



Night Watch

Worshiping Together/ Apart this Advent

*By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,
to guide our feet in the way of peace. Luke 1:78-79*

Advent – a season of hope and expectation.

This Advent, we long not only for the coming of Christ but also for the day when the pandemic will ease, when jobs and livelihoods will be restored, when once again we can gather with our loved ones and hold them close. This Advent comes at the end of a year that has often felt like one long night, and we yearn for light to guide us through the darkness.

This Advent, God waits with us through the dusk, the darkness, the deep of night, and the dawn.

*Keep our eyes open through the watches of the night, O Lord,
that we may meditate on your promises. Psalm 119:148*

Worship Path

Silence – *Take a few moments to settle, to breathe out the concerns of the day and breathe in God's peace.*

Candle lighting prayer – *Light the candle(s) on your Advent wreath as you pray for the coming of Emmanuel, God-with-us.*

Song – *Sing a favorite Advent hymn or listen to a musical arrangement. See the following pages for suggestions.*

Scripture lesson

Psalmody/Canticle – *Read the psalm aloud, or alternate verses with someone in your household or with whom you connect online or by phone.*

Gospel lesson

Prayer

Scripture verse meditation – *Read the verse several times. Like Mary, treasure the words and ponder them in your heart. During the week ahead, repeat them when you sleep and when you wake.*

Sending prayer



As you prepare to worship together, apart this Advent, construct an Advent wreath with whatever materials you have at hand. Gather four candles from around your home or use flashlights to provide a glow. Cut boughs from the bushes outside your door, or fashion a wreath from scrap paper in your recycling box. As you light the candles of your Advent wreath, know that you join with a great cloud of witnesses who wait and watch with you for the coming of Christ into our world.





Advent

by Christina Rossetti (1858)

This Advent moon shines cold and clear,
These Advent nights are long;
Our lamps have burned year after year
And still their flame is strong.

'Watchman, what of the night?' we cry,
Heart-sick with hope deferred:
'No speaking signs are in the sky,'
Is still the watchman's word.

The Porter watches at the gate,
The servants watch within;
The watch is long betimes and late,
The prize is slow to win.

'Watchman, what of the night?' But still
His answer sounds the same:
'No daybreak tops the utmost hill,
Nor pale our lamps of flame.'

One to another hear them speak
The patient virgins wise:
'Surely He is not far to seek' -
'All night we watch and rise.'
'The days are evil looking back,
The coming days are dim;
Yet count we not His promise slack,
But watch and wait for Him.'

One with another, soul with soul,
They kindle fire from fire:
'Friends watch us who have touched the goal.'
'They urge us, come up higher.'

'With them shall rest our waysore feet,
With them is built our home,
With Christ.' - 'They sweet, but He most sweet,
Sweeter than honeycomb.'

There no more parting, no more pain,
The distant ones brought near,
The lost so long are found again,
Long lost but longer dear:
Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard,
Nor heart conceived that rest,
With them our good things long deferred,
With Jesus Christ our Best.

We weep because the night is long,
We laugh for day shall rise,
We sing a slow contented song
And knock at Paradise.
Weeping we hold Him fast Who wept
For us, we hold Him fast;
And will not let Him go except
He bless us first or last.

Weeping we hold Him fast to-night;
We will not let Him go
Till daybreak smite our wearied sight
And summer smite the snow:
Then figs shall bud, and dove with dove
Shall coo the livelong day;
Then He shall say, 'Arise, My love,
My fair one, come away.'





First Week of Advent

Dusk

Nov. 29

Silence

Candle lighting prayer

Light one candle on your Advent wreath as you pray:

Emmanuel, God-with-us, at those times in our lives when dusk falls and the moon has yet to give its light, guide us with your hand and hold us fast. Shine your light into our world, and kindle hope within our hearts. Come, Lord Jesus.

Song

Choose one of these suggestions or another Advent favorite:

ELW 244 Rejoice, Rejoice Believers

ELW 253 He Came Down

ELW 438 My Lord, What a Morning

Organ setting of [*Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying* by J. S. Bach](#)

Vocal setting of [*My Lord, What a Morning* sung by Joan Baez](#)

Choral setting of [*Light One Candle* by Natalie Sleeth, arr. Sorenson](#)

Scripture lesson

Isaiah 64:1-9

Psalmody

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Gospel lesson

Mark 13:24-37

Prayer

Emmanuel, God-with-us, we pray for our world and for all in need of your tender mercy.

For those who are sick or suffering...

For those who long for restoration...

For all the joys and concerns of our hearts this day...

Finally, keep our eyes open through the watches of the night, O Lord, that we may meditate on your promises. Amen.

Scripture verse meditation

By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation;
you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.

Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs;

you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy.

Psalm 65:5, 8

Sending prayer

O God of our salvation, stay with us this week as we watch and wait.

Strengthen us from dusk to dawn, send us your hope, and call us into the fellowship of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



Second Week of Advent

Darkness

Dec. 6

Silence

Candle lighting prayer

Light two candles on your Advent wreath as you pray:

Emmanuel, God-with-us, when darkness descends, comfort your people and gather us in your arms. Shine your light into our world, and kindle peace within our hearts. Come, Lord Jesus.

Song

Choose one of these suggestions or another Advent favorite:

ELW 245 Creator of the Stars of Night

ELW 256 Comfort, Comfort Now My People

ELW 264 Prepare the Royal Highway

Vocal setting of [Creator of the Stars of Night by High Street Hymns](#)

Organ setting of [Comfort, Comfort Now My People by Hans-André Stamm](#)

Choral setting of [People, Look East by Barry Ferguson](#)

Scripture lesson Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalmody Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

Gospel lesson Mark 1:1-8

Prayer

Emmanuel, God-with-us, we pray for our world and for all in need of your tender mercy.

For those who are grieving...

For those who speak peace...

For all the joys and concerns of our hearts this day...

Finally, keep our eyes open through the watches of the night, O Lord, that we may meditate on your promises. Amen.

Scripture verse meditation

You, Lord, are my lamp;

the Lord turns my darkness into light. 2 Samuel 22:29

Sending prayer

O Lord, make a path for our steps in the coming week. Fill us with patience and peace as we wait for the fulfillment of your promise. For you, Lord, are our hope and our salvation, a lamp that turns our darkness into light. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



Third Week of Advent

Deep of Night

Dec. 13

Silence

Candle lighting prayer

Light three candles on your Advent wreath as you pray:

Emmanuel, God-with-us, send your Spirit among us that we may exult in you. Shine your light into our world, and kindle joy within our hearts. Come, Lord Jesus.

Song

Choose one of these suggestions or another Advent favorite:

ELW 243 *Lost in the Night*

ELW 251 *My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness*

ELW 631 *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

Choral setting of [Lost in the Night by F. Melius Christiansen](#)

Vocal setting of [Canticle of the Turning by Rory Cooney](#)

Handbell setting of [Savior of the Nations, Come by Sandra Eithun](#)

Scripture lesson Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Canticle Luke 1:46b-55 (the *Magnificat*, or song of Mary)

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

Prayer

Emmanuel, God-with-us, we pray for our world and for all in need of your tender mercy.

For those called to bring good news to the oppressed and to bind up the brokenhearted...

For doctors, nurses, medical assistants, and those preparing vaccines...

For all the joys and concerns of our hearts this day...

Finally, keep our eyes open through the watches of the night, O Lord, that we may meditate on your promises. Amen.

Scripture verse meditation

If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night,"

even the darkness is not dark to you;

the night is as bright as the day,

for darkness is as light to you. Psalm 139:11-12

Sending prayer

God of peace, send us out into this week rejoicing always, praying without ceasing, and giving thanks in all circumstances. When we are tested in the deep of night, strengthen us to hold fast to what is good. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



Fourth Week of Advent

Dawn

Dec. 20

Silence

Candle lighting prayer

Light four candles on your Advent wreath as you pray:

Emmanuel, God-with-us, to you be glory forever! For you have redeemed us and remembered your holy covenant. Shine your light into our world, and kindle love within our hearts. Come, Lord Jesus.

Song

Choose one of these suggestions or another Advent favorite:

ELW 242 Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

ELW 257 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (especially stanza 6)

ELW 260 The King Shall Come

Choral setting of [Veni, veni Emmanuel by Philip Lawson](#)

Choral setting of [Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming by Mack Wilberg](#)

Vocal/guitar setting of [The King Shall Come by Trevor Thomson](#)

Scripture lesson

Romans 16:25-27

Canticle

Luke 1:68-79 (the *Benedictus*, or song of Zechariah)

Gospel lesson

Luke 1:26-38

Prayer

Emmanuel, God-with-us, we pray for our world and for all in need of your tender mercy.

For those who are hungry, unhoused, or unemployed...

For those who are afraid...

For all the joys and concerns of our hearts this day...

Finally, keep our eyes open through the watches of the night, O Lord, that we may meditate on your promises. Amen.

Scripture verse meditation

By the tender mercy of our God,

the dawn from on high will break upon us,

to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the way of peace. Luke 1:78-79

Sending prayer

O Lord, send us out into this week trusting in your tender mercy. Prepare our hearts to receive you, that when Christmas morning dawns, we may rejoice in the light of Christ, God-with-us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.