

2018 Advent Liturgy : What Do We Expect?

GATHERING



ENTRANCE

REFLECTION

[T]he experience of mystery comes not from expecting it but through yielding all your programs, because your programs are based on fear and desire. Drop them and the radiance comes.

Joseph Campbell, *Thou Art That: Transforming Religious Metaphor*, p. 24

CANDLE LIGHTING

Leader: The liturgical year begins with the season of Advent, the season of waiting for the coming of Christ into the world.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: In the gathering gloom of winter,

the Holy One calls us into mystery.

People: We hear the voice of one calling in the wilderness,
inviting us to prepare a new way.

Leader: All around us, there are signs and wonders,
the Spirit guiding our feet into the way of peace.

People: We hear the distant song of angels,
inviting us to let go of fear and desire.

Leader: Surely God is our salvation.
Let us trust and not be afraid.

All: Our spirits rejoice in the Holy Mystery,
calling us into the radiant heart
of the Body of Christ.

OPENING PRAYER

HYMN

WORD FOR THE CHILDREN

SONG AS THE CHILDREN LEAVE FOR CLASS

Jesus loves us as we grow,
meets us on the paths we go,
keeps us safe and keeps us free,
helps us learn who we should be.

Yes Jesus loves us,
Yes Jesus helps us,
Yes Jesus shows us,
the best way we can go.

SILENCE

PRAYERS

CONFESSION

Leader: Holy One, your prophet Jeremiah foretold a time when you would fulfill your promise that people would live in safety.

People: Fearfully, we grab for our own small portion of justice and safety.

Leader: Your messenger, John the Baptist, asked us to give our extra coats and food so that those who have none might have some.

People: We want to keep our closets full of coats, and our pantries full of food.

Leader: Your servant Mary calls us to rejoice in the expectation that we are part of the story of salvation.

People: We avoid the hard labor of birthing something new, hoping that someone else will do it for us.

Leader: We have forgotten how to live in the expectation that your promises will be fulfilled.

All: Forgive us Holy One, for we would be a people full of expectation, looking forward to living in a world filled with your good news.

INDIVIDUAL PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE

Leader: The Holy One forgives us our blindness and fear, planting in us the seeds of holy expectation so that the radiance of God's promises can shine through us into the world.

All: Amen.

THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE

INTERCESSION AND PETITION

COMMITMENT

All: O Holy One, we come today
to claim our relationship with you.

We pray for the commitment to grow together,
sharing the gifts you give us with others
here and in the wider world.

Forgive us for the hurt we have inflicted,
and help us forgive those who have hurt us.

Give us strength and discipline
to nurture our relationship with you;
to care for every part of your creation;
to foster justice and be in solidarity with those in need;
to work to end all war, and violence, and discord;
and to respond joyfully when you call,
freely giving our selves as you have shown the way.

We open our hearts to you and your creation
in the name of Jesus, who is the Christ. Amen.

HYMN

THE WORD

SCRIPTURE

SERMON

SILENT REFLECTION

OFFERING

COMMUNION

PREPARATION

Leader 1: This is the table of the Heavenly Feast,
the joyful celebration of the people of God.

Leader 2: We gather now as one body, joined around the
table.

Here we celebrate God's presence among us
united in Christ's spirit, broken and whole all at once;

All: Nourished and hungry, loved and loving,
sinner and forgiven; we make one circle of knowing,
believing, rejoicing, being,
as God lights and rests among us.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Leader 1: Holy Creator, we thank you for this world,
filled with unexpected opportunities
to love and care and co-create.

People: We thank you for your Holy Spirit,
sometimes nearly hidden,
but always present and available.

Leader 2: We thank you for our brother Jesus,
whose promised coming anew
fills us with hope.

All: We thank you for your Holy Church,
the human expression of your divine presence,
where we learn to expect the blessing of your love.

BLESSING THE ELEMENTS

Leader 1: Christ invites everyone to eat the bread of life,
to drink the cup of the new covenant.

Leader 2: Jesus said, I am the bread of life.
You who come to me shall never hunger,
You who believe in me shall never thirst.

Leader 1: On the night he gave himself up, Jesus took bread,
and after giving thanks to God, broke it and said,
This is my body,
broken for the healing of the world.
Whenever you eat it, do so remembering me.

Leader 2: After supper, Jesus took the cup and said,
This is the cup of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for all.
Whenever you drink it, do so remembering me.

All: O Holy One, send down your Spirit
that these gifts of bread and cup
may be for us the body and blood of Christ.
Unite us with Christ forever
and bring us with the whole creation
to your eternal realm.

SHARE THE ELEMENTS

*If you do not wish to receive the elements today you are
welcome to join the circle and allow them to pass, or remain
in your seat. We serve grape juice in our cups. The crackers
are gluten-free.*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION

All: God of abundance and mercy,
we give joyful thanks
for your eternal love and healing presence
in our celebration of bread and cup.
Bless this body of Christ
that we may attend faithfully
to our call to be your servants,
with each other and throughout the world. Amen.

SHARED REFLECTIONS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HYMN

BENEDICTION

Leader: As we leave this place,
we rejoice in the expectation
of your promises fulfilled
and the radiant hope of Advent
alive within us.

All: Amen.