

Advent 2020



Church of the Holy Spirit
Our door is always open

www.churchholyspirit.org

2020 Advent Home Prayers

Introduction to an Expanded Advent

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Your Participation & Reflection

Thank you for taking the opportunity to observe a longer Advent season this year. Church of the Holy Spirit, Lebanon, NJ, is joined by a growing number of parishes in North America that are participating in this venture. This will help build a body of reflected experience over time in this effort of liturgical renewal. You are invited to a deepening of what Advent means and why we are engaged in this expanded usage. Such awareness is singularly important for participation in the liturgy- one of the glories of our tradition is that we worship as active participants and not just as observers or audience.

The Proposal and Its Origin

The Advent Project Seminar of the North American Academy of Liturgy includes liturgical scholars and/or teachers of worship in seminaries including Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and United Church of Christ. The aim of the seminar is to promote a calendar change in our liturgical year that would expand Advent to the seven weeks before Christmas.

Why Expand Advent?

First, churches long ago lost the Advent Season to the "Christmas culture." Christmas decorations now appear in all kinds of stores before Hallowe'en. By the time the new church year begins a month later in December with typical Advent I, our churches are tempted to make the season a four-week journey to Bethlehem. But that focus is only one pole (and secondary at that!) of the Advent Season. The primary focus when beginning our new church year is on the fulfillment of all the implications of Christ's resurrection for humanity and, indeed, the entire creation. This is usually called the "Kingdom" or the "Reign of God." This emphasis given at the beginning of the yearly liturgical cycle helps Christians engage ever more deeply in Christ's mission of peace, justice, and the integrity of Creation. Having these things firmly in our hearts, minds, & wills, can assist us more authentically enter into the yearly story from Bethlehem to the Passion then to Pentecost and the celebration of All Saints that would now conclude the year. Starting Advent in November strengthens its primary focus before we are overcome by the commerce of caroling. The second reason for expanding Advent is that it provides an alternative and more authentic vision of "end times" or "Reign of God" than the sadly popular but scarily distorted, fundamentalist versions.

What Changes?

At Holy Spirit (now in the ninth year of experiencing an expanded Advent), you know it changes very little from the "4 week standard" but yet fosters deep growth. The Sunday readings for an expanded Advent Season are the ones we already hear in our three-year cycle. However, there is a change in the atmosphere and tone after All Saints' Day - a Feast which more truly culminates and concludes the long season after Pentecost. There are musical emphases that appear in hymns specifically for Advent. Weekly antiphons are based in the Messianic titles for Christ and form the verses of "O come, O come Emmanuel," which help us focus on the major theme of the season. Prayers of the People are oriented to this theme as well. Then there is a seven-candle Advent wreath. Advent blue will replace Pentecost green three weeks earlier; and we use the color blue instead of purple so that Advent has its own integrity and not merely mimics a mini-Lent. Through an expanded Advent, we come to Bethlehem with a clearer understanding of why we are embarking once again on the annual pilgrimage of the liturgical year.

A Blessed Advent to All!

Bill+

For more info see our web site: <http://www.theadventproject.org>

2020 Advent Home Prayers - Worship

A wreath such as the one shown on the cover page is placed on the table where the evening meal takes place. The candle(s) remain unlit until the appropriate time near the beginning of the service.

The prayers begin when you (and/or household) are gathered around the table, either standing or seated.

Opening Sentence/Response

Advent I: *Week of the Sunday on or between 5 - 12 November*

O Wisdom, you came forth from the mouth of the Holy One.
Mighty and sweet your ordering of life: teach us prudence!

Advent II: *Week of the Sunday on or between 13 - 19 November*

O Adonai and Israel's God, your flame brought Moses to his knees.
Your mountain brought forth Law and Life: Come and redeem us!

Advent III: *Week of the Sunday on or between 20 - 26 November*

O Ruler of the nations, Desire and longing for wholeness, come!
We are your creatures, you formed us of earth: Save your people!

Advent IV: *Week of the Sunday on or between November 7 - December 3*

O Root of Jesse tarry not: over all your people your banner waves.
All rulers and nations worship you: Heal the nations!

Advent V: *Week of the Sunday on or between 4 - 10 December*

O Key of David, sign of might; you tear down bars that hold us fast.
Deliver the captives and free us from death: Burst our prison!

Advent VI: *Week of the Sunday on or between 11 - 17 December*

O Morning Star of Righteousness, your light shines brightly in the night.
Dispel our shadows and bring us light: Illumine our darkness.

Advent VII: *Week of the Sunday on or between 18 - 24 December*

O God in our midst, Emmanuel, in you our salvation comes to earth.
Come rule our lives and make us whole: Come and save us!

If there is a household gathered, the youngest/newest member of the family who is able then lights the candle or candles appropriate to the week(s) of the season. When this is accomplished the Phos hilaron is said.

Phos hilaron

O gracious Light, pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!
Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light,
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of life,
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

The Collects of Advent

The Leader then says one of the following collects according to the week in the season.

Advent I

Eternal God, your Word of wisdom goes forth and does not return empty: Grant us such knowledge and love of you that we may perceive your presence in all creation and every creature; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Advent II

O Lord our God, you gave your law that righteousness might abound: Put it into our hearts to love justice for others as much as we desire it for ourselves, that, as we know you to be our judge, so we may welcome your reign as it is manifested through Jesus Christ our savior; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be dominion and praise for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Advent III

Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things in your well-beloved Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords: Mercifully grant that the peoples of the earth, divided and enslaved by sin, may be freed and brought together under his most gracious rule; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Advent IV

Almighty God, you brought forth a royal branch from the ancient stock of Jesse's line: Grant that we who have been grafted into this heritage may bear fruit worthy of Jesus Christ; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

Advent V

Gracious God, your Christ opened wide the gate of heaven, making plain the way that leads to eternal joy: Grant that we who have been buried with Christ in baptism and raised to new life may strive courageously for the freedom and peace of the world; through the same, Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be praise and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Advent VI

Lord Jesus Christ, in your resurrection you appeared as the Morning Star that knows no setting: Dawn upon the darkness of the human heart so that the deathly orders of this world may be overcome and your whole creation made new; for with the Father and the Holy Spirit, you live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Advent VII

Eternal God, you do not abandon us in exile but hear our plea for returning and rest: Visit us we pray with your presence and raise us to greet with hope and joy the promised day of salvation; through Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns now and for ever. *Amen.*

Table Grace

A table grace is followed by the evening meal, or the prayers may conclude with a doxology that follows

Give us grateful hearts, O God, for all your mercies,
And keep us mindful and responsive to the needs of others;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

or this

Blessed are you, O Lord God, Ruler of the Universe, for you
give us food to sustain our lives and make our hearts glad;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Concluding Doxology

If a table grace is used, then this doxology may be reserved until the end of the meal.

May the Lord cause increase the abundance of love among us all, and toward all others,
that our hearts may be established in holiness before our God,
and at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. *Amen.*

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

or this

May the God of patient endurance grant us courage and harmony with one another,
according to Christ Jesus, that together we may with one voice we glorify God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Romans 15:5-6

Then may be said

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.