

# PREPARING THE WAY OF THE LORD



SIMPLE  
LITURGIES  
FOR  
ADVENT

Doug Baker



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# **ADVENT**

## **PREPARING FOR THE LORD'S COMING**

In the Christian calendar the year begins with Advent - the four weeks preceding Christmas. "Advent" literally means "coming" and refers to the coming of Jesus anticipated by the prophets and to his coming again in our own experience now as well as his coming in the future.

For many people the weeks leading up to Christmas are exceedingly hectic. Yet Advent is intended to be a time of renewal and reflection as we prepare for the Lord's coming. This booklet is shared in the belief that it is possible for us "busy" men and women - and particularly families - to reclaim something of deep importance during Advent by making and taking time to grasp the meaning of Christmas.

You will find five simple liturgies on the following pages designed for use during each of the four weeks of Advent and on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. They can be used by small groups, families or adapted for personal prayer.

The liturgies call for the use of an Advent Wreath. You can make one using a circular base into which four candles are placed and which is then covered with sprigs of evergreen. Or, you can place the candles on a large dinner plate with a circle of evergreen laid around it.

On the first Sunday in Advent - and each day that week - one candle is lit. An additional candle is lighted on the Second Sunday, a third on the Third Sunday, and a fourth on the final Sunday before Christmas. A white Christ candle can be placed in the centre and be lighted on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

## **THE ADVENT WREATH**

*... is round, with no beginning or end, reminding us of God's unending love for all creation.*

*... the Wreath is evergreen, recalling that our faith, our hope and our love never die, when they spring from Jesus Christ*

*...the Candles (purple to celebrate the coming of a King) represent the light that comes into the world with Jesus. Some traditions use a pink candle for the third week to represent joy. The white Christ candle symbolises the one who said "I am the light of the world " As more candles are lit the light grows stronger the nearer we come to Christ's birth.*

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THIS BOOKLET**

The liturgies can be used at meal or at other times.

If being used by a family, children can be encouraged to act as one of the readers, light the candles or - if too young to do either - be given the responsibility of blowing them out.

You may wish to use the full liturgy on one day each week and shorten it on other days: - simply saying:

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life," as you light the candle: or - saying that and using the prayer or the song.

You may wish to use different Bible readings for each day during the week or use a wider variety of carols and songs. Additional songs are suggested inside the back cover. Adapt what you find in whatever way is most helpful.

## **FIRST WEEK IN ADVENT**

### **Light the first candle as you say together:**

Jesus said: "I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life".

**First Reader:** What will we call this candle?

**Second Reader:** We will call it HOPE to remember the promises God gave through the prophets long ago and how those promises were fulfilled when God sent Jesus into our world to bring light and life to all who follow him.

**Bible Reading:** Long before Jesus was born, when the Jewish people were experiencing very difficult times - times when everything seemed dark and dreadful - the prophet Isaiah wrote:

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined."

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and uphold it, with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this."

*(Isaiah 9:2, 6-7)*

*Preparing the Way of the Lord*

**Song:** (You will find the music for this simple tune from Cameroon at the end of this booklet).

He came down that we might have hope  
He came down that we might have hope  
He came down that we might have hope  
Hallelujah for evermore

Leader: Why did he come?  
(repeat verse)

**PRAYER**

**Leader:** We thank you, God, that when there was great darkness in our world you sent Jesus to bring hope, light and life to all who would receive him as their ruler. Help us prepare our home and our lives to welcome Jesus this Christmas.

**All:** Come, Lord Jesus, be our Light.

## **SECOND WEEK IN ADVENT**

### **Light the first two candles as you say together:**

Jesus said: "I am the light of the world whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life".

**First Reader:** We called the first candle HOPE. What will we call this candle?

**Second Reader:** We will call it PEACE because of the promise of peace God gave long ago and to remind us that Jesus helps us to live in peace with one another today when we follow him.

**Bible Reading:** "In days to come the mountain where the Temple stands will be the highest one of all, towering above all the hills. Many nations will come streaming to it, and their people will say, "Let us go up to the hill of the Lord, to the temple of Israel's God. He will teach us what he wants us to do; we will walk in the paths he has chosen. For the Lord's teaching comes from Jerusalem: from Zion he speaks to his people."

•  
"He will settle disputes among great nations. They will hammer their swords into ploughs and their spears into pruning-knives. Nations will never go to war, never prepare for battle again."

*{Isaiah 2:2-4 GNB}.*



*Preparing the Way of the Lord*

**Song:** He came down that we might have peace  
He came down that we might have peace  
He came down that we might have peace  
hallelujah for evermore.

**Leader:** Why did he come?  
(repeat verse)

**PRAYER**

**Leader:** God, thank you for sending Jesus to show us how to live together in peace. Just as the light on our Advent wreath grows brighter the closer we come to Christmas, may we learn more about what it means to live in peace by drawing closer to Jesus and learning from Him each day. Then may we share in spreading his peace in our world.

**All:** Come Lord Jesus, fill us with your peace.

## **THIRD WEEK IN ADVENT**

### **Light the first three candles as you say together:**

Jesus said: "I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life".

**First Reader:** The first candle we called HOPE. The second candle we called PEACE. What will we call the third candle?

**Second Reader: We** will call it JOY because Jesus' coming has brought joy to so many people.

**Bible Reading:** There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them: "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Saviour was born - Christ the Lord! And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God: "Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased!". When the angels went away from them back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has told us". So, they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger. When the shepherds saw him, they told them what the angel had said about the child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them. The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them.

*(Luke 2: 8-20)*

*Preparing the Way of the Lord*

**Song:** He came down that we might have joy  
He came down that we might have joy He  
came down that we might have joy  
Hallelujah for evermore

**Leader:** Why did he come?  
(repeat verse)

**PRAYER**

**Leader:** Dear God, just as the shepherds were filled with joy when they saw Jesus as a baby in the manger, may we see and rejoice in the many ways you showed your love for us in all that Jesus taught and did when he grew older. And may our joy in what you still do for us, show in all that we say and do.

**All:** Come, Lord Jesus, fill us with your joy.

## **FOURTH WEEK IN ADVENT**

### **Light all four candles as you say together:**

Jesus said: "I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life".

**First Reader:** What will we call the fourth candle?

**Second Reader:** We will call it LOVE to remind us of the greatest gift God has given us and the love we have to share with one another.

**Bible Reading:** Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. And God showed his love for us by sending his only Son into the world, so that we might have life through him.

This is what love is; it is not that we have loved God, but that God loved us and sent his Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven. Dear friends, if this is how God loved us, then we should love one another. No one has ever seen God but if we love one another, God lives in union with us, and God's love is made perfect in us.

*(1 John 4:7-12)*

*Preparing the Way of the Lord*

**Song:** He came down that we might have love  
He came down that we might have love  
He came down that we might have love  
Hallelujah for evermore

**Leader:** Why did he come?  
(repeat verse)

**PRAYER**

**Leader:** God, when Jesus came he helped us understand what real love means: caring for others even when they don't seem to care for us, giving to others without expecting anything in return, and accepting all people because you have accepted them. Help us to love in his way, not only at Christmas but all through the year.

**All:** Come, Lord Jesus, fill us with your love.

## **CHRISTMAS EVE / CHRISTMAS MORNING**

**Leader:** As we light our first four candles let us remember the name we gave to each one as they are lit:

**LIGHT - PEACE - JOY - LOVE**

**Light all four ADVENT candles and a white Christ candle in the middle.**

**First Reader:** What do we call the last candle?

**Second Reader:** This is the CHRIST candle. We light it to celebrate the birthday of Jesus, the Word of God, who said:

**AU:** "I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life".

**Bible Reading:** Before the world was created, the Word already existed: he was with God, and he was the same as God. Through Him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him. The Word was the source of life, and this light brought light to humankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out. The Word became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory which he received as God's only Son.

*(John 1:1-5. 14)*

*Preparing the Way of the Lord*

**Song:** He came down that we might have light  
He came down that we might have light He  
came down that we might have light  
Hallelujah for evermore

**Leader:** Why did he come?  
(repeat verse)

Sing all of the verses, if you wish...

He came down that we might have hope  
He came down that we might have peace  
He came down that we might have joy He  
came down that we might have love.

**PRAYER**

**Leader:** As we look at all of our candles burning, we thank you  
God for your great gift to us in sending Jesus, whose birthday  
we are celebrating. He brings us hope, peace, joy, love and  
light.

**All:** May we bring honour to you by living in his way all  
year long.

## HE CAME DOWN

brightly

He came down that we may have love; he

The first system of musical notation is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features a treble and bass clef. The melody is in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics 'He came down that we may have love; he' are written above the staff. The music includes triplets and a fermata over the final note. Chords G and D7 are indicated below the staff.

came down that we may have love; he came down that we may

The second system of musical notation continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics 'came down that we may have love; he came down that we may' are written above the staff. The music includes triplets and a fermata over the final note. Chords G and G7 are indicated below the staff.

have love: he-le-lu-jah for ev-er-more. \_\_\_\_\_

Why did he come?

The third system of musical notation concludes the piece. The lyrics 'have love: he-le-lu-jah for ev-er-more.' are written above the staff, followed by a long line. Below the staff, the lyrics 'Why did he come?' are written. The music includes triplets and a fermata over the final note. Chords C, Cm6, G/D, D7, and G are indicated below the staff.

This Cameroon song is found in The Iona Wild Goose Publication 'Many and Great: Songs of the World Church, Vol 1'. Traditional words and music. Thanks to John Bell for permission to use this arrangement. Sung at moderate speed, at the end of each verse, a cantor or leader calls "Why did he come?" to encourage everyone to repeat what they have sung. It can also be danced in a circle moving counter clockwise using hands to beckon Christ, as it were, from heaven to earth. Additional gestures represent what it is that each verse says. He came to bring us: hope - looking up; peace - hands (palms facing you and thumbs interlocked) moving upwards to depict a dove flying; joy - hands clasp; love - arms folded across heart.



## **OTHER SONGS SUGGESTED FOR EACH WEEK**

### **First Week: HOPE**

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”  
“The Light of Christ Has Come Into Our World”  
“Our God Reigns”  
“Walk In The Light”  
“Jesus Bids Us Shine”  
“Shine, Jesus, Shine”

### **Second Week: PEACE**

“It Came Upon The Midnight Clear”  
“How Lovely On The Mountains” (“Our God Reigns”)  
“He’s Got The Whole World In His Hands”  
“Peace, Perfect Peace”

### **Third Week: JOY**

“Hark The Herald Angels Sing”  
“While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night”  
“The First Noel”  
“Away In A Manger”  
“Joy To The World”  
“Jubilate Deo”

### **Fourth Week: LOVE**

“Love Came Down At Christmas”  
“Come Down O Love Divine”  
“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

**PARENTS** - ask your children to suggest some of the newer carols which they might be learning through school or church.

*This booklet was compiled for the Corryineela Community by  
Doug Baker.*

*Material in it may not be used for resale.*

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