

Season of Advent

Crafting the Liturgy — Seasonal Planning Page

The Season of Advent is marked as a period of anticipation and waiting. The waiting we do in Advent is not done with worry or anxiety, but with hope and joyful longing for the fulfillment of God's promises in the here and now and in eternity. As God's people, it is our discipline of faith to set aside the trappings of the world that lead up to Christmas, and focus on the journey to the manger and ultimately the cross.

Liturgical Color

The liturgical color for the season of Advent is blue, the color of hope. (Some parishes use purple which is the color of royalty.) The third Sunday of Advent may utilize the color rose. On this *Gaudete* ("rejoice" in Latin) Sunday, candles or banners might be the place to insert this color into the worship space.

Alternate Prayers for the Season

To keep the liturgy engaging, as it can become rote at times, use the alternate liturgical texts provided on the Advent Seasonal page of SOWeR.

The Gathering

The use of the Kyrie and Glory to God are recommended in Advent.

The Word

Consider using the Gospel Canticle "My Soul Proclaims the Greatness of the Lord" (LBW p. 147) or another piece based on the Magnificat to introduce the Gospel reading for the day.

Hymn of the Day

When using the SOWeR worship worksheets for each Sunday and festival day, the first three or four hymn suggestions in the list are the ones that would be most appropriate for the Hymn of the Day. This season, the first hymn on each list is sung to a familiar tune but with words that match the theme of the day. There is also a link to these alternate hymns on the weekly pages; just click the link, cut and paste the words into your bulletin.

The Offertory

Use "What Shall I Render to the Lord" as the gifts of the congregation are brought before the Lord. Encourage children to assist with the presentation of the gifts to draw awareness of the special place of children in God's kingdom.

Longest Night

Consider having an evening service on the longest night of the year, December 21st. A liturgy that addresses grief and darkness is available on the Liturgies and Services page on SOWeR under "Seasonal Services" as well as on the Advent Seasonal Page. This could replace a mid-week service if your congregation worships on Wednesday evenings in Advent. Publish this special service early and often to encourage the grieving to attend.

Simple Hymns

There are simple hymns for Advent, arranged in easy key signatures, on the "Hymns and Music" page of SOWeR. These can be printed for local use.

REMINDERS FOR THE SEASON

- ✱ Print and distribute the 2023 Advent Calendar for Children and Families. It can be found on the Advent Seasonal Page of SOWeR or the first Sunday of Advent page.
- ✱ Invite children and their parents to read the prayers for the Advent wreath and light the candles each week.
- ✱ Print and distribute the seasonal devotional guide, "Let Us Pray" for individuals and families. This can be found on the Advent Seasonal page or on the First Sunday of Advent page.

COMMEMORATIONS

Nov. 29: Noah (c. 2913 BC - c. 1963 BC) — Prophet

Dec. 6: Nicholas of Myra (March 15, 270 - December 6, 343) — Pastor

Dec. 13: Lucia (283 - 304 AD) — Martyr

Dec. 20: Katharina von Bora Luther (January 29, 1499 - December 20, 1552)

LESSER FESTIVALS

Dec. 21: St. Thomas (unknown-72 AD) — Apostle. Thomas, called the Twin, was one of Jesus' twelve disciples.

None of the above festivals fall on Sundays this year.

THE ADVENT CANDLES

There is no single set of traditional names for the four Advent candles; there are, in fact, many different traditions that are utilized. The worship materials provided on SOWeR will use the following designations:

The Prophets Candle: Long before Jesus arrived on earth to live among sinful humanity, there were those who came to pave the way for him through the delivery of God's message and holy Word.

The Bethlehem Candle: The manger and site of his holy birth is recalled in the prophecy, "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days." (Micah 5:2)

The Shepherds Candle: The joy of the shepherds is recalled in the third candle. God sent the message of salvation to the most unlikely recipients.

The Angels Candle: It was through the heavenly hosts that the announcement of Christ's birth was made to the world.