

Advent Liturgy

The Rev. Dr. Ted Martin '12



Within this Advent Liturgy, we explore some of the traditional attributions of each of the candles. With a desire to have it be more personal, the Bethlehem Candle is renamed the Inn Keeper's Candle.

As the gathered body of Christ prepares for the arrival of Jesus Christ's birth, the liturgy reminds the participant of God's ever-present mercy during anxious times, even as we sing "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus." On Christmas Eve, the journey ends with an affirmation of God's love and the promise kept. There is joy in the season in the midst of possible sorrow, anxiety, or uncertainty.

May this Advent liturgy be a helpful tool for you this year as you seek to lead a congregation to the manger where mystery and wonder coalesce in the Christ child.

Paix ce Noël,
THM

1st Sunday of Advent

Hymn: "Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus" v. 1

Today, we light the Prophets' Candle. We remember the lives of the prophets who spoke to the nation of Israel and even to us today about God's unshakable commitment to his beloved people. These prophets heralded the coming messiah. They spoke words of warning and accountability. They spoke words of hope and anticipation. The prophets remind us to live lives of righteousness and to pursue justice.

Read: Isaiah 63:7-9

Prayer: Lord God of great mercy, you have not forgotten us. Help us to remember your acts of steadfast love during this season of Advent. In you do we trust and have our hope. Amen.

Hymn: "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" v. 2

2nd Sunday of Advent

Hymn: "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" v.1

Today, we light the Inn Keeper's Candle. Whether by an aching in his heart or with a gruff declaration, he informed Mary and Joseph, "There is no room in the inn." Although this situation seems hopeless, we remember God transforms even the most hopeless situation when we trust in his provision.

Read: Psalm 30:11-12

Prayer: Heavenly Father, there is nothing that can separate us from your love. Even in the most trying circumstance, we can trust that your grace will transform it for your glory. Help us to remember that you turn our mourning into dancing through the birth of our savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn: "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" v. 2

3rd Sunday of Advent

Hymn: "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" v. 1

Today, we light the Shepherds' Candle. What joy and amazement they experienced in that open field. We remember that their fear was transformed to joy when they heard the news. The most lowly of society lifted from their humble estate to bear witness to the greatest news the world has ever known!

Read: Luke 2:10-14

Prayer: Dear God, may we be like the shepherds as we hold dear this glorious news told by the angels. Help us to remember that you have dispelled our fears and seated joy in our hearts. Although we may feel like we are the least in the world, in your estimation, we have the greatest value in your kingdom. Amen.

Hymn: "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" v. 2

4th Sunday of Advent

Hymn: "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" v. 1

Today, we light the Angel's Candle—the messenger who came and visited Joseph, Mary and the shepherds. We remember the words of affirmation the angel delivered to each of them. We remember the words of comfort and assurance the angel speaks to each one. On this particular day, let us remember the Lord's words, "I will never leave you or forsake you."

Read: Luke 1:26-33

Prayer: Holy Lord God, we remember the great love you have for your people. Even as you have sent messengers throughout time to speak words of assurance when our confidence is shaken, we pray you would speak to us today so we may proclaim with boldness your truth. Amen.

Hymn: "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" v. 2

December 24 (Evening Worship)

Hymn: processional hymn of choice

Tonight, (*pastor lights*) I light the Christ Candle. Jesus is the hope of the nations. The promise kept. Compassioned expressed. Joy made manifest. Comfort to all who ache for deliverance. Christ has come. We remember God's covenantal love for us. We remember he emptied himself and became a little child and grew up with us. We remember Jesus has redeemed us and secured for us life.

Read: Luke 1:68-75

Prayer: Lord God Almighty: On this night of the bleak midwinter, we are comforted by the truth that the light of salvation has come through your Son. Jesus has redeemed us from all that separates us from you. Although our joy may be tempered, we come before your throne with thanksgiving, for Love has come down to us this day and fills us with peace. Amen.

Hymn: celebratory hymn or anthem