

**Welcome into the Hope of Advent**

**Prelude:**

**Advent Prayer**, Anthony Giamanco

**Call to Worship**

Hear ye, ' What news?  
Good news, which shall be for all people!  
Good? How?  
See the Anointed One comes!  
In the breath of wind, she whispers.  
In the feel of grass and leaves, he reaches out. In the transformation of ice to water to ice, they sing. In  
starlight and candle flame, the way is lit ...  
We reach for the presence of God.  
We are thirsty for the water of peace, the light of hope, the wind of joy, and the ground of love.  
Good news! The Anointed One comes!  
The Anointed One comes from God ' who's love for us is everlasting!

**Advent Candle lighting Liturgies: Who Do You Say Jesus Is?**

**Readers and Candle Lighters: Pat and Brian Courtis**

V1: Who do you say Jesus is?  
V2: To me, a student, Jesus is like a teacher, who helps me to learn and grow.  
V1: To me, an explorer, Jesus is like a guide, leading me in new directions.  
**All: We wait for Jesus, the wise teacher and guide, who leads us to hope.**  
V2: (Lights first Advent candle)  
V1: We wait for Jesus.

**Please Join us in Singing A Candle is Burning**

A candle is burning a flame warm and bright,  
A candle of HOPE in November's dark night  
White Angels sing blessings from heaven starry sky,  
Our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh

**Children's Time with Ashley: Advent; Hope**

**Prayer of Approach:**

We gather in this time of waiting we call Advent to reflect upon our lives, our faith, our past, present, and future.  
We gather to support each other through the coming season of Christmas, with its joy for some, sorrow for others.  
We gather to reset ourselves on our faith journey within our Christian family, the church.  
Let us worship God, who gives us Jesus, the  
Christ, alive in the past, in the present, and in the future  
Thanks be to God!

## Hymn V.U. #651: Guide Me O Thy Great Jehovah

1 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land; I am weak, but thou art mighty; hold me with thy powerful hand; Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more, feed me till I want no more.	2 Open now the crystal fountain whence the healing stream doth flow; let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through. Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer, be thou still my strength and shield, be thou still my strength and shield.	3 When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside; death of death, and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side: songs of praises, songs of praises I will ever give to thee, I will ever give to thee.
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## Waiting Prayer

God invites us to wait.  
Nobody knows for how long.  
Nobody knows what to expect when the wait is over.  
God asks us to wait by and in faith.  
God, help us to make our waiting time well-spent.  
And so we wait.  
And we are comforted and strengthened in the knowledge that we do not wait alone;  
we do not wait in vain.  
Throughout our history,  
across the earth as we know it,  
prophets like Isaiah, Amos, Micah, and Hosea,  
Perhaps Greta Thunberg, Black lives matter, saints like Peter, Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and  
Malala Yousafzai  
have waited for the world to change.  
We wait with the prophets, wise ones,  
peacekeepers, and justice seekers,  
assured that we do not wait in vain.  
For the day will come, God says. Just wait for it.  
God, give us the strength and perseverance to wait for your word. Amen.  
—an Advent prayer by Alydia Smith and Adele Halliday,  
The United Church of Canada, originally written for Behold! An Intercultural Gathering

## PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE

### Inviting in the Visitor Reflective Time

Imagine you are sitting in a small room in a house that is surrounded by farmland and woods. You have come here to seek the quiet and calm. The busy life of work, family, and the city have made you feel anxious and unfocused. You know you need something; you need some time to let your mind be quiet and your heart open. Quiet and open—those words sound so peaceful and desirable but unreachable. The room is simple: a bed, a desk, and a wooden chair. The walls are bare. You've brought books to read and a journal to write in, but you can't seem to do anything but sit on the chair and absorb the silence, even as you feel restless.

As you sit in the silence, you hear a faint sound like a knock on the door. Your heart races, *Who knows I'm here? I need to be alone*, you think. The knocking becomes louder. As much as you want to stay in the room, something moves you to go to the door. The knock comes again, but it's a soft knock. As you approach the door, you see a light streaming under it. "Hello. Can I help you?" you say without opening the door. A soft voice says, "It's me. I've been looking for you." Something deep inside you stirs, but you are confused. "Who are you? Do I know you?" you say. "Yes. But we have not talked in a long time. I've missed you," he says. You open the door.

Standing there is Jesus. His eyes look at you with such tenderness. He carries a small lantern that gives off a bright, warm light. You stand there, unable to speak at first, allowing yourself to take in his presence and his light. You speak to Jesus. What do you say to him? How does Jesus respond to you? You invite Jesus into the house. You sit and tell him of the restlessness you feel. As you talk to Jesus, a wave of peace and calm washes over you like the warm light streaming from his lantern. "Rest. Be still. You opened the door. Now let me take care of you," Jesus says. You close your eyes and let his words embrace you. Your heart is at peace, and your mind is still. When you open your eyes, Jesus is gone. Sitting beside the chair where he sat is the lantern, still emitting that bright, warm light. You smile and rest in the glow of the light.

Glory be to the Father,  
and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit.  
As it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.

### **Hymn V.U. #2: Come, thou long-expected Jesus**

1 Come, thou long-expected Jesus  
born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us,  
let us find our rest in thee.  
2 Israel's strength and consolation,  
hope of all the earth thou art,  
dear desire of every nation,  
joy of every longing heart.

3 Born thy people to deliver,  
born a child and yet a King,  
born to reign in us forever,  
now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
4 By thine own eternal Spirit  
rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all-sufficient merit,  
raise us to thy glorious throne.

### **A New Creed**

We are called to be the Church...to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope...

We are not alone,  
we live in God's world.  
We believe in God:  
who has created and is creating,  
who has come in Jesus,  
the Word made flesh,  
to reconcile and make new,  
who works in us and others  
by the Spirit.  
We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:  
to celebrate God's presence,  
to live with respect in Creation,  
to love and serve others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope.  
In life, in death, in life beyond death,  
God is with us.  
We are not alone.  
Thanks be to God.

### **Time of Meditation for Offering: These Gifts We Bring**

#### **Scriptures:**

Scripture Readers: Brian Courtis, Isaiah Carey, Jim Thuss

#### **Isaiah 64:1-9**

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,  
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—  
<sup>2</sup> <sup>[a]</sup> as when fire kindles brushwood  
and the fire causes water to boil—  
to make your name known to your adversaries,  
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!  
<sup>3</sup> When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,  
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.  
<sup>4</sup> From ages past no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you,  
who works for those who wait for him.  
<sup>5</sup> You meet those who gladly do right,  
those who remember you in your ways.  
But you were angry, and we sinned;  
because you hid yourself we transgressed. <sup>[b]</sup>  
<sup>6</sup> We have all become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.  
We all fade like a leaf,  
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.  
<sup>7</sup> There is no one who calls on your name,  
or attempts to take hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us,  
and have delivered <sup>[c]</sup> us into the hand of our iniquity.  
<sup>8</sup> Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.  
<sup>9</sup> Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,  
and do not remember iniquity forever.  
Now consider, we are all your people.

## **Psalm 80:1–7, 17–19**

### **Prayer for Israel’s Restoration**

#### **To the leader: on Lilies, a Covenant. Of Asaph. A Psalm.**

<sup>1</sup> Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
you who lead Joseph like a flock!  
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth  
<sup>2</sup> before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.  
Stir up your might,  
and come to save us!  
<sup>3</sup> Restore us, O God;  
let your face shine, that we may be saved.  
<sup>4</sup> O LORD God of hosts,  
how long will you be angry with your people’s prayers?  
<sup>5</sup> You have fed them with the bread of tears,  
and given them tears to drink in full measure.  
<sup>6</sup> You make us the scorn<sup>[a]</sup> of our neighbors;  
our enemies laugh among themselves.  
<sup>7</sup> Restore us, O God of hosts;  
let your face shine, that we may be saved

## **Psalm 80:17-19**

<sup>17</sup> But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,  
the one whom you made strong for yourself.  
<sup>18</sup> Then we will never turn back from you;  
give us life, and we will call on your name.  
<sup>19</sup> Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;  
let your face shine, that we may be saved.  
Shine upon us, shepherd of Israel.

## **Mark 13:24-37**

<sup>24</sup> “But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,  
<sup>25</sup> and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.  
<sup>26</sup> Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory.  
<sup>27</sup> Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.  
<sup>28</sup> “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.  
<sup>29</sup> So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he<sup>[a]</sup> is near, at the very gates.  
<sup>30</sup> Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place.  
<sup>31</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.  
<sup>32</sup> “But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.  
<sup>33</sup> Beware, keep alert;<sup>[b]</sup> for you do not know when the time will come.  
<sup>34</sup> It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.  
<sup>35</sup> Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn,<sup>3</sup>  
<sup>6</sup> or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. <sup>37</sup> And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

**Message: “In Hopeful Anticipation”**

## **Hymn V.U. #1: O Come O Come Emmanuel**

1 O come, O come, Immanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,  
who ordered all things mightily;  
to us the path of knowledge show  
and teach us in its ways to go. Refrain

3 O come, O come, great Lord of might,  
who to your tribes on Sinai's height  
in ancient times did give the law  
in cloud and majesty and awe. Refrain

4 O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem,  
unto your own and rescue them!  
From depths of hell your people save,  
and give them victory o'er the grave. Refrain

5 O come, O Key of David, come  
and open wide our heavenly home.  
Make safe for us the way that leads on high  
and close the path to misery. Refrain

6 O come, O Dayspring from on high,  
and cheer us by your drawing nigh  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadows pit to flight. Refrain

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind  
all peoples in one heart and mind.  
Bid all our sad divisions cease  
and be for us the Prince of Peace. Refrain

## **A Hopeful Benediction**

**Postlude: J.S. Bach**