

November 30th, 2022
1st Midweek Advent Service



8470 Landen Drive Maineville, Ohio

*At Abiding Word
We gather around the Word (worship)
We grow in the Word (education)
And we share the Word with the world (outreach).*

ADVENT - A TIME TO WAIT

Wait! That's not one of our favorite words. Who likes to wait? In a long line at a checkout counter in a supermarket, for a freight train going four miles an hour at a railway crossing, for a prospective employer to make up his mind, in an airport when the monitor says your flight has been delayed, for your doctor to get back to you with the results of a biopsy? For most of us, waiting is not something we relish. It's not a pleasant pastime; it's a frustrating waste of time.

Sometimes perhaps, but not always. Especially not now at the beginning of a new church year. It's Advent again, that perennial four-week season of the year that Christians set aside to prepare for the coming of the Lord. Advent is a Latin word that means "coming." Coming implies waiting. Advent is an invitation to wait—quietly, patiently, expectantly, joyfully.

QUIETLY AND PATIENTLY

Advent waiting is something the people of God have been doing ever since God first promised a Savior from sin after the fall in Eden. God's Old Testament people waited 4,000 years for that promise to be fulfilled. That was a long wait. The promise finally reached fulfillment with the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God. Before Jesus left this world and returned to his throne in heaven, he issued another promise: "I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:3). That was 2,000 years ago. We are still waiting. That's what Advent is all about.

The author of the book of Lamentations says, "It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord" (3:26). That is why the church, ever since the Synod of Lerida in A.D. 524, has designated the four weeks before Christmas on the church's calendar as Advent. It is definitely a good thing to be waiting "for the salvation of the Lord."

Waiting quietly, that is. And that's not always an easy thing—given the prevailing moods that pervade the pre-Christmas atmosphere. As the masses see it, this is no time for waiting quietly. This is a time for hurrying and scurrying. You know the routine. Perhaps you get caught up in it too.

It takes conscious effort to resist the temptation to get swept up in the tide and then carried away in the secularization that is the hallmark of the Christmas season.

Advent says, "Wait, slow down! Don't get entangled in the hustle and the bustle of the season. Get focused instead on what really matters."

But what does it mean to "wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord?"

When the author of Lamentations wrote those words, Israel was at the nadir of its existence as a nation. It was 586 B.C., the date for the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (Saddam Hussein's predecessor). Wholesale slaughter and devastation engulfed kings, priests, princes, prophets, and common people alike. Starving mothers ate their offspring. The nation's elite ended up in exile. The fall of Jerusalem was a wake-up call. God was using drastic measures to teach his apostate people to "wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord." His promise to send a Savior had not been invalidated by the

rebellion of his people.

Shades of 9/11? A grim reminder that we too live in troublesome times—exacerbated by the constant and growing threat of terrorism, the erosion of basic morality, and the lack of respect for the sanctity of life? The season's misplaced emphasis may be a diversion. But it's hollow. It's only temporary. In the midst of all the seasonal trappings, Advent is reminding us, "It is good to wait quietly." For what? "For the salvation of the Lord."

The exhortation to "wait quietly" presupposes that in this world "we do not have an enduring city," and that we are "aliens and strangers on earth . . . longing for a better country—a heavenly one" (Hebrews 13:4; 11:13,16).

EXPECTANTLY AND JOYFULLY

The Advent disposition of waiting quietly for the salvation of the Lord evokes two dominant moods—expectation and joy. Advent expectation is nourished by the confidence that the Lord, who came once as he promised, will come again—as he promised. And when he does, all lamentations will come to an end as we are ushered, finally and endlessly, into the presence of our Lord. Meanwhile he says, "Lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28).

Advent joy is nourished by the awareness that what we are waiting quietly for is the salvation of our Lord. What God's Old Testament people awaited for 4,000 years is now an accomplished fact, signed, sealed, and delivered by the birth, death, and resurrection of our Lord. The Advent joy we have in Christ is a theme that St. Paul wove like a silver thread into his letter to the Philippians. Though he was being "poured out like a drink offering," he could still say, "I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me" (Philippians 2:17,18).

This coupling of the moods of expectation and joy is prominent in many of the 32 Advent hymns in *Christian Worship* (CW). Perhaps none of them expresses those moods to affect us more than does the familiar and beloved "Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel." The contrast between the opening lines and the refrain is unmistakable—and intentional. It makes the hymn what it is. The plea for Emmanuel to come "and ransom captive Israel" is somber, plaintive, and expectant. The refrain that follows is irrepressibly exuberant: "Rejoice! Rejoice!"

This year in Advent (Nov. 28-Dec. 23), read and ponder an Advent hymn a day. Look for the words "come," "wait," and "rejoice." "The Advent of our King our prayers must now employ, And we must hymns of welcome sing in strains of holy joy" (CW 1:1). That's the first of the Advent hymns. The last one ends on a similar note. "All grief must flee before his grace, And joy divine will take its place" (CW 32:1).

Let this Advent season be for you what our fathers meant it to be when they incorporated it into the Church's calendar more than 1,500 years ago. May blessings abound to you as you remember that "it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."

Joel Gerlach, a retired pastor, is a member at St. John, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

The Glory of the Lord's salvation, Whose birth
stirred heav'n - ly choirs to song, Still shines up - on our gen - er -
a - tion As days grow short and times grow long. Then be pre -
pared, O Chris - ten - dom, To greet the King when he shall come.

M: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come. (*Revelation 1:4*)
C: Amen.

CONFESSON

M: The kingdom of heaven is near; therefore, let us repent of our sins.
C: **Merciful Father, forgive us for becoming too attached to this world. We repent of the many times we have allowed its vain pursuits and short-lived pleasures to lure us away from your Word. Guide our feet on the path of your Truth, and keep our eyes of faith focused on the skies, always prepared for Christ's return.**

M: Our heavenly Father is merciful and has sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for your sin. He promises to walk beside you all the length of your days, protecting you from the evil one. Therefore, as a called servant of the Word, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

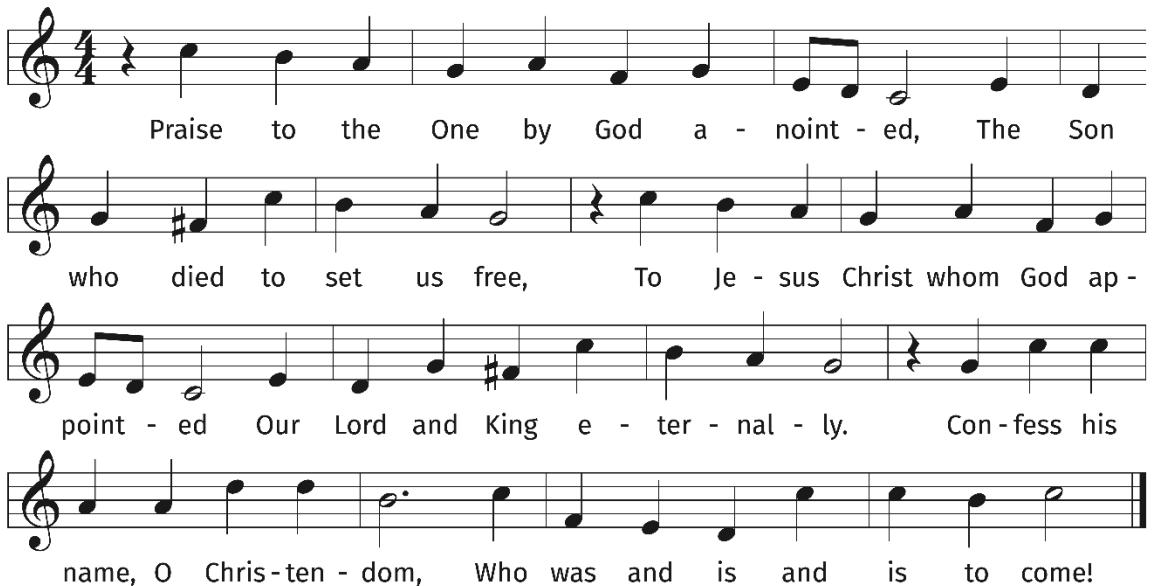
M: Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith,
C: **who, for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (*Hebrews 12:2*)**

M: And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death
C: **—even death on a cross!**

M: Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
C: and gave him the name that is above every name,

M: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
C: in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

M: and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
C: to the glory of God the Father. (*Philippians 2:8-11*)



Praise to the One by God a - noint - ed, The Son
who died to set us free, To Je - sus Christ whom God ap -
point - ed Our Lord and King e - ter - nal - ly. Con - fess his
name, O Chris - ten - dom, Who was and is and is to come!

M: Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people;
C: and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (*Hebrews 9:28*)

M: Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
C: and honor and glory and praise! (*Revelation 5:12*)

M: The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ,
C: and he will reign for ever and ever. (*Revelation 11:15*)

Let ev - 'ry tongue and race and na - nation Join in
the songs the an - gels raise Of glo - ry, hon - or, a - dor -
a - tion Till heav - en ech - oes with the praise. Sing al - le -
lu - ia! Sing a - men! The King of kings shall come a - gain!

M: Lord, God grant us your Holy Spirit that we may believe your Word. Cleanse our minds and renew our hearts that we may live for you here and hereafter, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

LESSON

GENESIS 49:8-12 & REVELATION 5:5

- ⁸ “Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s sons will bow down to you.
 - ⁹ You are a lion’s cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him?
 - ¹⁰ The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.
 - ¹¹ He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes.
 - ¹² His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk.
- ⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

M: The Lord will come again in glory. The Spirit and the Church cry out: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

SERMON**GENESIS 49:8-12 & REVELATION 5:5**
The Lion of Judah*Stand***LORD, HAVE MERCY**

M: In the closing hours of this day, hear us as we pray, O Lord:

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: For the well-being of people everywhere, for the growth of your church in all the world, and for the strengthening of all who serve and worship here, we pray, O Lord:

C: **Christ, have mercy.**

M: For one another, young and old, for your blessings that come with every stage of life, and for joy in doing your will,

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: For our public servants who work day and night to bring protection, justice learning, and health to this and every place,

C: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

M: For favorable weather and bountiful harvests, for clothing and food, for health of body, mind, and spirit, and for deliverance from all sin and every form of evil,

C: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

M: For the faithful who have gone before us, who have shared with us your good news, whose souls are now at rest in your heavenly kingdom, we give you thanks, O Lord:

C: **Thanks be to God.**

M: In thanksgiving for your many and varied gifts to us, we now commend ourselves to your care. Be our shield and strength, O Lord.

C: **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

M: O Lord God, all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works come from you. Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments. Defend us also from the fear of our enemies that we may live in peace and quietness, through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

C: In peace, Lord, you let your ser - vant now de - part
ac - cord - ing to your word. For my eyes have seen
your sal - va - tion, which you have pre - pared for ev - 'ry
peo - ple, a light to light - en the Gen - tiles
and the glo - - ry of your peo - ple Is - - rael.

BLESSING