

03 December 2023 – Communion / Advent 1  
**Open to Interruptions<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> The inspiration and much of the content for the Advent services is from “Sing a New Song: An Advent Devotional” from the PCC.

## Welcome / Announcements / Land Acknowledgement

*As we seek to dismantle racism and attend to growing diversity, we lament current and historic injustices on this land. We know we gather today as guests on the traditional and unceded territory of the ləkʷəŋən and the W̱SÁNEĆ. We live here not knowing the full story of the land and its people but seeking to learn more, and, by the grace of God, trying to walk a more hopeful and helpful path.*

Celebrations / Joys & Concerns **God's blessing on you. God's blessing on you.**  
**God's blessing, dear friends. God's blessing on you.**

## Call to Worship / Advent Candles

**Voice 1:** *The prophets call and the psalmist sings to announce that hope comes from God.*

**Voice 2:** *“O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence.” (Isaiah 64)*

*“We shall see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.” (Psalm 27)*

**Voice 1:** *The world cries for justice and transformation. Advent summons us to watch, to wait & to hope. In the destruction of the current order is the promise of a new order beyond our imagination. Signs of hope are all around us if we have the patience to wait and to see them.*

**Voice 2:** *Holy are you, Source of all new life among us.*

**All:** **Jesus Christ comes as the hope of the world.**

**Voice 2:** *We join with all creation and lift our hearts in joyful praise.*

**All:** **We light this candle to bear witness to hope.**

□ **Hope is a star (verse 1)**

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## PWS&D Message ~ **Journeying for Hope**

*“What an excellent experience to be together raising both awareness and funds for PWS&D. Can't wait until next year!”* shared Laura Kavanagh, team leader of Together in Motion based in Victoria, BC, after PWS&D's first ever **Journey for Hope**.

**Journey for Hope** brings together people from across Canada in support of PWS&D food security programs. The climate crisis, conflict and ever-increasing costs are exacerbating an already urgent food crisis. PWS&D and our partners assist marginalized communities to address hunger and food insecurity.

Food security projects provide hope to families and communities. Amalia, an Indigenous woman in Guatemala, shares how her life has changed. *“Before, our situation was poverty and violence, but this project is good for the community and Maya Mam women. I hope other families and communities see my life as an example.”*

***Journey for Hope*** is crucial in supporting this essential work. In just two years, over \$50,000 has been raised across the country. Thank you for your faithful response to Christ's call to show our faith and bring hope to those in need.

### Gathering Prayer / Words of Hope

Creator God, you made the heavens and the earth. You set the planets in their courses – lit the sun with fire – caused the stars to shine and the world to turn. Life springs up wherever your breath moves. In Jesus Christ, you brought hope into a world full of fear and despair. You sent your Spirit to enliven our hope and guide us on the way. Now we wait in anxious times for the world to be made new. Move in us and in all your creation to bring forth new life, while we wait with hope in your grace and goodness.

Redeeming God, we confess that waiting is difficult when the world around us is on edge. We are impatient with each other, waiting for someone to make a difference. We are impatient with you, O God, waiting for a sign that things will improve. Forgive us and turn our hearts to you again and again – showing us how to be hopeful people. Amen

Hear the Good News! There is nothing we have done, nothing we will ever do, that can separate us from the love of God made known in Jesus Christ. Take hope in this love – living as forgiven and forgiving people.

□ ***People in darkness***

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### Prayer for Understanding (from Psalm 34)

**Merciful and mighty God, I will bless you at all times – your praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in you – let the humble hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt God's name together. Amen**

### Scripture: Isaiah 64: 1-9 [OT 694]

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence — 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! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. 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. 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. 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. 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 us into the hand of our iniquity.

Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

**Mark 13: 24-37 [NT 50]**

But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. 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.

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. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates.

Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come.

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. 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, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.

**Luke 1: 46-55 [NT 57]**

And Mary said,

*“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.*

*Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,*

*for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name;*

*indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.*

*He has shown strength with his arm;*

*he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.*

*He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly;*

*he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.*

*He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”*

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## Questions / Reflection

□ *My soul gives glory to my God*

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### Offering and Prayer

The first Sunday in Advent celebrates God's gift of hope. It is not easy to be hopeful in stressful times. But God's steadfast presence gives us the courage to hope. So we offer whatever we have to share, knowing our gifts can spread hope in the world God loves by touching lives in Jesus' name.

□ *Praise God from whom all blessings flow*

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**God of hope, we offer you our gifts, knowing you can do with them more than we can ask or imagine. Bless what we offer as tangible signs of your love at work in a world on edge, and as symbols of the hope we share in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Friend. Amen**

### The Apostles' Creed

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**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 rose 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**

### Invitation to the Lord's Table (adapted from Jerie Lukefahr)

Wonderful Counselor. Mighty God. Everlasting Father. Prince of Peace. The prophet gave us many names to use when we speak of Jesus.

Friend. Disciple. Neighbour. Beloved. Jesus gives us many names to use when we speak of each other.

Communion. Eucharist. Heavenly banquet. The Lord's Supper. This meal is known by many names, but only one person prepares it, and invites us to partake of it, and that is Christ, our brother, our saviour and our friend.

We are never closer to Christ than when we gather here together. The invitation is for each of us: all who are faithful – all who doubt. All who are fearful – all who are strong.

Come to the table – it may be familiar, or it may be brand new to you. This table does not belong to the church, it belongs to Jesus Christ – and it is he who invites everyone to share in the bread of life and the cup of grace. Come share this joyful feast.

□ *Canticle of the turning*

† Celebrating Together with Thanksgiving (from *enfleshed*)

The Holy One be with you

**And also with you**

Open your hearts to the One who is Love

**We open our hearts to you, O God**

Let us give thanks to God with us

**To the One who took on flesh, we give thanks and praise**

Creator of all that is, Mother of life itself, by your hand we were formed. You made us relational. You created us to thrive – not alone, but together. You shaped the entire cosmos so that every form of life depends on another. You never intended for us to power through these lives alone. You made us strong and resilient people, but equally vulnerable and dependent on you, the earth, and all our neighbors.

You gifted us with the need to rely on one another, bone of each other's bone, flesh of each other's flesh. In your wisdom, you created us with both desire and need to be in community. Therefore, we join our voices with your people on earth and all the company of the heavens, singing praise to you...

*O holy, holy, holy God, O God of time and space. All earth and sea and sky above bear witness to your grace. Hosanna in the highest heav'n, creation sings your praise. And blessed is the one who comes and bears your name always!*

In our longing for your presence with us, we often expect your arrival in traditional places of power. We seek our hope and salvation in the false promises of dominance and might. But instead, you brought us salvation through vulnerability. You too became bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. God, in the form of a baby, you made yourself dependent on us. An infant, revealing the transformative power of giving and receiving love through human flesh.

Throughout the life of Jesus, we saw lives transformed by your willingness to make yourself vulnerable. And yet, that same vulnerability also came at a price. Though some fed you and raised you and befriended you, others persecuted you to the point of death. Seeking to eradicate their own feelings of vulnerability, those in power preyed on yours.

Still, today, we often crucify the ones who dare to risk it all on love.

On the night of his arrest, Jesus shared a meal with his companions. He took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to his disciples, saying: *“This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”*

After the meal, he took the cup, blessed it, and shared it saying: *“This cup that is poured out is the new covenant.”*

In remembrance of all you have done to save us, we proclaim the mystery of our faith...

***Sing Christ has died, and Christ is risen, Christ will come again!  
Sing Christ has died, and Christ is risen, Christ will come again!***

Pour out your Spirit on these gifts, O God. Give us a taste of resurrection hope that lasts through even the most challenging of relational betrayals. Meet us in this bread and this cup – hear the prayers of your people in this aching world. Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

In collective longing for a taste of your Kingdom on earth, we join together singing...

***Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosanna and amen!  
Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosanna and amen!***

### Sharing Bread and Cup

*The one who was with God in the beginning, is with us in this bread.*

*The one of whom the prophets spoke now speaks to us in this cup.*

*In these gifts God comes to us so that we may come to God.*

*The bread of life – the cup of grace – we remember and share with thanksgiving.*

*Please come forward to receive Holy Communion – everyone is welcome at this table.*

*If you are unable to come to the front, please signal an elder who will come and serve you.*

*We use gluten and dairy-free bread. Juice, wine, and pre-packaged elements are available.*

### Closing Prayer

God of Hope, we recognize the ways you still make yourself vulnerable to us today. In gratitude for a taste of your Kingdom, may our discipleship shape us into fierce protectors of the vulnerable, give us courage to practice our own vulnerability, and help us to honour the sacredness of our need for one another. In Christ's name we pray as Jesus taught...

□ ***Our Father in heaven (The Lord's Prayer – no repeats) 469***

Blessing (adapted from a Franciscan Prayer)

Wake us, O Divine Wisdom, to the wonder of each moment. Keep us amazed at simple things and open to unexpected encounters. Let us see you in life's interruptions and bless those who interrupt us, guiding us to return to our tasks at the right time.

May we go in hope and keep awake, watching for the signs of God at work in creation as we seek opportunities to serve in Jesus' name. And may the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

□ *We will go out with joy*