Preparing for Worship Today

Congregational responses are printed in ***bold italics***.

Pray for those who will be leading us in our worship today!

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**A Service of Word and Sacrament**

Advent 4A

Prelude

(We stand as the Bible and the ministry team enter the church)

* *OR: similar instructions according to local custom*

The Gathering of the People of God

The Promises of God

The Lord be with you!

 ***And also with you!***

We listen for the promises of God:

Isaiah 7.10-16 *The Lord himself will give you a sign*

I wait for the Lord,

 ***my soul waits, and in his word I hope;***

my soul waits for the Lord

more than those who watch for the morning,

 ***more than those who watch for the morning.***

O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love,

 ***and with the Lord is great power to redeem.*** *cf.* *Psalm 130.5-7*

*MThe fourth Advent Candle is lit*

Hymn Creator of the stars of night (tune: Conditor)

Creator of the stars of night,
your people’s everlasting light,
O Christ, Redeemer of us all,
we pray you hear us when we call.

In sorrow that the ancient curse
should doom to death a universe,
you came, O Saviour, to set free
your own in glorious liberty.

When this old world drew on toward night,
you came; but not in splendour bright,
not as a monarch, but the child
of Mary, blameless mother mild.

At your great Name, O Jesus, now
all knees must bend, all hearts must bow:
all things on earth with one accord,
like those in heaven, shall call you Lord.

Come in your holy might, we pray,
redeem us for eternal day;
defend us while we dwell below
from all assaults of our dread foe.

To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
praise, honour, might, and glory be
from age to age eternally.

Public domain

* The tune ‘Conditor’ is available [here](http://marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Conditor-Alme-Siderum.pdf), and the following melody line might be included in the order of service



* *OR*

Hymn 272 Come, thou long expected Jesus

From the God who is and who was and who is to come,

and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness,

the first-born from the dead,

grace and peace be with you all.

***And also with you.***  *Revelation 1:4-5*

With the Children

The Word Spoken: Scripture and Preaching

* OR (if no Eucharist today):

The Ministry of the Word: Scripture and Preaching

The Testimony of Scripture

Your word, O Lord, is a lamp to our feet,

 and a light to our path.

Romans 1:1-7 *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*

Psalm 80: 1-7,17-19 *Restore us, O God; let your face shine*

* *The Psalm could be read responsively or sung to an appropriate setting*

Matthew 1:18-25 *Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way*

This is the gospel of the Lord

 ***Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ***

The Preaching of the Word

Prayer of Confession

* [Introduction to the confession:]

God is levelling and straightening,

preparing a way to us;

Let us then, confess our sin and our faith, let us pray:

* [The confession:]

We bless you, O God,

for out of desire to love and enjoy us

you have created and sustained us

and all things.

And yet we confess that, in thought, word and deed,

we have fallen short of the glory

for which we were made.

* [Compose here an appropriate confessional prayer for the day: a confession of sin in ‘general’ terms and reflecting themes in the sermon]>
* The following collect, slightly adapted from the Anglican tradition, could be used to conclude the prayer, leading into the Kyrie:

*Purify our conscience, Almighty God,*

*by your daily visitation,*

*that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming,*

*may find in us a mansion prepared for himself;*

*Just so, [gracious God, have mercy on us]:*

Lord, have mercy; ***Lord, have mercy.***

Christ, have mercy; ***Christ, have mercy.***

Lord, have mercy; ***Lord, have mercy.***

Declaration of Forgiveness and Doxology

(We stand)

*The good news of Advent is that*

*God approaches with a merciful heart*

*and words of peace.*

…hear then, once more, Christ’s word of grace to us:

Your sins are forgiven.

 Thanks be to God!

Doxology

* EITHER (if your congregation knows a sung communion setting)

Glory to God in the highest,

 and peace to God’s people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,

 almighty God and Father,

 we worship you, we give you thanks,

 we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,

 Lord God, Lamb of God,

 you take away the sin of the world:

 have mercy on us;

 you are seated at the right hand of the Father:

 receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,

 you alone are the Lord,

 you alone are the Most High,

 ***Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,***

 ***in the glory of God the Father. Amen.***

* *OR*

***Worship, honour, glory blessing,***

 ***Lord we offer to your name;***

 ***young and old, their praise expressing,***

 ***join your goodness to proclaim.***

***As the saints in heaven adore you,***

 ***we would bow before your throne;***

 ***as your angels serve before you,***

 ***so on earth your will be done.***

Edward Osler 1798-1863 (Hymn 772)

The Peace

* *A possible introduction to the Peace (to memorise)*

*They shall beat their swords into plowshares,*

*and their spears into pruning hooks;*

*nation shall not lift up sword against nation,*

*neither shall they learn war any more… Isaiah 2.4*

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

 ***And also with you.***

The Apostles’/Nicene Creed

* *EITHER*

***We believe in one God,***

***the Father, the Almighty,***

***maker of heaven and earth,***

***of all that is, seen and unseen.***

***We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,***

***the only Son of God,***

***eternally begotten of the Father,***

***God from God, Light from Light,***

***true God from true God,***

***begotten, not made,***

***of one Being with the Father;***

***through him all things were made.***

***For us and for our salvation***

***he came down from heaven,***

***was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary***

***and became truly human.***

***For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;***

***he suffered death and was buried.***

***On the third day he rose again***

***in accordance with the Scriptures;***

***he ascended into heaven***

***and is seated at the right hand of the Father.***

***He will come again in glory***

***to judge the living and the dead,***

***and his kingdom will have no end.***

***We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,***

***who proceeds from the Father,***

***who with the Father and the Son***

***is worshipped and glorified,***

***who has spoken through the prophets.***

***We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.***

***We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.***

***We look for the resurrection of the dead,***

***and the life of the world to come. Amen.***

* *OR*

 ***I believe in God, the Father almighty,***

***creator of heaven and earth.***

***I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s 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 arose again;***

***he ascended into heaven,***

***he is seated at the right hand of the Father,***

***and he will come 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.***

The Visible Word: Eucharist

Hymn 34 O Lord, you are my God, for you I long

* *OR*

**Hymn** 507Come, Spirit blest

(We remain standing until after the Lord’s Prayer)

The 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.*

*Here, God takes works of darkness*

*and makes of them armour of light. Cf. Romans 13.12*

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

 And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

 We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

 It is right to give our thanks and praise.

(The prayer continues…)

*God of memory and hope,*

*source and goal of all that is,*

 *we give you thanks and praise*

*through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.*

*In the beginning you spoke us into being,*

*breathing into dust*

*the Spirit which is life.*

*You called a people into covenant,*

*taught us your ways and*

*called us to walk in your paths.*

*When disobedience and fear caused us*

*to lose our way,*

*you sent your Son*

*according to the promise*

*proclaimed by faithful messengers,*

*Upon him rested the spirit of*

*wisdom and understanding,*

*by which he opened the eyes of the blind*

*and the ears of the deaf.*

*When we rejected you again, in nailing him to the cross,*

*you raised him from the dead*

*and called us to awaken from our sleep.*

*Now we watch to see all sadness and sighing*

*flee before your approaching joy and gladness,*

…and we praise you

with the faithful of every time and place,

joining with choirs of angels and the whole creation

in the eternal hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

 heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

***Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.***

Hosanna in the highest!

(The prayer continues…)

*We praise you, Lord God, Sovereign over all things,*

*through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

*who, on the night in which he was betrayed,*

*took bread,*

*blessed you,*

*broke it,*

*and gave it to his disciples, saying,*

*‘Take this and eat it.*

*This is my body given for you.*

*Do this in remembrance of me’.*

*In the same way, after supper,*

*he took the cup,*

*blessed you,*

*and gave it to them, saying,*

*‘Drink from it, 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, whenever you drink it,*

*in remembrance of me’.*

*At this table*

*we recall his suffering and death,*

*his resurrection and ascension to your right hand,*

*and we look for his coming in glory.*

*Great is the mystery of faith:*

Christ has died.

 Christ is risen.

 Christ will come again.

(The prayer continues…)

*God of memory and hope,*

*pour out your enlivening Spirit*

*that these gifts of bread and wine*

*may be for us the body and blood of Christ.*

*As we receive what we are,*

*make us what we receive:*

*the very image of Christ.*

Blessing and honour, glory and power

 ***are yours forever more.***

*It is with confidence that we join our prayers*

*with the prayers of Jesus,*

*praying as he taught us:*

The Lord’s Prayer

***Our Father in heaven,***

 ***hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done,***

 ***on earth as in heaven.***

***Give us today our daily bread.Forgive us our sins,***

 ***as we forgive those who sin against us.***

***Save us from the time of trial***

 ***and deliver us from evil.***

***For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours***

 ***now and for ever. Amen.***

(The people sit)

The Breaking of the Bread

* *The minister takes the bread and breaks it in full view of the people, saying:*

*The bread we break,*

*is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?*

* *The minister lifts the cup in full view of the people, saying:*

*The cup we bless,*

*is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ?*

* *The minister holds out the bread and the cup to the people and says:*

…the gifts of God for the people of God.

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sin, have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us peace.

The Communion

Prayers of the People

…Come, Lord Jesus, and in your mercy,

 ***hear our prayer.***

Offering *(We stand as the offering is brought forward)*

*God of grace,*

*from whom comes every good and perfect gift,*

*we give thanks for all we have received from your hand.*

*Out of that abundance we bring these offerings.*

*May they be used well through the work of the church*

*in the service of your people.*

*By the power of your Spirit*

*strengthen us for such loving service*

*and keep us faithful*

*until Christ comes to make all things*

*his own in your kingdom of joy.*

*This we pray in the name of Jesus,*

*who lives and reigns with you*

*in the unity of the Holy Spirit,*

*now and forever. Amen.*

Notices

The Sending Forth of the People of God

Hymn 265 O come, O Come Emmanuel

* *OR*

Hymn 293 Unto us a boy is born

* *OR*

Hymn 256 From heaven you came, helpless babe

* *OR*

**Hymn** 268 Joy to the world!

Word of Mission and Blessing

*Go now and prepare the way of the Lord*

*with words and works of love.*

*And may the blessing of the God who comes to meet you,*

*Father, Son and Holy Spirit,*

*be with you and remain upon you*

*now and always, Amen.*

Postlude