

COMMUNITY WORSHIP

Come, Let Us Adore Him: Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy
First Sunday of Advent



SERVICE OF WORD AND TABLE

For the First Sunday of Advent

GATHERING IN PRAISE

Greetings

We gather as a faith community to celebrate in our diversity a very special time of the Advent season which marks the beginning of a new Liturgical calendar of the church. Today we begin a four-week period of preparation for the nativity of Jesus Christ at Christmas. We gather to reflect on how we can prepare our hearts for Christ’s birth in the world. This is a special time for the Garrett community to remember through prayer, reflections, special music, and good deeds what the true meaning of Jesus’ birth is. We commemorate the birth of Jesus and reflect on the triumphant return of Jesus at the second coming. We gather to light the first candle which symbolizes the hope that comes from God’s actions and promises of salvation for humanity through the prophets who foretold the birth of Christ.

First reader: From deep in the past, Jeremiah calls to us, “The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise, I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah”. Jeremiah 33: 14.

Beloved, the days are surely coming when the yearning of the land; the longing of the sun, moon, and stars; the desperate need of the people of earth for flourishing and peace will receive their fulfillment.

Community: While fear, anxiety, misinformation, and suspicion surround us on every side, we choose to watch and wait in hope, preparing our hearts to notice and cooperate with God’s grace already at work in our midst.

Second reader: We light this candle of hope as a sign of our commitment to pay attention and prepare for the days that are surely coming and are already here—the days when God’s kin-dom of love, justice, and mercy will reign.

Light the first candle of the Advent wreath.¹

GATHERING IN WORD & PROCLAMATION

+Opening Hymn *All Glory, Laud, and Honor*

#280 UMH

+Call to Worship

Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the ill intent.

Instead delight comes from the Word of the LORD on which they meditate day and night, becoming sturdy trees that yield good fruit.

¹ Taken from the UMC Discipleship Resources: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/come-let-us-adore-him-advent-candle-lighting-liturgy-2024>.

These prosper in all they do unlike those whose leaves wither and blow away to dust, unable to stand their ground.

The LORD charts the path of the righteous, leaving those who do not follow on a path to nowhere.

Opening Prayer

Presider

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.²

Prayer for Illumination

Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that, as the Scriptures are read and your Word proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 63:16B-17, 64:2-7

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19

Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

O shepherd of Israel, hearken,
from your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth.
Rouse your power,
and come to save us.

Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Once again, O LORD of hosts,
look down from heaven, and see;
take care of this vine,
and protect what your right hand has planted
the son of man whom you yourself made strong.

Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

May your help be with the man of your right hand,
with the son of man whom you yourself made strong.
Then we will no more withdraw from you;
give us new life, and we will call upon your name.

Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Gradual hymn *I want to walk as a child of the Light*

#206 UMH

² <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/book-common-prayer>.

Reflection

Preacher of the day

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic* church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the People

After each prayer, all are invited to respond: "Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer."

Save us Oh Lord. We cry to the Spirit of Christ, who takes on flesh and moves among us. Save us!! From the idols of unity that keep the weight of our collective problems on the backs of suffering and oppressed. Save us! *Silence*

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

From toxic understandings of gender that confine, that destroy, that encourage violence, against self and other. *Silence*

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Save us! From performance politics that prioritize perception over action. From the limits of identity politics and representation that oversimplify paths to freedom. *Silence*

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Save us! From corporations who make a profit through advertisements and campaigns that project social concerns all while evading their taxes and destroying our planet. *Silence*

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Save us! From an impossible pace not meant for survival only for production. *Silence*

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Save us! From the violence done in the name of the law through: Police brutality, the war on drugs, deportations and violence at the border, abuse of incarcerated trans women, save us from criminalization based on color and all that drives a morality shaped by dominance and control. *Silence*
Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

You free us from traps of guilt. You show us the way of liberation that welcomes all who desire justice and healing. Your grace leads us in learning and unlearning. You manifest both softly and fiercely. Your Love is a catalyst that opens possibilities we cannot yet imagine.

Turn us towards each other. Our salvation is collective. Save us Oh Lord. Amen.

Special Music

God is Good

Jonathan McReynolds

Invitation

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another. Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

Confession and Pardon

Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

All pray in silence.

Presider: Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; that proves God's love toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

Community: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

Presider: Glory to God. Amen.

+Sharing Peace.

Let us offer one another signs of reconciliation and love. We invite you to wave at others, clasp your hands and extend them toward others, or extend your open palms toward others as alternative expressions of passing the peace.

During the Sharing of the Peace, the Communion Stewards will join the Presider at the table to the north of the communion table to wash their hands. They will remain on the side as the Presider returns to the table to proceed with the Communion liturgy.

GATHERING AT THE TABLE

+The Great Thanksgiving

Presider: The Holy One be with you.

Community: And also with you.

Presider: Lift up your hearts.

Community: We lift them up to God.

Presider: Let us give thanks to the One who guides our life together.

Community: It is our joy to offer gratitude and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through the prophets. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Sanctus

Holy, Holy, Holy

#2257-b TFWS

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always, in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

Presider may hold hands over the bread, or touch or lift the bread

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Presider may hold hands over the cup, or touch or lift the cup.

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith. Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

Presider may raise hands.

In remembrance of all you have done to save us, we proclaim the mystery of our faith: that Christ was birthed among us. Christ was killed among us. Christ rises again among us.

***Memorial Acclamation**

Christ has Died

#2257-c TFWS.

Presider may hold hands, palms down, over the bread and cup.

Pour out your Spirit on this community and these gifts. Make them a taste of your Kingdom through Christ with us, that we might leave the Table both nourished by your Love and still hungry for justice for all your people.

Presider may raise hands.

By your grace, may we experience anew the call you place on our lives to serve one another. In feasting at your table, may our hearts be filled with courage once again to follow Christ, come what may.

Amen.

AMEN

Amen

#2257-d TFWS

+The Lord's Prayer

And now, with the confidence of children of God, let us pray the Lord's Prayer in the language of your choosing.

+Breaking of the Bread

+Sharing the Bread and Cup

Sending Prayer

The following prayer is then offered by the pastor or by all:

**Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery
in which you have given yourself to us.**

**Grant that we may go into the world
in the strength of your Spirit,
to give ourselves for others,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING*

Presider

Go forth in peace.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all. **Amen.**

Dismissal Hymn

Lift Up Your Heads, O Ye Gates

#213

UMH³

³ <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/book-of-worship/a-service-of-word-and-table-i-and-introductions-to-the-other-forms>.