

Advent Unwrapped 2025

Weekly Advent Services

Advent is a unique opportunity for the faithful to anticipate the coming of Jesus by exploring eschatology (How will it all end?), Christology (Who is Jesus and is he the Christ?), and discipleship (What does it mean to follow Jesus?). Although Advent is a time of waiting and preparing, it is also a time of decision making. What do we hope for (eschatology)? Do we believe the Jesus will help us get there (Christology)? And what is our role as followers of Christ in all of this (discipleship)?

Preparation

Have five large boxes wrapped (to look like Christmas presents) and placed under your Christmas tree or in a prominent spot in your sanctuary (make sure you wrap the boxes in a way that the lid can easily be taken off). Label each box *Hope*, *Peace*, *Joy*, *Love*, and *Christmas* in multiple languages.

Week 1: Hope

In your Hope advent box place a small gift of seeds/pinecones for each child/congregant, as well as the Hope Advent candle, and a small scroll with the scripture reading. Other ideas to include in the box could be red ribbons for World Aids Day, Advent calendars, take home zines (available in the [Advent Unwrapped](#) activity book).

This is also the Sunday closest to World AIDS Day (December 1). What stigmas around HIV/AIDS are still prevalent in your community? How can you actively debunk and work against these harmful stigmas?

- Check out the [World AIDS Day website](#) for activities and resources on World AIDS Day.
- Have a local community group or agency who does work with the AIDS community give a talk to your church about HIV/AIDS.
- Give out red ribbons to raise awareness, and consider having a special offering to support a local community agency.

Land Acknowledgement

Call to Worship

Come, Let us go up to the mountain of the Most High
There we will receive instruction on how to live in hope.
Come, Let us go to the house of the Dreamer
**There we will melt our guns into bridges,
And turn our bombs into wells**
Come, Let us Worship our God and our Guide

Opening Hymn

VU 651 "Guide Me O Thou Great and Holy"
TLUS! 56 "We long to know her"

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Grace

For the sake of our well-being

we seek forgiveness for the ways we have failed to love ourselves as you love us.

For the sake of our loved ones

we seek forgiveness for the ways we have failed to bring out the best in others and ourselves

For the sake of our community

we seek forgiveness for the ways we have worked against peace and goodwill

For the sake of all creation

we seek forgiveness for the ways we have failed to tread lightly on this earth

For the sake of your dream

we seek forgiveness for the ways we have failed to build your peaceable Kin-dom

Forgive us we pray.

Amen.

Words of Affirmation

Each day of prayer and love brings us closer to God's grace and glory.

May we not lose heart.

May we never give up.

Sung Response

TLUS! 103 "Bambelela"

Advent Candle Lighting

Invite someone to find the Hope Box.

What do you think might be in this box marked Hope?

What would you put in this box? What reminds you of hope?

Where would you like to share the gift of hope?

Open the box.

Today we have some pinecones. How are these symbols of hope?

Possibly play the [Advent Unwrapped Hope video](#).

Maybe hope is like a seed that grows and provides for us in amazing and unexpected ways.

We also have a word from the prophet Isaiah.

Reader:

Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Sovereign, to the house of God, that they may teach us their ways and that we may follow in their paths. We shall beat our swords into plowshares, our spears into pruning hooks, our guns into watering cans, nations shall not lift false words against nations, neither shall we study war." [Isaiah 2:3, 4 adapted]

And lastly we have a candle, a candle that we traditionally light each Advent to remind us of God's gift of hope.

In a world filled with fear, war and uncertainty, we light this candle of Hope.

Light candle.

May the gift of this candles bright flame, remind us of God's gift of Hope.

Hymn

"As We Light This Candle" (Advent Unwrapped)

"Down by the Riverside" (African American Spiritual)

Scripture

Isaiah 2:1–5

Psalms 122

Romans 13:11–14

Hymn

["The Giver"](#) (Advent Unwrapped)

Scripture

Matthew 24:36–44

Sermon/ Reflection

Why wait?

Advent is a season of expectant anticipation as we wait for the coming, again, of Jesus. How we wait for Jesus depends on who we understand Jesus to be and what we hope that he will do? For many early Christians Jesus was an alternative to the violent and oppressive Kings and Lord's of the time. Who is Jesus to you? Why do you choose to wait for him?

Share the testimonies of former moderators ([What is Advent? Who are we waiting for?](#)) as well as sharing your own.

Some questions for consideration:

- Who is Jesus for you?
- How might the coming of Jesus disrupt your life or the life of your community?
- Who might not want Jesus to come?
- What might his coming look like?
- Why should we wait for Christ?
- How do you stay active while waiting?
- What are you waiting for personally, as a church, as a community, and what can you do about it while you are waiting?
- What is your understanding of the end times? How do you need to get ready?

or

Curtis Mayfield and The Impression's hit "People Get Ready" became one of the songs on the American Civil Rights movements soundtrack. It was written by Mayfield in 1965, inspired by the March on Washington the year before. It is a gospel hymn that sums up the message of Advent: redemption and hope is coming for all people; the only ticket you need is faith that a better world could happen. Spend some time in your community imagining what this better world would look like? What it would be like? And how you can get ready for it?

Invite a diversity of people to share their testimonies and hopes for this better world.

Hymn

"People Get Ready", Curtis Mayfield
TLUS! 8 "Waymaker"

Offering

During the offering, invite people to reflect on what they are hopefully waiting for? Along with the offering plate, pass around the Hope box and encourage people during the offering or as they enter the church to write their hopes on a sheet of paper. Treat this box like prayer requests—they will be shared with the prayer team but not read out loud during worship.

Prayer of Dedication

Loving God,
Truly there is enough for all, if we only learnt to share it.
Help us to share what we have with those who are most in need.
Amen.

Pastoral Prayers

God of new awakenings,
daily we are asked to make tough choices that affect everything and everyone around us.
It is hard to protect ourselves and loved ones from situations we neither know nor understand.
How can we prepare for the unexpected?
How can we know what can only be described as mystery?
How can we wait for a visitor that is already among us?
Awaken in us God, the light of Christ and lighten paths that we can not find on our own:
 paths of healing for those are ill;
 paths of wisdom for those burdened by difficult decisions and situations; and,
 paths of rest for those wrestling with uncertainty.
Give us the courage to avoid quick fixes and easy answers.
Give us the courage to choose to wait, for your wisdom, peace and hope.
On this day of hope, illuminate our path to you.
We join these prayers together in the prayer that Jesus taught us ... [prayer of Jesus]
Amen.

Affirmation of Faith and Hymn

VU 5 “All the Earth is Waiting”

Commissioning and Benediction

Awaken to the Light of Christ around us,
In nature, in friends, in all your relationships.
Awaken to the Light of Christ between us
In relationships, in bonds, in fellowship and kinship.
Awaken to the light of Christ within us
In our gifts, in our love, in our instinct and being.
May we each awaken to the Light of Christ,
May we each awaken to the gift of hope.
And may this hope bless and guide you always.
Amen.

Week 2: Peace

Preparation:

This is the Sunday closest to the United Nations' [Human Rights Day](#) (December 10). What are basic human rights? What do you believe every person has the right to? What are the human rights violations that you and your community are most familiar with? Why do you think that is? What are you doing to fight for equal human rights for all people? How might you and your community learn more about Human Rights violations around the world, and what actions steps can you take now—and in the future—to support every person's basic rights.

- Research and share the basic human rights of children and people as defined by the United Nations and your particular country. Share it with your community and identify human rights violations that are happening close to home.
- Share the story of role models, like Desmond Tutu, who have fought for human rights. How did they choose the better way? What obstacles were in their path? Who did they follow as role models or guides?

In your peace advent box place small paper ornaments for each member of the congregation, as well as the Peace Advent candle. Alternatives could include ornaments of people who have or who are working towards peace.

Land Acknowledgement

Opening Hymn

TLUS! 57 "We Wait for God"

TLUS! 126 "The World God Imagines"

Call to Worship

While the sun endures

Let us praise God

While the waters cover the sea

Let us praise God

As the moon shines

Let us praise God

As rain and snow shower the earth

Let us praise God

Opening Prayer

God of peace,

In the gathering of your people,

In the fellowship that we share,

In the reading of scripture, and the reflection on the word,

In the praying

In the singing

In the beauty of this day,

May we grow in greater hope, in greater peace, in greater love.

Amen.

Prayer of Confession

Search us God,

Help us to honestly reflect on the situations where we have relied on our status, privilege or ancestry, focusing more on who we are than how we behave and who we hope to become. Help us to dig deep, and rediscover who you wish us to be and where ever this differs, grant us the wisdom and courage to turn back towards you, so that we may bear good fruit. Amen.

Words of Assurance

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, that together we may with one voice glorify God in our Worship and Praise. (Romans 15:5–6)

Advent Candle Lighting

Last week we lit the hope candle, and were reminded of all the ways creation shares God's hope.

Invite someone to find the Peace Box.

What do you think might be in this box marked Peace?

What would you put in this box? What reminds you of Peace?

Where would you like to share the gift of Peace?

Open the box.

Today we have a seedling or a small nest, or some twigs and branches.

Possibly play [Advent Unwrapped Peace video](#).

Maybe peace is like a beautiful nest or a young tree, a delicate home for fragile creatures that needs us all to work together to make it strong.

We also have little ornaments with pictures and names of people who help us work for peace and teach us the ways of love and peace.

And lastly, we have a candle, a candle that we traditionally light on the 2nd week of Advent to remind us of God's gift of peace, in a world filled with brokenness.

Light the candle.

May the gift of this candles defiant flame, remind us of God's gift of peace.

Hymn

TLUS! 88 "Why are Things so Broken?"

"As We Light This Candle" (Advent Unwrapped)

VU 955 "Donna Nobis Pacem"

Scripture

Isaiah 11:1–10

Psalms 72:1–7, 18–19

Romans 15:4–13

Hymn

VU 8 “Lo’ How a Rose ‘er Blooming”

Scripture

Matthew 3:1–12

Sermon/ Reflection

As a community, build a Jesse Tree during the sermon time. There are many Jesse Tree liturgies and reading lists available if you would like to do a full service or series over Advent. The general premise is to demonstrate how God’s love and grace has remained constant across the centuries and is embodied in Jesus.

You may wish to do a truncated version by having four different groups of people (possibly Sunday School Classes) take on a different section or time period. Ask them each to look at the readings and Bible characters for their assigned section and come up with a personal version or re-telling of the story. Once they share their re-telling they can add an ornament to the tree with the litany below.

[Everybody]

When we remember our history

We choose to grow in God’s Love

(Present the Jesse Tree)

[Group 1: The Beginning: Retell the story of Creation including Noah and the Flood]

When we remember our beginnings

We choose to grow in God’s Love

(Put images on the tree. Possible images could include: dove, a fruit tree, rainbow, arc.)

[Group 2: The Ancestors: Retell the story of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph]

When we remember our ancestors

We choose to grow in God’s Love

(Put images on the tree. Possible images could include: stars, a ram, a ladder, a multicolour coat.)

[Group 3: The Prophets: Retell the story of some of the major prophets and leaders like the Hebrew midwives, Moses, Miriam, Deborah, Samuel, David, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah]

When we remember the teachings of the prophets

We choose to grow in God’s Love

(Put images on the tree. Possible images could include: the Moses basket, burning bush, tablet, shepherd’s hook, tambourine, harp, tears.)

[Group 4: The Gospel: Retell the story of the nativity with John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Zechariah, Joseph]

When we remember God in and with us

We grow in God’s Love

(Put images on the tree. Possible images could include: scallop shell, carpenter tool, star, manger, mother and child.)

Hymn

TLUS! 140 “Kuti ndisine rudo”

Offering

Provide each congregant a small paper ornament (with a string attached) and invite them to write the names of people and saints who have inspired them to choose a better way. During the offering, encourage people to come forward and hang their ornaments on your Christmas tree or on a Jesse Tree (a tree stump with a branch growing out of it). Consider giving thanks for these names during the prayers of the people.

Prayer of Dedication

Truly in your abundant mercy there is enough for all, if we learn to share it.
 In the giving and receiving of our offering may we practice the gift of sharing,
 In the hopes that one day all will choose to share what blessings they have for the good of all.
 In the hopes that we will all continue to grow in your love.
 Bless these gifts, bless the giver, and bless the receivers.
 Amen.

Pastoral Prayers

We long for your peaceable Kin-dom,
 A place where our children can play outside without fear of predators
 Where the vulnerable are not exploited for their labour
 Where there is enough for all
 We long for a world without exploiters, vultures, and abusers
 A world where everyone will know your peace and hope
 Until then, we are trapped in a world where fear, pain, and suffering are inevitable
 But where comfort can always be found in your love.
 Surround those of us who are suffering from the ills of this world,
 And send all of us messengers of your hope, grace and peace wherever and whenever possible.
 May those who are conflicted find comfort in those who are comfortable
 And those who are comfortable by conflicted until all are at peace.
 We join these prayers together in the prayer that Jesus taught us ... [prayer of Jesus]
 Amen.
 (Based on a quote by Cesar A. Cruz)

Affirmation of Faith and Hymn

Sing or say the prayer of St. Francis
 VU 684 “Make Me a Channel of Your Peace”

Commissioning and Benediction

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement bless and keep us all as we work towards
 your kin-dom of peace.
 Amen.

Week 3: Joy

Preparation

In your Joy Advent box, place small gifts of bubbles for each youth, an egg, and the Joy Advent candle. An alternative to the sermon is to have a painting reflection. You will need: a large canvas, paint brushes, light blue, dark blue, purple, gold and black paint.

Land Acknowledgement

Call to Worship

Praise be to God

Who has made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them

Praise be to God

Who is watching over the strangers and upholding the downtrodden

Praise be to God

Who will transform our deserts to lush lands blooming with joy and singing

Praise be to God

Praise be to God, oh my soul

Opening Hymn

MV 45 "You are Holy"

VU 18 "There's a Voice in the Wilderness"

VU 240 "Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven"

Opening Prayer

God, you called Isaiah to be a prophet

Paul to be an apostle,

Mary to be a God-bearer,

John to be a witness.

Now you call us each to be holy.

In our own unique way.

Let it Be.

Amen

Prayer of Confession

Beloved Saviour,

Forgive us when we fail to be patient like the farmer

Who waits for the precious crop from the earth ...

Forgive us when our hearts weaken ...

Forgive us when we grumble against one another and against you ...

Remind us of James' teaching to be patient, to strengthen our hearts, not to grumble, and to remember the lives of the prophets and saints who came before us.

Words of Assurance

Modern day saints and prophets, take courage, for the coming of Christ is near.

Advent Candle Lighting

The hope candle reminds us of all the ways creation sings of God's hope for the world,
The peace candle reminds us of how we are called to build God's dream of peace.
Today we focus on Joy.

Invite someone to find the Joy Box.

What do you think might be in this box marked Joy?
What would you put in this box? What reminds you of Joy?
Where would you like to share the gift of Joy?

Open the box.

Today we have a delicate egg.

Possibly play the [Advent Unwrapped Joy video](#).

Maybe joy is like a little egg that forces us to be in the world differently. A little egg that is full of surprises!

And lastly, we have a candle, a candle that we traditionally light on the 3rd week of Advent to remind us of God's gift of joy, in a world filled with brokenness.

Light the candle.

May the gift of this candles infectious flame, remind us of God's gift of joy.

Hymn/Anthem

"As We Light This Candle" (Advent Unwrapped)

TLUS! 55 "We Light This Candle"

["Memory"](#) (Advent Unwrapped)

"Christmas Lullaby" (*Songs for A New World*, Jason Robert Brown)

Scripture

Isaiah 35:1–10

Luke 1:46b–55

James 5:7–10

Hymn

MV 110 "First-born of Mary" (John Bell)

MV 107 "God Loves Me" (Elole nye Mawa elolo nguto)

Scripture

Matthew 11:2–11

Sermon/ Reflection

Be courageous in your reflections today!

For many years the Magnificat was considered controversial and revolutionary, but over time the radical nature has been domesticated. The same can be said for many revolutionary people and artists. Think of early jazz musicians who once only played hidden in smoke-filled bars late at night, but are now played as background music in mall elevators. Or TV shows like *Star Trek*, once revolutionary for their diverse crew and creative special effects, that are now mercilessly parodied. The same can be said for the iconic Civil Rights leader, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In the retelling of history people often forget to share his then unpopular views on war and poverty. Mainline denominations also fail to mention that the vast majority of them were not supportive of King's actions or tactics. The more removed we are from a person or event, the easier it is for us to change their message and story to suit our current needs and beliefs. How have we co-opted and domesticated the Christmas Story and the Magnificat to fit our 21st century needs?

When have you or your community of faith courageously said yes to Christ, when the stakes were high? What did you have to say no to, or let go of to embrace the new thing? Did you lose parishioners, partners, or friends as a result? Would you have responded differently if you knew fully what was at stake? What helps you choose to be courageous? Who are your role models in courageous actions?

or

Share a Visual Reflection on The Magnificat

[Light blue paint: two gentle curves from one line are painted slowly on the canvas from top to bottom while the following reflection is read. This blue line will be Mary's silhouette.]

It begins with Mary, woman full of grace ...

A young woman, told by God that she is to carry the Christ.

We are not told why God choose Mary. We know that Zachariah and Elizabeth were "righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord" (1:6), and that Godliness was in their blood.

Good candidates, they were, to raise a prophet.

But what about Mary?

We know that she is a relative of Elizabeth according to Luke, but in Matthew's gospel we know nothing about Mary. Was she Godly too? Or was she the town rebel?

Why is Mary blessed among woman?

Perhaps the real question is why not?

All of us, are we not all named, chosen and called by God?

Are we not each favoured?

We are each blessed.

The only thing that we need to know about Mary is that God chose to work through her, just as God chose to work through Elizabeth, Sarah, Hagar, and Hannah.

Just as God chose to work through a group of Hebrew midwives, an exiled prince, and a young shepherd boy.

Just as God chooses to work through you and me.

God's choices may seem improbable or even impossible, and that may just be the point.

Angel Gabriel says it best: nothing is impossible with God!

[Pause—finish the blue line—and add a couple of strokes to the bump]

Mary, woman full of grace.

[Deep blue paint: start to smear blue paint from the top right hand and slowly work your way down the canvas—this paint is to represent a night sky]

God has called Mary to be a God-bearer.

Terrifying—remember young, unwed, and pregnant girls got stoned in Mary's day.

Courage can only come through fear.

In our time what happens to God-bearers? [Share your own context, or share some of the contexts that you know of.] Having an orientation towards Jesus takes guts. It takes guts to follow God's dream when false prophets are calling for hatred, division and the hoarding of wealth. It takes guts to respond to our personal call, as Mary did. By saying yes to God, we are choosing to say no to the powers of hate and greed; it is a courageous choice.

It takes guts to take our gifts and our skills and to shine brightly, like stars in the night sky, for God and God's dream of a better world for all.

[Purple paint: fan out the purple paint from the middle, but leaving a space in the centre for the Christ Child—the purple is to represent this Advent Season of waiting]

Why didn't God send Angel Gabriel with a stork carrying two new born babies, divinely created, for Elizabeth and Mary? Instead, both women were pregnant with the spirit of God. They carried and nurtured the spirit within them. According to Luke, Elizabeth went into seclusion for five months, while the blessing of John grew inside of her. Was she in pain? Was her life at risk? Mary, in her first trimester stayed with Elizabeth in her last, as they prepared for their divine task of motherhood together.

Together they anticipated the faces of their new born children. Together they wondered how their world would be rocked and transformed by the welcoming of the blessings foretold to them. Together they prepared their hearts and minds for the coming of their children, God's promise to the world.

We too, take time together to prepare, anticipate and wonder.

We like Elizabeth and Mary receive God's message (do not be afraid) and with expectancy, mother life into our hope.

[Gold paint: From the curve in the light blue, make spiral motions with the gold paint to represent a growing Christ Child]

Our hope is in Emmanuel.

Ancient Love

Soul-Searching Love

Earth-Shaking Love

A love, invited to grow within each of us.

For, we are all Theotokos.

[write this in Black across the bottom of the painting]

We are all God-Bearers.

God has planted a seed of hope inside of each of us

That we are called to nurture and care for as we wait...

For the future of the world is inside of us.

We wait courageously ...
For nothing is impossible with God.

Hymn

MV 134 "Dreaming Mary"
VU 899 "Song of Mary"

Offering

During the offering, invite people to write on sheets of paper where they think God's love is needed in the world, and collect them in the Love box.

The economy of this earth is not the economy of God's.
What is great here can be considered among the least in heaven. Our ranking and class systems is meaningless in the world to come. Do not judge your gifts and offerings by this world, instead judge it by the world to come.

Prayer of Dedication

For the opportunity to give freely, we give thanks.
For the privilege to worship openly, we give thanks.
For the blessings we have received, we give thanks.
Accept these offerings God with our thanks and love.
Amen.

Pastoral Prayers

Let our souls magnify the Lord
And our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour.
Let us pray,
Mighty One,
Look on us with favour, we beg,
So that future generations may call us blessed.
You have done great things that we name to you now in praise and gratitude ...
Grant your mercy on those who have dealt wickedly with us and those we love alike ...
Bless those who love you ...
Show your strength on those who foolishly trust on their own pride and intellect, seeking complete independence
and on those who attempt to lord over, dominate, exploit and control us and others.
Bless the lowly in body and spirit with good things and put a hunger for justice in those whose bellies are full.
Make us your workers and when we become weary remind us daily of your mercies and your promise to be with us always.
We join these prayers together in the prayer that Jesus taught us ... [prayer of Jesus]
Amen.

Affirmation of Faith and Hymn

MV 120 “Canticle of the Turning”

Commissioning and Benediction

Go now,
Magnifying the Lord and Rejoicing in God our Saviour
Who has done, and will continue to do great things.
Receive God’s blessing, feel God’s favour and share it with all those you will meet along the way.
Amen.

Week 4: Love

Preparation

In your Love Advent Box place a small toy chick, or some very cute baby pictures, as well as the Love Advent candle.

An alternative to the sermon this week is to have prayer stations around the worship space.

Land Acknowledgement

Opening Hymn

MV 143 "We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky"

Call to Worship

Instead of waiting on presents and Christmas treats

We choose to wait for Christ

Instead of the way of consumerism, capitalism, and individualism

We choose to seek your beloved community

Instead of fear, hate, and complacency

We choose to be bold and courageous in our love

Instead of being bound by the pressures and expectations of traditions

We choose to trust in you

Instead of everything else

We choose to worship you.

Opening Prayer

Restore us, O God,

let your face shine on us.

As you have lead Joseph

lead us.

As you have restored those who have been broken by the cruelty of the world

restore us.

As you have shined on our ancestors

shine on us,

so that we may be saved.

Amen.

Prayer of Confession

Beloved,

in what ways do you seek restoration this week?

How has your light been dimmed?

What has tarnished the luster of your bright shining faith?

Loving God,

receive our silent confessions that we offer to you now,

(Time of silence)

in your love, respond to our deepest need.

Words of Assurance

Our ancestors trusted that but a glimpse of God's shining face is all one needed to be restored in faith and kindle the light that is always within. May the same be true of us. Amen.

Advent Candle Lighting

The hope candle reminds us of all the ways creation sings of God's hope for the world,
The peace candle reminds us of how we are called to build God's dream of peace.
The joy candle reminds us of how we are called to reflect God's immeasurable joy.
Today we focus on love.

Invite someone to find the Love box.

What do you think might be in this box marked love?
What would you put in this box? What reminds you of love?
Where would you like to share the gift of love?

Open the box.

Today we have some pictures of little baby animals.

Play the [Advent Unwrapped Love video](#).

Maybe love is like new life, that needs us all to grow.

And lastly, we have a candle, a candle that we traditionally light on the 4th Sunday of Advent to remind us of God's gift of love in a world filled with apathy and loneliness.

Light the candle.

May the gift of this candles warm flame, remind us of God's gift of love.

Hymn

VU 17 "O Ancient Love"

Scripture

Isaiah 7:10–16
Psalm 80:1–7, 17–19
Romans 1: 1–7

Hymn

TLUS! 78 "Trust These Words"

Scripture

Matthew 1: 18-25

Sermon/ Reflection

Many people and groups assert that “God is with them” in a way that might imply that God affirms and supports their actions. We know that this cannot always be the case. “God is with us” is often used as words of comfort, but perhaps they should also be words of challenge and accountability. If God is always with us, God is also with us when we are not loving our neighbours or ourselves as we ought. God is also presumably with those with whom we disagree. What would it look like to fully embrace the notion that God is always with us? How might the idea that God is always with us help us evaluate our daily actions?

or

The Great Antiphon Prayer Stations

The Great Antiphons are seven ancient names for Jesus that are historically remembered and recited on the seven days before Christmas Eve. Set up seven stations around the sanctuary, one for each of the Antiphons, and encourage people before, after, or during the service (in place of a sermon), to reflect and pray at each of the stations.

Station 1: O Wisdom



Have symbols or drawings that represent wisdom like an oil lamp. Alternatively, have a picture of a road map, and some cut out road signs. In what directions do you think wisdom is calling us? How can you discern wisdom’s call? How does Jesus reveal wisdom to you?

- **Action:** Light a candle while praying for a path to be illuminated in a full moment of silence.

Station 2: O Adonai



Have symbols or drawings of Moses. This could include two tablets, a burning bush, or Mount Sinai. What laws do we need reminding of as individuals and as a community? What laws might we need to re-interpret for our current time? How does Jesus reinterpret the law for us?

- **Action:** Write down three laws that will guide you this week/ try to live by these laws for the Christmas season.

Station 3: O Rod of Jesse

Have symbols or drawing of a Jesse Tree (or display the Jesse Tree from Week 3). What needs resurrecting and new life in your personal and communal lives? How might you support or nurture this new life so that it might grow? What new life does Jesus bring into your life?

- **Action:** Reflect on one person from a generation other than your own that you wish to support. What are some tangible ways that you can support them if they wish? Write them a note of encouragement.

Station 4: O Key of David

Have symbols or drawings of a key. What is blocking us from entering the Kin-dom of God? How does Jesus help us to better understand God's Realm?

- **Action:** Do an examen on your past week: when have you felt closest to God? When have you felt farthest? What will help you draw closer to the Divine this Christmas?

Station 5: O Dayspring

Display images or symbols of a sunrise. How do we rely on the Son and the Sun for our daily survival? What hope does Jesus bring in his rising?

- **Action:** Write a morning prayer for yourself to do every morning until Christmas. Or teach and repeat a body prayer as able (use the [Advent Unwrapped](#) Body Prayer).

Station 6: O Desire of Nations

Display a crown or images of leadership. What sort of leadership is needed for a just and peaceful end to conflict in our world? How does Jesus govern over your life?

- **Action:** Have a world map where people can use push pins and/or sticky notes to pray for particular places and regions.

Station 7: O Emmanuel

Display an image of Jesus in a manger, or your church's nativity set. What do you need freeing from in your life? How will you create space for Jesus to live within you?

- **Action:** Make or take a baby Jesus—by the kitchen sink, at your office at work, on the bus—and think of where you need to place him in your life. How can you intentionally make room for Jesus?

Hymn

VU 1 “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” (consider the [Advent Unwrapped version](#))

Offering

In the Joy Box, invite people to write on sheets of paper where they think God's joy is needed in our world.

We offer these gifts to Jesus and his Church,
For the sake of his ministry in this broken and needy world.

Prayer of Dedication

**Bless these gifts that we offer with a cheerful and generous heart.
Amen.**

Pastoral Prayers

Even in the bleakest times
When our diet is the bread of tears,
Like our ancestors, may we trust in you,
Refusing evil and choosing the good.
Give us the faith of our ancestors God, when our faith is lacking,
Feed us with your grace when we are in need,
Starving for the hope, peace, joy, and love, that only you can bring.
Receive our prayers that we offer silently or out loud along with the sighs of our heart ...
We join these prayers together in the prayer that Jesus taught us ... [prayer of Jesus]
Amen.

Affirmation of Faith and Hymn

TLUS! 55 “We Wait for God”

TLUS! 142 “As a Parent Holds a Child”

Commissioning and Benediction

Come quickly Christ to save us
And bless us as we wait with joy,
As we anticipate your long-awaited arrival: our wisdom,
our Lord, our rose, our key, our dayspring, our desire, our Emmanuel.
Come, brother Jesus, Come.

All liturgies by Alydia Smith. Some prayers first published in Advent Unwrapped or Seasons of the Spirit.