

ADVENT PRAYER SERVICE 2023

Entrance Hymn

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear:

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel

O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave:

O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight:

O come, thou key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery:

O come, O come, thou lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times didst give the Law
in cloud and majesty and awe:

Introduction

During the season of Advent, we are called to seek the light of Christ, even in the midst of darkness. We are invited to face the darkness in our own lives and in the world around us.



The prophets assure us that the darkness will not overcome us. They call us to watch for the light. We are called to wait, to hope, to trust in promises made.

As we make this Advent journey in faith, we invite God's light to dispel the darkness. We ask for the grace to set down all those burdens that darken our hearts as we search for the light. We ask for the gift of attentiveness that we may truly see God's loving presence within and among us. And we ask for renewed faith that we might be light for others.

Opening Prayer

Let us Pray:

God who dispels all darkness,
come to be with us, in each one of our situations;
come to live among us, live with us and in us;
come to full the distances that divide and separate us;
come to reconcile us with You and with one another.

God of light, open our hearts to the mystery of your love and the invitation of your grace. Let our complacency give way to conversion and our judgements to compassionate acceptance of others. Turn oppression to justice and transform conflict to a just peace. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who draws near, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

A designated person is selected to light each candle on the advent wreath using a taper as Reader 1 and Reader 2 read each reflection.

PEACE

Reader 1: As we light the first candle we bring to mind all the people and the places of the world that are in need of light this day: (pause)



Reader 2: We bring to mind those places in the world where families and countries are torn apart by conflict, violence, or war at this time. We remember the people of Gaza, Israel, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Yemen, Myanmar, Haiti, Congo, Sudan, and we ask for the light of God's peace to break through the darkness. (pause)

HOPE

Reader 1: We bring to mind all those places in the world where people have been forced from their homes and are separated from their families and we ask for the light of hope to break through.

Reader 2: We pray for all those places in the world where people are suffering from disease or illness. We pray for the children, the elderly, and the infirm. We pray for families whose loved ones are held hostage. Sustain them in their hope of healing and returning safely to their families. (pause)

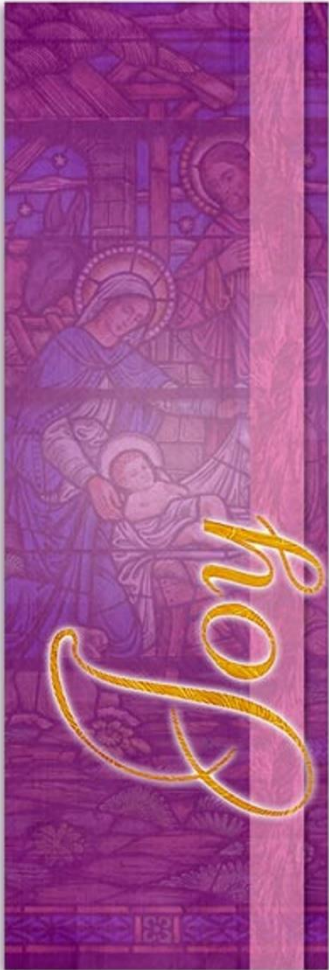
LOVE

Reader 1: We bring to mind all those places in the world where people are held captive by poverty, hunger, loneliness, and isolation. We ask for the light of love to break through.

Readers 2: We pray for all who open borders and doors to offer refuge and shelter, food, company, compassion, and love. Provide urgent provisions of food, water, and medical supplies to those embroiled in conflicts, those who are homeless, those who are hungry.

JOY

Reader 1: We bring to mind those who are lonely, those struggling to make ends meet, those who have lost loved ones, those who are on the margins of society. Bring your light of joy to their lives, that they may one day smile again.



Reader 2:

We pray the Prince of all joy will satisfy the longings of every human heart. We pray the Lord will draw all people to Himself and renew hearts in the joy and wonder of His love.

May our prayers encircle the world and offer light in places of darkness. May we work as one body to bring justice for the poor, peace for a world in conflict, healing for the afflicted. Enkindle hope in our darkened world and announce the dawn of your kingdom once again. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

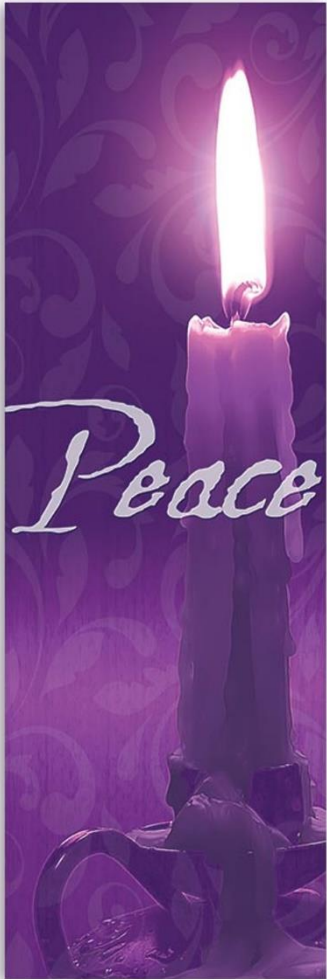
Christ Be Our Light

Farrell

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
Light for the world to see.
Christ, be our light!
Shine out through the dark, shine!
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Longing for food many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
Shared until all are fed.



First Reading

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah *Is. 6:1-2, 10-11*

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for the Lord has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,
to bind up hearts that are broken;

To proclaim liberty to captives,
freedom to those in prison;
to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.

‘I exult for joy in the Lord,
my soul rejoices in my God,
for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation,
he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity,
like a bridegroom wearing his wreath,
like a bride adorned in her jewels.

‘For as the earth makes fresh things grow,
as a garden makes seeds spring up,
so will the Lord make both integrity and praise
spring up in the sight of the nations.’

The word of the Lord.

O Antiphons

Beginning Dec. 17 of each Advent season, and for the ensuing seven days, a special antiphon known as an O Antiphon is read before the Magnificat during evening prayer or before the gospel at Mass. Sometimes called the Greater Antiphons, or the O’s of Advent (because they begin with that exclamation ‘O’), the O Antiphons differ from the daily antiphons because they herald the coming birth of Christ. Originally written in Latin around the seventh or eighth centuries, these special antiphons are verses



extracted from the Old Testament prophets — namely, Isaiah — and express the longing for the coming of the Christ. In fact, the word “come” is used in every O Antiphon.

Each of the seven antiphons begins by addressing Jesus using an Old Testament title for the Messiah. These seven names or titles, all from the Book of Isaiah, are:

Dec. 17, O’ Sapientia (meaning O Wisdom), from Isaiah 11:2-3.

Dec. 18, O’ Adonai (O Lord or Ruler), 11:4-5 and 33:22.

Dec. 19, O’ Radix (O Root of Jesse), 11:1.

Dec. 20, O’ Clavis (O Key of David), 22:22.

Dec. 21, O’ Oriens (O Radiant Dawn), 9:1.

Dec. 22, O’ Rex Gentium (O King of the Nations), 2:4.

Dec. 23, O’ Emmanuel (O God with Us), 7:14

The O antiphons are read slowly. The response may be repeated.

O Wisdom of the Most High, ordering all things with strength and gentleness,

R/ come and teach us the way of truth.

Pause

O Ruler of the House of Israel, who gave the law to Moses on Sinai,

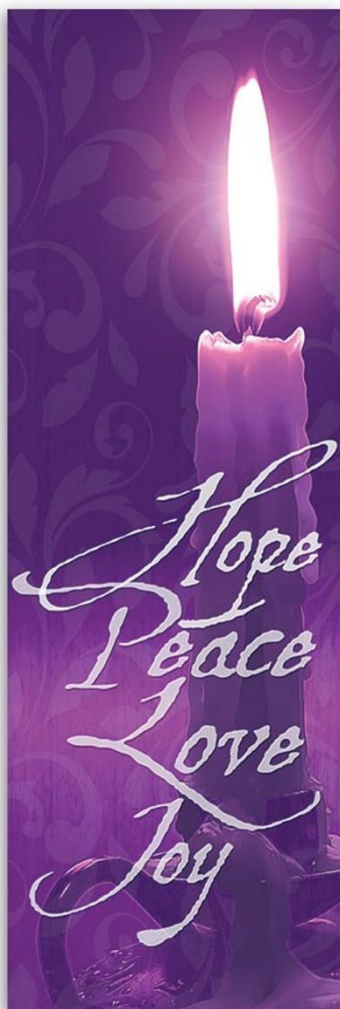
R/ come and save us with outstretched arm.

Pause

O Root of Jesse, set up as a sign to the peoples,

R/ come to save us, and delay no more.

Pause





O Key of David, who open the gates of the eternal kingdom,
R/ come to liberate from prison the captive who lives in darkness.

Pause

O King of the peoples and corner-stone of the Church,
R/ come and save us whom you made from the dust of the earth.

Pause

O Morning Star, radiance of eternal light, sun of justice,
R/ come and enlighten those who live in darkness and the shadow of death.

Pause

O Emmanuel, our king and lawgiver,
R/ come and save us, Lord, our God.

Pause

Hymn **Come Jesus, Prince of Peace**
(St. Frances De Salles, Sunday 7pm Choir)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UaWX-k11GWo>

Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 1:18-24

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in

her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.’ Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

*The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son
and they will call him Emmanuel,*

a name which means ‘God-is-with-us’. When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.

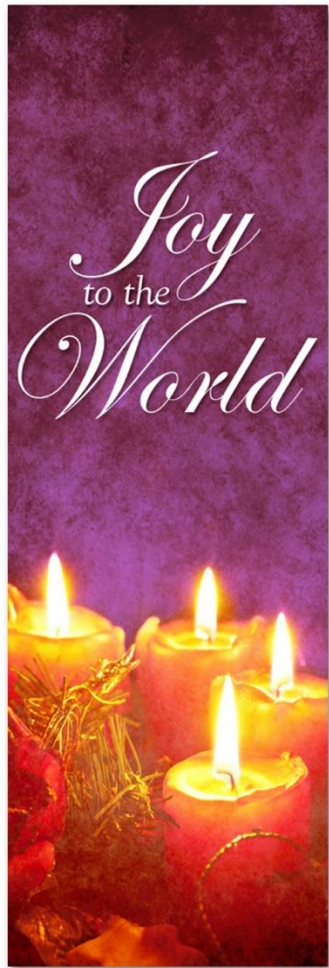
The Gospel of the Lord.

Homily

Prayers of Intercession

1. For the Church, that the season of Advent will bring about in her members renewed hope as we seek to live more fully for God. **Lord, hear us.**
2. That as a parish community, may we watch and remain alert to those within our communities who are feeling isolated, hurt or alone **Lord, hear us.**
3. For joy in the lives of those who have none, delight in the hearts of those who forgive each other, and gladness that comes with knowing the love of God in our lives. **Lord, hear us.**
4. For peace in our world; remove all bitterness, hatred and a desire for revenge from the hearts of people at war. May they pursue the paths of justice, peace and reconciliation. **Lord, hear us.**
5. That in the busyness of the Christmas season we receive the perfect gift of Christ’s peace through moments of prayer and reflection. **Lord, hear us.**





6. That through our words, actions and joyful spirit we may inspire in others a desire to follow Jesus Christ, and so find the perfect gift of salvation. **Lord, hear us.**
7. That all of us here recognize the presence of Christ in others and embrace those around us with a spirit of welcome and hospitality. **Lord, hear us.**
8. For all who mourn while we rejoice. Comfort them with your presence and bring the light of your healing to their emptiness and grief. **Lord, hear us.**

On Jordan's Bank

Coffin

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh,
come then and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings from the King of kings.

Then cleansed be every Christian breast,
and furnished for so great a guest!
Yea, let us each our hearts prepare
for Christ to come and enter there.

For thou art our salvation, Lord,
our refuge and our great reward;
without thy grace our souls must fade,
and wither like a flower decayed.

Stretch forth thy hand, to heal our sore,
and make us rise, to fall no more;
once more upon thy people shine,
and fill the world with love divine.

All praise, eternal Son, to thee
whose advent sets thy people free,
whom, with the Father, we adore,
and Holy Ghost, for evermore.

Closing prayer

Emmanuel,

Our world waits in darkness longing for Your light.

In the midst of darkness, enkindle our hope.

As we long for lasting peace in the midst of war, Be with us.

As we long for families to be reunited, Be with us.

As we long for enemies to be reconciled, Be with us.

As we long for cures and healings, Be with us.

As we long for decent jobs and economic security, Be with us.

As we long for love and community, Be with us.

Fill the deepest longings of your people and dispel the darkness
in our hearts and in our world. Let your Word ignite the hope
the world needs to bring to life your love and justice.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

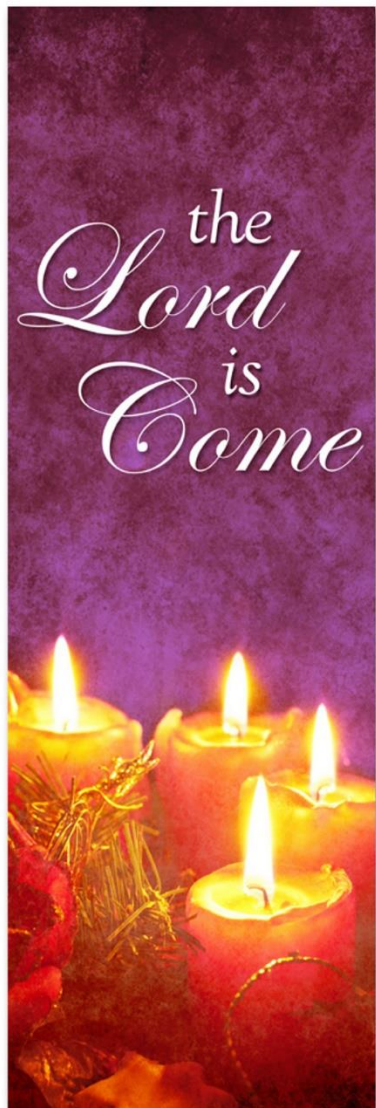
Final Hymn

Come, O Long Expected Jesus

Wesley

Come, O long-expected Jesus,
Born to set your people free;
From our fears and sins release us
By your death on Calvary.

Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope to all the earth impart,
Dear desire of ev'ry nation,
Joy of ev'ry longing heart.



Born your people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a king;
Born to reign in us forever,
Now your gracious kingdom bring.

By your own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By your all-sufficient merit
Raise us to your glorious throne.