

# 2024 Advent Liturgy: Hoping for What We Don't See

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Hope is not wanting: no, not that self-centered.

Hope is trust in grace unseen,  
already there, already unfolding,  
the seed beneath, the child within.

Hope is surrender to a greater movement,  
acceptance that I am the thread  
and the tapestry is vast.

Hope is confidence in spring as winter approaches.

Hope is belief in the fullness of time.

Hope is knowing in death and suffering  
there is a healing presence.

Hope is patience, letting grace take its time.

Hope is planting ourselves in a future  
that exists only in our acting:  
raising children, loving enemies, planting trees.

Hope is awaiting the One Who is Here.

– Steve Garnaas-Holmes, “We Live by Hope,”

<https://unfoldinglight.net/2019/12/09/gjylxrs66zw2w78jgp8jb93j85spj7/>

**LIGHTING THE ALTAR CANDLE**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: In the long, dark nights of Advent,  
it is hard to see what is ahead.

People: Like Elizabeth awaiting the birth of John,  
we are called to hope  
for what we cannot see,  
to be patient as grace takes its time.

Leader: In the short, cold days of Advent,  
it is hard to believe  
that spring will surely come.

People Like Mary awaiting the birth of Jesus,  
we are called to surrender  
to something greater than ourselves.

Leader: In these four weeks of Advent,  
we are called to hope,  
to breathless anticipation  
for the revelation of God among us.

All: We are called to await the coming  
of the One who is already here,  
the One who lived and died  
and rose again to be born in us:  
the One we know as Jesus, who is the Christ.

## **OPENING PRAYER**

## **HYMN**

## **SILENCE**

## **PRAYERS**

## **CONFESSION**

Leader: We may believe  
that our hope depends  
on peace, justice, or comfort.

People: We can find hope growing  
in moments of success or pleasure.

Leader: Whatever certainty  
that we can have about the future  
stimulates our hope.

People: But these false sources of hope  
leave us in despair.

Leader: We cry out, Holy One,  
awash in fear and anxiety.

All: Forgive us for our lack of trust  
in your sustaining words and signs.

#### INDIVIDUAL PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

#### ASSURANCE

Leader: The Holy One knows our weakness  
for false expectations  
and offers authentic hope  
grounded in grace unseen.

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:   Eternal Giver of Life,  
we give thanks that you are grace unseen,  
like seeds in the ground,  
an unfolding presence already here,  
giving us confidence that spring will come.

Leader 2: We give thanks for Jesus,  
your child, who showed us  
that even in suffering and death  
there is healing and resurrection.

People:       We give thanks for Mary,  
the mother of Jesus,  
who surrendered herself,  
consenting to be a thread  
in your vast tapestry,  
carrying in her womb  
Emmanuel, God with us.

Leader 1: We give thanks for your Holy Spirit,  
who teaches us patience  
while grace unfolds in the fullness of time.

Leader 2: We give thanks for your Holy Church,  
where we plant our future,  
acting with hope by loving our enemies,

planting trees, and raising our children.

All:                   With grateful hearts, filled with hope,  
we await the coming  
of the One who is already here.

#### 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 grain and grape,

and work of human hands  
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

Leader 1: The body of Christ, broken for all of us.  
Feed on Christ in your hearts with thanksgiving.

Leader 2: The cup of the new covenant,  
poured out for the healing of the world.  
Drink deeply of it.

#### 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: Let us go out into the world  
trusting in grace unseen,  
already there, unfolding.



Let us bring a healing presence  
into the future that exists  
in our acting,  
as we await the One who is here.

In the name of Mary's Child  
and in hope,  
let us greet one another  
with signs of peace.

All:                   Amen.