



Year B (2023-2024) – Advent

THE KING SHALL COME

NOTE

With this Church Year, Advent begins as late as it possibly can, with the First Sunday in Advent falling on December 3. That places the Fourth Sunday in Advent on December 24. Hypothetically, there would be Advent worship in that morning and Christmas Eve worship that afternoon/evening. Some worship planners may choose not to do that, understanding that perhaps many/most would not attend both services on December 24. One could omit the Fourth Sunday in Advent, noting that that day’s Gospel, the Annunciation, is often part of a Christmas Eve service of Nine Lessons and Carols.

SERIES EXPLANATION

The Church Year begins with the season of Advent, which means “coming.” When someone is coming over, what do you do? It depends on who is coming and why they are coming. If it’s a good friend popping in for a quick visit, you don’t worry too much about how the house looks or serving a meal. But imagine the governor is coming over for an evening to give you some sort of citizen’s award. That’s a big deal. There is work to be done: deep cleaning, planning a menu, getting the yard looking its best, etc.

So, is Advent a big deal? It depends on who is coming and why they are coming. In this worship series, we get the answer to those questions. We see that the King shall come. We see why the King came on that first Christmas and why he shall come again on judgment day. In this season, we also cherish the way our King comes to us today in Word and sacrament, establishing his reign in our hearts.

Our worship will follow this pattern.

First Sunday in Advent	<i>He Is Coming to Save Us</i>
Second Sunday in Advent	<i>Prepare to Meet Him</i>
Third Sunday in Advent	<i>He Is Bringing Perfect Joy</i>
Fourth Sunday in Advent	<i>Just as God Promised</i>

CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS YEARS OF *THE FOUNDATION*

The first years of *The Foundation* offered content for planning worship and preaching in two formats, an Excel spreadsheet for the entire church year and PDF exports from that spreadsheet for each season. For this new Year B, the thematic and sermon content is provided only in the seasonal PDFs. One reason for this is the addition of an occasional “Note to the Preacher,” something that doesn’t work as well in a spreadsheet.

The spreadsheet still contains dates and suggestions for hymns and liturgy. Those who like to customize the spreadsheet for local use are still able to do so. Since the new hymnal has now been in use for two years, this Year B spreadsheet does not include options for both cautious and ambitious introduction of new musical material. If your congregation is just starting to use the new hymnal, review the strategies in Years C and A for ideas on how to make introduction as comfortable as possible for as many as possible.



First Sunday in Advent

December 3, 2023

THE KING SHALL COME

HE IS COMING TO SAVE US

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

Rulers plan and administrate and govern. They typically do not save. If your house is on fire, it will not be the mayor who shows up to save you from the flames. If America were attacked, the President would serve as the commander in chief of the armed forces. The President would not pick up a weapon, go to the front lines, and fight to save you from the enemy.

Jesus is different. He is both infinitely greater than all other rulers, yet also infinitely humbler. He does not consider it beneath his rank as King to risk his life for his subjects. He is willing to fight for us. He is willing to die for us. For King Jesus came into our world for one reason—to save us.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the reading)*

Isaiah 64:1-9 – All of us have become unclean, tainted by sin. So we needed our King to come to save us.

1 Corinthians 1:3-9 – Our faithful God promises to enrich us with every spiritual gift so that we can stand firm as we wait for our King to come again on judgment day.

*Mark 11:1-10 – On Palm Sunday Jesus rides into Jerusalem as a king. The crowd shouts, “Hosanna!” which means, “Save us!”

RESOURCE REMINDER

CW21’s *Altar Book* contains eight seasonal prayers of the church. These are spoken by the pastor, not responsive. *Service Builder* contains two responsive prayers for the Advent season.

HYMNS

Opening	495 The King Shall Come
HOD	301 Savior of the Nations, Come
Third/Distr	548 The King of Glory Comes
Closing	313 Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes

SERVICE OPTIONS

Consider using "The King Shall Come" (CW495) in place of the Gloria. It's the title of the Advent series, and the Gloria is often omitted in Advent. One possible progression: Opening Hymn, Invocation, Confession and Absolution, Lighting of the Advent Candles (from the old CW Occasional Services) in place of the Kyrie, and select verses of "The King Shall Come" in place of the Gloria (just don't call it the Gloria since it's not), Prayer of the Day.

Note that this plan utilizes the Gospel reading of Jesus entry into Jerusalem, which serves as a microcosm for the message of the Festival Half of the Church Year. It sets up this series theme.



Second Sunday in Advent

December 10, 2023

THE KING SHALL COME

PREPARE TO MEET HIM

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

Scriptures teach that King Jesus is the Son of God in flesh and the only hope for salvation. Jesus himself claimed that he is the only way into the glorious kingdom of heaven. You do not approach meeting someone like that casually or carelessly. You prepare meticulously. What does that mean? What does a life of readiness—ready to meet such a King—look like? In one word: repentance. If we insist on hanging onto our sins, how can we receive the One who came for the very purpose of taking those sins away?

Throughout history, God has raised up called servants—like John the Baptist—to preach a message of repentance. This repentance is central to our preparation for the Lord's coming. Without repentance, the King's coming only terrifies. But all those who believe and repent look forward to the coming of the King and the consummation of his everlasting kingdom.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the reading)*

Isaiah 40:1-11 – Isaiah prophesies about one who could come to prepare people to meet their sovereign LORD. This prophecy is fulfilled in the ministry of John the Baptist.

*2 Peter 3:8-14 – St. Peter reminds us that judgment day will come at an unexpected time. So prepare with daily repentance.

Mark 1:1-8 – God raised up John the Baptist to preach a message of repentance and forgiveness, preparing people to meet their Lord and King.

HYMNS

Opening	312 Comfort, Comfort All My People
HOD	316 On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry
Third/Distr	325 My Soul In Stillness Waits
Closing	302 Prepare the Royal Highway - v1,4

SERVICE OPTIONS

If you are not using "The King Shall Come" in place of the Gloria, consider singing select verses as the closing hymn throughout Advent, echoing the theme of the worship series.



Third Sunday in Advent

December 17, 2023

THE KING SHALL COME

HE IS BRINGING PERFECT JOY

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

The historic Christian Church gave Latin titles to each Sunday. They titled the Third Sunday in Advent “Gaudete,” which means “Rejoice!” As we reach the midway point of Advent, we remember that when the King shall come, he will bring us perfect and everlasting joy.

Joy is not the same thing as happiness. Happiness is an emotion. Joyfulness is a condition. Happiness comes from your circumstances. Joyfulness comes from your King entering into your heart and assuring you of his abiding love and your glorious future. Therefore, happiness is fleeting. Joyfulness is enduring.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the reading)*

*Isaiah 61:1-3,10,11 – Through the prophet Isaiah, the Savior-King proclaims good news of great joy for all those who are brokenhearted.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 – The promises of the coming King let us live with joy, regardless of present circumstances.

John 1:6-8,19-28 – John the Baptist teaches the infinite superiority of Christ Jesus. John was only a witness to the light. Jesus is the light who gives life and perfect joy.

HYMNS

Opening	524 Rejoice, the Lord Is King
HOD	324 O Lord, How Shall I Meet You
Third/Distr	315 Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord
Closing	493 Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers - v1,4



Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 24, 2023

THE KING SHALL COME

JUST AS GOD PROMISED

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

In Eden, mankind fell into sin, bringing death and despair to Paradise. God immediately promised to send a Savior who would undo that devastation. This Savior would be a descendant of Adam and Eve—a human being. Century after century, through the prophets, God reiterated and expanded upon that promise of a Savior-King. In a manger in Bethlehem, on that first Christmas, God’s promise was fulfilled.

The perfect faithfulness God demonstrated in keeping all his promises about Christ’s first coming at Christmas is what gives us the certainty and comfort that God will keep his promises about Christ’s second coming on judgment day. The King shall come!

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the reading)*

2 Samuel 7:8-16 – The LORD promised King David that one of his descendants would establish an everlasting kingdom.

Romans 16:25-27 – The prophetic writings about King Jesus prove that God keeps his promises.

*Luke 1:26-38 – In the womb of the Virgin Mary, God kept his promise to send a Savior who would establish an everlasting kingdom.

HYMNS

Opening	328 The Angel Gabriel
HOD	327 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
Third/Distr	349 A Great and Mighty Wonder
Closing	320 As Angels Joyed with One Accord - v1,2,6,7

SERVICE OPTIONS

“The Angel Gabriel” provides a very simple option for a small choir or assembly of cantors. It could even be done by children. The choir serves as the narrator. One cantor sings anything spoken by Gabriel. Another sings any text spoken by Mary. The congregation could join in on the final “Gloria” at the end of each verse.