

Following are suggestions of ways, in the spirit of Christ, to broaden our celebration of the 12 days of Christmas:

- ❖ light the Christ candle each day in the season of Christmas at supper, saying “*Christ is born! Hallelujah!*”
- ❖ revive the Middle Ages tradition of Boxing Day as a day for people who have material, emotional, physical) wealth to share with those who do not have; give a gift on this day to someone who has been of service to you
- ❖ December 26th is also the traditional day to honour St. Stephen, the first martyred disciple of Jesus; read his story in Acts 6 & 7; sing the carol of Good King Wenceslaus
- ❖ spread out the opening of gifts over a few days, giving a chance to savour each gift given; give a final gift on Epiphany to mark the gift giving of the magi
- ❖ read the story of Simeon and Anna, who waited so long for the Messiah to arrive, in Luke 2: 22-40; celebrate with Simeon and Anna by singing carols such as “Go Tell It On the Mountain” or “Joy to the World” (originally an Easter hymn)
- ❖ mark the feast of the Holy Innocents on December 28th by reading Matthew 2: 13-18 and hosting a children’s party (complete with cake and a resounding singing of “Happy Birthday” to Jesus) as a way to celebrate the innocent among us
- ❖ hold a Twelfth Night celebration to mark the end of Christmas



ADVENT

A liturgy for use at home
to begin the adventure
of what God is up to in Christ.



Advent, which is from the Latin ‘adventus’, means ‘coming’. We wait in Advent for the coming of God’s Messiah, our Saviour, Christ Jesus. We wait upon God, remembering that the root word for “wait” in both Hebrew and Latin also means ‘hope’. Advent is the first season of the cycle that is the Christian year.

Singing: Choose from one of the following hymns:
Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming, German, 15th century, English
trans. Theodore Baker 1894
Came He Not in Fire, William Farley Smith
Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending, John Cennick 1750,
rev. Charles Wesley 1758 and Martin Madan 1769

Proclamation: *“Do not be afraid. God is with us.
Thanks be to God.”*



Considering Courage and Obedience:

- ❖ Where in our life [together] do we let the fear of loss, persecution or even death (of all kinds) paralyze our obedience to God's risky invitations for new life?
- ❖ How does fear, courage and obedience become challenges in the cultures we are a part of?

Through the Week:

- ❖ At supper each evening, light the first blue candle, saying:
“Let us walk in the light of the Lord!”
the second blue candle, saying:
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”
the third blue candle, saying:
“Be patient until the coming of the Lord.”
and the fourth blue candle, saying:
“Do not be afraid. God is with us. Thanks be to God.”
- ❖ Pray for the courage to obey.



Advent 1: Keep Awake!

Sunday, December 2nd, 2007; Year A

Candle Lighting: Light one blue candle.

Question: *“Why do we light this candle?”*

Response: *“We light this candle to remember what time it is.
The night is far gone; the day is near.”*

Scripture¹: Read Isaiah 2: 1-5

Prayer: You
are coming to us again,
with compassion and instruction,
with mercy and the just judgment we crave.

Wake us up,
from our amnesia of who we are,
from our complacency with the status quo,
from the nightmare of despair.
Keep us awake,
with grateful worship,
with the old, odd story,
with the dream of expectant hope
that we will beat our swords into plowshares,
and our spears into pruning hooks
that nation shall not lift up sword against nation
or learn war anymore
because we will know
and love
and walk in Your Way
always.

Come soon, Lord Jesus.

Amen.

¹ The other three texts for this Sunday are Psalm 122, Romans 13: 11-14 and Matthew 24: 36-44.

Singing: Choose from one of the following hymns:

Come Now, O God of Peace, Geonyong Lee ca.1984

Wait for the Lord, Jacques Berthier 1984

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus, Charles Wesley 1744

O Come, O Come Emmanuel, ca. 9th century,
trans. John Neale, 1851

Let There Be Light, Frances Wheeler Davis 1968

Proclamation: *“Put on the Lord Jesus Christ
and come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!”*



Considering Wakefulness:

- ❖ What are some of the ways we are kept asleep in our discipleship? What are the ways that might wake us up to expectant hope and action?
- ❖ Where are the places/situations that compel us to long for the just judgment of our God?

Through the Week:

- ❖ Light this candle at supper each evening, saying,
“Let us walk in the light of the Lord!”
- ❖ Pray that Jesus returns soon.



Advent 4: No Not Fear

Sunday, December 23rd, 2007; Year A

Candle Lighting: Light again the first blue candle, saying:
“Let us walk in the light of the Lord.”
Light again the second blue candle, saying:
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”
Light again the third blue candle, saying:
“Be patient until the coming of the Lord.”

Question: *“Why do we light this candle?”*

Response: *“We light this candle to give thanks and to gain the courage to follow and obey.”*

Scripture²: Read Matthew 1: 18-25

Prayer: You
gift us with life
and then invite us to risk losing it
so that Your purpose for all of life
can be birthed.
We give thanks for Mary
who risked her life
to host Your kingdom come.
We give thanks for Joseph
who risked ridicule and abuse
to provide a protected place for the infant Christ.
We give thanks for Jesus,
for You with us,
who lost reputation and life
to birth a new world.
You have let Your face shine among us
and save us from our sins.
Amen and Amen.

² The other three texts for this Sunday are Isaiah 7: 10-16, Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19 and Romans 1: 1-7.

Give us the strength of the prophets
to sustain our cruciform suffering
for others
and for You.
But we pray that the late rains come early.
Amen.

Singing: Choose from one of the following hymns:
Wait for the Lord, Jacques Berthier, 1984
People, Look East, Eleanor Farjeon, 1928
Joy Shall Come, Israeli traditional, music arr. Darryl Nixon 1987
Watch and Pray, The Iona Community, 1988
Hail to God's Own Anointed, James Montgomery 1821

Proclamation: *“Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.”*



Considering Patience:

- ❖ What does patience teach us about what our role is and what God's role is?
- ❖ What were some of the sufferings of the prophets and how were they patient?
- ❖ Where in our life do we need to be patient and trust in what God is up to? How might the practice of patience impact the actions we do or do not take?

Through the Week:

- ❖ At supper each evening, light the first blue candle, saying:
“Let us walk in the light of the Lord!”
the second blue candle, saying:
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”
and the third blue candle, saying:
“Be patient until the coming of the Lord.”
- ❖ Pray for patience.

Advent 2: Repent

Sunday, December 9th, 2007; Year A

Candle Lighting: Light again the first blue candle, saying:
“Let us walk in the light of the Lord.”
Light a second blue candle.

Question: *“Why do we light this candle?”*

Response: *“We light this candle to remember the call to repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”*

Scripture³: Read Matthew 3: 1-12

Prayer: You
are on the move.
We give thanks for Your prophet's call
to turn back to You –
both gift and warning.
Prepare us.
Make Your paths straight in us.
May Your burning desire
for life,
for our freedom,
for us,
prune away
our apathy,
our self-centeredness,
our deathliness
that we might bear the fruit of
compassion,
forgiveness,
and right relationship with Your Creation,
with one another,
with You,
to the glory of Your name. Amen.

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³ The other three texts for this Sunday are Isaiah 11: 1-10, Psalm 72: 1-7, 18-19 and Romans 15: 4-13.

Singing: Choose from one of the following hymns:
There's a Voice in the Wilderness, James Lewis Milligan, 1925
Prepare the Way of the Lord, Isa. 40:3
 adapt. Michael Burkhardt, 1990
On Jordan's Bank, Latin, Charles Coffin 1763, trans. John
Chandler 1837

Proclamation: "Bear fruit worthy of repentance."



Considering Repentance:

- ❖ What might fruit worthy of repentance be?
- ❖ What in your life and the life of the church does Jesus' baptism burn away? What does this make room for to grow instead?

Through the Week:

- ❖ At supper each evening, light the first blue candle, saying: "***Let us walk in the light of the Lord!***" and the second blue candle, saying: "***Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.***"
- ❖ Nurture a fruit – a life-giving, sweet action for others – that is worthy of repentance.



Advent 3: Be Patient

Sunday, December 16th, 2007; Year A

Candle Lighting: Light again the first blue candle, saying:
 "***Let us walk in the light of the Lord.***"
Light again the second blue candle, saying:
 "***Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.***"

Question: "Why do we light this candle?"

Response: "***We light this candle in patient hope until the coming of the Lord.***"

Scripture⁴: Read James 5: 7-10

Prayer: You are to be trusted,
 are You not?
Thousands of years have passed.
Must thousands more?
Sorrow and sighing swirl around us yet:
 The earth is threatened.
 The poor are hungry.
 Prisoners are yet bound.
 There are blind who do not yet see.
 The vulnerable exploited.
 The burdened weighed down.
 Wickedness thrives.
We grow crazy with impatience.
Train us,
 like the farmer,
to trust the growing new life
 You are seeding even now.
Train us
 to watch for the signs of Your labour
 and to steward it's precious presence.

⁴ The other three texts for this Sunday are Isaiah 35: 1-10, Psalm 146: 5-10 and Matthew 11: 2-11.