

Worship Plan - Church Year A

2022-2023



This planning guide is not meant to be a "one size fits all" approach to the new hymnal. But it is a starting point that we hope worship planners will find useful. See sections titled "OPTIONAL NEW HYMNS PERHAPS REQUIRING INTRODUCTION," "NOTES FOR CONSERVATIVE," and "NOTES FOR AMBITIOUS" for resources to enable easy customization to better fit local circumstances. These sections (for each Sunday) are especially helpful in how they alert planners about hymns/songs that require advance preparation. It's never best to pick a new hymn tune and hope for the best!

Series Theme

Christian Worship provides an updated three-year lectionary for the Christian calendar along with appointed prayers, psalms, and gospel acclamations. Thematic Sundays are a chief feature of the new lectionary. All the resources share a common focus. The Gospel sets the theme for the day and largely matches the Gospel selections in other three-year lectionaries. The First Reading features more Old Testament narratives that match the theme of the Gospel. The Second Reading no longer comes from sets of continual readings but is a selection from New Testament epistles that supports the Sunday's Gospel. The Prayer of the Day, Psalm of the Day, Gospel Acclamation, and Hymn of the Day are appointed to match the Sunday theme. (From *CW: Commentary on the Propers*.)

The themes below for each day reflect (or are identical to) those found in *CW: Commentary on the Propers*. The explanations below usually quote or adapt material from this source. But the published Commentary provides much additional material, including (in part): 1) a more thorough description of the day's theme, 2) far more analysis of each reading (also the appointed psalm), occasional reference to the original languages, and 3) the Prayer of the Day (which cannot be included in the online planner due to copyrights).

Note a difference between the explanations below and the longer ones in the published Commentary: those found in this planner quickly and briefly show connections between readings and the theme of the day. The longer versions provide more depth for worship planners and preachers.

Readings

*** Readings with a triple asterisk are the recommended preaching text. Some hymn choices are made with this preaching text in mind. The Preacher Podcast usually follows these suggestions.

Additional Hymn Suggestions

Additional hymn suggestions are available in *Christian Worship: Service Builder* and in *Christian Worship: Planning Guide*, available from NPH: <https://online.nph.net/church-supplies/categories/hymnals-songbooks/christian-worship-suite>.

CW: Planning Guide includes several hymn indexes, including an exhaustive Scripture index for the hymns.

Supporting Musical Arrangements

Choral and keyboard music supporting new hymns may be found at NPH (online.nph.net) by searching on '[cw21choral](#)' or '[cw21keyboard](#).'

Note: The abbreviation "GA" stands for Gospel Acclamation.

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First Sunday in Advent - 11/27/2022

SERIES THEME

COME, LORD JESUS!

The Latin word *adventus* means “coming.” The last words in Scripture are “Come, Lord Jesus!” Thus, the season of Advent begins with the end in mind. We enter a new Church Year with our eyes fixed on the End—capital “E”—when Jesus Christ will come and destroy this sin-broken world.

If that is what Jesus and his angels are coming to do—destroy the universe with fire (2 Peter 3)—why would we cry out, “Come, Lord Jesus”? Because we know that Jesus has come into our world once before. The Son of God became the Son of Man. From the manger to the cross, Jesus did everything necessary to redeem mankind. As this new Church Year walks us through the entire life of Christ, we see God’s promises of deliverance fulfilled... God’s plan of salvation completed. And so, when Christ comes again, while the universe will be destroyed, we know God’s people will be ushered into a new, glorious, everlasting kingdom.

Advent is necessary to prepare us for Christmas. It enables us to understand the true significance of Christmas. For Advent allows us to see that because of what Christ did when he came the first time, believers need not fear when he comes again. Instead, we yearn for it. Come, Lord Jesus!

THEME OF THE DAY

COME, LORD JESUS! - AS KING

Why would the Church Year begin with a gospel reading that describes an event near the very end of Jesus’ life—his entry into Jerusalem at the start of Holy Week? Because the events of Palm Sunday serve as a perfect summary of the entire plan of salvation.

It is an odd sight, this man riding into Jerusalem on a baby donkey, to cheers and the celebratory waving of palm branches. Understandably, many asked, “Who is this?” The answer: This is not just a rabbi. This is the King of all Creation. This is God Almighty wrapped in flesh. Yet, he does not enter Jerusalem with all his glory and power on display. The King hides all that and rides into Jerusalem so that he might also be our priest and sacrifice.

This is a King unlike any other ruler who has ever lived. For he is infinitely greater than all other kings, while simultaneously being infinitely humbler. This King is willing to trade his golden crown for one made of thorns. This King comes not demanding our service but to serve us. You look at how good, how loving is this King, and you ask that question upon which eternity hinges. “Who is this?” As we march through this new Church Year, the answer becomes crystal clear. This King is the Savior of the nations.

FIRST READING

*** Isaiah 2:1-5 – In the future, when our King comes again, he will transform this world.

SECOND READING

Philippians 4:4-7 – Our present life is transformed from worry to joy and hope because of the King who came.

GOSPEL

Matthew 21:1-11 – The King of all Creation comes to us in total humility, willing to do everything necessary to save us from our sin.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Setting 3 Gloria was introduced starting November 7, with Sanctus and Agnus from Setting 2. That or similar will continue through this Sunday.

Ambitious:

Opening Hymn:

548 - The King of Glory Comes

or

309 - The Advent of Our King

Psalm of the Day:

24A

or

24H

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Alleluia. At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth. Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 3

Hymn of the Day:

301 - Savior of the Nations, Come

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

305 - Lift Up Your Heads, You Mighty Gates

Closing Hymn:

524 - Rejoice, the Lord Is King

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

915 - Hosanna to the Living Lord (opening);

Notes for the conservative service:

915 - would require intro, not critical to sing it if first reading is sermon text; prob a better choice if Gospel were sermon text; Gospel was sermon text in Year C

Notes for the ambitious service:

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Second Sunday in Advent - 12/4/2022

SERIES THEME

COME, LORD JESUS!

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If that is what Jesus and his angels are coming to do—destroy the universe with fire (2 Peter 3)—why would we cry out, “Come, Lord Jesus”? Because we know that Jesus has come into our world once before. The Son of God became the Son of Man. From the manger to the cross, Jesus did everything necessary to redeem mankind. As this new Church Year walks us through the entire life of Christ, we see God’s promises of deliverance fulfilled... God’s plan of salvation completed. And so, when Christ comes again, while the universe will be destroyed, we know God’s people will be ushered into a new, glorious, everlasting kingdom.

Advent is necessary to prepare us for Christmas. It enables us to understand the true significance of Christmas. For Advent allows us to see that because of what Christ did when he came the first time, believers need not fear when he comes again. Instead, we yearn for it. Come, Lord Jesus!

THEME OF THE DAY

COME, LORD JESUS! - AS JUDGE

When Jesus comes back as judge, everyone will face a binary outcome. Either they will be judged righteous and experience the peace and joys of Paradise. Or they will be judged wicked and suffer unquenchable fire (Matthew 3).

John the Baptist’s job was to point to the only way to prepare for a judgment, one where the stakes are that high. Repent! And look to the Lord Jesus. For when Jesus came into our world the first time, it was not as judge, but as Savior. All those whose faith is in Christ have already been judged righteous.

Please, take these words to heart: the reign of God draws near, and his judgment is inevitable. As John the Baptist once said, “All people will see God’s salvation.” The only question is if one sees Christ’s second coming with joy or regret. For those who fail to repent, the coming of the Judge brings certain doom. But his people will see that Judge like a banner on the hilltop, rallying us to his glorious side.

FIRST READING

*** Isaiah 11:1-10 – From the family tree of Jesse, father of King David, another King would come to judge the world with righteousness and establish an everlasting kingdom.

SECOND READING

Romans 15:4-13 – God’s people face the coming judgment not with fear but with hope because God has raised up the Root of Jesse as our Savior.

GOSPEL

Matthew 3:1-12 – To prepare us for the coming judgment, God sent John the Baptist, a voice in the wilderness, calling all to repent.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Today the Setting 3 Sanctus and Agnus Dei will be introduced

Ambitious:

Opening Hymn:

311 - Dawning Light of Our Salvation

or

321 - God's Own Son Most Holy

Psalm of the Day:

130A

or

130G

or

325 - My Soul in Stillness Waits

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Alleluia. Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. And all people will see God's salvation. Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 3

Hymn of the Day:

316 - On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

* 312 - Comfort, Comfort All My People

Closing Hymn:

304 - What Hope! An Eden Prophesied

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

311 - Dawning Light of Our Salvation

Notes for the conservative service:

311 - Dawning Light of Our Salvation

Closing: 326 - O Jesus, Grant Me Hope and Comfort

304 is tight with the sermon text and should be sung, could move to opening hymn if desired.

Notes for the ambitious service:

311 - Dawning Light of Our Salvation - should be introduced with cantors

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Third Sunday in Advent - 12/11/2022

SERIES THEME

COME, LORD JESUS!

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If that is what Jesus and his angels are coming to do—destroy the universe with fire (2 Peter 3)—why would we cry out, “Come, Lord Jesus”? Because we know that Jesus has come into our world once before. The Son of God became the Son of Man. From the manger to the cross, Jesus did everything necessary to redeem mankind. As this new Church Year walks us through the entire life of Christ, we see God’s promises of deliverance fulfilled... God’s plan of salvation completed. And so, when Christ comes again, while the universe will be destroyed, we know God’s people will be ushered into a new, glorious, everlasting kingdom.

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THEME OF THE DAY

COME, LORD JESUS! - AS MESSIAH

Humanity wants a made-to-order Messiah. We want the Savior we want. The Jews wanted a political Messiah who would remove Roman oppression and reestablish the kingdom of Israel. The generic Christian of today wants a Messiah who is a good teacher and an inspiration for brotherly love.

Even faithful Christians face the temptation of a made-to-order Messiah. We want a Messiah who isn’t bothered by the sin that keeps cropping up in our life, who doesn’t call for total dedication but is fine if we only want a relaxed association with him. We want a Messiah who dispenses blessings liberally, to ensure that our life is blessed, as we would like to define it.

That is not the Messiah who came. Jesus defies the expectations of Israel, the world, and us. Jesus reminds us that “blessed” is a term that he defines, and it begins with not rejecting the Messiah because he fails to meet our expectations. One proof that Jesus is the Messiah is that he fulfilled every prophecy. Therefore, blessed people respond to adverse circumstances with patient waiting and confidence that, at just the right time, their Messiah will fix all that is broken in their lives.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 35:1-10 – The prophet foretold that the coming of the Messiah would change everything.

SECOND READING

James 5:7-11 – Knowing what we do about the Messiah’s coming kingdom, we want it now. God’s encouragement, however, is for us to be patient.

GOSPEL

*** Matthew 11:2-11 – Jesus deals gently with those whose present circumstances lead them to doubt that he is the Messiah.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Ambitious:

Opening Hymn:

307 - When the King Shall Come Again

Psalm of the Day:

146A or B

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Alleluia. I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you. Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 3

Hymn of the Day:

324 - O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

812 - Christ, the Sure and Steady Anchor

Closing Hymn:

519 - There Is a Redeemer

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

812 - Christ, the Sure and Steady Anchor

Notes for the conservative service:

812 - this would benefit from introduction but it's not a difficult hymn tune and st. 1 especially fits with the gospel sermon text

Notes for the ambitious service:

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Fourth Sunday in Advent - 12/18/2022

SERIES THEME

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THEME OF THE DAY

COME, LORD JESUS! - AS IMMANUEL

This time of year it is so easy to get caught up in the beautiful trappings of Christmas and forget why this birth had to take place. Mankind fell into sin. Sin brings an awful burden. Hatred and oppression. Suffering and pain. Guilt and shame. The devastation of death. These are all natural consequences of sin. And what can we do about any of it? Nothing of substance. We can numb ourselves to pain, but we cannot avoid it. We can fill our life with distractions in an attempt to forget about our guilt. But our conscience is always nagging. And death... no one avoids that.

Man can do nothing to shake off the burden of sin. Therefore, the Church prays that God would come in power to remove that burden for us. Since the Garden, there has been only one plan to do that: God would take on flesh and blood. To do what mankind could not do—remove all the burdens of sin—God became man. When you look into the manger, what do you see? A baby? Yes. But, more. That is Immanuel, “God-with-us.” The Son of God became Mary’s son, so that he could do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 7:10-14 – The Lord promised that deliverance would come through the gift of Immanuel. And how would we recognize him? He would be born of a virgin.

SECOND READING

Romans 1:1-7 – After thousands of years of God’s promises, St. Paul sees them all fulfilled in Christ. Jesus is Immanuel, true God and true man.

GOSPEL

*** Matthew 1:18-25 – In faith, Joseph accepted that within the womb of his bride-to-be was Immanuel—the very Son of God, the promised Savior from sin.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Setting 3 Sanctus and Agnus Dei
reintroduced/reinforced

Ambitious:

Opening Hymn:

322 - Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

Psalm of the Day:

89A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Alleluia. The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel. Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 3

Hymn of the Day:

327 - O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

* 496 - Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love

* 320 - As Angels Joyed with One Accord

Closing Hymn:

330 - Peace Came to Earth

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

330 - A supplement hymn, last hymn on Advent 4 as a Christmas hymn, but tightly bound to the theme of Advent 4

Notes for the conservative service:

322 - RESTORATION tune is new to CW, but should be familiar to some from "Come, Ye Sinners Poor and Needy"

Notes for the ambitious service: