

EXPECTATION

Luke 21:25-36; Jeremiah 33:14-16 // A Worship Service for Advent

This worship gathering introduces the season of Advent and time of expectation. Here are some materials to get you started creating your own worship service.

MAIN THEME: *How do we wait for the coming of Christ with expectant hearts?*

CHOOSING MUSIC // FOR SINGING

- 🎵 **Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus** [Key of G]
Text: Charles Wesley
Tune: Sandra McCracken and Derek Webb
© 2000 Nippon Music (ASCAP) / Same Old Dress Music, Inc. (ASCAP)

- 🎵 **By Faith** [Key of B]
Words and Music: Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty, and Stuart Townend
© 2009 Thankyou Music

- 🎵 **Wait for the Lord** [Key of E]
Text and Music: Jacques Berthier
© 1991, Ateliers et Presses de Taizè, Taizè Community, France. GIA Publications, Inc. exclusive North American agent

CREATING DRAMA // FOR HEARING

This week, consider presenting the scripture reading in a fresh, creative way. We suggest turning to the Network of Biblical Storytellers for tools to help you do this. They have great resources for the Gospel reading on which this service centers, Luke 21:25-36. [www.nbsint.org]

FINDING ART // FOR SEEING

“Jesus said, There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among the nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves.” // Luke 21: 25-26

Gather art that showcases all of God’s creation and use it as a way to symbolize different forms of this week’s theme, expectation.

LIVING WORSHIP // FOR DOING

Encourage the members of your congregation to adopt the discipline of journeying daily in expectation during the season of Advent. We recommend the devotionals produced by our friends at Passport, Inc., which you can find at [d365.org]

MAKING SPACE // FOR WORSHIPPING

In many churches, an Advent wreath with candles is used throughout the Advent season to mark the time until Christmas. The evergreen wreath holds four candles on the outside, signifying the four Sundays of expectation and hope, with an additional white candle, the Christ candle, in the center, signifying the arrival of Christ. On the first Sunday of Advent, one candle is lit. On the second Sunday of Advent two candles are lit. We follow this pattern through the season until Christmas when the Christ candle is lit.

A GUIDED ACTIVITY // MAKING AN ADVENT WREATH

Materials:

- *Floral Wire*
- *Wire Cutters*
- *Double-Wire Frame*
- *Variety of Fresh Greens (evergreen, pine bows, ivy, eucalyptus sprays, ferns, douglas fir)*
- *Four Violet 12” Candles*
- *One White 12” Candle*
- *Advent Wreath Candle Holder*

1. *Gather together your fresh greens and cut into lengths of approximately 6-8”.*
2. *Put together a small bundle of the clippings.*
3. *Lay the small bundle on the wire frame and tightly wrap the floral wire around the stems.*
4. *Continue this pattern around the wreath, overlapping the stems, until the wreath base is full.*
5. *Cut the floral wire and secure it around the form.*
6. *Place the five candles in the candle holder.*
7. *Put the candle holder in the middle of the wreath.*

WRITING POETRY// FOR PRAYING

During this season of Advent, use prayers with related themes to set apart this season of expectation. This week, use an Advent-specific variation on the Lord’s Prayer from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. Their Director, John D. Witvliet, writes about the prayer:

“We often live, work, and worship as if heaven were light years away, even though scripture teaches us that Jesus permeated the heaven and earth boundary in his advent and that God’s Spirit and our prayers and songs permeate this boundary all the time. As far as spiritual diseases are concerned, the season of Advent and the Lord’s Prayer may be among the most strategic inoculations we could discover.”

SAMPLE WORSHIP SERVICE

Expectation // Luke 21:25-36; Jeremiah 33:14-16 // A Worship Service for Advent

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Use the song below to gather. Between the song and the Call to Worship, explain the significance of the Advent wreath and its role in worship this month. Then, light the first candle of the wreath.

GATHERING SONG

Wait for the Lord

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord! (Isaiah 40:3)

All: **Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.**

Wait for the Lord (reprise)

SONG OF EXPECTATION

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

PRAYER OF EXPECTATION

In this prayer, incorporate Jeremiah 33:14-16 to further focus on the expectation of Christ's coming.

SONG OF FAITH

By Faith

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 21:25-36

MESSAGE

TIME OF RESPONSE

Wrap up the message and invite worshipers to spend five minutes with 3-5 people around them. Ask them to share times in their life they have fervently waited for something. Then, ask them how these times contrast from waiting on the coming of Christ. Invite them to share with the larger group, and use this as the introduction to this Advent version of The Lord's Prayer.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

All: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name.**

One: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace—hallowed be your name. Christ our Lord, you descended to earth, to a lowly manger to bring all nations under your rule and draw us into your holy and perfect presence. We bow at your manger in awe of your might. Immanuel, God with us—hallowed be your name.

All: **Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.**

One: Prince of Peace, make your kingdom complete. May we prepare a way for your kingdom wherever there is violence and hatred wherever there is oppression and injustice wherever there is quarreling and alienation. May we prepare a way for your kingdom of peace, where the wolf will live with the lamb and the leopard will lie down with the kid. In us, through us, and around us, your kingdom come.

All: **Give us today our daily bread.**

One: Bread of life, feed us with your truth. In a season of greed and selfish desires may we see that we are sustained only by your providence. May our eagerness to open our gifts pale in comparison to our joy to receive the gift of the Savior. May our discontent disappear as we approach the day of your coming.

All: **Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.**

One: Lord God, our lives are filled with sin. We need a Savior to come to us. For our worry and our scurrying this Advent season, forgive us. For the way we make this a season of shopping rather than waiting, forgive us. For the security and comfort we

seek from sources other than you, forgive us. For our indifference to the wonder of your coming, forgive us. Come to us, Savior of the world.

All: Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.

One: Protect us from the constant dangers and enticing temptations we face each day. Deliver us from the oppressive evils of apathy, addiction, and abuse. Strengthen your church when it faces persecution for announcing the coming of your kingdom. Comfort all who are suffering in their hearts or in their bodies; give them health and peace to sing of your power.

All: For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.

One: Word who became flesh and lived among us, we have seen your glory, full of grace and truth. You come to us now, and you will come to us again in glory, when we will join all heaven and earth in giving you blessing and honor and glory and might forever! Until that glorious day, we praise you for becoming one of us, and we long for your glory to be fully revealed. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

John Witvliet, adapted loosely from The Worship Sourcebook. From Matthew 6:9-13; English translation of the Lord's Prayer copyright © 1988 by the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC).

SONG OF FAITH

By Faith (final stanza only)

BENEDICTION

One: May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

All: Amen.