

Advent Liturgy 2019

As Methodist Women in Britain we focus everything we do under three main headings: the worldwide church, global social justice, and creative spirituality. These Advent Reflections, written by Deacon Denise Creed, try to encompass these values using the traditional headings of Hope, Love, Peace, Faith and, on Christmas Day – Joy.



Week 1 – HOPE

Bible Reading

Isaiah 40:31; Isaiah 9:2

*But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.
For the people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.*

Prayer

Lord God, we long for your light and hope to come afresh to us as individuals and to the world. This Advent may we be bearers of your hope in our dark world. As people in the past waited for you to fulfil your promise in sending a Saviour, may we wait in anticipation for your coming again, not as a baby, but as King of kings and Lord of lords. Amen

Song

Longing for Light

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing with hope, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.
*Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your Church gathered today.*



Week 2 – LOVE

Bible Reading

John 3:16, 1 John 4:10, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

*“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.
Real love isn't our love for God, but his love for us.
God sent his Son to be the sacrifice by which our sins are forgiven.
For love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy,
it does not boast, it is not proud. Love is not rude, it is not self-seeking,
it is not easily angered, it keeps no account of wrongs.
Love takes no pleasure in evil, but rejoices in the truth.
Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things,
endures all things. Love never fails.*

Prayer

Lord you are love, and yet we treat your love so lightly at times
forgetting the cost of the cross. In our lives may we be patient and kind,
prepared to keep no account of wrongs, help us to rejoice in truth
and, by the way we live show that we belong to you.
Thank you that as your redeemed children we live in the light of your love,
enable us to share this good news with others,
so your love may be found in all people in all places. Amen.

Song

Longing for love

Longing for love, many are searching.
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
help us to reach out to the loveless
Sharing what we have found.
*Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your Church gathered today.*



Week 3 – PEACE

Bible Reading

Isaiah 9:6, John 14:7

*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,
and the government will be upon His shoulders.
And He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Jesus said "Peace I leave with you;
My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled; do not be afraid."*

Prayer

Jesus came as the Prince of peace,
yet Lord, even as we pray for peace,
we know that it begins with us.
And although the Spirit gives us the fruits of patience,
gentleness, faithfulness, kindness, love, joy, goodness, and self-control,
Jesus came as the Prince of peace.
Peace is all about relationships,
so may the way we treat one another
mirror our relationship with you our God.
Today we pray for peace, peace in our hearts and in our world.
Amen

Song

Longing for peace

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
with all the divisions, many despair.
Your Word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.
*Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your Church gathered today.*



Week 4 – FAITH

Bible Readings

Ephesians 2:8, I Corinthians 16:13-14

*For it is by grace you have been saved,
through faith and this is not from yourselves,
it is the gift of God.
Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith;
be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.*

Prayer

Lord, you are faithful God, you promised a Messiah
And when the time was right you sent your Son, Jesus.
Your faithfulness knows no boundaries,
your love for us is beyond our understanding,
when we give up on you, you never give up on us.
As we come closer to celebrating the birth of Jesus,
may you increase in us the faith we have,
so that we might become more like the one who became one of us
and that we might truly know you as our Father God. Amen

Song

Longing for faith

Longing for faith, many are searching.
Failing to see that you are the One
who gave us life, by dying for us,
You are God's only Son
*Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your Church gathered today.*



Christmas Day – JOY

Bible Reading

1 Peter 1:8, Nehemiah 8:10, Jeremiah 33:11, John 15:10-12

*Though you have not seen him, you love him.
Though you do not now see him, you believe in him
and rejoice with a joy that is inexpressible
and filled with glory.
"The joy of the Lord is your strength."
There will be shouts of gladness and joy.
You will hear people say,
'Give thanks to the Lord Almighty,
because he is good and his love is eternal.'
Jesus said "If you keep my commands,
you will remain in my love, just as I have kept
my Father's commands and remain in his love.
I have told you this so that my joy may be in you
and that your joy may be complete.
My command is this:
Love each other as I have loved you."*

Prayer

Lord, on this joyful Christmas Day,
we come to give you our thanks and praise
that you fill our lives with joy, hope, love and peace
and that by the power of your Spirit you give us faith
so that we can put all our trust in you.
Your love was outpoured on the world
when Jesus came to live on earth
and your amazing forgiveness and mercy
was outpoured on the world when Jesus died for us.
So today, with joy filled hearts, we come in thanksgiving
for your gift of love in Jesus, given unconditionally,
may live our lives to best of our abilities and full potential
until Jesus comes again or takes us home. Amen

Song

Our longings are over

Our longings are over, Christ is now with us
This special day reminds us he came
to share our life, to give us his blessings.
So joyfully we proclaim
*Christ, is our light!
who shines in our hearts.
who shines through the darkness.
Christ, is our light!
Who shines here through us, gathered today.*

Longing for Light': Words and Music © 1993 by Bernadette Farrell (b. 1957). Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 706. Published by OCP Publications, 5536 NE Hassalo, Portland, OR 97213, USA. All rights reserved. Used with permission. Contain my own adaptations.
As far as I am aware these thoughts and prayers are as original as possible – but I realise I will have been influenced by other Advent Liturgies I have used in the past, so my apologies if this has happened. Denise Creed.