

Liturgy

The Second Sunday of Advent (Love)



GATHERING

The Mighty One, God, the LORD, speaks
and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

**Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God shines forth!**

Our God comes; He does not keep silence.

In love, He gathers His covenant people to Him.

The earth is full of Your steadfast love, O LORD!

May Your lovingkindnesses come to us,

Your salvation according to Your promise.

*May the LORD make His face to shine upon us,
and show us His unfailing love.*

With preparation and in expectation, then,
let us worship the Coming One!

— from Psalms 50, 85, 119

Long Ago, Prophets Knew

Long ago, prophets knew
Christ would come, born a Jew,
Come to make all things new,
Bear his people's burden,
Freely love and pardon.
Ring bells, ring, ring, ring! Sing choirs sing, sing, sing!
When He comes, when He comes, who will make him welcome?

God in time, God in man,
This is God's timeless plan;
He will come, as a man,
Born himself of woman,
God divinely human.
Ring bells, ring, ring, ring! Sing choirs sing, sing, sing!
When He comes, when He comes, who will make him welcome?

Mary, hail! Though afraid,
She believed, she obeyed.
In her womb, God is laid
Till the time expected,
Nurtured and protected.
Ring bells, ring, ring, ring! Sing choirs sing, sing, sing!
When He comes, when He comes, who will make him welcome?

Journey ends! Where afar
Bethl'hem shines, like a star,
Stable door stands ajar,
Unborn Son of Mary,
Savior, do not tarry!
Ring bells, ring, ring, ring! Sing choirs sing, sing, sing!
Jesus comes, Jesus comes, we will make him welcome!

Tune: PERSONENT HODIE, 1582, arr. Gustav Holst. Public domain.
Words: Fred Pratt Green. ©1971 Hope Publishing. CCLI Song #4944078 (lyrics)

*LECTIONARY for the second Sunday
of Advent, Year B:*

Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Mark 1:1-8

The theme for this second week of Advent is Love. "Advent" comes from the Latin word for "coming," and so during this season we often refer to Christ as The Coming One. On this Sunday we consider the immense and amazing love of God shown in the coming of Christ—in His first coming in human flesh as the Word incarnate; in His promised second coming in power and glory at the end of the age; and in His coming to our hearts daily in a continually renewal of our relationship with Him.

This second Advent Sunday is also the time the Church traditionally focuses on John the Baptist. What does the message of John the Baptist have to do with this dual-time-focused love of God, and with His continual presence in our lives? And how might this hopeful expectation of His love assist us in preparing our hearts for His coming now, as we wait, "in the meantime"?

The gathering antiphonal reading, for two readers and the congregation, weaves together psalm texts that remind us of God's covenant love, the blessing of the hope of His promises, and the comfort and beauty of His presence.

This joyful hymn of Advent expectation and confident hope in the fulfillment of all God's promises through the prophets down through the ages begins the service with a ringing declaration: "We will make Him welcome!"

INVOCATION

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

O Wisdom proceeding from the mouth of the Most High,
reaching from eternity to eternity and ordering all things
with strength and sweetness:

Come, teach us the way of knowledge.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high
And order all things, far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show
And cause us in her ways to go.

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.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**We believe in one God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.**

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
begotten from the Father before all ages,
*God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father.*

Through Him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven;
He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and was made human.

*He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered and was buried.*

**The third day he rose again,
according to the Scriptures.**

He ascended to heaven and is seated
at the right hand of the Father.

*He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead.
His kingdom will never end.*

**And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life.**

He proceeds from the Father,
and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.
He spoke through the prophets.

*We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.*

**We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and to life in the world to come.**

Amen.

The closing words of our corporate prayers of invocation are drawn from the ancient O Antiphons (as are each of the verses of the Advent hymn, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel).

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. As we mentioned last week, 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 as the Sundays build toward the celebration of Christ's birth on December 25. You'll notice that each of the verses of the hymn corresponds to and reflects the journey we follow as we go through the four weeks of Advent. We sing the second verse here to close our prayers of Invocation on this Love Sunday.

Here's a link to the Music Room:

<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/o-come-o-come-emmanuel>

To read more about the season of Advent, 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>

You'll find more about the four Sundays of Advent here:

<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/blog/2019/12/04/four-sundays-advent>

The Nicene Creed is particularly appropriate for this second Sunday of Advent, as we contemplate the words of the prophet Isaiah who foretold the message of John the Baptist, who is often identified as the last of the Old Covenant prophets. We also see reflected in the first stanza of the Creed the ancient hymn text, "Of the Father's Love Begotten," which follows as our sung response to the profession of our faith.

Of the Father's Love Begotten

Of the Father's love begot*ten,
Ere the worlds began* to be,
He is Alpha and Ome*ga,
He the Source, the End*ing, He
Of the things that are, that have* been,
And that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore*.

O that birth forever bless*èd!
When the Virgin, full* of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiv*ing,
Bare the Savior of* our race;
And the Babe, the world's Redeem*er,
First revealed His sacred face,
Evermore and evermore*.

Setting: Ellen Koehler. Copyright ©2015 Ellen Koehler. All Rights Reserved.
Words: Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 5th century;
transl. by John M. Neale and Henry W. Baker.
Hymn tune: DIVINUM MYSTERIUM, Plainsong, 11th century

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

Show us Your steadfast love, O God, our Savior,
and grant us Your salvation.

*Listen to what the LORD our God says:
He promises peace to his people, His faithful servants,
to those who turn their hearts to Him.*

– Psalm 85:7-8

Merciful God,
**You pardon all who truly repent and turn to you.
We humbly confess our sins and ask Your mercy.**

[Silence]

**We do not always love You with a pure heart.
We do not always love our neighbor as ourselves.
We do not always do justice and love kindness.**

[Silent confessions]

**We desire to walk humbly with You, in Your ways,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Have mercy on us, O God, in your loving-kindness.
Cleanse us from our sin, that we may be holy
and blameless before You.**

The Jesus Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
Have mercy on me, a sinner.
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison, Lord Jesus, have mercy on me.

©2002 Petaluma Music; Setting by David Baker. Used by permission.

Music for this setting of the ancient hymn, Of the Father's Love Begotten, is available in the sheet music catalog (Hymn Settings) as a lead sheet and as a sung response or doxology with melody line, chord chart and scored keyboard or organ part.

Here's a link:

<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/fathers-love-begotten>

For the ease of congregational singing, asterisks indicate syllables that are sung with more than one melodic note.

You may also hear a live recording of Of the Father's Love Begotten in the Audio Media Studio.

https://clerestorynotes.com/live/content/music_library/fathers-love-begotten-clip

The prayer of confession is adapted from the Book of Common Worship.

We will echo this prayer, that we might be holy and blameless before God, in our closing benediction at the end of the service.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Surely God's salvation is near to those who fear Him,
that His glory may dwell among us.
*Lovingkindness and faithfulness meet together;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.*
Faithfulness springs up from the ground,
and righteousness looks down from the sky.
The LORD will indeed give what is good;
righteousness will go before Him
and shall make His footsteps our pathway.

– from Psalm 85:9-13

Thanks be to God!

TIME OF OFFERING

Words and prayers of thanksgiving and devotion

In the psalms of David and the words of the prophets,
Your promise is spoken, Almighty and all-loving God,
and takes flesh in the fullness of time in the virgin's womb.
**May Emmanuel find welcome anew in our hearts
and become incarnate in our lives.
In gratitude and in worship,
we now bring Your tithes and our offerings.**

Come Emmanuel

Come and speak to us,
Come and renew us;
Come and live through us, Emmanuel.
Grace to implore us,
Ever before us;
Come and restore us, Emmanuel.

Come Emmanuel, come Emmanuel;
Come Emmanuel, come Emmanuel.

Once mercy found us,
Still You astound us;
Hold and surround us, Emmanuel.
Living inside us,
Faithful to guide us;
Cover and hide us, Emmanuel.

Come Emmanuel, come Emmanuel;
Come Emmanuel, come –

Love that begins us,
Pardons and wins us;
Come and reign in us, Emmanuel.
Come and speak to us,
Fill and renew us;
Come and live through us, Emmanuel.

Emmanuel, Emmanuel.

CCLI Song #3999938 (lyrics). ©2003 Ariose Music. Twila Paris.

*The words of assurance are drawn
from the psalm in today's lectionary.*

*This corporate prayer of dedication is
adapted from the Roman Missal, Ad-
vent liturgy, to reflect the verses of
our sung prayer, Come, Emmanuel.*

*This beautiful Twila Paris song is a
wonderful and moving sung prayer
throughout the Advent season, but
especially on this Sunday that focuses
on God's love: "Love that begins us,
pardons and wins us; Come and reign
in us, Emmanuel."*

LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE: LOVE

Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

Lighting of the candle

Prepare the way of the Lord.

We light this candle as a symbol of proclamation and in the love that Jesus, our Savior, has for us.

**May the word sent from God through the prophets lead us to the way of salvation.
O come, O come, Emmanuel!**

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

THE WORD

Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Mark 1:1-8

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 (spoken)

**Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
Forever. Amen**

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heav'n to earth come down!
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling; all Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion; pure, unbounded love Thou art.
Visit us with Thy salvation; enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe, Thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit; let us find the promised rest.
Take away our bent to sinning; Alpha and Omega be.
End of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty, to deliver; let us all Thy life receive.
Suddenly return, and never, nevermore Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray and praise thee without ceasing, glory in Thy perfect love.

Setting: Ellen Koehler. Copyright ©2011 Ellen Koehler. All Rights Reserved.
Words: Charles Wesley, 1747. Hymn tune: BEECHER, John Zundel, 1870.

Lighting of the Advent Candles can be done by individuals or small groups of people. The readings from week to week are taken from the texts of the lectionary.

This beautiful Charles Wesley hymn is fitting throughout the year, but especially so on this Advent week: It fixes our minds and hearts on the coming of Christ—His work in His first coming on earth in human flesh, His promised second coming, and His constantly renewing presence in our lives.

We sing the first three verses of this hymn here, at Table, and the fourth at Sending.

Music for Ellen's setting of Love Divine, All Loves Excelling is available in the sheet music catalog (Hymn Settings) as a lead sheet. (You may email us at clerestorynotes@gmail.com for availability.)

SENDING FORTH
The Life of the Body

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (reprise verse 4)

Finish then Thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see Thy great salvation perfectly restored in Thee:
Changed from glory into glory, till in heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee, lost in wonder, love and praise.

Setting: Ellen Koehler. Copyright ©2011 Ellen Koehler. All Rights Reserved.
Words: Charles Wesley, 1747. Hymn tune: BEECHER, John Zundel, 1870.

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:
May the love of God, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you and go with you all;
May the Lord make you increase and abound in love;
And may He so strengthen your hearts
that you may be blameless and holy
before our God and Father
at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

– from 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

Amen. Thanks be to God!

Come quickly Lord Jesus. Maranatha!

A thought about worship...– “In Advent we celebrate the beginning and ending of Christ’s victory over the powers of evil, and we call upon God to accomplish that victory in our own lives, to break in on us, to be born in our hearts, and to create us anew. This is the message of Isaiah to us: a Savior is coming not only to Israel but to the whole world.” (Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Time: Forming Spirituality through the Christian Year* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004], 44).

Lectionary for next week: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Psalm 126
Luke 1:46b-55
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

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URL: <https://www.clerestorynotes.com>

This fourth verse of the song at Table closes the worship service with a strong statement of praise and a prayer of dedication.

These Sending words of charge and benediction are drawn from Paul’s words of the blessing and power of God’s love found in 1 Thessalonians 3. (Note their resonance with the prayer of confession, above.)