

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.

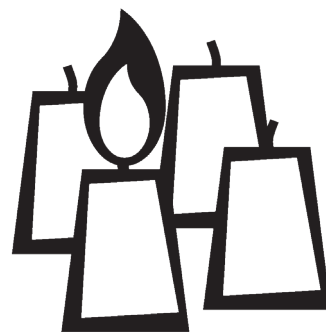
The Angels Candle: It was through the heavenly hosts that the announcement of Christ's birth was made to the world.

Advent 1

November 29, 2026

First Sunday of Advent (Year B)

God's anger is kindled by our sin and disobedience. The Lord turned away from his people and left them vulnerable to the consequences of their iniquity. Yet, when they cried out to him for salvation, when they vowed to live in unity with him as his beloved created ones, he sent his Son into the world to save us from sin and death. Through Jesus, God's face shines upon us. He is faithful until the end of the age.



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

First Reading: Isaiah 64:1-9**Don't Be Angry, O Lord!**

Israel was cut off from the Lord because of their iniquity. Sin had separated them from God, but a cry went out for God not to forget them, even though they were unclean. Israel vowed to be like clay and allow God, their Father, to be the potter as they recognized that they were the very work of his hand.

Psalm 80:1-7**Let Your Face Shine, That We May Be Saved**

The psalmist lamented to the Lord that he had left them to drown in their tears and made them a laughingstock to all their neighbors. "Let your face shine upon us," he cried, begging the Lord to save his people from their misery. He implored the Shepherd of Israel to come and save His people.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9**God is Faithful**

Paul wrote to the church in Corinth giving thanks for them and the fact that they were enriched by the Spirit, possessing all good gifts for the sake of the ministry of the Gospel. "Christ will sustain you!" He wrote. "You were called into Christ!"

Gospel Reading: Mark 13:24-37**Son of Man Will Come in the Clouds**

Jesus explained to his followers that a time of distress would come but they would see the signs in the sun, stars and heavens that would clue them in to the time when the Son of Man would return to earth in great power and glory. Angels would be sent from the ends of the earth to gather God's elect. Jesus assured his friends that even though heaven and earth would pass away, his Word will last forever.

Suggestions for the Day:

- Liturgical Color: Blue or Purple.
- Use the Kyrie during Advent.
- Use the Nicene Creed.
- Light the first candle on the Advent wreath.
- Print and handout the Advent Calendar for families. This document can be found on the Seasonal Page for Advent.
- Themes of the endtime pervade the readings for today. Many popular sources try to incite fear in the hearts of believers, but Jesus assures his followers that they will detect the signs and can count on his Word enduring forever. There is nothing to fear for God's elect – those whom he loves and who love him.

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:

	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
Keep in Quiet Wonder	---	---	---	---	---	web
Rejoice, Rejoice Believers	25	---	515	244	99	99
Hark, A Thrilling Voice is Sounding!	37	---	345	246	94	94
Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending	27	---	336	435	---	---
O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide	38	---	355	---	---	---
Wake, Awake for Night is Flying	31	---	516	436	95	95
Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah	---	633	---	240	---	---
Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates	32	---	340	---	93	93
When He Cometh	---	---	---	---	96	96
O Bread of Life from Heaven	222	---	---	480	84	84

The hymn suggestions above can be found in: LBW= Lutheran Book of Worship, WOV= With One Voice, ELW= Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Augsburg Fortress); LSB= The Lutheran Service Book (Concordia Publishing), REC= The ReClaim Hymnal for Church and Home (ReClaim Resources), and *** means you can find it on SOWeR at "Hymns and Music."

CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles

Love Comes Down
(CCLI# 5553633)
Come to Us
(CCLI# 6149833)
Come Lord Jesus
(CCLI# 5575886)
Even So, Come
(CCLI# 7036288)
The King is Coming
(CCLI# 6122544)

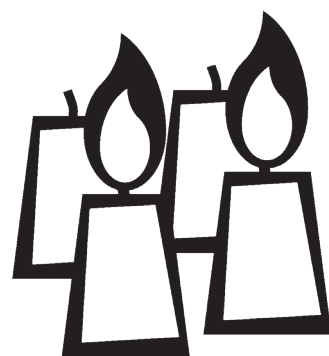
The contemporary song suggestions above are noted by their CCLI number. To print these songs, a congregation must have a CCLI license.

Advent 2

December 6, 2026

Second Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Repentance is key to receiving the coming Messiah. When we cling to our stubborn, idolatrous ways we resist noticing the sin in our hearts and lives. We are masters at justifying our sin, readily finding a reason to explain our actions that are against God's perfect will. Christ came to free us from our broken human condition. John's call to return to the Lord, is a call to live boldly in the faith of Christ our Savior.



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

First Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11
Comfort My People

The Lord called to the prophet to comfort his people who were to be exiled far from home. Though they strayed from the Lord's fold and angered him greatly, God would not forsake them or leave them without a source of comfort and hope.

Psalm 85
God Withdrew His Anger

The psalmist spoke about God's change of heart in regard to his adulterous and faithless people saying, "You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger." Confidently the psalmist proclaimed that God's faithfulness would prevail to save the people from their sins as righteousness would come together with peace.

Second Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-14
One Day is a Thousand Years

Peter reminded believers that the end would certainly come, even though it seemed like forever since Christ was with them. To God, the apostle said, a thousand years is just one day, and one day is as a thousand years. Human time and God's time are two completely different things. Because of that, the faithful are not to fear - we will not be forsaken by the One who transcends time and place.

Gospel Reading: Mark 1:1-8
Prepare the Way of the Lord

As the prophet Isaiah foretold, John the Baptist came crying out in the wilderness urging people to prepare the way of the Lord and to make his paths straight. The forerunner to Christ urged the people to repent so their hearts would be ready to receive the Messiah. We, too, are called to turn from sin and turn toward Jesus.

Suggestions for the Day:

- Liturgical Color: Blue or Purple.
- Use the Kyrie during Advent.
- Use the Nicene Creed.
- This Sunday we hear a lot about peace. God gives comfort to his people, he withdraws his anger, and sends a forerunner to announce the coming of the Lord's Messiah. We live in a troubled world in deep need of peace. Consider these ideas to foster contemplation on peace (shalom):
 - Invite people to write down a place in their lives where they need peace and place it on the altar in special container.
 - Spend some extended time in intentional silence during worship, lifting up those who live in areas of unrest.

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
Comfort, Comfort, Now My People	29	---	347	256	98	98
On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry	36	---	344	249	101	101
Awake, Awake and Greet the New Morn	---	633	---	242	---	---
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus	30	---	338	254	---	---
Hark the Glad Sound	35	---	349	239	92	92
My Lord, What a Morning	---	627	---	438	---	---
Oh Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel	34	---	357	257	103	103
My Faith Looks Up to Thee	479	---	702	759	243	243
There's a Wideness in God's Mercy	290	---	---	587	186	186
You Satisfy the Hungry Heart	---	711	641	484	---	---

The hymn suggestions above can be found in: LBW=Lutheran Book of Worship, WOV=With One Voice, ELW=Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Augsburg Fortress); LSB=The Lutheran Service Book (Concordia Publishing), REC=The ReClaim Hymnal for Church and Home (ReClaim Resources), and *** means you can find it on SOWeR at "Hymns and Music."

CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles

Prepare the Way of the Lord
(CCLI# 5351361)
For Your Glory
(CCLI# 5339716)
Emmanuel (Advent Hymn)
(CCLI# 7053686)
Sanctuary
(CCLI# 24140)
Prepare the Way
(CCLI# 3441008)

The contemporary song suggestions above are noted by their CCLI number. To print these songs, a congregation must have a CCLI license.

Advent 3

December 13, 2026

Third Sunday of Advent (Year B)

God puts people in our lives to prepare us for Christ. Their job is to till the soil of our hearts to prepare us to receive the seed of the Word. John the Baptist was called to prepare the people for the coming Lord. Many heard his message and repented, but many others resisted and turned away from John's witness thereby rejecting the coming Christ. Will we listen to the call and receive him or will we turn away?



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Sent to the Brokenhearted

The words spoken by Isaiah were the same words Jesus spoke in when he stood before his people and proclaimed the coming kingdom (Luke 4:18). Sent to the brokenhearted and captive, both Isaiah and Jesus were given God's commission to free people and remind them of God's covenantal love and mercy.

Psalms 126

The Lord Has Done Great Things

For those who recognize the generous hand of God in their midst, their hearts sing for joy just as the heart of the psalmist who proclaimed that the Lord has done great things for his people and makes their hearts glad. God's goodness was a like a dream come true for those who struggled in pain but were then filled with joy.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

The Will of God for You

Saint Paul proclaimed to the Christians in Thessalonica that God's will for them in Christ was that they would give thanks in everything, rejoice always, and pray unceasingly. Though hard to do, it's a reminder that God is always working in our lives. Let us take care not to quench the Holy Spirit as he moves and fills us.

Gospel Reading: John 1:6-8, 19-28

A Witness to the Light

The arrival of John the Baptist, who was not the light, but the one who was sent to bear witness to the Light, had come. The goal of John's witness was that all would come to believe in the Messiah of Israel. The Light, Jesus, was coming into the world and this was a call to prepare our hearts to receive him.

Suggestions for the Day:

- Liturgical Color: Blue or Purple.
- Use the Kyrie during Advent.
- Use the Nicene Creed.
- This Third Sunday in Advent is called "Gaudete" Sunday. The word, (**GOWD-ay-tay**) means "rejoice." On this day, it is appropriate to light a pink candle on the Advent wreath (if your congregation uses pink and blue/purple) to signify the joy of nearing Christmas.
- To help the congregation focus on the aspects of joy for this Third Sunday in Advent consider singing the round, "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice."
- Pray for the brokenhearted today as we think about God's love for the outcast and alone.

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:

	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
Joy to the World	39	---	387	267	123	123
Prepare the Royal Highway	26	---	343	264	102	102
Rejoice, Rejoice Believers	25	---	515	244	99	99
Christ, Be Our Light	---	---	---	715	---	---
O Day of Peace	---	762	---	711	---	---
Softy and Tenderly, Jesus is Calling	---	734	---	608	177	177
Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us	481	---	711	789	205	205
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	543	---	790	858	11	11
Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing	259	---	924	545	54	54
Let Us Break Bread Together	212	---	---	471	83	83

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CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles

Shining Star
(CCLI# 6186119)
Light of the World
(CCLI# 934807)
He is the Light
(CCLI# 7061131)
Light of the World
(CCLI# 7023299)
Sing Hallelujah
(CCLI# 5877175)

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Advent 4

December 20, 2026

Fourth Sunday of Advent (Year B)

God had dangerous business in mind for the young Galilean girl who was betrothed but not yet married. She was chosen by the Most High God to carry, give birth, and raise the Lord's Son. If anyone found out she was pregnant out of wedlock, she could have been stoned, or at the very least shunned and rejected. But Mary, who answered the call of God, instead is known for her unwavering faith and obedience.



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

First Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16**David's Kingdom Will Reign Forever**

King David had arrived! Once a shepherd boy, he was now the conquerer of nations and had a beautifully built cedar house to show for it. As he looked at his new home he felt compelled to build God a house worthy of his divine majesty. God had other plans, however. He never asked to have a house built, in fact God promised that it would be he who would build his house and establish David's reign.

Psalm 89:1-5 (19-29)**The Lord Anointed David**

The Lord promised David that he would establish his descendants forever and put him on the throne. This promise was fulfilled in David's life but extended for generations with the culmination of the covenant being realized in Jesus Christ.

Second Reading: Romans 16:25-27**There is One Who is Our Strength**

Paul ended his letter to the believers in Rome with a final blessing. He reminded them that there is one who is able to give strength, it is the one about whom the apostle preached - Jesus Christ. What was once a mystery of faith is now known. What was once hidden has now been revealed through the prophets to all nations.

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:26-38**Gabriel's Message to Mary**

To a young virgin girl an angel was sent with an incredible message. "The Lord is with you," he said as he laid out for her God's plan for the salvation of the world. This young girl, not yet married, would be the chosen vessel for God's one and only Son. Mary would be the God-bearer and was instructed to name the infant Jesus, which means "God saves."

Suggestions for the Day:

- Liturgical Color: Blue or Purple
- Use the Kyrie during Advent.
- Use the Nicene Creed.
- For an incredible image representing this Sunday's story of Mary receiving Gabriel's message take a look at the painting, "Virgin Mary Consoles Eve," by Sister Grace Remington of the Sisters of the Mississippi Abbey in Dubuque, Iowa. Pay special attention to their feet! (Just google the title of the painting to find it.)
- Use this image as a discussion starter in a small group or Sunday School class. How does Jesus' birth crush Satan's power that took a foothold in the Garden of Eden?

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:

	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
O Lord, How Shall I Meet You	23	---	334	241	100	100
Oh Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel	34	---	357	257	103	103
Savior of the Nations, Come	28	---	332	263	97	97
Lord, Enthroned in Heav'nly Splendor	172	---	534	475	---	---
The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came	---	632	356	265	---	---
Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing	559	---	528	886	30	30
My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness	---	730	---	251	---	---
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	315	---	700	631	14	14
Lord, Speak to Us That We May Speak	403	---	---	676	267	267
Now We Join in Celebration	203	---	---	462	---	---

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CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles

Mary Did You Know
(CCLI# 839225)
Breath of Heaven (Mary's Song)
(CCLI# 1128784)
Magnificat
(CCLI# 4802608)
Exceeding Joy
(CCLI# 3713901)
Emmanuel
(CCLI# 12949)

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