

Prayer of Confession:

God of hope and safety, like sheep who go astray, we have wandered from your paths of life and light. We have heard the Shepherd's voice calling us by name, but we have turned instead to our own way. Show us your tender mercy. Restore us in the security of your fold. Lead us back to still waters. Seat us again at your table. Fill us with your Spirit, that we might bear glad witness to your saving mercy, revealed to us in the Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Shepherd (Bethel):

In the process
 In the waiting
 You're making melodies over me
 And your presence
 Is the promise
 For I am a pilgrim on a journey

You will lift my head above the mighty waves
 You are able to keep me from stumbling
 And in my weakness
 You are the strength that comes from within
 Good Shepherd of my soul
 Take my hand and lead me on

You will lift my head above the mighty waves
 You are able to keep me from stumbling
 And in my weakness
 you are the strength that comes from within
 Good Shepherd of my soul
 Take my hand and lead me on

You make my footsteps and my path secure
 So walking on water is just the beginning
 Cause my faith to arise, stand at attention
 For you are calling me to greater things

Oh
 How I love you
 How I love you
 You have not forsaken me
 With you is where I want to be

Words of Assurance (Original Content):

The truth of Advent is this:
 God is coming to us! We are not alone.
 In you we find acceptance! In you we find freedom!
 In you we find a full life! In you we find hope!

Lead us in your hope, O Lord, and teach us your love! May we look forward with confidence as we 'labor and strive for you, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe.' (1 Timothy 4:10 NIV)

Corporate Reading 1 Peter 1:3-6 (NIV):

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (J. Neale):

O come, O come Emmanuel
 And ransom captive Israel
 That mourns in lonely exile here
 Until the Son of God appear

*Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel
 Shall come to thee, O Israel*

Benediction:

C.S. Lewis says, "Hope is one of the Theological virtues. This means that a continual looking forward to the eternal world is not a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next."

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WITH

HOPE

WEEK 1

Seasons (Hillsong):

Like the frost on a rose
 Winter comes for us all
 Oh how nature acquaints us
 With the nature of patience
 Like a seed in the snow
 I've been buried to grow
 For Your promise is loyal
 From seed to sequoia I know

Though the winter is long even richer
 The harvest it brings
 Though my waiting prolongs even greater
 Your promise for me like a seed
 I believe that my season will come

Lord I think of Your love
 Like the low winter sun
 As I gaze I am blinded
 In the light of Your brightness
 Like a fire to the snow
 I'm renewed in Your warmth
 Melt the ice of this wild soul
 Till the barren is beautiful

I can see the promise
 I can see the future
 You're the God of seasons
 I'm just in the winter
 If all I know of harvest
 Is that it's worth my patience
 Then if You're not done working
 God I'm not done waiting
 You can see my promise
 Even in the winter
 Cause You're the God of greatness
 Even in a manger
 For all I know of seasons
 Is that You take Your time
 You could have saved us in a second
 Instead You sent a child

And when I finally see my tree
 Still I believe there's a season to come
 Like a seed You were sown
 For the sake of us all

From Bethlehem's soil
 Grew Calvary's sequoia

Candle Light Reading #1 (Isaiah 61:1-3 ESV):

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion - to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.

Candle Light Reading #2 (A series of weekly readings from Isaiah) - from The Worship Sourcebook, p.439-440, #27:

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; the one who follows me will not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

We light these candles as a sign of the coming light of Christ.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined. (Isaiah 9:2, NRSV)

Come, Lord Jesus, our Promise and our Salvation. Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

God With Us (All Sons and Daughters):

Oh you've come to bring peace, to be love
 To be nearer to us
 Oh you've come to bring life, to be light
 To shine brighter in us
 Oh Emmanuel, God with us

Our deliverer, you are Savior
 In your presence, we find our strength
 Over everything our redemption
 God with us, you are God with us
 Oh you've come to be hope, to this world
 For your honor and name
 Oh you've come to take sin, to bear shame
 And to conquer the grave
 Oh Emmanuel, God with us
 You are here, you are holy
 We are standing in your glory

Edge of Heaven (River Valley Worship):

For now we may feel pain
 For now we stand in faith
 For now your Spirit moves
 For now we reach for You

Here we are
 Living on the edge of Heaven
 Clinging to Your holy presence
 We're longing to be where You are
 Here we are
 Lifting holy hands to Heaven
 We will sing your praise forever
 Longing to be where You are

For now you give us strength
 For now heaven calls our name
 For now our hope is this
 For now we know You're coming again

Take this world, take it all
 Give me Jesus
 Through the trial, through the pain
 Give me Jesus
 Take my life, everything
 Give me Jesus

Take Courage (Bethel):

Slow down take time, breathe in he said
 He'd reveal what's to come the thoughts in his mind
 Always higher than mine and he'll reveal all to come

Take courage my heart, stay steadfast my soul
 He's in the waiting, he's in the waiting
 Hold onto your hope, as your triumph unfolds
 He's never failing, he's never failing

Sing praise my soul, find strength in joy
 Let his words lead you on do not forget
 His great faithfulness, He'll finish all he's begun

You who hold the stars, who call them each by name
 Will surely keep your promise to me that I will rise in your victory