



Second Sunday in Advent, December 7th, 2025

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candles



Preparation: Have a cut out white paper dove for each person and some pens, for the Prayers of the People.

You might want to start this service with a recording (or choir/band) version of **Prepare ye the way of the Lord** from Godspell (Stephen Schwarz / John-Michael Tebelak) - here's a YouTube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFAHBTJgghc>

Here we are!

Gathered in the Advent waiting room.

Longing for a sign.

Searching for a whisper of wonder.

Straining to hear a newborn cry.

Come, Jesus, come,

already and not yet,

into our world, into our hearts.

And all the people say: **Amen**

We light the candle of hope

We light the light of peace.

Into a world full of conflict and fear;
into a world
where scarcity abounds in some places,
while plenty abounds in others;
into a world still unable to find the balances
that would make for true peace,
we bring this light of peace.

There's a candle-lighting song here you can use each week to the tune DIX TiS 314 "As with gladness":

<https://singingthesacred.wordpress.com/2012/11/16/light-a-candle-straight/>

Acknowledging



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

The Ancient of Days breathed life into this land and her peoples. From time beyond our reckoning the *(please name the people on whose land you gather)* People, the Traditional Custodians, have blessed this place through their law and customs, their care and life. We pay respects to their Elders and leaders past and present, and pray for the future of their communities. May we walk gently and respectfully on this Land.

Singing - Come, thou long-expected Jesus TiS 272

OR: On Jordan's bank - TiS 270



Prayer

You might want to begin this prayer with a piece of music that makes you feel at peace and invite people to be still.

Thank you,
God who breathed life and order out of chaos,
for coming to us in Jesus, the Prince of Peace.
This Advent season we are thankful,
for all the ways we see your Spirit moving
to bring peace in our hearts and in our world.

Thank you,
for coming to us in the peacemakers,
the ones who use their voices,
their skills and their lives,
to promote peace in our world.

With gratitude,
we name those peacemakers, in our hearts.

(time of quiet - or some more of the music)

We confess that we have missed opportunities
to be peacemakers in the way of Jesus.

We have held onto grudges and old hurts
and not forgiven others as you forgive us.

We have blocked our ears to the cries of war,
because it makes us feel uncomfortable.



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We have failed to support people
with our time, money and voice,
who are doing the work of peace.

Forgive us and set us on the right path.
Guide our feet in the way of peace.

(time of quiet - or some more of the music)

Siblings in Christ, be assured,
We are forgiven, blessed, healed,
renewed and released,
to walk in the way of peace
for the sake of the world,

Thank you, God, Amen.

Passing the peace

May the Peace of God dwell with you:
and also with you.

Listening

Read: Isaiah 11:1-10
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

For these words of faith and for Jesus the Word
Thanks be to God.

Reflecting - Rev. Sandra Houghton

I love all the traditions associated with Advent – decorating the house and Christmas tree, sending Christmas cards, singing carols, buying and wrapping presents, and making puddings and cakes. But perhaps the tradition that really speaks to my heart is lighting the candles on the Advent wreath. I love the way that lighting the candles on the Advent wreath helps us on our journey through Advent as we await the birth of the Christ Child. And I love the way that doing this simple thing helps us reflect on what is really important in this season that is often overshadowed by rampant commercialisation. As we light each candle, we are invited to reflect on an aspect of our faith, understandings about the

incarnation and focus on the incredible gift that lies at the centre of our faith.

Ironically, it is thought that the Advent wreath has its origins in a pre-Christian tradition of having wreaths (sometimes made on a cartwheel) covered in evergreens and decorated with candles as part of the mid-winter festivals in the Germanic lands.

But German Lutherans in the sixteenth century began to adopt this tradition as a way of making the time through Advent as they waited for the celebration of Christmas. They started the tradition of having a candle on the wreath for each Sunday in Advent and another in the centre for Christmas Day/Eve (sometimes they would even have a candle for each day of Advent). They would light one candle on the first Sunday, two on the second Sunday, and so on, until all the candles were lit on Christmas Day. This tradition gradually spread to other churches and countries.

The wreath itself can be assigned symbolic meaning. As it is usually made in a circle, this is said to symbolise God's infinite love for humanity or eternal life as the circle has no beginning and no end. Often the wreath is covered in evergreen foliage, which is also symbolic of eternal life. The candles are said to remind us of the coming of the Light of the World and are given a variety of meanings. Sometimes these meanings are to do with the important characters in the Advent stories- the Prophets, John the Baptist, Mary, Joseph or the Shepherds. But perhaps most commonly the candles remind us of God's Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love that are such important aspects of the Advent Bible stories.

On this second Sunday in Advent, we firstly light the Hope candle that was lit for the first time last Sunday, and then we light the second candle which is the candle of Peace. The Peace candle seems most appropriate as we have two Bible readings today which are focused on peace and peace-making.



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In the book of Isaiah, the prophet proclaims the peacefulness that God's promised Messiah will bring when he comes into his Kingdom. This one, whom Isaiah describes as a 'shoot from the stump of Jesse' whom Christians believe to be Jesus, will be filled with God's Spirit. Isaiah lists some of the attributes of God's Spirit; wisdom, understanding, wise counsel, might, knowledge and the fear of the Lord, righteous judgment, faithfulness and power. But Isaiah then uses vivid imagery to show that the Kingdom this Promised One will bring into being will be peaceful, like a reimagined Garden of Eden. Predators will give up being hunters, animals that would normally be the hunter and the prey will lie together in harmony, and little children will play safely around snakes.

Now, even though we believe that this prophecy is about Jesus, who was and is God's Promised One, we know that these prophecies about a peaceful and harmonious world have not been fulfilled. In fact, if anything, our world is probably more war torn than ever. So, what has happened?

Perhaps it might be helpful to remember that in Advent we do not just look forward to recalling Jesus' coming to earth as a baby at Christmas, but we also look forward to the time when Jesus the Christ will come again to bring his Kingdom to fruition. This second coming will, we believe, bring the peace, reconciliation, and harmony we long for to our currently very broken world. Jesus, the Prince of Peace will reign.

When he wrote the book of Romans, Paul was aware of divisions in the church at Rome, specifically between those from Jewish backgrounds and those from Gentile/pagan backgrounds. Paul sought to bring peace to this church by reminding them that they all are forgiven and reconciled to God **only** through faith in the Risen Jesus Christ. It is because of the faithfulness to death of Jesus that they have been saved. No one can claim superiority, so their calling is to build their lives together around their

mutual faith in Jesus Christ and share in his love and service.

So, Paul gives to them these instructions, which are also instructions to every church that has followed on after them, "May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." Romans 15:5-7

Amen to that. May we live in peace and love together this Advent, as we prepare to commemorate the coming of the Christ Child at Christmas, and as we prepare for the day when he comes again in glory.

Singing - Christmas is coming TiS 289

OR: Light one candle for hope; TiS 286;

OR: Hark the glad sound! The Saviour comes; TiS 269

Offering

God who greets us with messages of peace, we offer to you all that we hold in our hands, our hearts and our lives. Bless us and use us, and these gifts we bring, to make peace and to sustain peace wherever possible. Amen.

Notices

Dec. 9th is International Anti-Corruption Day
Dec. 10th is International Human Rights Day.

Prayers for World & Community

Peace

From the United Nations: *"Peace is not just a vision—it's a call to action that each of us can answer by promoting understanding, respect, and justice in our daily lives."*
<https://www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-peace>



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Take some time for these prayers. You could have some gentle music playing. Invite people to take a paper dove of peace, write a prayer of peace on it, and place it somewhere appropriate, (in an empty manger, on the communion table, a Christmas tree or map of the world, etc. You could also invite them to read out their prayer.)

If prayers are read aloud,
use the following response after each one:
God of waiting; bring peace.

When everyone is finished,
pray this together:

**God of waiting, bring peace,
bless peace, shelter peace.
Let your unending song of peace ring out.**

We pray together then as Jesus taught us:

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
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.

Singing - Comfort, comfort all my people ***TiS 647***

OR: Come to be our hope, O Jesus TiS 688
OR: Loving Spirit, loving Spirit, TiS 417

Here are extra verses for *Comfort, Comfort*,
written by the author of the song, Robin Mann, for
1988 Christmas Bowl Appeal-
<https://www.robinmann.com.au/uploads/b/d2ea5d90-9061-11ef-8d43-b1dd8d41e9ac/comfortcomfort.pdf>

3. Though we build strong walls for prisons,
though we feast while others starve,
though we fill this world with weapons:
comfort, comfort.

Every prisoner will be rescued,
every hungry mouth be filled,
every gun will rust, forgotten:
comfort, comfort.

4. Though we fracture God's creation,
though we stand so far apart,
though we fail to love each other:
comfort, comfort.
Every wall will crack and crumble,
every stranger will be friend,
every one embrace another:
comfort, comfort.

Blessing

Go out from this gathering
singing the ceaseless song of hope,
with all you are and in all you do.

And may the carols in the supermarket
become signs of promise
and fall gently on your ear this year.

May you see threads of the fabric of peace
in tinsel trimmed decorations,
woven through families, communities and nations.

May the jolly red Santas and unseasonal snow
be signs of outrageous joy.

And may nativity scenes remind you
that love is born,
that love is always born.

And all the people say: **Amen.**

Reflection: Rev. Sandra Houghton
Retired Minister - Sale

Liturgy & Editor: Rev. Jennie Gordon
Retired Minister - Cape Paterson
revjenniegordon@gmail.com

