



ADVENT WORSHIP LITURGY SET



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Welcome to the **In Light & Darkness Worship Liturgy**. The inspiration for our theme comes from the common usage of “light” and “darkness” during Advent and from exploring how the earth experiences both the very lightest and darkest days with summer and winter solstices during Advent. Scripture focusing on God’s light has led to the belief light is the source of goodness and hope. This belief implies darkness is not wanted or needed, it is something to banish or get rid of, or God is not even present in the dark.

Barbara Brown Taylor’s book, *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, helps us reimagine our understanding of darkness, primarily how Christianity heavily relies on the binary construct of light as good and darkness as bad. Taylor proposes that the pair of light and dark co-exist in balance, not opposition. She asks, “What can light possibly mean without dark?”

We hope our In Light and Darkness-themed materials will help you share conversations about your understanding of light and darkness. We encourage you to explore how those understandings influence how you view God, your faith, and the world.

These Advent and Christmas Liturgies are written to tie in **An Illustrated Advent for Families: In Light and Darkness** and **In Light and Darkness: An Advent Devotional** (both the Illustrated and Text-only Editions) for a fully In Light and Darkness-themed Advent. At the same time, these liturgies can be used by themselves, apart from the devotionals. Feel free to tweak the prayers and litanies to work for your worship leaders and community.

Each week’s liturgy consists of the below elements.

- Call to Worship
- Opening Prayer
- Passing of the Peace
- Advent Wreath Lighting
- General Prayer
- Prayer of Confession
- Assurance of Pardon
- Prayer of Illumination
- Prayers of the People
- Prayer for the Offering
- Communion*
- Affirmation
- Charge and Benediction

* We substituted Hymn Recommendations (listed throughout the service) for the Communion Liturgy in the Candlelight Service. If you would like to include a Communion Liturgy, you can use the one within the Children and Families Service.

The Children and Families Service is written for Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, fully acknowledging and celebrating the birth of Jesus, but may be adapted to other calendar dates. Adjust the Advent Wreath Lighting to the appropriate candles and adjust verb tenses to suit the story you are telling during that service. It is customary to light the Christ candle and say, “Merry Christmas,” on the evenings of December 24 and 25.

The Candlelight Service is written for Christmas Eve. Still, it may also be adapted to other calendar dates with slight adjustments to tenses, replacing “Christmas Eve” with “Advent” or “Christmas Time” depending on how your faith community divides the seasons.

FEEDBACK ALWAYS APPRECIATED

We are excited to see the many ways churches, communities, and families will use this worship liturgy. As with all of our products, we encourage people to think big and to get creative. A great way to share your experiences is to post photos on social media using the hashtag #illustratedministry. We can’t wait to see glimpses of your creativity!

As you use these resources, we would love to hear what was helpful and meaningful and any suggestions and comments you have for us. We want to continue to create quality faith formation materials, and we appreciate your feedback.

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TikTok: tiktok.com/@illustratedmin

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Pinterest: pinterest.com/illustratedmin

YouTube: youtube.com/illustratedmin

Our Facebook Group is a vibrant and growing community. If you’re looking for ideas and suggestions for using this resource, or any of our resources, you can request to join here:

fb.com/groups/illustratedmin

Peace,
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Note: Please do not include attachments or links to download our files in any emails/newsletters that are posted publicly online with services like Mailchimp, Constant Contact, etc. Links of this nature are searchable by Google, and the files can quickly become accessible to the general public.

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Print: Most congregations who purchase our digital files choose to print out the materials. Printing the materials is probably the easiest way to share the resources with your community.

Thanks for understanding, and we appreciate your support!

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**SAMPLE
ONLY**



Advent 1

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Come to worship, all who seek and search for truth and justice.

All: **The light will guide your way to wisdom.**

One: Come to worship, all who wonder, wander, and wait for Jesus.

All: **The light will show you the way.**

One: Come to worship, to find comfort, rest, and peace.

All: **God is in the shadows, find peace under God's wings.**

One: Come to worship, all who seek safety from scary things.

All: **God is in the hiding places, and the darkness is safe.**

One: We gather to worship in light and in darkness.

All: **God is here among us. Let us worship!**

OPENING PRAYER

Light of the World and Shadow of Safety,
you created light and darkness for our good.

As we enter this season of Advent,
waiting in the darkness for the light of the world,
we find you all around us.

We join together to praise you today,
to hear from your Spirit,
and to meet with the living Word, Christ Jesus,
who was with God in the beginning.

Open our hearts and minds to hear what you have to say to us today.

Open our hearts and minds to release our concerns to your loving care.

And open our hearts and minds to meet the needs of our neighbors with compassion.

Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

God said, “let there be light,” and there was light.

God says, “let there be peace in this place,” and there shall be peace.

Speak a word of peace to your neighbor, to your family members, to a stranger.

May the peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

Person A: In our most desperate times, by day or by night, the hope of Christ may be found. We watch and we wait to witness the hope of heaven making a place here on earth.

Person B: Today we light the candle of hope, because hope has come to us.

| *Light the first candle.*

All: Come, hope of heaven!
We lift up our heads with expectation.
Where will we find you today?

ADDITIONAL PRAYER

Light of the World and Shadow of Safety,
we find hope in the world you have created for us,
hope in the sunlight that energizes life on our planet,
hope in the moon that directs the tides and brightens the night,
hope in the stars that direct weary travelers,
hope in the night that gives us all rest.
When we begin to feel hopeless and helpless,
remind us of the lights guiding our path and the darkness shielding our sleep.
We choose hope in the name of the One who was and is and is to come.
Amen.



PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Light of the World and Shadow of Safety,
we humble ourselves to pray.
You created us to be reflections of your love and justice,
but we often reflect our own fears and prejudices.
Forgive us, God.
If we are mirrors of your great brilliance,
help us sparkle when the world is gray.
Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

God is faithful to turn us around and place us on healthy paths when we acknowledge our unloving and unjust selves. Rest in the assurance you are forgiven, loved, and ready to begin again.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Light of the World and Shadow of Safety,
open our hearts and minds to the brilliance of your Word today.
May we receive it as illumination for our journey and a cloud of shelter for our souls.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Light of the World and Shadow of Safety,
among this gathering of your saints we bring joys and sorrows from our lives, and the lives of those whom we love.
Today we celebrate...
Today we pray for...
Attend the joys and concerns of your people with both the light of your salvation and the shadow of your comfort.
And open our own hearts to how we may partner with you
to accompany our friends, family, and neighbors through both joy and loss.
Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE OFFERING

Light of the World and Shadow of Safety,
we bring our humble offerings to you,
knowing to you belong the lights sustaining us and the vastness of the universe surrounding us.
Take our offerings of time and treasure and multiply them among us.
Guide us to use these gifts with wisdom and cleverness to the glory of your Son, Jesus.
Amen.

COMMUNION

INVITATION

Even as we watch and wait for the coming of our True Hope, Christ prepares a table for us. Christ's bread of life and cup of blessing are available to all who desire to be fed by the feast. This fellowship welcomes you to come to the table, no matter where you are on your journey, no matter where you come from, whom you love, your identity, or level of understanding. All willing hearts are welcome.

CONFESSION AND PARDON

Light of the World and Shadow of Safety,
we confess once again we are humans,
imperfect in our love for one another, and unjust with our power.
As we approach the table of your sacrifice, set us right again.
Orient us to the love and justice of heaven.
Amen.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Glory to God.
Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Begin with the Great Thanksgiving commonly used in your tradition, and then you can use the below prayer:

Light of the World, you are holy.
Shadow of Safety, you are powerful and mighty.
Just as you guided Israel as a pillar of fire at day
and a pillar of cloud at night, you guide us through darkness and light.
And you guided Jesus, from his incarnation in Bethlehem,
through his baptism, temptation, and ministry,
even as he prepared for pain and loss. We remember:



WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Begin with the Words of Institution commonly used in your tradition, and then you can use the below prayer:

And so, in remembrance of the Light of the World, Jesus Christ,
we come to the table with hope and expectation,
confident that through the incarnation of Jesus, we are made whole.
Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Let us pray:

God our Loving Parent, meet us here as we share these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the life and blessing of Christ,
that we may be lights of love and justice to the world.

Holy Spirit, unite us in Christ's mission.

Help us care for one another and for our community,
until love and justice reign and we feast at his heavenly banquet together.

To Christ, our friend and brother,
to the Almighty Creator,
to the Holy Spirit, our comforter,
be glory and praise forever and ever.
Amen.

PRAYER FOLLOWING COMMUNION

Light of the World and Shadow of Safety,
you have fed us with the bread of life and the cup of blessing.
You have made our humanity whole by the sacrifice of Jesus.
When we doubt our worth or splendor,
we remember your holy work, completed on our behalf,
by the light and the shadow of heaven.
We choose to go by the powers of love and justice from this moment onward.
Amen.

AFFIRMATION OF HOPE

One: Siblings in Christ, let us proclaim the hope of our faith:

One: While we were still stardust,

All: our Creator held us in contemplation.

One: While we were enslaved,

All: the Righteous Judge burned with anger.

One: When we were set free,

All: the Shepherd guided us toward green pastures.

One: While we were violent and hateful,

All: God imagined a world of peace.

One: When we oppressed others,

All: the Mighty One moved against us and laid us low.

One: When we were oppressed,

All: the Deliverer broke our chains.

One: When we did not know the way of love and justice,

All: the Loving Parent sent the Child, Jesus.

One: When we carried heavy burdens,

All: Jesus bore them for us.

One: We have seen God's faithfulness in the past.

All: And because of our past, we have hope for the future.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Siblings in Christ, do not be afraid of the light or darkness.

Go into the world and bring light to the lost and darkness to the weary.

Receive this blessing:

May you find hope in the sunrise and comfort in the sunset.

May you be beacons of light and shelters of warmth for the travelers surrounding you.

May you remember the hope of Christ lives in you.

Amen.



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