. Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord, when he comes,
find us watching and waiting.

Amen.

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

Preparation

O God, reveal among us the light of your presence
that we may behold your power and glory.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 45

Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.**

Advent Readings

Isaiah 9:1-7; Luke 22:54-69

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

Think about a time when you were deeply misunderstood. How did that feel? What did you do? Now, consider Jesus in his moment of betrayal, denial, and condemnation. How does he respond to his situation? Take a few minutes to be impressed and inspired by Jesus. Then, consider what it might look like for you to imitate Jesus in your own circumstances.

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

**Come, Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
When your friends denied you, you loved them. When your enemies
interrogated you, you refrained from self-defense. You are a marvel. Yet, you
are also our example. Help us to prepare ourselves to be a people like you,
embodying a life of humility, service, and love in all that we do. Amen.**

Conclusion

May Christ our redeemer bring us healing and wholeness.
Amen.

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

Preparation

O God, reveal among us the light of your presence
that we may behold your power and glory.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 119:49-72

Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.**

Advent Readings

Isaiah 9:8-17; Mark 1:1-8

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

How would you tell the story of your life, and how would you tell the story of the world in which you are living? Now, tell both of those again with Jesus at the center of each. What changes?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, our Messiah. You are the Lord's anointed one - the long-awaited fulfiller of history and securer of God's promised future. Our own stories and the story of the world find their fullness in you, and we await in hope your glorious return. Help us to live today in the light of your past faithfulness and future promise. Prepare us, we pray. Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord make us ready for his coming in glory.
Amen.

Thursday, December 17, 2020

Advent Antiphon - O Sapientia

O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High,
reaching from one end to the other mightily,
and sweetly ordering all things:
Come and teach us the way of prudence.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 50

Gloria Patri

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.

Advent Readings

Isaiah 9:18-10:4; Matthew 3:1-12

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

Where do you search for wisdom? What do you think is similar and different between the wisdom of Jesus and the wisdom of this world?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, our wisdom from on high. Illumine to us the path of life,
and guide our steps as we journey forward toward the horizon of your
promised land. Help us to bear fruit in keeping with repentance, so that our
lives may proclaim the hope of your kingdom, for which we wait in hope.
Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord, when he comes,
find us watching and waiting.
Amen.

Friday, December 18, 2020

Advent Antiphon - O Adonai

O Lord, and leader of the House of Israel,
who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush
and gave him the law on Sinai:
Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 40

Gloria Patri

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.

Advent Readings

Isaiah 10:5-19; Matthew 11:2-15

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

What does John the Baptist have to do with your life today? Does his strangeness inspire you in any way or illuminate any aspect of discipleship?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, our redeemer and our God. Prepare in us a home for yourself, so that we may dwell with you forever. Help us to be a people among whom others may taste and see your goodness and love. Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord make us ready for his coming in glory.
Amen.

Saturday, December 19, 2020

Advent Antiphon - O Radix Jesse

O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign among the peoples;
before you kings will shut their mouths,
to you the nations will make their prayer:
Come and deliver us, and delay no longer.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 55

Gloria Patri

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.

Advent Readings

Isaiah 10:20-27; Luke 3:1-9

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

What might preparing the way for Jesus look like in your own life today? What obstacles to God do you think God is calling you to remove to clear the path for his transforming work?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, our long-expected, long-awaited king. You are the fulfillment of all God's promises and our every desire. Help us to turn our attention and affection toward you, our only true hope. Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord, when he comes,
find us watching and waiting.
Amen.

Sunday, December 20, 2020

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Advent Antiphon - O Clavis David

O Key of David and scepter of the House of Israel

you open and no one can shut; you shut and no one can open:

Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house,

those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 24

Gloria Patri

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.

Advent Readings

Isaiah 42:1-12; John 3:16-21

The fourth Advent candle is lit.

Silence is kept.

Reflect & Discuss

What would it look like for you to move from darkness to light today?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, light of the world, blessed is Gabriel, who brought good news;

blessed is Mary, your mother and ours. Bless your Church preparing for

Christmas; and bless us your children, who long for your coming. Amen.

Personal prayers are offered.

The Fourth Collect of Advent

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son

Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself;

who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now

and forever. Amen.

Monday, December 21, 2020

Advent Antiphon - O Oriens

O Morning Star,

splendor of light eternal and sun of righteousness:

Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 62

Gloria Patri

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.

Advent Readings

Isaiah 11:1-9; John 5:30-47

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

What makes someone a compelling witness? How would you tell someone else about your own experience of God's healing and help?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, our morning star. Dawn in our darkness today. Give us grace to hope in your coming kingdom and to bear witness in word and deed to your faithfulness. Help us not to live merely by the light of our own eyes but to walk in the way of your truth and love, for our own sake and for the sake of the world. Amen.

Conclusion

May Christ our redeemer bring us healing and wholeness.

Amen.

Tuesday, December 22, 2020

Advent Antiphon - O Rex Gentium

O King of the nations, and their desire,

the cornerstone making both one:

Come and save the human race,

which you fashioned from clay.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 66

Gloria Patri

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.

Advent Readings

Isaiah 11:10-16; Luke 1:5-25

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

Where in your life do you desire God's help but disbelieve God's ability or willingness to help? What would it look like to bring that desire to God today with a spirit of openness and trust?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, king of the nations. You are our refuge in times of trouble and our strong helper when we are in need. Help us to love what you love, desire your will above all else, and trust you with our lives. Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord make us ready for his coming in glory.

Amen.

Wednesday, December 23, 2020

Advent Antiphon - O Emmanuel

O Emmanuel,
our King and lawgiver,
the hope of the nations and their Savior:
Come and save us, O Lord our God.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 72

Gloria Patri

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.

Advent Readings

Isaiah 28:9-22; Luke 1:26-38

Silence is kept after the Readings.

Reflect & Discuss

What does it mean to you that Jesus is Emmanuel (“God with us”)? As you prepare to celebrate Christmas at home, what does it mean to you that God has come to dwell with us as a human being?

Personal prayers are offered.

Advent Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus, our Emmanuel. As your Spirit overshadowed the Virgin Mary and prepared her to become the bearer of God, so also fill us with your life and power, that we may prepare ourselves to be bearers of your light and love. Draw near to us, keep us in your presence, and allow us to behold your glory. Amen.

Conclusion

May the Lord make us ready for his coming in glory.
Amen.

Thursday, December 24, 2020

Christmas Eve (Evening Prayer)

Preparation

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

You laid the foundation of the earth
and the heavens are the work of your hands.

Blessed are you, Sovereign God,
our light and our salvation,
to you be glory and praise forever.
To dispel the darkness of our night
you sent forth your Son, the firstborn of all creation,
to be the Christ, the light of the world.
Rejoicing in the mystery of the Word made flesh,
we acclaim him Emmanuel, as all creation sings to you:
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Blessed be God forever.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 89:1-29

Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.**

Christmas Eve Readings

Isaiah 59:15b-21; Luke 1:57-80

The Christ candle is lit.

Silence is kept.

Gospel Response (from John 1)

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
full of grace and truth.

**The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
full of grace and truth.**

And we have seen his glory,
the glory as of a father's only son,

full of grace and truth.

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.

**The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
full of grace and truth.**

Christmas Prayer

Lord Jesus, Light of light, you have come among us.

Help us who live by your light to shine as lights in your world.

Glory to God in the highest. Amen.

People of God: shout and sing:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Amen.

Closing Prayer

Almighty God, you make us glad with the yearly remembrance
of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ:

grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer,

so we may with sure confidence behold him

when he shall come to be our judge;

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and forever. Amen.

Conclusion

Blessed be the name of the Lord,

now and forever. Amen.



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PHILADELPHIA



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