



Advent and Christmas Candle Lighting Liturgy

Prepared by Lauren Sanders, Indigenous Spiritual Care Chaplain, FIRST UNITED (Prairie Band Potawatomi/mshkodeni bodéwadminwen, Kickapoo Nation of Kansas/kiikaapoa, African American/Black) and Rev. Peter Sanders, Pastoral Advisor

Anticipate Hope

Suggested Scripture - Mark 13:24-37

Lighting the Candle to Anticipate Hope

Leader: Advent is a time of anticipation and preparation! Stay alert!

All: Hope has always been here. Hope will arrive soon.

Leader: (lights first candle) We hear the voices of God's children crying out with hope in the words of Call to Justice #18.17

All: Hope has always been here. Hope will arrive soon. We hear the words of Your people. Stay alert!

Leader: "We call upon all governments, service providers, and educators to fund and support the re-education of communities and individuals who have learned to reject 2SLGBTQQIA people, or who deny their important history and contemporary place within communities and in ceremony, and to address transphobia and homophobia in communities (for example, with anti-transphobia and anti-homophobia programs), to ensure cultural access for 2SLGBTQQIA people."*

All: Hope has always been here. Stay alert! Hope will arrive soon.

*Call to Justice #18.17 from Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Prayer to Anticipate Hope

Bringer of Hope, who is also within hope, we await your coming with anticipation and hope. As our ancestors awaited the Messiah, as they awaited Christ's return, we hope in anticipation of justice for our murdered and missing loved ones. Grant us a courageous faith, as we work in community and solidarity around this essential Call to Justice. Amen.

Suggested Hymn - He Came Downⁱ, vs 4 (He came down that we may have hope...)

Advance Peace

Suggested Scripture Mark 1: 1-8

Lighting the Candle to Advance Peace

Leader: Advent is a time for advancing God's call to make peace! Prepare the way!

All: We make peace together. The peace of Christ will be here soon.

Leader: (lights first candle) We hear the voices of God's children crying out with hope.

All: Hope has always been here. Hope will arrive soon. Stay alert!

Leader: (lights second candle) We share God's peace, working to repair and make amends for intentionally fractured relationships.

All: We make peace together. The peace of Christ will be here soon. We hear the words of your people. Prepare the way!

Leader: All should "...fund and support the re-education of communities and individuals who have learned to reject 2SLGBTQQIA people, or who deny their important history and contemporary place within communities and in ceremony, and to address transphobia and homophobia in communities... to ensure cultural access for 2SLGBTQQIA people." *

All: We make peace together. Prepare the way! The peace of Christ will be here soon.

*Call to Justice #18.17 from Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Prayer to Advance Peace

Restorer of Peace, help us make peace from your loving kindness. Help us transform systems which keep us from peacemaking. Help us to rebuild and prepare the way for Christ's peaceful Kin-dom. May the peaceful light of Christmas be welcomed, and the promise of your peaceable realm fulfilled. Amen.

Suggested Hymn - He Came Down, vss 4, 2 (He came down that we may have hope...peace)

Activate Joy

Suggested Scripture - Psalm 126

Lighting the Candle to Activate Joy

Leader: Advent is a time to honor our tears of grief and yet expect an exuberant harvest. Shout with joy!

All: In our sorrow, we dreamed together. The joy of Christ will be here soon.

Leader: (lights first candle) We hear the voices of God's children crying out with hope.

All: Hope has always been here. Hope will arrive soon. Stay alert!

Leader: (lights second candle) We share God's peace, working to repair and make amends for intentionally fractured relationships.

All: We make peace together. The peace of Christ will be here soon. Prepare the way!

Leader: (lights third candle) While we grieve intentional oppression and genocide, we plant those tears, faithfully knowing God transforms our weeping into celebration.

All: In our sorrow, we dreamed together. The joy of Christ will be here soon. We hear the words of your people. Shout with joy!

Leader: We will "...fund and support the re-education of communities and individuals who have learned to reject 2SLGBTQQIA people, or who deny their important history and contemporary place within communities and in ceremony, and to address transphobia and homophobia in communities... to ensure cultural access for 2SLGBTQQIA people."*

All: In our sorrow, we dreamed together. Shout with joy! The joy of Christ will be here soon.

*Call to Justice #18.17 from Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Prayer to Activate Joy

God of giggles and laughter, your creative breath joyfully made all of creation. You are wonderful to all of us. We, whose hearts are heavy, seek the joy of your presence. Guide our sorrow towards fearless joy, imagination, delight, and inspiration. Help us live in joy and celebration as we remember the good news of the great joy of Christ's birth. Amen.

Suggested Hymn - He Came Down, vss 4, 2, 3 (He came down that we may have hope...peace...joy)

Affirm Love

Suggested Scripture - Psalm 89: 1-3

Lighting the Candle to Affirm Love

Leader: Advent is a time to proclaim God's loyal love for everyone. Sing love forever!

All: Love has always been here. Love will arrive soon.

Leader: (lights first candle) We hear the voices of God's children crying out with hope.

All: Hope has always been here. Hope will arrive soon. Stay alert!

Leader: (lights second candle) We share God's peace, working to repair and make amends for intentionally fractured relationships.

All: We make peace together. The peace of Christ will be here soon. Prepare the way!

Leader: (lights third candle) While we grieve intentional oppression and genocide, we plant those tears, faithfully knowing God transforms our weeping into celebration.

All: In our sorrow, we dreamed together. The joy of Christ will be here soon. Shout with joy!

Leader: (lights fourth candle) From love, God made a covenant with us. Through love and solidarity, we live out that covenant together by keeping promises.

All: Love has always been here. Love will arrive soon. We hear the words of your people. Sing love forever!

Leader: We will "...fund and support the re-education of communities and individuals who have learned to reject 2SLGBTQQIA people, or who deny their important history and contemporary place within communities and in ceremony..." We will "address transphobia and homophobia in communities... to ensure cultural access for 2SLGBTQQIA people."*

All: Love has always been here. Love will arrive soon. Sing love forever!

**Call to Justice #18.17 from Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*

Prayer to Affirm Love

God of tenderness, you love fiercely in revolutionary ways. From creation to the rainbow to the stars in the sky to the sabbath to the temple to Christ's birth to baptism to communion, you are faithfully loving us, calling all of us to your embrace in Christ's Kin-dom. Help us notice your open arms of deep affection, warm welcome, and affirming love. Continue teaching us how to love each other fiercely and in solidarity. Amen.

Suggested Hymn - He Came Down, vss 4, 3, 2, 1 (hope...peace...joy...love)

Ally Justice

Suggested Scripture – Luke 2:1-20

Lighting the Candle to Ally Justice

Leader: Advent hope, peace, joy, and love was always here.

All: Joy to the world! Christ has come!

Leader: (lights first candle) We hear the voices of God’s children crying out with hope in the words of Call to Justice #18.17

All: We are giving our labor, resources, and time.

Leader: (lights second candle) We are re-educating “communities and individuals who have learned to reject 2SLGBTQQIA people...”* for the witness of peacemaking.

All: We are giving our labor, resources, and time.

Leader: (lights third candle) We are joyfully re-educating communities and individuals who deny 2SLGBTQQIA people their “important history and contemporary place within communities and in ceremony...” *

All: We are giving our labor, resources, and time.

Leader: (lights fourth candle) We are dismantling “transphobia and homophobia in communities... to ensure cultural access for 2SLGBTQQIA people” for the building up of the community of love.*

All: We are giving our labor, resources, and time.

Leader: (lights Christ candle) We are completing the circle, celebrating Christ as our center. Joy to the world! Christ has come!

All: Advent hope, peace, joy, and love was always here.

**Call to Justice #18.17 from Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*

Prayer to Ally Justice

Immanuel, in you, justice is born into the world. In your birth, the journey towards justice is realized. We shout praise that our work, our preparation, and our prayers are brought to fruition. Help us to stand in your justice and continue the work of realizing your dreams for the world. Bear us along as witnesses to your glorious realm. Amen.

Suggested Hymns - He Came Down, vss 4, 2, 3, 1, 5 (hope...peace...joy...love...life, optional vamp), Joy to the World, Voices United #59

Please join FIRST UNITED for an Allow Grief, Blue Christmas Service

December 21, 2023, 1 PM PST

Join us via Zoom or in person at 360 Jackson Street, Vancouver with the FIRST UNITED Spiritual Care team and guest musicians.

To access the online link, please visit <https://firstunited.ca/events>

ⁱ *He Came Down* is not available in either *Voices United* or *More Voices*. However, it is one of what John Bell refers to as his “simple songs.” He writes these songs to be sung as many times as needed with small changes. In this case, each verse is one line with only the last word/syllable changed, and it is set to a traditional Cameroonian tune. ***The Words and music are available at hymnary.org or for download and reprinting at onelicense.net. The verse numbers listed correspond to the written lyrics on hymnary.org.***