

Liturgical Resources

Uniting In Worship

The Promise of His Glory: Services and Prayers for the Season from All Saints to Candlemas (Mowbray)

The New Handbook of the Christian Year Hoyt L. Hickmas, Don E. Saliers, Laurence Hull Stookey, James F. White (Abingdon Press)

THE O ANTIPHONS

Used from December 17-23.

These seven antiphons originated in Rome prior to the 9th century.

Each recalls a messianic title from the Old Testament:

- (1) O Wisdom (2) O Adonai (3) O Root of Jesse
- (4) O Key of David (5) O Dayspring
- (6) O King of the Nations (7) O Emmanuel.

The hymn, “Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel” is derived from these ancient antiphons

ADVENT The end and the beginning



One of the earliest prayers thought to have been used in Christian worship is ‘*maranatha*’. Derived from the Aramaic it is most likely two words ***marana tha*** which means “Come, our Lord”. It is a prayer that orients us toward the future - calling upon God to come. However it can also be translated ***maran atha*** which means “Our Lord has come”; an acclamation of what God has already done in our world.

This ambiguity is important for our understanding of the season of Advent, because it emphasises both our remembrance of the past and our hope for the future. In Advent we expectantly wait for the One who has already come. We anticipate the promised justice of God’s new world, yet we praise God who raised the ‘righteous branch’ to rule with justice and righteousness.

Advent is a season of four weeks designed to help prepare us to celebrate the mystery of the Incarnation - of God breaking into our world. However Advent is also a celebration of the promise that Christ will bring an end to all that is contrary to the ways of God, so the readings carry a theme of God's coming in judgement.

We begin our observance of the Christian year reflecting on God's central goal and purpose for creation

Colour

The liturgical color for Advent is purple (repentance and royalty) or blue (hope). Rose-colored paraments and vestments may be used on the Third Sunday in Advent. (*Gaudete* Sunday).

The Advent wreath

The Advent wreath may be used to mark the four weeks of Advent, symbolizing the ages before the coming of Christ when the light of prophecy illumined those who awaited His appearance.

The Advent Wreath has four blue-purple candles in a ring around a white or gold candle. The first candle is lit on Advent Sunday; additional ones are lit, one on each Sunday, and the white or gold one on Christmas Day. The new candle each week may appropriately be lit after the Gospel Reading, before the Peace or after Communion. At the latter point, the prayers used at the lighting become a natural post-communion prayer. All five candles may appropriately be alight during services through the Christmas season.

There are several traditions about the meaning or theme of each candle. The scheme that accords best with the proposed Lectionary is:

Advent 1	The Patriarchs
Advent 2	The Prophets
Advent 3	John the Baptist
Advent 4	The Virgin Mary
Christmas Day	The Christ

Each of the four Sundays then reminds us of those who prepared for the coming of Christ. 'The Patriarchs' can naturally focus on Abraham, our father in faith, and David, Jesus' ancestor in whose city he was born. 'The Prophets' gives an opportunity to reflect on the way the birth of the Messiah was 'foretold'. John, who proclaimed the Saviour, and Mary, who bore him in her womb, complete the picture.

Music

Advent is a unique season in the Christian Calendar, but it often gets swamped by the season of Christmas. In TIS p.1090 there are many suggestions for hymns during this season that carry the hope and expectation of the season.

Carol Services

Advent Carol Services can be used very effectively to carry the message of the season