

Liturgy for the First Sunday of Advent
Family Sunday

Words to Ponder

“Advent is a season of waiting, expecting, and hoping. Beginning four Sundays prior to Christmas and ending on Christmas Eve, Advent helps us prepare for the coming, or “advent” of the Christ-child at Christmas. (The word “advent” comes from the Latin word that means “coming.”)

-Arlene M. Mark

Soft Music (preferably harmonica)

Processional

Worship Leaders
The Wreath with the Advent and Christ Candles
The Minister/Pastor

+Call to Worship

Liturgist: Let us hear the revelation of God’s promise
Church: For Advent is a time of expecting new light to shine.
Liturgist: Let us receive light from the prophets
Church: For light penetrates darkness and prepares the way of the Lord.
Liturgist: Let us see God’s glory shine forth
All: For we long to be transformed by the light of God’s holiness.

+Lighting the First Advent Candle: The Candle of Hope (One family to lead)

Father: Today is the beginning of Advent,
Mother: The celebration of God’s coming to us in Christ Jesus.
Children: Advent offers us another way to see our world, to become aware of the presence of God’s Rule all around us, to acknowledge once again that God is in charge of history.
All family members: We light this first candle to symbolize the promises found in the prophecy given to us from God. God, you have promised to come quickly and abide with us.
Parents: We are watchfully praying.
Church: “Even so Lord, quickly come!”

Song

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Translated: John Neal, 1818-66

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high, who ordered all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show, and teach us in its ways to go. (Refrain)

Advent Prayer (Unison)

We come, our God, seeking light; light to reveal your majesty; light to clear our blindness; light to

illumine our understanding. Come into our hearts and lives as we worship, so that we may serve in your kingdom as bearers of light and guide others to the Light. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Sound of Ching (If there is no ching, you can sound the cover of a kettle or spoons)

+Opening Song

"My Soul Magnifies the Lord" HFJ # 116

Words by Henry W. Kiley, Philippines; based on Luke 1:46-55
Music based on Kalinga Motive

All:

My soul magnifies the Lord, and in God my heart exults
Salidum salidumay, insinalidumiway. Ay ay salidumay

Solo (Female):

Favored look he casts on me, shadowed me so tenderly
Generations then will see deep things God works silently,
Ay ay salidum-may.

Men:

To God fearing souls he goes, on them mercy he bestows;
With the strength of his right arm scatters all the proud who swarm,
Ay ay salidum-may.

Women:

Those enthroned he will bring down, and the lowly he will crown;
Hungry ones he'll fill with cheer, but the rich his Day will fear.
Ay ay salidum-may.

Children and Youth:

So the Promise from of old comes to life has not gone cold;
Promise made to Abraham bears its fruit the Kingdom come.
Ay ay Salidum-may.

Unison:

Blessed Mary, all Saints say; your consent has paved the way.
Our salvation now is won, by the coming of God's Son.
Ay ay Salidum-may, Salidum-may, Salidum-may.

Call to Confession (Minister)

We can no longer play dumb. We not only know the lives we are called to lead, we are well aware of how we fail—through our words as well as our silence, by our deeds and our unwillingness to act. Let us confess to the God who comes to us.

Prayer of Confession through Song and Dance

Let a young boy/girl sing and have the other children do some movements.

Assurance of Pardon (Minister)

Hear the words of assurance given to all who turn in faith to Christ our Savior. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Sharing of God's Peace

Let us go around and share God's peace to one another

+Reading of the Scriptures

Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38

Anthem

If there are adult/children/youth choirs, at this advent service, it would be nice if they can sing together as one choir.

Proclamation of the Word***Response***

(Children will recite the meaning of Advent through acrostics. The Sunday School teacher can ask the children to make their own meaning of the word Advent or the teacher can give the acrostic and give it to 6 children a week before Advent Sunday for them to memorize and recite during Advent Sunday.)

Call to Offering

In this busy season, our most important preparations will happen here in our hearts when we make a way for God to come into our lives, when we "prepare the way of the Lord." In the midst of our preparations, we bring gifts to share so that God's love will shine brightly through the ministry of this church and in our own lives as well. Let us gather our offering.

Offertory Song

(One child, Youth, UCM and CWA, or if the church has a family of singers let them sing the offertory song)

+Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God above ye heavenly host! Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost! Amen.

+Offertory Prayer (Unison)

God of promise and hope, we take time this morning to share offerings of time, talent, and treasure.

We present ourselves to you, knowing you are the source of all good gifts. Your word reminds us that we do not know the day or hour when our faithfulness will be examined, and so we pray that we might live each day and each moment striving for lives of love and compassion for the least, lowliest, and the lost, in a way that is pleasing to you. We pray this in the name of the Christ, whose coming calls us to preparation and repentance. Amen. (Matthew 24:36-44.)

+Closing Hymn

“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”

Words: Charles Wesley, 1744

Music: Rowland H. Prichard, 1830; harm. The English Hymnal, 1906

Come, O long expected Jesus, born to set your people free;
From our fears and sins release us, Christ, in whom our rest shall be.
You our strength and consolation, come salvation to impart;
Dear desire of many nations, joy of every longing heart.

Born your people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever, born your gracious realm to bring.
By your own eternal Spirit, rule in all our hearts alone;
By your all sufficient merit, raise us to your glorious throne.

+Closing Prayer (Elder of the Church)**+Benediction** (Minister)

There is a world out there that is oversupplied with theories and technology, but drastically undersupplied with hope. You however, like Christ, are tomorrow's people, those who know the future is pregnant with promise and hope. This same Jesus comes again with glory, to judge the living and the dead. Go and live out your hope graciously and courageously.

+Postlude (Harmonica)**+Recessional**

Choir Members, Worship Leaders

Liturgy for the Second Sunday of Advent Human Rights Sunday

Preparation

To have a meaningful celebration of Advent and Human Rights Sunday, assign some young people to do the following:
Playing of drums —just one beat at a time
A loud cry or wailing followed by loud drum rolls
While the drum roll is going on some young people will run/walk towards the worship center and will do a tableau of the different human rights violations in and outside the country. Let them remain at the center until after the opening sentences.

Prelude

(Flute: "How Can Our Song this Time Be Chanted", *HFJ* # 368)

Opening Sentences

Liturgist: For those who are suffering (sound of drum)
Church: God's gift to the world shall come:
Liturgist: For those who feel despair (sound of bell)
Church: God's gift of hope shall come!
Liturgist: For those who are oppressed (Sound of gunshots)
Church: God's gift of freedom shall come!
Liturgist: For those who are lonely (sound of wind chime)
Church: God's gift of joy shall come!
Liturgist: For those who are sick (sound of babies cry)
Church: God's gift of healing shall come!
Liturgist: For those who are troubled (sound of drum rolls)
Church: God's gift of peace shall come!
Liturgist: For those who are unloved (sound of people shouting)
Church: God's gift of Love shall come!
All: Christ, the Lord of the world, shall come to bring us hope, love, peace!

Song

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

Oh, come, O Key of David, come, and open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to you, O Israel!

Oh, come, our dayspring from on high, and cheer us by your drawing nigh,
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to you, O Israel!

+Opening Prayer (Unison)

O God, we pray for all those in our world, who are suffering from injustice:
For those who are discriminated against because of their race, color or religion;
For those imprisoned for working for the relief of oppression;
For those who are hounded for speaking the inconvenient truth;
For those tempted to violence as a cry against overwhelming hardship;
For those deprived of reasonable health and education;
For those suffering from hunger and famine;
For those too weak to help themselves and who have no one else to help them;
For the unemployed who cry out for work but do not find it.
We pray for anyone of our acquaintance who is personally affected by injustice. Forgive us, Lord, if we unwittingly share in the conditions or in a system that perpetuates injustice. Show us how we can serve your children and make your love practical by washing their feet.

Lighting the Second Candle of Advent: The Candle of Peace

Father: As we light this Advent Candle we acknowledge that peace does not reign in our world. The natural world around us is being destroyed.

Mother: Wars rage between countries. Injustice exists in every nation. Violent conflicts erupt between friends. Children are abused right in our neighborhoods.

Child 1: We ask, "Where is our hope?" "Who will show us the ways of peace and reconciliation?"
"Where do we find the strength, the will, the courage to work for peace and justice?"

Child 2: As always the child Jesus beckons us to prepare for his birth and in the birth of Jesus we find hope.

All family members: In the life and teachings of Jesus we find the way to peace and justice. And with the help of the Holy Spirit we find the courage and the power to work for peace.

Prayer for Peace (Unison)

O God of all good gifts, this candle represents our desire to know you fully; to understand completely your love for us so that peace may truly dwell on all your holy mountain. Help us, during this season of preparation, to remember the true meaning of readying ourselves to participate in your peaceful and loving ways. Give us the courage to spread the message that your peace and love is for all people. Grant healing in our personal lives that we may know the joy of life's true abundance. Amen.

Sound of Bell

+Opening Hymn

"Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun"
by Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

Jesus shall reign where e'er the sun doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretches from shore to shore, till moons shall wax and wane no more.
To him shall endless prayer be made, and praises throng to crown his head.

His Name like sweet perfume shall rise, with every morning sacrifice.

People and realms of every tongue, dwell on his love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim their early blessings on his Name.

Blessings abound where e'er he reigns: The prisoner leaps to lose his chains,
The weary find eternal rest, and all the sons of want are blest.
Let every creature rise and bring, peculiar honors to our King;
Angels descend with songs again, and earth repeat the loud. Amen.

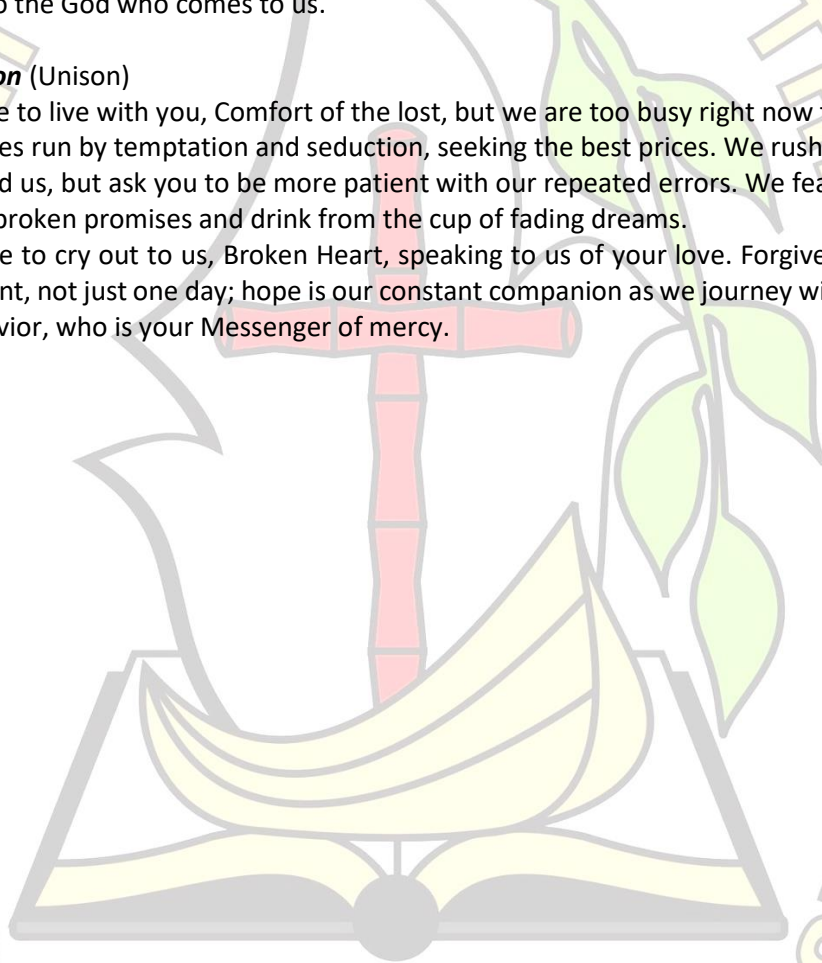
Call to Confession (Leader)

We can no longer play dumb. We not only know the lives we are called to lead, we are well aware of how we fail—through our words as well as our silence, by our deeds and our unwillingness to act. Let us confess to the God who comes to us.

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

You call us home to live with you, Comfort of the lost, but we are too busy right now to listen. We flock to the stores run by temptation and seduction, seeking the best prices. We rush to judge everyone around us, but ask you to be more patient with our repeated errors. We feast at the table piled high with broken promises and drink from the cup of fading dreams. Yet you continue to cry out to us, Broken Heart, speaking to us of your love. Forgiveness is the gift for every moment, not just one day; hope is our constant companion as we journey with Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who is your Messenger of mercy.

Sound of Bell



Song of Confession

The Steadfast Mercy of God
(Ang Kalooy sa Ginoo)

Music: Elena G. Maquiso, 1971 Words: Feliciano R. Ursos;
Eng. Trans. Sally B. Villagante

The—stead-fast mer-cy of God—has the wide-ness of the— sea, God's— fair-ness and sense of
The—bless-ed love of— God,—o-ver-flo-wing without—cease Spring-ing fromm the depths of com-
just-ice are more than li-ber-ty. The grief and pain deep in our hearts God, in
pass-ion, God's heart em-brac-ing our pain. If we love God to the full-est and we
mer-cy knows and—feels, Hu-man frail-ties and our—weak-ness in God's me-cy cast a-side.
trust in the Liv-ing Word, We would have a life filled with glad-ness. Our—God be glo-ri-fied!

Assurance of Pardon (Minister)

May the God of peace cleanse you through and through. The promise is that our whole being—spirit, soul and body will be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (*1 Thess. 5:23*) Rejoice, then, and give thanks as we receive forgiveness and healing in Christ's name. Amen.

Passing of the Peace

As a forgiven people of God, let us go around and share God's peace to one another while singing "I've Got Peace like a River".

Church/Community Concerns**Pastoral Prayer**

Response

"Kum Ba Yah My Lord"
Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah
Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah
Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah
O Lord, kum ba yah
Someone's praying Lord, kum ba yah
Someone's praying Lord, kum ba yah
Someone's praying Lord, kum ba yah
O Lord, kum ba yah!

Poem Reading "Ideal World" (HFJ #458 but it is ok to read another poem on peace if you have one)

+Scripture Readings

Jeremiah 33:14-16, Romans 15:12-13

Anthem**Proclamation of the Word****Call to Offering** (Leader)

Through Christ, let us continually praise God and share what we have, for such gifts are pleasing to God.

Offering**Offertory Song**

"Silent Night, Holy Night"

Men's Choir or Family Choir

Doxology**+Thanksgiving Prayer** (Unison)

Gracious and Giving God, we once again prepare for the birth of your chosen Son. Through the voices of prophets and preachers, you have been heard in the driest deserts and the deepest valleys. Unfurl our hearts and open our minds so that we may hear your salvation story anew. Giving this money is a worshipful gesture of our unending alleluias to you. We dedicate this offering to your Kingdom work. Amen.

+Song of Dedication

"Make Me a Channel of Peace"

Make me a channel of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me bring your love.
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord. And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

Make me a channel of your peace. Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope
Where there is darkness, only light. And where there's sadness, ever joy.

Refrain

Oh, Master grant that I may never seek, so much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
In giving to all people, we receive and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Refrain

+Closing Prayer (Minister)

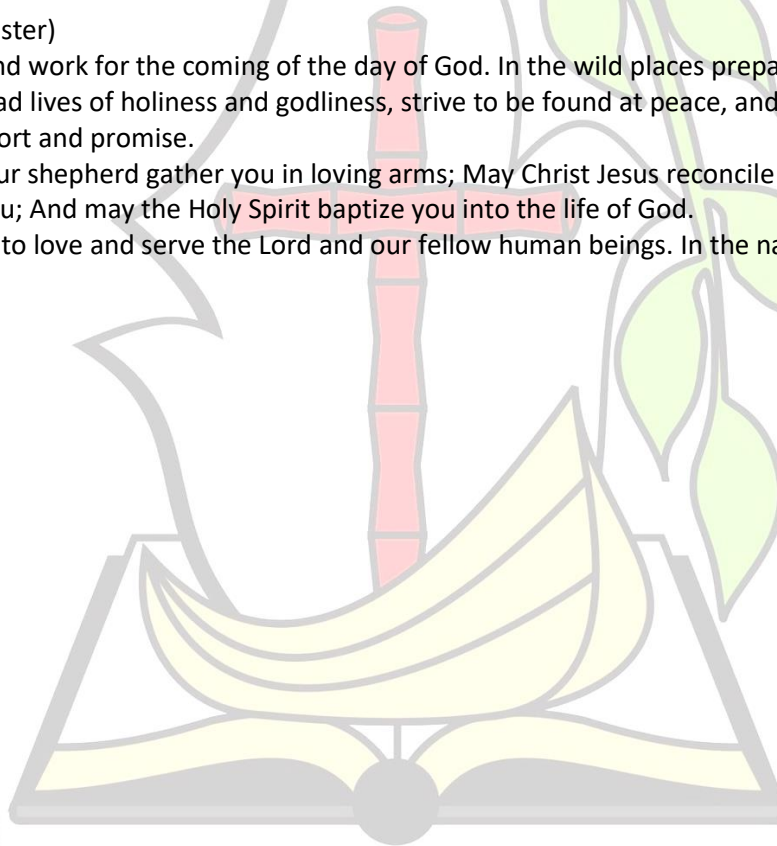
God we thank You for meeting us here today, and for delivering Your Word through the speaker. We hope that each soul in this place have been touched through the songs and the preaching, and may each take to heart the Word that came forth. We pray that those seeking an answer have received it, and that those who needed a special touch were granted that touch. Bless each of us and keep us safe until we are able to gather together again. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

+Benediction (Minister)

Go now: wait and work for the coming of the day of God. In the wild places prepare a straight path for the Lord. Lead lives of holiness and godliness, strive to be found at peace, and speak freely of the Lord's comfort and promise.

And may God our shepherd gather you in loving arms; May Christ Jesus reconcile justice and peace within you; And may the Holy Spirit baptize you into the life of God.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord and our fellow human beings. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Postlude (Guitar)**Recessional**

Liturgy for the Third Sunday of Advent***The Act of Gathering******Processional***

The family who is leading the worship will join the processional bringing some symbols like the Bible, cross, and flowers.

+Opening Sentences

Liturgist: The unfolding of God's word gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.

All: As we wait for the living light, let us hear God's word and live by Christ's teachings.

Sound of Bell***Song***

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

Oh, come, oh, come, our Lord of might, who to your tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times gave holy law, in cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to you, O Israel!

Oh, come O Rod of Jesse's stem, from ev'ry foe deliver them
That trust your mighty pow'r to save; bring them in vict'ry through the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to you, O Israel!

Sound of Bell***+Lighting the Third Advent Candle: The Candle of Joy***

The third Sunday of Advent symbolizes Joy with the "Shepherd's Candle" reminding that even in the midst of sufferings, oppressions and darkness, we can still experience joy and comfort. We can still experience these because of Christ's coming and birth.

+Opening Song

"Comfort, Comfort You My People"

Translator: Catherine Winkworth; Author: Johann Olearius (1671) Tune: GENEVAN 42

Comfort, comfort you my people; tell of peace, thus says our God;
Comfort those who sit in darkness bowed beneath oppression's load.
Speak you to Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them;
Tell them that their sins I cover, and their warfare now is over.

For the herald's voice is calling in the desert far and near,
Bidding us to make repentance since the kingdom now is here.

Oh that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way;
Let the valleys rise in meeting and the hills bow down in greeting.

Make you straight what long was crooked; make the rougher places plain;
Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits God's holy reign,
For the glory of the Lord now o'er earth is shed abroad,
And all flesh shall see the token that God's word is never broken.

Call to Confession (Leader)

Our God is a God of justice, waiting to be gracious to us, yearning to have pity on us. Blessed are all who wait for the Lord (Isaiah 30:18). In faith, let us make our confession to God.

Flute Music (Kyrie Elieson *HFJ* # 90 or Lord Look into My Heart *HFJ* #89)**Prayer of Confession** (Unison)

We give thanks, O God, that you are unchanging, that your concern for justice and righteousness is so strong that you came in human form to share that concern with us in person. We confess that all too often we hesitate to speak or act when we see people being treated unjustly. Forgive us, O God, for the times when we have been happy to hear the gospel without truly living it. Forgive us for uncaring attitudes when we base our opinion of another person's worth on what they own, or how they look; on what they say, or how they live, rather than accepting them for who they are—people made in your image. Forgive us when our longing to live simply and with humility is defeated by selfish desires—for pursuing profit before seeking your will. Forgive us for placing our hope in other than the Christ-child born in a poor stable. Our hope lies in the promise of your mercy, O God, extending to those who fear you from generation to generation. Heal, restore and bless us, we pray, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon (Minister)

May the God of peace cleanse you through and through. The promise is that our whole being—spirit, soul and body will be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (*1 Thess. 5:23*). Rejoice, then, and give thanks as we receive forgiveness and healing in Christ's name. Amen.

Community Concerns**Intercessory Prayers**

(Assign from among the members—children to adults—to read these prayers below)

Help us.

Help us to uphold the values that are so central to who we are: human beings created *B'tzelem Elohim*—in the image of God. Help us to recognize that the inherent dignity of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. The inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family are the foundations of freedom, justice and peace in the world. May we find the strength to protect and plead the cause of the stranger among us, to ensure just treatment for all who dwell in our land.

Response: "O Hear Our Prayer, Almighty God" *HFJ* #83

O hear our prayer, Almighty God, in faith and trust we make our plea!

O hear our pray'r, o loving God. As is your will, so let it be. SO LET IT BE!

Guide us.

Guide us toward one law, one justice, one human standard of behavior toward all. Move us away from the equivocation that honors the divine image in some but not in others. Let us forever affirm that the justice we purport to hold dear is nothing but a sham if it does not uphold the value of human beings, the basic human dignity for all who dwell in our midst.

Forgive us.

Forgive us for the inhumane manner in which we too often treat the other. We know, or should, that when it comes to crimes against humanity, some of us may be guilty, but all of us are responsible. Grant us *kapparah* - atonement for the misdeeds of exclusion we invariably commit against the most vulnerable members of society: the unwanted, the unhoused, the uninsured, the undocumented.

Response: "O Hear Our Prayer, Almighty God" *HFJ* #83

O hear our prayer, Almighty God, in faith and trust we make our plea!

O hear our pray'r, o Loving God. As is your will, so let it be. SO LET IT BE!

Strengthen us.

Strengthen us to find the wherewithal to shine your light into the dark places of our world. Give us ability to uncover those who are hidden from view, locked away, forgotten. Let us never forget that nothing is hidden and no one is lost from before you. Embolden us in the knowledge that *neshamot*—human souls are neither disposable nor replaceable; that we can never, try as we might, lock away the humanity of another.

Response: "Sweet Hour of Prayer"

Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer! That calls me from a world of care,

And bids me at my Creator's throne make all my wants and wishes known.

In seasons of distress and grief, my soul has often found relief

And oft escaped the tempter's snare by thy return, sweet hour of prayer!

Remind us.

Remind us of our duty to create a just society right here, right now, in our day. Give us the vision of purpose to guard against the complacency of the comfortable—and the resolve in knowing that we cannot put off the cause of justice and freedom for another day. Remind us that the time is now. Now is the moment to create your kingdom here on earth. May it be your will. And may it be ours. Amen.

Response: "Hear our prayer, O Lord"

Hear our prayer, O Lord. Hear our prayer, O Lord;

Incline Thine ear to us, and grant us Thy peace. Amen.

Scripture Readings

Isaiah 40:1-5, Luke 1:14-17

Anthem

Call to Offering (Leader)

Do good and share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. (Hebrews 13:16)

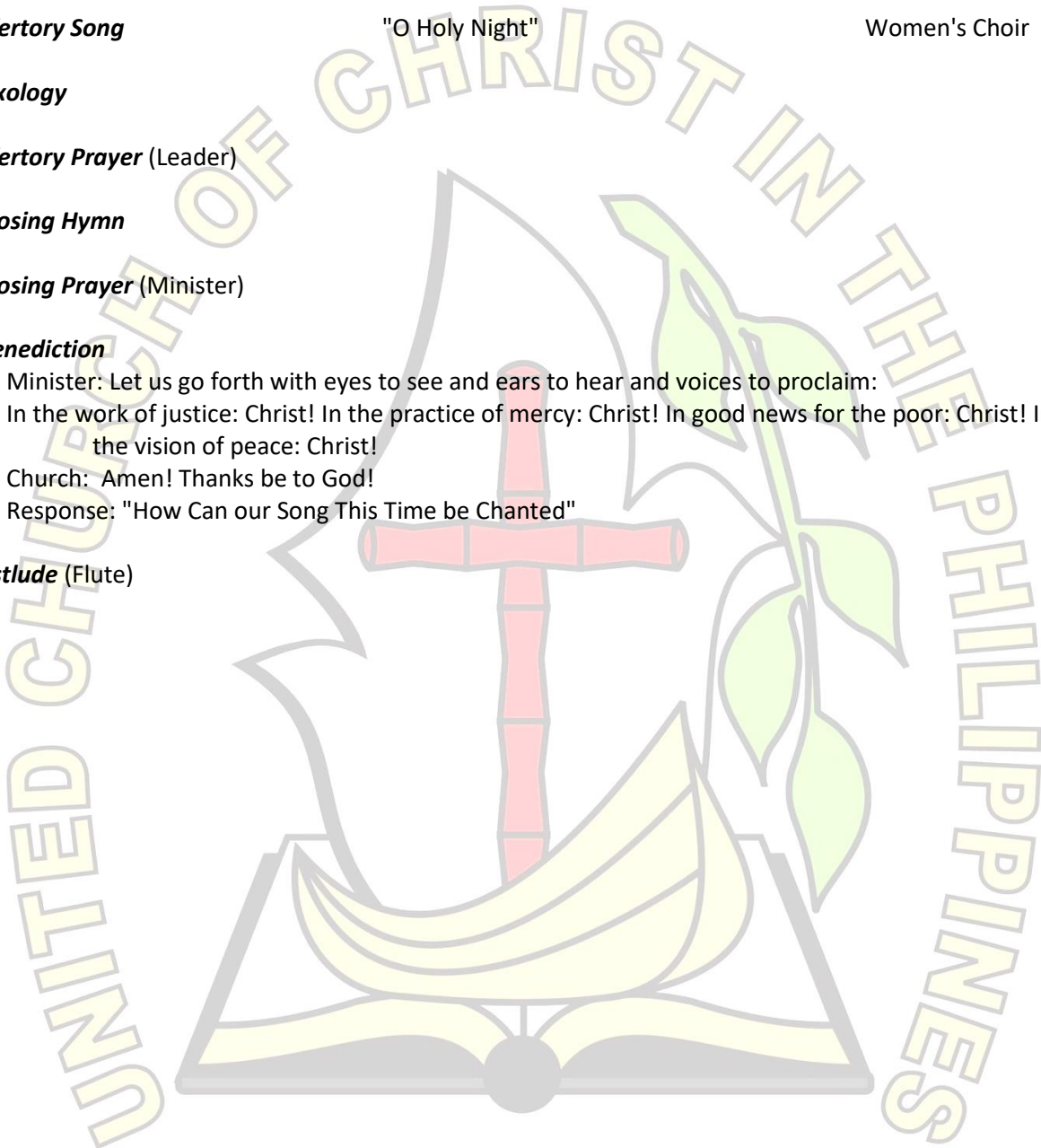
Offertory Song

"O Holy Night"

Women's Choir

Doxology**Offertory Prayer** (Leader)**+Closing Hymn****+Closing Prayer** (Minister)**+Benediction**

Minister: Let us go forth with eyes to see and ears to hear and voices to proclaim:
In the work of justice: Christ! In the practice of mercy: Christ! In good news for the poor: Christ! In
the vision of peace: Christ!
Church: Amen! Thanks be to God!
Response: "How Can our Song This Time be Chanted"

Postlude (Flute)

Liturgy for the Fourth Sunday of Advent***We Gather to Remember******Prelude (Piano or Organ)***

Choir/ Children

Introit**"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"*****Lighting of the Three Advent Candles******Advent Candle of Hope******Advent Candle of Peace******Advent Candle of Joy******Song*****"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"**

O come, O Bright and Morning Star, and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night, and turn our darkness into light.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel, shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O King of nations, bind, in one the hearts of all humankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease, and be yourself our King of Peace. (Refrain)

We Gather to Glorify God***Opening Sentences***

Leader: We come to glorify God and to rejoice in the One who saves us.

(Sound of tambourines)

Men: God comes, so we might believe, so we might be blessed.

Women: Our hearts leap for joy! For God is coming to us in a child.

(Sound of tambourines)

Youth: God comes for those who hunger for hope, for those who thirst for grace.

Leader: Holy is the One who comes in God's name, who fulfills every promise of God.

(Sound of tambourines)

Council Members: God comes to walk with those who follow in faith, to bring peace to a shattered world.

All: The Time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God has come near; the true light which enlightens everyone is coming into the world.

(Sound of tambourines)

Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle: The Candle of Love

The angels announced the good news of a Savior. God sent his only Son to earth to save us, because God loves us! *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."*

(John 3:16-17)

Opening Prayer (Leader)**+Opening Hymn**

"Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"

Translator: Catherine Winkworth; Author: Georg Weissel (1642)

All:

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates! Behold, the King of Glory waits;
The King of kings is drawing near, the Savior of the world is here.
Life and salvation He doth bring, wherefore rejoice and gladly sing:
We praise Thee, our God, now, Creator, wise art Thou!

Pulpit side:

A Helper just He comes to thee, His chariot is humility,
His kingly crown is holiness, His scepter, pity in distress,
The end of all our woe He brings; wherefore the earth is glad and sings:
We praise Thee, Savior, now, mighty in deed art Thou!

Lectern side:

O blest the land, the city blest, Where Christ the Ruler is confessed!
O happy hearts and happy homes, to whom this King in triumph comes!
The cloudless Sun of joy He is, who bringeth pure delight and bliss.
We praise Thee, Spirit, now, Our Comforter art Thou!

All:

Fling wide the portals of your heart; Make it a temple set apart
From earthly use for Heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.
So shall your Sovereign enter in and new and nobler life begin.
To Thee, O God, be praise, for word and deed and grace!

We Gather to Confess and Receive God's Forgiveness**Call to Confession** (Minister)

Friends, our high priest, Jesus Christ knows all our weaknesses and can sympathize because he was tested in every way we are, only without sinning. So let's come boldly to the throne of grace, where we can find mercy and grace to help when we need it most.

Confession (Leader)

Our God, we lower our heads before you and we confess that we have too often forgotten that we are yours. Sometimes we carry on our lives as if there was no God and we fall short of being a credible witness to you. For these things we ask your forgiveness and we also ask for your strength. Give us clear minds and open hearts so we may witness to you in our world. Remind us to be who you would have us to be regardless of what we are doing or who we are with. Hold us to you and build our relationship with you and with those you have given us on earth.

Assurance of Pardon (Minister)

New every morning is God's love for us, and so we are bold to proclaim the Good News: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

Sharing of God's Peace (Go around as we share God's peace)**We Gather to Intercede for One Another****Community Concerns****Pastoral Prayer** (Four persons are assigned to lead in the prayer for hope, for peace, for joy, and for love.)**Response****"What A Friend of Jesus"**

Joseph M. Scriven, 1855

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit. Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!

We Gather to Proclaim God's Word**Scripture Readings**

Isaiah 9:6-7 and Luke 2:4-7

Anthem**Sermon****We Gather to Affirm our Faith****Affirmation of Faith Advent Credo**

Leader: It is not true that creation and the human family are doomed to destruction and loss.

All: This is true: For God so loved the world that God gave God's only begotten Son, that whoever

believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

Leader: It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination, hunger and poverty, death and destruction.

Women: This is true: I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Leader: It is not true that violence and hatred should have the last word, and that war and destruction rule forever.

Women: This is true: Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, the Everlasting, the Prince of Peace.

Leader: It is not true that we are simply victims of the powers of evil who seek to rule the world.

Men: This is true: To me is given authority in heaven and on earth, and lo I am with you, even until the end of the world.

Leader: It is not true that we have to wait for those who are specially gifted, who are the prophets of the Church before we can be peacemakers.

Minister: This is true: I will pour out my spirit on all flesh and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions and your old men shall have dreams.

Leader: It is not true that our hopes for liberation of humankind, of justice, of human dignity, of peace are not meant for this earth and for this history.

Youth: This is true: The hour comes, and it is now, that the true worshipers shall worship God in spirit and in truth.

All: So let us enter Advent in hope, even hope against hope. Let us see visions of love and peace and justice. Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage: Jesus Christ—the life of the world.

(Daniel Berrigan, S.J. in *Testimony: The Word Made Flesh*)

Silence

We Gather to Dedicate Ourselves

Call to Offering (Leader)

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given us, let us use them: if service, in our serving; whoever contributes, in liberality; whoever does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

(Romans 12:6-8)

Offertory Song

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Words: Bishop Phillips Brooks (1835-1893), 1868

Music: "St. Louis," Lewis Henry Redner (1831-1908), 1868

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie.
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary and gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together proclaim the holy birth

And praises sing to God, the King and peace to all on earth.

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of God's heaven.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.

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.

Thanksgiving Prayer (Unison)

We are the receivers of hope, of peace, of joy, and of love. We are receivers of grace, receivers of Jesus. We are the givers, following God's call, following Jesus, following our hearts. Lord, we give these offerings for the work of your kingdom, with humble thanks for all the gifts we have received.

+Closing Hymn

"O Come All Ye Faithful"

HFJ#135

By: John F. Wade

O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come now, O come now to Bethlehem.
Come and behold the ruler of all angels!

Refrain

O come in adoration (thrice) Christ the Lord!

Sing, alleluia, all ye choirs of angels;
O sing, all ye blissful ones of heaven above.
Glory to God in the highest, glory! (Refrain)

Amen, Lord, we greet You, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to You shall all glory be given;
Word of our God, now in the flesh appearing. (Refrain)

+Closing Prayer (Minister)

+Benediction (Minister)

Depart in peace, and take with you the certain knowledge that God is always coming into the world. We will seek God, not in a long ago stable or ancient manger, but in the people we meet and in the depths of our own hearts. May the blessing of the Advent season make you a blessing to others; may the peace of the season pervade all that you do. We will welcome the challenge of discipleship. We will offer ourselves as God's ministers. We will go forth in hope, peace, joy, and love.

Response

“O come in adoration (thrice) Christ the Lord!”

Postlude (Piano or Organ)

Sources:

1. *Words for Worship* edited by Arlene M. Mark
2. *Worship Resources* 9th CCA Assembly
3. *Resources and Reflections for Worship*
4. *Worship Together*
5. *Worship Elements and Symbols*
6. *Hymnal of Faith Journey*
7. www.ucc.worshipresources.com

