

Liturgy

The Fourth Sunday of Advent (Peace)



GATHERING

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

Listen to what the LORD our God says:

**He promises peace to His people,
who are His beloved saints.**

The LORD will indeed give what is good.

Righteousness will go before Him
and shall make His footsteps our pathway.

May the LORD make His holy face to shine upon us.

May we see God's face and so know peace.

With preparation and in expectation, let us worship Him!

— from Psalm 85:7-13

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?

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

*LECTIONARY for the fourth Sunday
of Advent, Year A:*

Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 3:18-25

This fourth Sunday of Advent brings us nearly to the end of our journey of preparation, waiting, and watching with eager anticipation the coming of the Lord. During this 4-week season, we focus our hearts and minds on the Advent—the coming of the promised Messiah, the Savior of the world—in three ways. We joyfully look forward to the Christmas celebration of the first coming of the Word made flesh. At the same time, we watch and wait expectantly for His second Advent, when He will come again in all His glory and triumphant power at the end of the age. And we thankfully meditate on what Bernard of Clairvaux called the third Advent, the coming of Christ into our own lives, and pray that He again—continually—will be born in our hearts and create us anew.

On the first three Sundays of Advent, we considered the ways in which Hope, Love, and Joy are promised, manifested, and fulfilled in this three-fold longing for the Coming One. Today, the Sunday of Peace, we turn our attention to the birth of the Prince of Peace, and ponder—with renewed awe—that He has brought us near to Him to share in His peace. And we gladly worship Him, whose earthly birth was in humility and lowly estate but who will come again in glory. For He is King of kings, Lord of lords, and Prince of peace.

*To read more about Advent as a season of watchful waiting and expectation, or about the four Sundays of Advent, visit the Reflections section of the Clerestory Notes website:
<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/content/blog>*

*This joyful hymn of Advent expectation begins the service with words of confident hope in the fulfillment of all God's promises through the prophets down through the ages, but also causes us to pause in thoughtful consideration of the question: "Who will make Him welcome?"
(We answer the question at the close*

INVOCATION

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

God of eternity,

with expectant hearts we Your people await Christ's coming.

**As once He came in humility, so now may He come in glory,
that He, the Prince of Peace, may make all things perfect
in Your everlasting kingdom. For He is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind.
Bid envy, strife, and quarrels cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

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

Let us speak together the words of Paul
as he declared the Advent of the Prince of Peace:

**We are set apart for the gospel of God,
which He promised beforehand through His prophets
in the holy scriptures –**

**The gospel concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who was descended from David according to the flesh,
and was declared to be the Son of God with power
according to the Spirit of holiness,
by the resurrection from the dead.**

**In Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
and through Him God was pleased to reconcile all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,
by making peace through the blood of His cross.**

For He Himself is our peace.

To all God's beloved, who are called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

– Romans 1:1-7; Colossians 1:19-20; Ephesians 2:14

Good Christians All, Rejoice

Good Christians all, rejoice
With heart and soul and voice.
Now ye need not fear the grave:
Peace! Peace!
Jesus Christ was born to save!

Calls you one and calls you all
To gain His everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!

Hymn tune: IN DULCI JUBILO (14th-century German melody).
Latin carol, transl. John Mason Neale, 1853.
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of the service, with the fourth verse's declaration: "We will make Him welcome!"

In this year A, we are using one verse of this ancient hymn each week as a sung prayer of Invocation. Each of the verses is based on one of the eighth-century "O Antiphons," traditionally sung in Vespers service on each of the last seven days of Advent. They are filled with beautiful biblical imagery and wonderful theology expressing the hope of Christ's coming. The verses we sing at Invocation each week correspond to and reflect the journey of these Advent weeks: Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace.

Ellen's setting of O Come, O Come, Emmanuel is available in the music catalog as a lead sheet. As we've noted in the past few weeks' comments, the harmonic arrangement varies from verse to verse, which is especially moving when all four verses are sung at one point in a service. Separated week by week, as we are doing throughout this season, they highlight the movement of our Advent watchfulness as the Sundays build toward the celebration of Christ's birth on December 25.

Here's a link to the Music Room:

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

The Profession of Faith is taken from three passages in Paul's Epistles that speak specifically to the Person and Work of Christ as the victorious Prince of Peace, and to the peace Christ has given to us, His beloved children.

Ellen's setting of Good Christians All, Rejoice is available in the Sheet Music Catalog (Season of Light section) as a lead sheet. See the Commentary in the Music Room for a discussion of the history of this carol and some creative suggestions for using it during the Advent and Christmas seasons.

Here's a link:

<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/good-christians-all-rejoice>

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

Call to 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

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.

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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 for 2-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

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for He has looked favorably on His people,
and redeemed them.

*God has raised up a mighty Savior from the house of David.
He has shown the mercy promised to our fathers,
and remembered His holy covenant.*

In the tender compassion of our God,
the Dayspring from on high has come to us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

– from Luke 1:68-79

In Christ we are forgiven.
Thanks be to God!

TIME OF OFFERING

Words and prayers of praise, gratitude, and expectancy

Jesus Came, the Heav'ns Adoring

Jesus came, the heav'ns adoring,
Came with peace from realms on high;
Jesus came for man's redemption,
Lowly came on earth to die.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Came in deep humility.

Jesus comes again in mercy,
When our hearts are bowed with care;
Jesus comes again in answer
To an earnest, heartfelt prayer;
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Comes to save us from despair.

Jesus comes to hearts rejoicing,
Bringing news of sins forgiven;
Jesus comes in sounds of gladness,
Leading souls redeemed to Heav'n.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Now the gate of death is riv'n.

Jesus comes on clouds triumphant,
When the heav'ns shall pass away;
Jesus comes again in glory;
Let us then our homage pay.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Till the dawn of endless day.

Words: Godfrey Thring. Music: Henry T. Smart. Hymn Tune: REGENT SQUARE
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LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE: PEACE

Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16

Lighting of the candle

We light this candle as a symbol of peace.

May the visitation of your Holy Spirit, O God,
Purify us, that we may be ready
for the coming of Jesus, our hope, joy, and peace.

Response:

O King and Desire of the nations,
Cornerstone that binds them into one:
**Come, and deliver us whom You formed
out of the dust of the earth
to be a people for Yourself.**

THE WORD

Isaiah 7:10-17

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Romans 1:1-7

Luke 1:39-55

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!

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.

The congregational responses in this year A are drawn from the traditional O Antiphons.

The Lord's Prayer (sung)

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heav'n.
Provide each day our daily needs;
Forgive our sins
As we forgive others' wrongs;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
Forever and ever;
And Thine is the power,
Forever and ever;
And Thine is the glory,
Now and forever,
Amen, amen, amen.

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Fullness of Grace

Fullness of grace in man's human frailty,
This is the wonder of Jesus.
Laying aside His power and glory,
Humbly He entered our world.
Chose the path of meanest worth;
Scandal of a virgin birth.
Born in a stable, cold and rejected;
Here lies the hope of the world.

Fullness of grace, the love of the Father
Shown in the face of Jesus.
Stooping to bear the weight of humanity,
Walking the Calvary road.
Christ the holy innocent
Took our sin and punishment.
Fullness of God, despised and rejected;
Crushed for the sins of the world.

Fullness of hope in Christ we had longed for,
Promise of God in Jesus.
Through His obedience we are forgiven,
Op'ning the floodgates of heav'n.
All our hopes and dreams we bring
Gladly as an offering.
Fullness of life and joy unspeakable:
God's gift in love to the world.

CCLI Song #4411752 ©2004 Thankyou Music.
Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty, Stuart Townend.

Music for The Lord's Prayer is available in the music catalog as a lead sheet and scored for voice and piano. It is also available in the music collection, Singing the Liturgy, Volume 1.
<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/lords-prayer>

You can hear The Lord's Prayer in the Audio Media Studio.

https://clerestorynotes.com/live/content/music_library/lords-prayer-clip

If you've looked at the Liturgy Collection, the Four Sundays of Advent Year A, you will have noticed that the songs for Time of Offering and Table are different. You may enjoy perusing those liturgies as well, and use those songs as alternates, if you prefer.

SENDING FORTH
The Life of the Body

Long Ago, Prophets Knew (verse 4)

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)

Benediction:

Beloved, hear and take these words of blessing into your hearts,
as you watch and wait with eager anticipation the coming of Christ:

May our Lord Jesus Christ, who came once in humility
and will come again in triumph and glory,
fill your hearts with joyful expectation at all times,
as you go forth into the world to love and serve the Lord.

Amen.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely,
and preserve you complete and blameless
at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it.

– based on 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Thanks be to God!

Come quickly Lord Jesus. Maranatha!

A thought about worship... – “Advent is a time to review once again where our faith is placed and how our lives are lived. Trust in Jesus is not merely a onetime act but a continuous state of being, a moment-by-moment existence in Christ. It is a daily turning from a life lived for self to a life lived in tune with the power of the Spirit who continually calls us to be like Jesus.” (Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Time: Forming Spirituality through the Christian Year* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004], 52).

Lectionary for next week: Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23

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

*We reprise the final verse of our
Gathering hymn here, as a strong and
confident reminder and declaration
that we live in the blessings of eternal
covenant relationship with the victori-
ous Prince of Peace.*