

# Come! Walk in the light of day!

Adapted, compiled and  
written by Elsie Rempel

**1<sup>st</sup> Advent  
2004**

**to Epiphany  
2005**

**Lectionary  
Cycle A**

**Come! Walk in the light of day!**

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HWB = Hymnal: a Worship Book

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# Introduction:

When worship as a household supports congregational worship, our relationship with God and God's people is strengthened. We realize that God's light is indeed near; it is with us and among us.

During the season of Advent, God's children prepare for the coming of Christ and Christmas in ways that set us apart from our society. This year, we are reminded to focus on the coming day, on the light of God. Advent connects us with those who waited for the Messiah in the Hebrew scriptures, with all who celebrate the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and in our hearts, and with all who wait for Christ's second coming when all creation will be restored to God.

The prayers and activities in this booklet are adapted from the Worship resources developed by the Advent 2004 writing team from Illinois for Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA.

Use the resource whatever way best fits into your home's routines and life stage realities. If your family has younger children, feel free to simplify, shorten and paraphrase the prayers and pondering thoughts. Repeat the weekly litany each day of the week, moving through the list of daily Scriptures.

The **pondering questions** are designed to allow God to speak to each household member in a personal way. Enjoy a short time of silence after each question and feel free to share these thoughts or ponder them in your heart as Mary did.

## **Worship focus**

You may want to add the following items to help focus worship for your family. These items can be part of your home's Christmas decorations and can help you make a holy space in your home and your hearts for Christ this Christmas season. Feel free to adapt them to suit your home.

### **1. Window poster**

Create a poster of a window frame with six panels (3 down and 2 across). Each panel should be covered by an 8 ½ x 11 sheet of black construction paper. These black sheets will be replaced or enhanced weekly to create an increasingly bright Christmas scene. The first two panels should reveal the star-studded sky, the third, the path to Bethlehem, the fourth, Jesus' nativity, the fifth, the shepherds, and the sixth, the Wisemen.

### **2. Advent Lights**

Create an advent log by attaching six candles to a small log or use an existing wreath of four with a taller Christ candle in the centre. Purple, pink and white reflect the move from repentant preparation to celebration.

### **3. A simple crèche**

If you don't have one, create a simple A-frame with rough lumber or bark and add toys or play dough figures to the scene throughout the season.

### **4. A family Advent journal:**

The activities section will have a reflective question for each week's theme. If you haven't kept a journal before, consider starting one for this season.

### **5. A Bible and this booklet.**



# Come! God's Peace is at Hand!

Week One

## **Call to Worship:**

(Leader can speak this in phrases which are echoed by the other family members.)

### **Leader:**

Come! Walk in the light of day! God's peace is at hand!  
Lord of Life, bring light into our darkness,  
and dispel the gloom of our doubts and busyness.  
We want to live in your light and pray for peace.

### **Candle lighter:**

We light this first Advent candle  
to remember and invite God's peace  
into the darkness of our world.

## **Listening to God's Word:**

Reflect on God's peace through these texts this week:

Isaiah 2: 1 – 5, Psalm 122: 1 – 5, 6 – 9, Romans 13: 11 – 14,  
Matthew 24: 36 – 44, Luke 1: 26 – 38, 39 – 45.

## **Pondering thoughts to choose from:**

- How do we see God's peace in today's reading?
- I wonder what area of my life needs God's peace.
- How does God's peace replace fear?



## **Sing or play:**

HWB 172 *O come, O come, Immanuel*

HWB 178 *Come, thou long-expected Jesus.*

## **Prayer:**

(Use echo form or ask one person to prepare to read this prayer.)

Lord of Peace, with you, we are on holy ground and can lay aside the darkness within us. We thank you for the light of peace. Together, we pray for peace in our world; peace within our congregation; peace within our family and friends; peace within ourselves.

**Candle snuffer:** May God's peace shine in and through us as God's day draws near, even as we blow out this candle.

Amen.

## **Activities to choose from:**

1. Create the window frame for your advent poster, covering each of the six window panes with a piece of black construction paper. Cut out shiny stars and add one to the first panel each day this week. You will add more signs of the light of God's day to it during the other weeks.
2. Bring the light of God's peace into someone else's life today by helping them solve a conflict peacefully.
3. Make a plan for living peacefully with creation this Advent. How can you reduce the garbage created at celebrations?
4. Start setting up a Christmas crèche. Add the figures of those who were waiting for the Messiah.
5. Start out on God's Advent path by looking for evidence of God's peace in your home and neighbourhood. Record these peace sightings in a Family Advent journal.
6. If you are afraid, or you meet someone who is, think of what the angel said to Mary, and what he might say to you to help replace the fear with peace.
7. Consider the Advent Travel Tax project in KidsPak as a joint home and congregational project. You can find it at church or at: <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources/family/>.



# Come! God's Harmony is at Hand!

Week Two

## **Call to Worship:**

(Leader can speak this in phrases which are echoed by the other family members.)

### **Leader:**

Come! Walk in the light of day! God's harmony is at hand!  
Lord of Life, bring harmony into our relationships,  
and help us co-operate and welcome others  
as you welcome us.  
We want to live in your light and pray for harmony.

### **Candle lighter:**

We light this second Advent candle  
to remember and invite God's harmony  
in the way we work and play together.

## **Listening to God's Word:**

Reflect on God's harmony through these daily texts: Isaiah 11: 1 – 10, Psalm 72: 1 – 7, Romans 15: 4 – 13, Matthew 1: 18 – 25, Luke 1: 57 – 66, 67 – 80, Matthew 3: 1 – 12.

## **Pondering thoughts to choose from:**

- I wonder how it will be when all enemies learn to co-operate and become friends.
- How can God's harmony help you co-operate and stand up for the needy?
- How is God bringing hope and encouragement in and through your home and congregation this Advent?

## **Sing or play:**

HWB 187 *Let the heavens be glad* and the Advent theme song *Yonder come day* or HWB 322 *For we are strangers no more*.

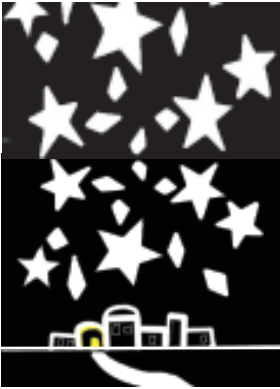
**Prayer:** (Use echo form or ask one person to prepare to read this prayer.)

Lord of Harmony, with you we are on holy ground and can lay aside the quarrels between us. We thank you for the light of harmony. Together we pray for harmony in our world, harmony within these walls, and harmony between our family and friends.

**Candle snuffer:** May God's harmony shine in and through us as God's day draws near, even as we blow out this candle. Amen.

## **Activities to choose from:**

1. Add stars of harmony to the second upper pane of your poster window and add the advent theme "Come! Walk in the Light of Day!" to the top of the window frame.
2. Add small toy animals to your crèche landscape. Put animals together who are natural enemies to show how God will one day restore peace, even to the animal kingdom.
3. Make lists of how God is helping you co-operate in your family or practice singing in harmony.
4. Write a letter or send an e-mail to your political representative that expresses your desire for harmony and peace in our world.
5. Pray daily for a person with whom you find it hard to co-operate. Ask God to help you have the right attitude.
6. Clean your home together this week. Celebrate how good it is when everyone co-operates. Can you sing in harmony while you clean?
7. Find a way to co-operate with your neighbours to bring some Christmas cheer to someone who needs it.



# Come! God's Healing is at Hand!

Week Three

## **Call to Worship:**

(Leader can speak this in phrases which are echoed by the other family members.)

### **Leader:**

Come! Walk in the light of day! God's healing is at hand!  
Lord of Life, bring light into our darkness,  
and healing to sick and fearful souls.

We want to be whole and be agents of healing for others.

### **Candle lighter:**

We light this third Advent candle  
to remember God's healing touch for the illness in our world.

## **Listening to God's Word:**

Reflect on God's healing power with these daily texts: Isaiah 35: 1 – 7, 8 – 10, Psalm 146: 5 – 10, Luke 1: 39 – 56, James 5: 7 – 10, Matthew 11: 2 – 6, 7 – 11.

## **Pondering thoughts to choose from:**

- How have you experienced and shared God's healing power?
- How does a fearful heart block God's healing?
- Imagine the healing that could happen if everyone lived by God's values.

## **Sing or play:**

HWB 400 *Santo, santo, santo* or

HWB 184 *Hark the glad sound!* and *Yonder come day*

**Prayer:** (Use echo form or ask one person to prepare to read this prayer.)

Lord of Healing, with you we are on holy, healing ground. You are health for the ills of our world. We thank you for your light of healing. Together we pray for healing in our world; healing within our congregation; healing for our family and friends; and healing within our own bodies and souls.

### **Candle snuffer:**

May God's healing work in and through us as God's day draws near, even as we blow out this candle. Amen.

## **Activities to choose from:**

1. Add daily stars and a horizon line of hills to the third pane of your window poster. Let each star remind you to do something that shares God's healing love.
2. Reflect on and give thanks for God's healing presence in your family and congregation.
4. Draw a picture about the healing in one of our Bible texts and give it to a sick or lonely person.
5. Practice James' advice about being patient by waiting patiently for Christmas.
6. Add figures to your crèche that represent people or animals who need healing and pray for them.
7. As you bake Christmas goodies and prepare gifts, think about how they add to a healthy lifestyle.



# Come! God's Restoration is at Hand!

Week Four

## **Call to Worship:**

(Leader can speak this in phrases which are echoed by the other family members.)

### **Leader:**

Come! Walk in the light of day! God's restoration is at hand!  
Lord of Life and Wholeness, brighten our darkness,  
and restore us to what you made us to be.

We want to live in your light and pray for restoration.

### **Candle lighter:**

We light this fourth Advent candle to show  
that we are looking for God's restoration in our world.

## **Listening to God's Word:**

Reflect on God's restoring power with these daily texts: Isaiah 7: 10 – 16, Psalm 80: 1 – 7, 14 – 19, Romans 1: 1 – 7, Matthew 1: 18 – 25, (Christmas Eve) Luke 2: 1 – 7, (Christmas Day) Luke 2: 8 – 20.

## **Pondering thoughts to choose from:**

- I wonder what Mary and Joseph thought about these Hebrew Scriptures as Jesus' birth drew near.
- Is there something God wants you to help restore to God's intended purpose for it?
- I wonder if Mary and Joseph sensed God's restoration when the shepherd's came to visit.

## **Sing or play:**

HWB 201 *Hark! the herald angels sing*

HWB 173 *Savior of the nations, come*

and other favorites from #189 – #214

**Prayer:** (Use echo form or ask one person to prepare to read this prayer.)

Lord of Restoration, with you we are on holy ground. We long to lay aside the brokenness within us. We thank you for the hope of restoring life to its intended purpose. Together we pray for the restoration of our world. May your will be restored within our congregation; among our family and friends and within ourselves.

**Candle snuffer:** May God restore us to our intended purpose as God's day draws near, even as we blow out this candle. Amen

## **Activities to choose from - Christmas Week:**

1. Fill the fourth pane of your Advent window with a choir of angels singing above the nativity scene.
2. Add a special Jesus stocking to your other Christmas decorations. Invite guests and family members to donate money to this stocking. Then send the proceeds to a place your family thinks Jesus would want his "gift" to go.
3. Create Christmas ornaments from self-hardening modeling material to represent the themes of this Advent and hang them on your tree.
4. Recall and share stories of how God's purposes are being restored in your congregation during this last year.
5. Thank an older person in your life for the ways they have made you aware of God's purposes for your life.
6. Give the gifts of time, friendship and a hug to someone who does not have family around.
7. Pick parts of the Christmas story to memorize so that you can recite most of it as a family on Christmas day.
8. Read and enjoy some Christmas story picture books. One favourite that is well suited to this year's theme is *Bright Christmas: An Angel Remembers*, by Andrew Clements, illustrated by Kate Kiesler.

## **Christmas home worship:**

- As you light the Christ candle in your worship centre for the first time, light a candle on a birthday cake for Jesus too. Sing “Happy Birthday” to Jesus, or sing one of the Christmas songs in the Jubilee songbook (pp. 38 - 41).
- Bring Mary and Joseph from the path into the stable.
- Gently place the baby Jesus into the crèche, then add the angels and bring the shepherds into the stable.
- Pick an appropriate carol to sing as you carry out each of these actions.
- You may want to sleep in the living room on Christmas Eve, near the poster, the crèche and the tree, as a way of identifying with Mary and Joseph sleeping in an unusual place this night.
- Repeat or create your own special rituals and traditions to mark the importance of “Emmanuel - God with us”.
- On Christmas Day, you may want to plan a lights theme party and invite people from your neighbourhood to attend. Give each person a candle and invite him or her to be a light bearer. Gather around your worship center, light all candles from the Christ candle, and talk about the different ways of walking in the light that you have focused on during Advent. Then have a light snack together.





# Come! God's Salvation is at Hand!

Week Five

## **Call to Worship:**

(Leader can speak this in phrases which are echoed by the other family members.)

### **Leader:**

Come! Walk in the light of day! God's salvation is at hand!  
Lord of Life, we celebrate the gift of your love  
in the birth of our Saviour.

We live in hope for the day when all creation  
will know God's love and praise God's name.

### **Candle lighter:**

We light this candle of your epiphany,  
remembering that God came to be with us  
in Jesus to save the world.

## **Listening to God's Word:**

Reflect on God's saving power with these daily texts: Isaiah 63: 7 – 9, 15 – 19, Isaiah 64: 1 – 5a, Psalm 148, Hebrews 2: 10 – 13, 14 – 18, Matthew 2: 13 – 23.

## **Pondering thoughts to choose from:**

- I wonder what makes people praise or resist God's saving power.
- I wonder how God felt about trusting humans to care for Jesus.
- I wonder how God helps people grow perfect through suffering.

## **Sing or Play:**

HWB 202 *The virgin Mary had a baby boy*

HWB 189 *To us a Child of hope is born*

HWB 190 *'Twas in the moon of wintertime* and other favorites.

**Prayer:** (Use echo form or ask one person to prepare to read this prayer.)

Jesus, our Saviour, with you, we are on holy ground. Your love returns us to wholeness and right relationship. We thank you for the light of salvation. Together we pray for the saving of our world; for your wholeness within our congregation; within our family and friends; and within ourselves.

**Candle snuffer:** May God's salvation shine in and through us as God's day draws near, even as we blow out this candle. Amen.

## **Activities to choose from:**

1. In the fifth windowpane, add a lighted path to Egypt from Bethlehem, that Mary and Joseph can follow.
2. Read about or hear a live story from refugees who have been saved from violence.
3. Write notes to family members that tell them how you think God is using them to make things right in the world. Hide these under their dinner plates.
4. Buy or make a blanket for MCC to send to refugees or send some of your clothing to a homeless shelter.
5. Go for a walk or ride into the countryside and think about how the land, the plant and animal life praises the Lord. Rewrite Psalm 148 for your area.
6. Send notes of thanks to people in your church family who have worked hard to share the good and saving news of Jesus during Advent.
7. Reflect and then journal about the different ways God's salvation is experienced.



# Come! God's Day of Radiance is at Hand!

Week Six

**Call to Worship:** (Leader can speak this in phrases which are echoed by the other family members.)

**Leader:** Come! Celebrate God's boundless riches! God's day of radiance is at hand!

Lord of Life, we see your radiance in creation and in our lives.

We worship and adore our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

**Candle lighter:** We light this candle of your epiphany, remembering that you are the light of the world; you are the one we adore.

Listening to God's Word:

Read and reflect on God's radiance through these daily texts:

Matthew 2: 1 – 12, Isaiah 60: 1 – 6, Psalm 72: 1 – 7, 8 – 14, 15 – 20, Ephesians 3: 1 – 6, 7 – 13.

**Pondering thoughts to choose from:**

- I wonder how the radiance of the gifts Jesus receives compares to the radiance of Jesus.
- What radiance can Jesus give to the gifts you can offer?
- I wonder what mysteries of God's radiance are active here?

## **Sing or play:**

HWB 192 *On this day earth shall ring*

HWB 207 *Niño lindo (Child so lovely)* or *Rise, Shine* from p.7 of the *Jubilee* songbook.

**Prayer:** (Use echo form or ask one person to prepare to read this prayer.)

Lord of Radiance, along with the wise of every age, we worship and adore you. We thank you for lighting the darkness in our world with your peace, harmony, healing, restoration, salvation and radiance. May we see your radiance in creation and in our lives.

**Candle snuffer:** May God's radiance shine in and through us as God's day draws near, even as we blow out and put away these candles. Amen.

## **Activities to choose from:**

1. Make a plan with the members of your household to find new ways of listening to God and worshipping together, now that the Christmas season has ended.
2. Wrap a gift brightly and give it to a foreign student or a lonely neighbour.
3. Think of ways your family can share God's light of peace, healing and hope in our world. You may want to send donations to MC Canada and a local project.
4. Have a party, with friends or neighbours, to celebrate the light Jesus shares with us. Give your refilled advent candleholders away as a way of sharing God's light with others.
5. Brighten the life of the birds who have stayed around for winter by putting up or refilling a birdfeeder with suet and seeds.
6. Play your favourite Christmas music while you clean up and put away the objects that have helped you celebrate Christmas.
7. Reflect on highlights of this year's advent to epiphany worship time and record them in your family worship journal.

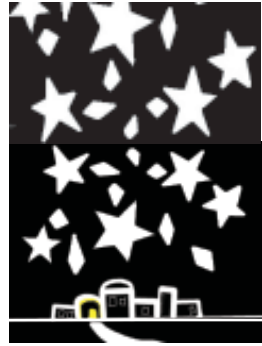
**Notes:**



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