Should your pastor be unable to attend Sunday worship on short notice, you’ve come to the right place…

this is the

Grab and Go Binder

Resource compiled by Rev. Sharan Knoell

Most recently updated: June 2021

**General Instructions and Tips**

Centering Yourself Spiritually:

-Remember: You are stepping in to lead worship in a pinch; no one is expecting perfection. This is holy work that you’ve set out to do; give yourself grace. Take a few deep breaths, and pray:

Graceful and loving God, a wise servant of yours once said that there is space between what is said from the pulpit and what a churchgoer hears, and it is your Holy Spirit who wanders around in that space. God, let your Holy Spirit wander freely between the words of my mouth and the meditations of everyone’s hearts. Guide those who are leading worship, and be with our Pastor in her emergency today. In Christ’s name we pray, amen.

-Remind yourself that the congregation of Valley United is a gracious and loving group. They will be thrilled that you are stepping out in faith to lead worship, and they will be appreciative that you’re taking such a bold step.

Day Of:

-Check in with the Music Director (and anyone else helping to lead worship) to make sure you all are on the same page.

-Check in with the person operating the sanctuary computer and ensure they know how to access the PowerPoint.

General Tips:

-When you read aloud, read slowly and clearly (slower and clearer than your everyday speech). When reading, ask yourself what the most important parts are, and be sure to emphasize those.

-All Bible readings in the worship services are from the Common English Bible, unless otherwise noted.

-If you see a notation for “StF” that means the hymn is coming from the “Sing the Faith” hymnal, which is the thin, blue hymnal in the pews.

**Be sure to return this binder to the copy room when you’re finished with it!**

**A Service for the Season of Lent**

**Prelude**

**THE GATHERING**

**Greeting / Announcements**

**Call to Worship**

One: Jesus said, "When I am lifted up, I will draw all people to myself."

**All: Blessed be the God of our salvation who bears our burdens and forgives our sins.**

One: Again and again, let us worship the God of salvation!

Our first hymn is **Just as I Am, without One Plea (#442).**

**Prayer of Confession**

One: Let us pray for the cleansing of our hearts, confessing our sins to the One whose mercy is everlasting.

**All: Redeeming God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart and have not loved our neighbors as we ought; we have strayed from your commandments. Do not remember our sins, but forgive our iniquities, that we may fix our eyes on you.**

*(Silent prayer for personal confession)*

**Assurance of Pardon**

One: Friends, by the faith of Christ, our sins are forgiven. May we delight in the joy of our salvation knowing that we are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**Response - In God Alone (814, English only)**

**PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD OF GOD**

**Prayer for Illumination**

One: We pray for God to silence the busyness of our hearts and minds so that we can receive illumination from God’s word. Let us pray: Your Word, O God, has power to change our lives and to create a whole new world. As we meditate on your word this day, fill us with your Holy Spirit, that we may treasure your word with our whole hearts and fix our eyes on you. Amen.

**Scripture Reading - Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19**

**1** Shepherd of Israel, listen! You, the one who leads Joseph as if he were a sheep. You, who are enthroned upon the winged heavenly creatures.

Show yourself **2** before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh!

 Wake up your power!

 Come to save us!

**3**

Restore us, God!

 Make your face shine so that we can be saved!

**4**

Lord God of heavenly forces,

 how long will you fume against your people’s prayer?

**5**

You’ve fed them bread made of tears;

 you’ve given them tears to drink three times over!

**6**

You’ve put us at odds with our neighbors;

 our enemies make fun of us.

**7**

Restore us, God of heavenly forces!

 Make your face shine so that we can be saved!

 Let your hand be with the one on your right side—

 with the one whom you secured as your own—

**18**

 then we will not turn away from you!

Revive us so that we can call on your name.

**19**

 Restore us, Lord God of heavenly forces!

 Make your face shine so that we can be saved!

**Anthem -**

**Scripture Reading - Matthew 1:18-25**

**18** This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. When Mary his mother was engaged to Joseph, before they were married, she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. **19** Joseph her husband was a righteous man. Because he didn’t want to humiliate her, he decided to call off their engagement quietly. **20** As he was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child she carries was conceived by the Holy Spirit. **21** She will give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” **22** Now all of this took place so that what the Lord had spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled:

**23**

*Look! A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son,*

 *And they will call him,* Emmanuel. (*Emmanuel* means “God with us.”)

**24** When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife. **25** But he didn’t have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. Joseph called him Jesus.

**Meditation by Rev. Canon Rosemarie Logan Duncan from the 2021 Lenten Devotional by the Washington National Cathedral[[1]](#footnote-0)**

Our gospel today is Matthew’s version of the birth of Jesus that we are more accustomed to hearing for Christmas. In this reading today we find one of the few instances where Joseph, whose life we commemorate today, is named.

The gospel relays that during the time of his engagement to Mary, Joseph discovers that she is pregnant. Joseph knows the child is not his, and he knows that Jewish law would find Mary guilty of adultery, an act that brought shame and could be punished with death. The law allowed for Joseph to divorce her. However, because Joseph is a righteous man, he also understands another part of his Jewish heritage: he understands that the law is to be tempered with mercy. So instead of exposing Mary to public disgrace, as the reading says, he decides to dismiss her quietly in a way that would reduce public inquiry into what has happened.

Then an angel appears to him in a dream and tells him, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.” Joseph’s response after this encounter leads us to believe that he comes to understand in this moment that the difficult situation confronting him is part of God’s much greater plan.

We don’t know much about Joseph and the gospels do not document a single word from him, but we do know that in action he was faithful to God’s plan playing a crucial role in the protection of Mary and the childhood of Jesus.

While some traditions place Joseph’s death as March 19, it is unclear when he died. We do know that this commemoration falls during Lent, the season we are called to acknowledge honestly our brokenness and to deepen our trust in God’s abundant mercy. May we, like Joseph, listen for God’s voice and with obedience follow the guidance of God’s plan for our lives. Amen.

**RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD**

Our next hymn is **Love Has Come (#110).**

**Prayer of Dedication for the Offering**

One: For the gifts in the offering plates, as well as for the gifts in all of our lives, let us dedicate them in service to God: We give you thanks, O God, for every blessing and spiritual gift you have poured out upon us. Let the gifts of our lives be a source of blessing in your world, all to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

**Response - Take, O Take Me as I Am (698)**

**Joys & Concerns / Prayers of the People**

One: We share joys and concerns, because we live, we work, we worship in communion with one another. *(Share joys and concerns)*

Please join me as I pray:

During the final days of his earthly life, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears, and in faithful obedience, he opened the way to eternal salvation. Let us open our hearts this day as we lift up our deepest needs and concerns to the One who is mighty to save.

We pray for all leaders and people, that by the power of your cross you would drive out all violence, domination, and injustice in our world as you draw us to Christ. *(pause)*

We pray for our war-ravaged world, that you would teach us to walk together in your way of righteousness and peace. *(pause)*

We pray for the vocation of the church, that our prayers would bear the fruit of action as we hear the cries of pain and suffering of those in need. *(pause)*

We pray for the poor, the terrified, and the oppressed, and those who are too much alone, that they may find a home in you as we serve them in your name. *(pause)*

God, as your son anticipated his death on the cross in light of your steadfast love, may all who have died or who are dying be at rest in your eternal care. *(pause)*

Holy Spirit, we give you a moment of silence now to pray our own personal joys and concerns. *(long pause)*

Through Christ, with Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, we pray the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples and us, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Our closing hymn is **When I Survey the Wondrous Cross (#223).**

**Benediction**

One: And now receive the benediction:

Jesus said, "Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also." Go in peace to love and serve Christ.

**Benediction Response**

Grace, Love, and Fellowship

**Postlude**

**A Service for Ordinary (not Lent or Advent) Time**

**Prelude**

**THE GATHERING**

**Greeting / Announcements**

**Call to Worship**

One: We have gathered from our different states, churches, and lives to worship here.

**People: How good it is to worship together in unity!**

One: We come from different occupations with different passions and gifts.

**People: How good it is to worship together in unity!**

One: We come as unique individuals, bound together in the love of Christ.

**All: How good it is to worship together in unity!**

Our first hymn is **Faith Begins by Letting Go (#684).**

**Prayer of Confession**

One: We come to worship God, acknowledging that we are a broken and sinful people. Please join me as we confess our sins together and then privately. We pray to you, God of love:

**All: We hear your words that we are siblings in Christ, yet we let artificial lines of cities and towns, counties and boroughs, states and denominations divide us. We fall victim to sibling rivalries. We divide our gifts and choose which people we want to serve and how we want to serve them - forgetting that those decisions should come from you. Forgive us when our humanity gets in the way of your will and your love for your people.**

*-Silent prayer for personal confession-*

Assurance of Pardon (Adapted from Psalm 103)

One: The Lord is compassionate and merciful, very patient and full of faithful love. God doesn’t deal with us according to our sin or repay us according to our wrongdoing, because as high as heaven is above the earth, that’s how large God’s faithful love is for those who honor the Lord. Know that in Jesus Christ, we are all forgiven. Amen.

**Response - We Are Forgiven (447)**

**PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD OF GOD**

**Prayer for Illumination**

One: We pray for God to silence the busyness of our hearts and minds so that we can receive illumination from God’s word. Let us pray: Your Word, O God, has power to change our lives and to create a whole new world. As we meditate on your word this day, fill us with your Holy Spirit, that we may treasure your word with our whole hearts and fix our eyes on you. Amen.

One: Normally, I would read you the first Scripture reading, but today we’ll be singing it. Please turn to #544 in your hymnals as we sing **Bless the Lord.**

**Anthem -**

**Psalm 133 (NRSV)**

**1** How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity! **2** It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes. **3** It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life forevermore.

**Meditation by Rev. Sharan Knoell**

There are a few givens any time there is a gathering of Presbyterians. 1) There will be food - good food. 2) Committees, teams, and task forces will be created and consulted before any major decisions are made. 3) If the leader asks for someone within the group to lead a prayer, everyone - including pastors - stares at the ceiling. 4) Whether the gathering is in a sanctuary or a fellowship hall, the majority of the people will sit and congregate in the back. I know we’ve already checked several of those things off that list this morning!

There are two purposes for this Psalm - first to express gratitude, and second to create a crowd.

Gratitude is simple. God has given us at Valley United the gifts to merge three Presbyterian churches over a state border in this little Valley, the blessings to learn how to live together, and to discern who God is calling us to be in this community. Thank you to each of you - including those who are no longer with us and those who have yet to join us - for answering the call to go where God is sending us.

The second reason for gathering - creating a crowd - is a little more puzzling. In the first verse of this Psalm, the writer is encouraging families, people, kindred to live together as one. And one thing that means is that they need to congregate, to be in the same space with one another. Those of us who’ve lived or do live with a sibling, parent, spouse, partner, roommate know that two or more people occupying the same space often turns out to be way more complicated than it sounds.

We all have our own ideas of how things should be, how things work out the best, and how we like to live...and that doesn’t always jive with the person with whom we’re sharing space. The good thing is that “unity” or “together as one” doesn’t mean we have to agree all the time. It doesn’t mean we get our way all the time. And it doesn’t mean we even have to like each other all the time. It DOES, however, mean we need to listen, to be open to new things, and be willing to learn from others.

And when we crowd together, when we congregate, when we share space...particularly as Presbyterians...we inspire a sense of belonging. We gather to remind ourselves of the bonds that unify us, that bring us together in the first place. And that thing that brings us together is not just being Presbyterian or being part of this congregation, but God. It’s really our love of God, our appreciation for what God has already done in and through our lives, and our desire to serve God going forward that brings us together and creates a bond.

And so we’re here today to form a crowd. We’re worshipping, sharing space, congregating for worship. Then we’ll go back out into the world, and our work begins. Talk to people in the Valley this week, and celebrate what your church is doing for the community. Meet someone you don’t know. Feel a sense of belonging to this Christian community. Remind yourselves that we’re all working to show and spread the love of God in our world. What better reason to congregate and celebrate than that?

So have gratitude for being Presbyterian, for being part of this church, for being a Christian. The love of God is the most important thing that bonds us together as one today. And how very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity. Amen.

**RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD**

Our next hymn is **Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather (#311).**

**Prayer of Dedication for the Offering**

One: For the gifts in the offering plates, as well as for the gifts in all of our lives, let us dedicate them in service to God: We give you thanks, O God, for every blessing and spiritual gift you have poured out upon us. Let the gifts of our lives be a source of blessing in your world, all to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

**Response - God is So Good (658)**

**Joys & Concerns / Prayers of the People**

One: We share joys and concerns, because we live, we work, we worship in communion with one another. *(Share joys and concerns)*

Please join me as I pray:

God of all times, places and peoples, we came today so full of concerns, confessions, hopes, dreams and questions. We came because the world is full of voices and distractions that would take our eyes off you and your will for us. We came seeking that which is worthy of our trust. We came because you promise us the sufficiency of faith, hope and love.

You are a God who hears all prayers and who is working out your will in ways we cannot always see. You are also a God who invites our prayers and petitions, for that is how we are called to be with you. So we lift up the prayers you already know are on our hearts, the concerns you know that keep us up at night, the worries and anxieties that ground us in our need for you.

We pray for a wayward world that loves violence and abides inequality that breaks your heart; for a nation in sore need of healing; for mercy and empathy for the one we do not understand; for those in our congregation and families who wait for news of a diagnosis, who are living with health challenges, who care for the sick and dying. May they feel your Spirit surround, embrace and encourage them.

God, we offer you a moment of silence for our own joys and concerns. *(long pause)*

Triune God, as we prepare to go out from this place, teach and sustain us as your children and servants, that we may bear witness to your unexpected choices and your wondrous and mysterious means of working in ways that we might never imagine. For we pray all this in the name of the one who taught us to pray, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Our closing hymn is **O Look and Wonder (#397).** You may sing it in English or you can attempt the Spanish in the hymnal.

**Benediction**

One: And now receive the benediction:

May the grace of Christ our Savior, the love of God our Creator, and the fellowship of the Spirit be with us, forever and always. Amen.

**Benediction Response - We Will Go Out with Joy (539)**

**Postlude**

**A Service for the Season of Advent**

Prelude

**THE GATHERING**

**Greeting / Announcements**

**Lighting of the Advent Wreath** - See Appendix 1

**Call to Worship**

One: The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill my promise to my people.

**People: Justice and righteousness will fill the land and all will live in peace and safety.**

One: The Lord is coming to God’s temple.

**People: We watch and wait for the Lord’s coming and fulfillment of God’s promise.**

**All: Prepare the way of the Lord!**

Our first hymn is **O Come, O Come Emmanuel (#88, vs. 1-3, 7).**

**Prayer of Confession**

One: As we prepare for the birth of Jesus, let us confess our sins to God.

**All: You have sent us prophets and we have not listened. We have not always determined what is best or made way for your reign in our lives, our church, and our society. Forgive us, we pray, and renew your covenant within us, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Hear us now, in this moment of silence, as we name our sins for which we would ask for your forgiveness.**

*-Silent prayer for personal confession-*

**Assurance of Pardon**

One: The Lord is our God. God is everything that is good, and pure, and holy.

**People: We give thanks for the goodness and mercy of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.**

One: In the name God’s one and only Son we are all forgiven.

**All: Thanks be to God, Amen.**

**Response - Glorify Thy Name (StF 2016)**

**PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD OF GOD**

**Prayer of Illumination**

One: We pray for God to silence the busyness of our hearts and minds so that we can receive illumination from God’s word. Let us pray: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O God. Amen.

**First Scripture Reading – Malachi 3:1-4**

**1**

Look, I am sending my messenger who will clear the path before me;

 suddenly the Lord whom you are seeking will come to his temple.

 The messenger of the covenant in whom you take delight is coming,

says the Lord of heavenly forces.

**2**

Who can endure the day of his coming?

 Who can withstand his appearance?

He is like the refiner’s fire or the cleaner’s soap.

**3**

He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver.

 He will purify the Levites

 and refine them like gold and silver.

 They will belong to the Lord,

 presenting a righteous offering.

**4**

The offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord

 as in ancient days and in former years.

**Anthem -**

**Second Reading – John 3:14-21**

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so must the Human One[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john+3&version=CEB#fen-CEB-26124d)] be lifted up **15** so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. **16** God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won’t perish but will have eternal life. **17** God didn’t send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him. **18** Whoever believes in him isn’t judged; whoever doesn’t believe in him is already judged, because they don’t believe in the name of God’s only Son.

**19** “This is the basis for judgment: The light came into the world, and people loved darkness more than the light, for their actions are evil. **20** All who do wicked things hate the light and don’t come to the light for fear that their actions will be exposed to the light. **21** Whoever does the truth comes to the light so that it can be seen that their actions were done in God.”

**Meditation by Dietrich Bonhoeffer**[[2]](#footnote-1)

When God chose Mary as the means when God himself wants to come into the world in the manger of Bethlehem, this is not an idyllic family affair. It is instead the beginning of a complete reversal, a new ordering of all things on this earth. If we want to participate in this Advent and Christmas event, we cannot simply sit there like spectators in a theater and enjoy all the friendly pictures. Rather, we must join in the action that is taking place and be drawn into this reversal of all things ourselves. Here we too must act on the stage, for here the spectator is always a person acting in the drama. We cannot remove ourselves from the action.

With whom, then, are we acting? Pious shepherds who are on their knees? Kings who bring their gifts? What is going on here, where Mary becomes the mother of God, where God comes into the world in the lowliness of the manger? World judgment and world redemption - that is what’s happening here. And it is the Christ child in the manger himself who holds world judgment and world redemption. He pushes back the high and mighty; he overturns the thrones of the powerful; he humbles the haughty; his arm exercises power over all the high and mighty; he lifts what is lowly, and makes it great and glorious is his mercy.

The following is a poem by Dietrich Bonhoeffer written in Tegel prison in 1944. Bonhoeffer, a theologian and pastor, was arrested by the Nazi party in 1943 for his anti-fascist views. He was imprisoned for a year and a half before he was hanged. While in prison, he wrote extensively, and this poem was written about a year before he was executed.

Close to you I waken in the dead of night,

And start with fear - are you lost to me once more?

 Is it always vainly that I seek you, you, my past?

I stretch my hands out,

and I pray -

and a new thing now I hear;

“The past will come to you once more,

and be your life’s enduring part,

through thanks and repentance.

Feel in the past God’s deliverance and goodness.

Pray him to keep you today and tomorrow.”

**RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD**

Our next hymn is **Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates (#93).**

**Prayer of Dedication for the Offering**

One: For the gifts in the offering plates, as well as for the gifts in all of our lives, let us dedicate them in service to God: Gracious and giving God, we thank you for the gifts in our lives that have come from you. We ask you to use these gifts within this church, in our community, and throughout our world to spread your love and grace to all. In your name we pray, amen.

**Response - Doxology (606)**

**Joys & Concerns / Prayers of the People (adapted from Rick Worley for re:Worship)**

One: We share joys and concerns, because we live, we work, we worship in communion with one another. *(Share joys and concerns)*

Please join me as I pray:

In the hushed anticipation of your coming, O Lord, remind us that you are always with us, that like Joseph we might always be eager to fulfill your will, and be eager to pray:

O God, in days to come the mountain of your house will be established, and your joy shall reign. We pray for the church, Valley United, the PCUSA, and churches across the world, that you might teach us your ways and that we might walk in your paths. Come Lord Jesus, and hear our prayer. *(pause)*

Out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and you, O God, shall judge between the nations. We pray for our nation, and all nations, that your peace would be manifest in every corner of the earth. Come Lord Jesus, and hear our prayer. *(pause)*

On your Earth, O Lord, wolves lie down with lambs and children play with serpents without fear. We pray for the sick, the suffering, and those in distress of any kind, especially the joys and concerns we’ve named allowed, those on our prayer list, and those on our prayer chain; that you would heal all injuries, comfort all grief, and settle all wrongs. Come Lord Jesus, and hear our prayer. *(long pause)*

On your Earth, O Lord, even the wilderness and dry land are glad and rejoice. We pray for those who rejoice this week as they celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, new relationships, new life; that they might obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing might flee away. We take a moment to lift our own personal joys and concerns in prayer. *(pause)*

In the fullness of time, O God, you sent your son, to be born of our sister Mary. And his name was Emmanuel: God With Us. We thank you for your Presence with us, and we pray that you might be always present with those whom we love but see no longer. Come Lord Jesus, and hear our prayer. *(pause)*

O Christ, hear our prayers, restore us, and show us the glorious light of your countenance, that we might be saved. Come Lord Jesus, and hear us when we pray, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Our closing hymn is **Go Tell It On the Mountain (#136).**

**Benediction**

And now receive the benediction:

May the grace of the coming Christ our Savior, the love of God our Creator who gifted us with Jesus, and the fellowship of the Spirit that was present at Christ’s birth be with us, forever and always. Amen.

**Benediction Response - Advent Song (StF 2090)**

**Postlude**

**Appendix 1**

Advent Candlelighting words for all four Sundays in Advent can be found below. Each week was designed to have two readers, but if only one voice is available, the whole thing can be read by one person. Ensure the reader uses a microphone and there is a candlelighter stick and fire nearby.

**First Sunday in Advent - Hope**

Reader 1: We gather together on this first Sunday in Advent to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Christchild.

Reader 2: Advent is a season of waiting.

Reader 1: But we do not wait alone.

Reader 2: God is with us.

Reader 1: We gather with those who have seen the signs, heard the whispers, felt the tugs in their hearts.

Reader 2: God is birthing hope into our waiting world.

*-Lighting of the acolyte staff-*

Reader 1: The days are surely coming, says the Lord.

Reader 2: We are waiting in hope.

Reader 1: Make me to know your ways, O Lord.

Reader 2: We are waiting in hope.

Reader 1: Strengthen our hearts in holiness, Lord.

Reader 2: We are waiting in hope.

*-Brief silence, count silently to five, light a blue or purple candle, and extinguish the acolyte staff-*

Reader 1: Let us pray,

We enter, O God, into this season of preparation and anticipation, longing to skip ahead and celebrate the coming of your light into our darkness. But, you would have us first slow down, breathe deeply, and prepare ourselves to receive your gift. We know that your Holy Spirit comes in powerful and unexpected ways. So, we pray that we might recognize you moving in and through the season. In Christ’s name and in Christ’s way we pray in hope, Amen.

**Second Sunday in Advent - Peace**

Reader 1: We gather together on the second Sunday in Advent to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Christchild.

Reader 2: Advent is a season of waiting.

Reader 1: **But we do not wait alone.**

Reader 2: God is with us.

Reader 1: **We gather with those who have seen the signs, heard the whispers, felt the tugs in their hearts.**

Reader 2: God is giving the gift of love to our waiting world.

*-Lighting of the acolyte staff or white candle-*

Reader 1: The days are surely coming, says the Lord.

Reader 2: **We are waiting for peace.**

Reader 1: Make me to know your ways, O Lord.

Reader 2: **We are waiting for peace.**

Reader 1: Strengthen our hearts in holiness, Lord.

Reader 2: **We are waiting for peace.**

*-Light two purple or two blue candles, and extinguish the acolyte staff-*

Reader 1: Let us pray,

We enter, O God, into this season of preparation and anticipation, longing to skip ahead and celebrate the coming of your light into our darkness. But, you would have us first slow down, breathe deeply, and prepare ourselves to receive your gift. We know that your Holy Spirit comes in powerful and unexpected ways. So, we pray that we might recognize you moving in and through the season. In Christ’s name and in Christ’s way we pray in love, Amen.

**Third Sunday in Advent - Joy**

Leader: We gather together on the third Sunday in Advent to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Christchild.

Leader 1: Advent is a season of waiting.

Leader 2: **But we do not wait alone.**

Leader 1: God is with us.

Leader 2: **We gather with those who have seen the signs, heard the whispers, felt the tugs in their hearts.**

Leader 1: God is giving the gift of love to our waiting world.

*-Lighting of the acolyte staff or the white candle-*

Leader 1: The days are surely coming, says the Lord.

Leader 2: **We are waiting in joy.**

Leader 1: Make me to know your ways, O Lord.

Leader 2: **We are waiting in joy.**

Leader 1: Strengthen our hearts in holiness, Lord.

Leader 2: **We are waiting in joy.**

*-Light two purple and one pink or three blue candles, and extinguish the acolyte staff-*

Leader: Let us pray,

We enter, O God, into this season of preparation and anticipation, longing to skip ahead and celebrate the coming of your light into our darkness. But, you would have us first slow down, breathe deeply, and prepare ourselves to receive your gift. We know that your Holy Spirit comes in powerful and unexpected ways. So, we pray that we might recognize you moving in and through the season. In Christ’s name and in Christ’s way we pray in joy, Amen.

**Fourth Sunday in Advent - Love**

Reader 1: We gather together on the fourth Sunday in Advent to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Christchild.

Reader 2: Advent is a season of waiting.

Reader 1: **But we do not wait alone.**

Reader 2: God is with us.

Reader 1: **We gather with those who have seen the signs, heard the whispers, felt the tugs in their hearts.**

Reader 2: God is giving the gift of love to our waiting world.

*-Lighting of the acolyte staff-*

Reader 1: The days are surely coming, says the Lord.

Reader 2: **We are waiting for love.**

Reader 1: Make me to know your ways, O Lord.

Reader 2: **We are waiting for love.**

Reader 1: Strengthen our hearts in holiness, Lord.

Reader 2: **We are waiting for love.**

*-Light all colored candles, and extinguish the acolyte staff-*

Reader 1: Let us pray,

We enter, O God, into this season of preparation and anticipation, longing to skip ahead and celebrate the coming of your light into our darkness. But, you would have us first slow down, breathe deeply, and prepare ourselves to receive your gift. We know that your Holy Spirit comes in powerful and unexpected ways. So, we pray that we might recognize you moving in and through the season. In Christ’s name and in Christ’s way we pray in love, Amen.

1. <https://cathedral.org/worship/lenten-meditations/>. Accessed June 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. “God is in the Manger: Reflections on Advent and Christmas.” Louisville, KY. Westminster John Knox Press, 2010. 42-43. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)