Liturgy

The First Sunday of Advent (Hope)



GATHERING

I was glad when they said unto me,
"Let us go to the house of the LORD!"
Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God;
for I shall yet praise Him, my help and my God.
According to Your decree, we gather to give thanks
and lift up the name of the LORD.
O send out Your light and Your truth; let them lead us.
Let them bring us to Your holy hill and to Your dwelling.
Then we will go to the altar of God, to God our exceeding joy;
and we will praise You, O God, our God.
We will watch expectantly for the LORD;
We wait in hope for the God of our salvation.
For the LORD will be our light.

– from Psalms 43 and 122; and Micah 7

Even So, Come

All of creation, all of the earth
Make straight a highway, a path for the Lord;
Jesus is coming soon.

Call back the sinner, wake up the saint,
Let ev'ry nation shout of Your fame;
Jesus is coming soon.

Chorus
Like a bride waiting for her groom,
We'll be a Church ready for You.
Ev'ry heart longing for our King, we sing:
Even so, come, Lord Jesus come.
Even so, come, Lord Jesus come.

There will be justice, all will be new,
Your name forever, faithful and true;
Jesus is coming soon.

Chorus

Bridge (2 times)
So we wait, we wait for You.
God, we wait; You're coming soon.

Chorus

Bridge (2 times)

Chorus

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LECTIONARY for the first Sunday of Advent, Year B:

Isaiah 64:1-9
Psalm 80;1-7, 17-19
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:24-37

Today is the first Sunday of the liturgical year. The theme for this first week of Advent is the hopeful watching and waiting for the coming of Christ, the Lord. As did the ancient church, in this Advent season we joyfully remember the first coming of Jesus to His earth, and at the same time look forward with joyful expectation to His coming again in glory. As we worship, we ponder with great thanksgiving our life now, "in the meantime," and celebrate that He has called us into His story.

To read more about Advent as a season of watchful waiting, expectation, and anticipation, see Ellen's blog, "Advent—Happy New (liturgical) Year" in the Reflections section of the Clerestory Notes website:
https://clerestorynotes.com/live/blog/2018/11/29/advent-happy-new-liturgical-year

To read more about each of the four Sundays of Advent, and the spiritual journey they comprise, see "The Four Sundays of Advent," also in the Reflections section of this website:
https://clerestorynotes.com/live/blog/2019/12/04/four-sundays-advent

The Liturgy Collection, which includes all four liturgies in this Year B, can be found here:
https://clerestorynotes.com/live/content/four-sundays-advent-year-b

The gathering antiphonal reading, for two readers and the congregation, weaves together Scriptures that speak to our waiting in confident hope because of God's covenant love and echoes the strains of today's Psalm..

Invocation

Prayers of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving for God's presence

God of grace, ever faithful to Your promises:
The earth rejoices in hope of our Savior's coming,
and looks forward with longing to His return at the end of time.
As once He came in humility, so now may He come in glory.
Prepare our hearts to receive Him, now and always,
for He is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Setting: Ellen Koehler. Copyright ©2012 Ellen Koehler. All Rights Reserved.
Text: Latin hymn, *12th century*; transl. John M. Neale, 1851.
Hymn tune: Veni Emmanuel, 15th century plainsong.

Ellen's setting of O Come, O Come, Emmanuel *is available in the music catalog as a lead sheet. The harmonic arrangement varies from verse to verse. This is especially moving when all four verses are sung at one point in a service. But it also adds interest to the movement of the weeks of Advent season to sing successive verses each week as the Sundays build toward the celebration of Christ's birth on December 25. We sing the fist verse here to close our prayers of Invocation on this Hope Sunday.*

Here is the link to the Music Room (Season of Light), where you will find sample lead sheets and commentary, with historical background and worship use suggestions:
https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/o-come-o-come-emmanuel

Profession of Faith

Let us together profess the faith of the church of all ages in the words of this hymn of the ancient church:

You are God; we praise You.
You are the Lord; we acclaim You.
You are the Eternal Father; All creation worships You.
To You all angels, all the powers of heaven, sing in endless praise:
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.
The glorious company of apostles praises you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praises you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praises you.
Throughout the world the holy Church acclaims You;
Father of majesty unbounded,
Your true and only Son, worthy of all worship,
and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.
You, Christ, are the King of glory,
the eternal Son of the Father.
When You became man to set us free
You did not shun the Virgin's womb.
You overcame the sting of death,
and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.
You are seated at God's right hand in glory.
We believe that you will come and be our judge.

Leader:
Come then, Lord, and help Your people,
bought with the price of Your own blood,
and bring us with Your saints to glory everlasting.

– from *Te Deum laudamus* ("Thee, O God, we praise").
A hymn of the early church, fourth century.
Attributed to church fathers Ambrose and Augustine.

I have crafted this antiphonal Profession of Faith from the ancient hymn Te Deum laudamus, *attributed to the fourth-century church fathers Ambrose and Augustine. From its acclamation of praise from all creation to the triune God of the universe, to its declaration of the victory and exaltation of Christ, this ancient text leads powerfully and lovingly into a time of confession, repentance and forgiveness. During Advent, the classic hymn* Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus *is a fitting and beautiful sung response to the concluding words of* Te Deum laudamus, *"Come then, Lord, and help Your people…."*

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free.
From our fears and sins 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.

Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a Child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit,
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all-sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Setting: Ellen Koehler. Copyright ©2004 Ellen Koehler. All Rights Reserved.
Words: Charles Wesley, 1745. Hymn tune: HYFRYDOL; Rowland H. Prichard, 1830.

Music for this setting of Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus *is available in the sheet music catalog as a lead sheet and arranged for 3-part vocal* harmony. *(See the Sheet Music Catalog in the Music Room, "Season of Light.")*
Here's a link to the commentary in the Music Room:
https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/come-thou-long-expected-jesus

You may hear this beloved Christmas hymn in the Audio Media Studio section of the Music Room. (This live recording, from 2017, is from our annual Advent Lessons and Carols service.)
https://clerestorynotes.com/live/content/music_library/come-thou-long-expected-jesus-live-clip

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock;
You who are enthroned above the cherubim, shine forth!
Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us Your salvation.

[Silence]

Come, and restore us, LORD God Almighty;
make Your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

Spoken prayers of confession

Come, and restore us, LORD God Almighty;
make Your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

– texts from Psalms 80:1-3, 19; 85:7

We use the text of today's psalm as refrain of our corporate prayer of penitence. It is echoed in the closing lyrics of Send Out Your Light.

Send Out Your Light

Send out Your light, Lord,
Send out Your truth;
Send them that they may guide us.
Lord, may they bring us
Into Your courts,
To the heart of Your dwelling places.

Send out Your light, Lord,
Send out Your truth;
Send them that they may guide us.
Come, and restore us,
Lord God of Hosts;
Make Your face shine upon us,
That we may be saved.

Music and words by Ellen Koehler.
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Words based on Psalms 43:4, 84:1-2, and 80:19.

Music for Send Out Your Light *is available in the Psalm Settings section of the music catalog as a lead sheet, scored for voice and piano accompaniment, and arranged for2-part and 3-part harmony. This beautiful sung prayer expressing the heart's cry for God's presence can be used throughout the year, but is especially meaningful during the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany.*
Here's a link:
https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/send-out-your-light

You can hear Send Out Your Light *in the Audio Media Studio. It is also available for viewing in the Video Library.*
https://clerestorynotes.com/live/content/music_library/send-out-your-light-clip

https://clerestorynotes.com/live/content/video-media-video-clips-index

Assurance of Pardon

If You kept a record of sins, O Lord,
who could stand?
But with You there is forgiveness;
so that we can, with reverence, serve You.

Put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is lovingkindness,
and with Him is abundant redemption.
He redeems His people from all their sins.
How blessed are all those who wait for Him!

– Psalm 130:3-4, 7-8; Isaiah 30:18b

Time of Offering

Words and prayers of praise and gratitude

Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending

Lo, He comes with clouds descending,
Once for favored sinners slain;
Thousand thousand saints attending
Swell the triumph of His train.
Alleluia! Alleluia! God appears on earth to reign.

Every eye shall now behold Him,
Robed in dreadful majesty!
Those who set at naught and sold Him,
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
Deeply wailing, deeply wailing, shall the true Messiah see.

Now the Savior, long-expected,
See in solemn pomp appear.
All His saints, by man rejected,
Now shall meet Him in the air.
Alleluia! Alleluia! See the day of God appear.

Yes, amen! Let all adore Thee,
High on Thine eternal throne.
Savior, take the pow'r and glory;
Claim the kingdom for Thine own.
O, come quickly! O, come quickly! Everlasting God, come down!
O, come quickly! O, come quickly! Everlasting God, come down!

Setting: Ellen Koehler. Copyright ©2011 Ellen Koehler. All Rights Reserved.
Words: Charles Wesley and Martin Madan; based on John Cennick, 1752.
Hymn tune: Regent Square Henry T. Smart, 1867. .

This hymn is not often thought of as an Advent hymn, but it should be. It powerfully highlights our understanding of Advent as one of those points in God's story where He "folds time," bringing together the transcendent reality and redemptive work of the past and future. We sing the first three verses here, and close the service with the fourth verse.

Music *for Ellen's setting of Lo*, He Comes with Clouds Descending *is available in the music catalog as a lead sheet. (It is available as piano accompaniment on request.)*
Here's a link:
https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/lo-he-comes-clouds-descending

Lighting of the First Advent Candle: Hope

Reading: from Isaiah 56:1 and 64:1-9

Lighting of the candle

Leader: Prepare the way of the Lord.

We light this candle as a symbol of expectation
and hope of the coming of our Savior, Jesus.
May the light sent from God shine in the darkness
to show us the way to salvation.
O come, O come, Emmanuel!

Leader: Prepare, then, the way of the Lord.

The Word

Isaiah 64:1-9
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Mark 13:24-37
1 Corinthians 1:3-9

The Table

Remembering the Body of Christ

Passing of the Peace

The Lord be with you!
And also with you!
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again!

*The Lord's Prayer (*sung*)*

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your Name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as in heav'n.
Give us today our daily bread;
Forgive us our sins
As we forgive those who sin against us;
Save us from the time of trial,
And deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
And the glory are Yours.
Now and forever, Amen.

Setting by Eric Wyse; ©2000 Wildgrove Music (BMI)

Eric Wyse's setting of the Lord's Prayer, Our Father in Heaven, *is available at Score Exchange (http://www.scoreexchange.com/scores/19379.html)*

Prepare a Place

Prepare a place while you're waiting.
Prepare a place for the coming One.
Prepare a place and be patient
While you wait for the coming One.
Wait for the coming One;
While you wait for the coming One.

Prepare your heart while you're waiting.
Prepare your heart for the coming One.
Set time aside and be quiet
While you wait for the coming One.
Wait for the coming One;
While you wait for the coming One.

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Christine Dente and Michael W. Smith

SENDING FORTH
The Life of the Body

Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending (verse 4)

Yes, amen! Let all adore Thee,
High on Thine eternal throne.
Savior, take the pow'r and glory;
Claim the kingdom for Thine own.
O come quickly! O come quickly! Everlasting God, come down!
O come quickly! O come quickly! Everlasting God, come down!

Setting: Ellen Koehler. Copyright ©2011 Ellen Koehler. All Rights Reserved.
Words: Charles Wesley and Martin Madan; based on John Cennick, 1752.
Hymn tune: REGENT SQUARE Henry T. Smart, 1867. .

We reprise the song sung at Offering as we prepare to go out into the world to live as God's people and share His light during this season of watching and waiting. "O come quickly! Everlasting God, come down!"

Benediction:

Beloved, hear and take these words of blessing into your hearts,
as you go forth into the world to love and serve the Lord –
watching and waiting with eager anticipation the coming of Christ:

God is faithful; by Him you were called into the fellowship of His Son,
in whom we have grace and peace. He will also strengthen and keep you
to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
– based on 1 Cor. 1:3-9

Thanks be to God!
Come quickly Lord Jesus. Maranatha!

A thought about worship…– "The spirituality of Advent calls us to start our journey in expectation of the second coming of Christ. . . . The hope of a world restored under God proclaims that evil is not the final word. . . . The second coming says that the ultimate word in history is the triumph of God, the reign of God's kingdom, the eternal and lasting rule of the good. Here is where our Advent meditation rests." (Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Time: Forming Spirituality through the Christian Year* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004], 50).

Lectionary for next week: Isaiah 40:1-11
Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
2 Peter 3:8-15a
Mark 1:1-8

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