



A stand-alone CWS service for any Sunday in Advent

**Suggested readings: Isaiah 9: 2-7 Luke 2: 1-7
Hebrews 1: 1-4**

“At least in our worship here, let us resist the temptation to skip straight to baby stories and comfy Christmas carols. Let’s explore this season of Advent as fully as we can, so as to open ourselves to the much needed gifts God is offering to us.”

Nathan Nettleton. <http://www.laughingbird.net>

Call to Worship

Listen, here is good news.

The Living God, weaver of time and space
far beyond us, nearer than body and bone
is joining us in person,
growing in a mother’s womb
delivered in the labour of birth
washed and clothed
cradled, nursed and fed.

**All: *This is a wonder and a mystery
This is good news of great joy
Thank God, Thank God.***

For Reflection:

We are magi on a caravan of lumbering hope,
travelling through grinding wind and glaring sun,
chill clear nights and skin-baking days.
We come to seek Your light.
We come lumbering in hope,
each of us on our own life’s journey
-travelling through times of loneliness and fear.
Through heartbreak and anger,
through grief and loss,
through economic uncertainty,
through fear for loved ones caught up in war,
through our own private crises,
through the extended shock of
horrific images of hurricanes and genocide,
through struggles with mental illness of a child,
the disintegration of a parent,
the simple letting go of a child more ready to be an
adult than we are ready to allow their growth,
through the changes in a new marriage,
the welcoming of a new child,
the completion of a degree,
the vision emerging in a new work of art,
we come lumbering in hope
on a journey of joys and sorrows.
We come, as magi to seek your light.

Dr. Susan M. (Elli) Elliott. Source: <http://ellielliott.webs.com>

Prayers

Peer into us with your infant eyes
and let your day break in us.
Let healing dawn in our wounds.
Let comfort dawn in our afflictions.
Let honesty dawn in our half-truths.
Let forgiveness dawn in our bitterness.
Let compassion dawn in our indifference.
Let joy dawn in our sorrows.
Let courage dawn in our fears.
Let hope dawn in our despair.
Let dawn break as the song of the angels
bursting forth to sing in our hearts.
Day-breaking God, peer into us with
your infant eyes and let your day break in us.
We are here to worship you,
**All: *to deeply acknowledge who you are,
and to go home by another way...
the way that changes the world. Amen.***

Dr. Susan M. (Elli) Elliott. Source: <http://ellielliott.webs.com>

Here we remember the vital work of Christian World Service partners around the world. These are people bringing hope, optimism and the opportunity to improve life for their communities. They also provide the chance for people to work their way out of poverty. Joel Posadas who received a small business loan from a CWS funded programme in the Phillipines says the loan significantly improved his family’s economic situation. “With determination and industriousness, we have improved our lives,” he says.

Offering for Christmas Appeal

O God, come travel with us through Advent
and shed your light among us.
Give us hearts of generosity and compassion,
hearts that reflect your love,
and help us to be channels to spread your
hope in the world. Amen.

Prayers for others

Leader: As we look on the shepherds, we pray for people who work through the night while others sleep. We pray for those who have to stay awake for long hours, receive low wages and are little respected. We remember young people working in dangerous conditions in factories.

All: We pray for all children forced to work with dangerous substances, men and women on night shifts and all who work in crowded factories.

Leader: As we look on the wise men we pray for people who question the world until they get the truth: peace negotiators, who are ready to take risky journeys who take different ways to go home.

All: We pray for men and women working in dangerous situations: journalists, medical staff working in disaster areas, members of aid agencies.

Leader: As we look on the nativity scene we think of the forces that gathered in the darkness outside and pray for all living in areas of civil war and ethnic cleansing.

All: We pray for all who work for peace: war correspondents, peace keepers, and the families they are separated from.

Adapted from Christian Aid.

LORD'S PRAYER:

Loving God, in whom is heaven.
May your name be kept holy.
Your new day come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever, Amen.

Closing reflection

God of surprises, you call us from the narrowness of our traditions to new ways of being church. From the captivities of our culture to creative witness for justice.

From the smallness of our horizons to the bigness of your vision.

All: Clear the way in us, your people that we might call others to freedom and renewed faith.

Joan Puls & Gwen Cashmere.

Blessing

Go forward into Christmas to meet the God who awaits around corners, and hides in barns and unexpected places, and meets us in surprisingly ordinary people. And the blessing of God be yours, this God who holds us in a parent's love, this little baby from God whose hand reaches out in longing towards us and the Spirit who invites us to become pregnant with hope for God's reign of justice and peace. Amen.

David Bromell. With permission

Suggestions for Hymns

Church Hymnary 4th ed. 279 Make way, make way
WOV 197 Hark the glad sound
WOV 202 The people that in darkness walked
WOV 212 The King of Glory
AA 23(i) Come now, Lord Jesus
AA 154 Where is the room?
Singing the Circle Book 1p 32 Signs of hope.
Touch the Earth Lightly 48 There is no child
Carol our Christmas 30 Look towards Christmas
New Hymns by Brian Wren; Her baby newly breathing

Give us a chance in:

Fiji



Uganda



Philippines



Palestine

