

Advent Sunday

A Procession and Service



A service of hymns and reading with a procession including the four corners of the compass is an traditional form of service which seems to be coming back into use. This includes a modern addition of the earth and the sky, which can be left out if required. It is written from an All Age perspective. It symbolises the idea of 'the light of the world' shining in every corner.

Hymn numbers unless otherwise stated taken from Hymns Old and New: New Anglican Edition (1996)

Practicalities

Supply small candles in cardboard or other holders for those attending. The Leader needs two helpers with large candles to give light for the readings, and two others with tapers to light the individual candles. A cross-bearer and members of the choir, if available, add to the sense of occasion.

Before the service, one large candle should be placed on the floor on a green or brown cloth to represent Mother Earth and another high up on a blue or blue and white cloth to represent the sky.

Put the service on in the afternoon or early evening. Start with the building in semi-darkness. Give each person a small candle on entering and direct them to different parts of the building to make the most of the symbolism...

Hymn

Come thou long-expected Jesus (HOAN 98) or
Prepare ye the way of the Lord (from Godspell)

The Lord be with you
And also with you.

Welcome and a few words about what will be happening

Hymn

Hills of the north rejoice (HOAN 209)

While this is sung, the leader and attendants go to the north.

Reading 1

Isaiah 51:1-3

Come all who are thirsty, come, fetch water;
come, you who have no food, buy corn and eat;
come and buy, not for money, not for a price.
Why spend money and get what is not bread,
why give the price of your labour and go unsatisfied;

Only listen to me and you will have good food to eat,
and you will enjoy the fat of the land.
Come to me and listen to my words,
hear me and you shall have life. REB

or

Responsorial Reading Isaiah 35:1-7

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.
The burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water.
A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;
The ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. NVSV

Light candles of people in the north

Hymn

Walk in the light (not in HOAN) *or* other

During the hymn, the leader and attendants move to the west.

Reading 2 Verses from Ezekiel 34

For this is what the Sovereign Lord says:
I myself will search for my sheep and look after them.
As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock
when he is with them,
so will I look after my sheep.
I will rescue them from all the places
where they were scattered
I will tend them in a rich pasture,
on the mountain heights of Israel.
I myself will tend my sheep
and make them lie down.
I will search for the lost
and bring back the strays.
I will bind up the injured
and strengthen the weak. RSV

Light candles of people in the west

Hymn Long ago prophets knew

During the hymn, the leader and attendants move to the south

Reading 3 Isaiah 7:10-11

The Lord himself will give you a sign.
A young woman will be with child
and will give birth to a son
and will call his name Emmanuel,
that is 'God with us'.

Light candles of people in the south

Hymn How lovely on the mountain (HOAN 219)

Move to the candle representing the earth

Reading 4 Isaiah 30: 19, 23

Truly, O people in Zion, inhabitants of Jerusalem, you shall weep no more.
He will give rain for the seed which you sow in the ground,
and the produce of the land will be rich and plentiful.
On that day your cattle will graze in broad pastures;
the oxen and the donkeys which till the ground will eat hay and corn.
On every lofty mountain and every high hill
there will be brooks running with water.
The light of the moon will be like the light of the sun
and the light of the sun will be sevenfold brighter. NIV

Light the candle representing the earth

Hymn Mine eyes have seen the coming of the glory of the Lord (HOAN 336)

Move to the candle representing the sky

Reading 5 Malachi 3: 1

Look, I am sending my messenger
who will clear a path before me.
Suddenly the Lord whom you seek
will come to his temple;
the messenger in whom you delight is here,
here already, says the Lord of Hosts.

The candle representing the sky is lit

Hymn Kumbaya (HOAN 289)

Move to the east during hymn

Reading 6 Verses from Luke chapter 1

In those days Mary set out and hurried to a Judean town in the hill country where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry 'Blessed are you among women, blessed is the child that will be born to you. Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord said to her will be accomplished.'. NIV

Light candles of people in the east

Hymn Hail to the Lord's anointed (HOAN 193)

Prayers including the Collect for Advent Sunday

Responses

I, Jesus, am the offspring of David,

I am the bright star of dawn.

'Come!', say the Spirit and the bride

'Come!' let each hearer reply.

Let anyone who is thirsty come;

let whoever wishes

take the water of life as a gift.

He who gives this testimony says,

'Yes, I am coming soon!

Amen. Come Lord Jesus.

adapted from verses in Revelation 22 (NIV)

Blessing

For you who revere my name,

the sun of righteousness will rise

with healing in his wings.

And you will go out and leap

like calves released from the stall. (Malachi 4: 2)

And the blessing of God Almighty,

the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

be with you and with all you love,

today and for ever. Amen.

Final Hymn

God is working his purpose out (HOAN 172)

or You shall go out in joy (HOAN 571)