



An Advent Service of Hope and Expectation

In the midst of darkness, we long for the coming of the light of Christ. Within this service, the text of the hymn "Lost in the night" gives us words to express our deepest pleas for God's mercy and salvation. Together we cry out: "Christ is coming soon! Come and save us soon!"

Gathering Song: *Savior of the Nations, Come*

<https://youtu.be/SOO9TFhvcK0>

Dialogue

O Lord our God, we stumble as those lost in the night.

Will not day come soon?

We live burdened by the sorrows and cares of this world.

Will you help us soon?

We hear the promise of your Word made flesh:

Christ is coming soon!

We long for the light of your salvation.

Come and save us soon!

Will not day come soon?

Reading: Mark 13:24-37

²⁴ "But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. ²⁷ Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸ "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he¹ is near, at the very gates. ³⁰ Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³² "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Beware, keep alert;¹ for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴ It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵ Therefore, keep awake -- for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶ or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

Hymn: *Lost in the Night*

<https://youtu.be/p2hcOcHseX0>

Following a brief silence:

Let us pray. O Lord our God,
we live in the promise of your coming.
Help us to keep awake and be ready for your birth
in our world and in our hearts.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Will you help us soon?

Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

¹ Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³ A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵ Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." ⁶ A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. ⁹ Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; ¹ lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, ² lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" ¹⁰ See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹ He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Hymn: *Comfort, Comfort, Now My People*

<https://youtu.be/Bbk1eagEjOw>

Following a brief silence:

Let us pray. O Lord our God,
you speak to us of comfort and peace.
When the things of this world wither and fade,
grant that we may stand steadfast in your Word.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Christ is coming soon!

Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-20

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! ¹⁵ The LORD has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. ¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you¹ in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing¹⁸ as on a day of festival.¹ I will remove disaster from you,² so that you will not bear reproach for it. ¹⁹ I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. ²⁰ At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.

Hymn: *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn* https://youtu.be/4rXmt7d_ASw

Following a brief silence:

Let us pray. O Lord our God,
we shout for joy at the nearness of your birth.
Renew us with your love, and send us out into the world
to share the good news of Christ's advent.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Come and save us soon!

Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-15a

⁸ But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you,¹ not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.¹

¹¹ Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for and hastening¹ the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? ¹³ But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ¹⁵ and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Hymn: *Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers* <https://youtu.be/FMBRLq0-y9Q>

Following a brief silence:

Let us pray. O Lord our God,
we long for your coming.
Grant us patience in our waiting.
Shower us with your peace.
Lead us to live as your holy people.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Prayers

God of hope, you shed your light in the darkness of this world. Grant that we may always live in the promise of your Word made flesh. O God for whom we long, **come and save us soon!**

God of mercy, you comfort all in need of your tender care. Watch over those who are sick, those who mourn, and those who struggle in the midst of holiday joy. O God for whom we long, **come and save us soon!**

God of peace, establish your justice in the nations of this world, that all may strive for the good of your creation. O God for whom we long, **come and save us soon!**

God of joy, fill our world with the light of your presence, that we may share the good news of Christ's coming. O God for whom we long, **come and save us soon! Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

Our Father, who art in heaven,

**hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

Brothers and sisters,

we are lost in the night no more,

but live in the promise of Christ.

May God, who sends light to overcome all darkness,

grant you grace, mercy, and peace. **Amen.**

Sending Song: *Hark, the Glad Sound!*

<https://youtu.be/cs6MMorJSz0>

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is coming soon.

Thanks be to God.