

Circuit Advent Liturgy Week 1:

Opening Liturgy:

Advent dawns with lights strung high and
music everywhere,
Sights and smells abound around,
Senses assaulted and confused,
O hush the noise,
Let's hear the angels sing.

Let's seek to see and seek to hear.
Let's seek to feel and seek to know.
Let's seek to find peace and love.
O hush the noise,
Let's hear the angels sing.
Amen

Amid the lists and cards and gifts,
Amid the pleas and "please can we",
Amid the chaos of the world,
O hush the noise,
Let's hear the angels sing.



Item to Reflect upon: a **Wave**

Jesus encourages us to note the chaos around us and rather than being overwhelmed by it to respond to it in a way that recognises what is truly important. In that way the noise is, in effect, hushed.

Hymn StF 205 v 1

It came upon a midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
'Peace on the earth, good will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

Light Candle 1

*Lighting the First Candle on your Advent ring,
you are invited to pause and think
about one or two things you might intentionally not do this Advent,
that could give you more time to pause.*

Prayer

The Angels are still singing,
hush the noise,
hear them sing,
repeat the song,
and be blessed in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

As we begin Advent, we begin our inward preparations to meet the Christ child again, prayerfully, using Bible readings, and with hymns old and new, and with reflections to help on our way.

Hymn StF 169

Come thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free,
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us for ever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Charles Wesley

Prayer of Confession

Creator of light and darkness, we so often chase shadows and fail to walk in the light.
Forgive us, O God.

A time of stillness

We travel through Advent as forgiven people, lifting our faces towards the light.
Let us walk together in hope and in faith. Amen.

Lord's Prayer – please use whichever version you prefer

Readings

Jeremiah 33: 14 – 16

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

Luke 21: 25 – 36

"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place and to stand before the Son of Man."

Reflection

Chaos is such a small word for such huge repercussions. Chaos used to mean a bit of a mess, being rather all over the place, muddled, or hectic. But late last century chaos theory was a new branch of mathematics that was talked about that was summed up by the phrase: 'the flap of a butterfly's wings in the Amazon can cause a tornado in Texas'.

Chaos theory is indeed helpful in working our weather patterns – very necessary for not only forecasting but also for predicting the effects of climate change. These changes and the extremes they produce seem to be a reflection of the signs and distress talked about in Luke's Gospel reading today. Living near the coast, as we do, we can see the reality of coastal erosion and the power of the sea and waves. So it is an appropriate symbol for us this week that chaos is represented by a wave. But we know as well that the rolling sea and lapping waves can have a calming effect.

As part of the 'Hush the Noise' series we are encouraged to dispel the chaos to focus on Advent, the coming of Jesus, but we can't ignore it completely, so it is suggested that we note it. We recognise that we live in the midst of a chaotic world, some caused by nature, some human induced, but we try not to get overwhelmed by it all.

The Gospel tells us to stand up and raise our heads above the noise and confusion, and not to get weighed down by worries. A tall order, but a great ambition, alongside the certainty that God is with us, giving reassurance and strength to achieve the necessary quiet and stillness to counteract the chaos of the world.

Hymn StF 411

May the God of hope go with us every day,
filling all our lives with love and joy and
peace.

May the God of justice speed us on our way,
bringing light and hope to every land and
race.

God will be our Shepherd as we go our way
and will not forsake us when we go astray.
Even though the load of life is hard to bear,
we must not forget that God is always there.

Spanish Traditional
translated by Alvin Schutmaat
v2 Ann Mitchell

*Praying, let us work for peace;
singing, share our joy with all;
working for a world that's new,
faithful when we hear Christ's call.*

Prayers of Intercession

When will your day come, O God?
All around us there is war, conflict between nations, fighting amongst factions,
hatred between individuals.

When will you bring peace?
There are good things in our world, but we are still surrounded by cruelty and greed,
gossip and jealousy, ruthlessness and deception.

When will your kingdom fully come?

We are encouraged by those who work for justice and peace but, as crisis follows crisis, we are overwhelmed by the scale of human suffering, from warfare and persecution, floods and drought, bringing famine and disease.

How can we hope for a better time ahead?

O God, give us your peace in our hearts and the strength of the peacemakers;
give us your hope in our hearts and the patience that springs from confidence in you;
give us your love in our hearts and a concern for others that never ends.

In your Son, we saw peace, hope, and love born in the world, your presence alive and at work.
May you work in us and through us, today and for ever.

Amen.

Hymn StF 172

Hills of the north, rejoice,
river and mountain-spring,
hark to the advent voice;
valley and lowland, sing.
Christ comes in righteousness and love,
he brings salvation from above.

Shores of the utmost west,
lands of the setting sun,
welcome the heavenly guest
in whom the dawn has come:
he brings a never-ending light,
who triumphed o'er our darkest night.

Isles of the southern seas,
sing to the listening earth;
carry on every breeze
hope of a world's new birth:
in Christ shall all be made anew;
his word is sure, his promise true.

Shout, as you journey on;
songs be in every mouth!
Lo, from the north they come,
from east and west and south:
in Jesus all shall find their rest,
in him the universe be blest.

Charles Ernest Oakley

Lands of the east, arise!
He is your brightest morn;
greet him with joyous eyes,
let praise his path adorn:
your seers have longed to know their Lord;
to you he comes, the final Word.

Blessing

The angels are still singing.
Hush the noise, hear them sing, repeat the song.
And the blessing of God,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be ours, now and always.
Amen.

