

ADVENT PRAYER SERVICE

God Draws Near Prayer Service for Lighting the Advent Wreath

Needed:

- Advent Wreath
- Matches
- CD player
- CD's or musical accompaniment
- Tapers (optional)

*"What came to be through
God was life, and this life
was the light of the human
race; the light shines in the
darkness, and the darkness
has not overcome it."*

-John 1:4-5



Invitation to Prayer:

[Lower the lights, or begin in darkness. Pause for some minutes and allow the silence to enfold those present. While still in darkness, play an instrumental piece of music appropriate to Advent.]

Suggestions:

- CD: December (Artist: George Winston)
- CD: Solstice – Piano Solos or CD: Christmas Eve (Artist: David Lanz)
- CD: Peace (Artist: Jim Brickman)

Introduction:

Leader: Advent is the time we are reminded that our God draws near. Long ago God came as one of us. Through the ages God continues to come as Spirit, as Word, as bread and wine, and in each one of us when we reach out to those in need. Believing in a God who draws near to his children, we wait; we hope and we labor for a more just, loving and peaceful world. As we make this Advent journey we invite God to come again and again so that our waiting, our hoping and our laboring may give way to the fulfillment of God's promise to come in glory.

Opening Prayer:

Leader: Let us Pray: O God, your promise to come in glory will be a reality when our hearts are one, our hands extend to one another in peace and our earth is renewed. Be with us in this Advent moment as we come together to celebrate this season of waiting.

All: We ask this in the name of Jesus who draws near, who lives and reigns with You
and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath:

As we light the Advent wreath, we bring to mind all the children of God who wait.

We bring to mind those who long to be treated with dignity, and we ask that we may be committed to respect every individual we encounter, in our words and in our deeds.

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We bring to mind those who wait for peace in our day, and we ask that we may be persuasive in asking our leaders to put away weapons of war.

We bring to mind those who work for the healing of the earth, and we ask that we may be willing to make personal choices that make a difference.

We bring to mind those who search for meaningful work, and we ask that we may advocate forcefully for just economic systems that provide jobs with justice.

We bring to mind those who are hungry, and we ask that we may take more of a role in transforming our food systems so all may partake of the banquet.

We bring to mind those who have no home, and ask that we may help them through our friendship and our resources.

All: May the needs of our world that we bring before you today make us aware of how much our world is in need of your presence. Let us be a sign of that presence to our brothers and sisters in need. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Readings: Isaiah 35: 1-6; 10;

The desert and the parched land will exult; the steppe will rejoice and bloom.

They will bloom with abundant flowers, and rejoice with joyful song. The glory of Lebanon will be given to them, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; They will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.

Strengthen the hands that are feeble, make firm the knees that are weak,

Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; With divine recompense he comes to save you.

Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared.

Those whom the LORD has ransomed will return and enter Zion singing, crowned with everlasting joy;

They will meet with joy and gladness, sorrow and mourning will flee.

The Word of the Lord



Psalm 25: 4-5; 8-9; 10, 14 - **Response: O Lord, we look for your coming.**

Make known to me your ways, LORD; teach me your paths.

Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior. For you I wait all the long day, because of your goodness, LORD.

Response: O Lord, we look for your coming.

Good and upright is the LORD, who shows sinners the way,

Guides the humble rightly, and teaches the humble the way.

All the paths of the LORD are faithful love toward those who honor the covenant demands.



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Response: O Lord, we look for your coming.

The counsel of the LORD belongs to the faithful; the covenant instructs them.
My eyes are ever upon the LORD, who frees my feet from the snare.
Relieve the troubles of my heart; bring me out of my distress.

Response: O Lord, we look for your coming.

Reflection:

Let us remember that during this busy time of year, we need to stop and reflect on how the Christ child entered the human community, a small, helpless child in a dark night, bringing light that we long to experience again and again.

Let us take a moment to sit in silence, to open ourselves up to the God who draws near, to remember that we need to create an interior space so we can be ready to welcome the Sacred Child for whom the world had no room, so we can be ready for His light.

(Silent reflection)

Prayer Intentions:

Leader: We pray now for the needs of all those who wait in our world, for the light of Christ, for our love and for our work for justice and peace. Please offer your prayers of petition and respond, “Hear us, O God.”

Response: Hear us, O God.

Closing Prayer:

Leader:

Emmanuel, our broken world waits for you. In the darkness of winter, we choose hope. Trusting in your promise to bless us with your light, we proclaim, “Our God draws near.”

God of goodness and love, we thank you for your promises. We welcome your coming into our lives, and we commit ourselves to be a means of your coming to those in need.

We offer this prayer in Jesus name, Amen.