

The Fourth Sunday of Advent YEAR C December 20, 2015

The last week of Advent returns us to the beginning of John's story, as Mary, pregnant with Jesus, visits Elizabeth, and John leaps within his mothers' womb. Mary's song is, of course, one of the highlights of the birth narratives, and carries a powerful justice-proclaiming message. In the waiting of Advent, it can be tempting to become passive observers of God's activity, but the Scriptures call us instead to be active participants in God's salvation.

May our worship inspire and empower us to be both recipients of God's salvation and little incarnations who carry salvation to our world.

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

Micah 5:2-5a

Micah has told of the humiliation and difficulties Israel must experience in the near future, but he has written that later God will give them victory over their enemies. A shepherd-king will be born of David's line, and put an end to their oppression.

Psalm 80: 1 - 8

A prayer of repentance asking God to save God's people, to turn them back to God and restore them.

Hebrews 10:5-10

Under Jewish law, each year the high priest entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement to offer sacrifices for the forgiveness of certain sins, but Christ's sacrifice, his total self-offering, once and for all on the Cross, renders continuation of these sacrifices unnecessary.

Luke 1:39-45,(46-55)

As an angel foretold, Elizabeth is now six months pregnant with John the Baptist, and her relative Mary carries Jesus, foretold to be the Son of God, in her womb. God will make Jesus a king of David's line; he will rule Israel for ever.

TEXT OF READINGS

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Micah%205:%202-5a%0Acw%20Psalm%2080:%201-8%200AHebrews%2010:%205-10%0ALuke%201:%2039-45,46-55

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Lord,
we beseech thee, give ear to our prayers,
and by thy gracious visitation
lighten the darkness of our hearts
by our Lord Jesus Christ;
who liveth and reigneth with thee
and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Collect Two

God our redeemer,
who prepared the blessed Virgin Mary
to be the mother of your Son:
Grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour,
so we may be ready to greet him
when he comes again as our judge;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

Presider or deacon

As we wait with pregnant expectation for the coming of Jesus, let us offer prayers to God who sends his Son in the womb of a virgin.

Deacon or other leader

For the peace of the world, and for our unity in Christ.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For *N* our bishop and all bishops, for the presbyters, for the deacons and all who minister in Christ,
and for all the holy people of God.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For the church throughout the world and the faithful in every place.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For the leaders of the nations and all in authority.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For justice, peace, and freedom among peoples of the earth.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

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For travelers, for the sick and the suffering, for the hungry and the oppressed, and for those in prison.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For the dying and the dead.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For our deliverance from all affliction, strife, and need.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

Joining our voices with _____ and with all the saints and angels of God, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.

To you, O Lord.

Presider

O Root of Jesse, who arises as a sign among all peoples, in whose presence kings stand silent and nations bow in worship, come and deliver us, and tarry not. Glory to you for ever. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

For most of us, time goes too swiftly.

Let us pray today for those for whom time goes far too slowly.

For displaced people who have been living for many years in refugee camps yet still see no hope of repatriation.

For political and religious prisoners who pray for justice for themselves and for the well being of loved ones on the outside.

For the diseased and the maimed who long for a future which is no longer dictated by limitation or pain.

For declining churches that are too obsessed with waiting a return to past glories to be able to step freely into Christ's new future.

For the newly bereaved who fear their anguish will never cease and wonder whether they are losing their minds.

For friends and loved ones who, for various reasons, seem unable to plan for tomorrow without anxiety and trepidation.

You, Holy Friend, are forever our healing, liberation, peace and joy. May all your people open their minds and hearts to your time of salvation, and receive the grace which is made perfect in human weakness. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

POST COMMUNION

Heavenly Father,
you have given us a pledge of eternal redemption.
Grant that we may always eagerly celebrate
the saving mystery of the incarnation of your Son.
We ask this through him whose coming is certain,
whose day draws near,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS

God our Redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son:
grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour, so we may be ready to greet him
when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever *Amen. Common Worship*

Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for his coming in glory;
bring us through the birth pangs of the present age to see, with her, our great salvation in
Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen Common Worship Shorter Collect.*

All-powerful God, let the splendour of your glory rise in our hearts like the dawn, that the
darkness of the night may be scattered and the coming of your only Son may reveal us as
children of the light. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns
with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen. Methodist
Worship*

*Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us
from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you
live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

O God of Elizabeth and Mary,
you visited your servants with news of the world's redemption
in the coming of the Saviour.
Make our hearts leap with joy,
and fill our mouths with songs of praise,
that we may announce glad tidings of peace,
and welcome the Christ in our midst. *Amen.*

Shepherd of Israel,
you gently support the one who is with child
and call forth the Lamb who dances in the womb,
Stir our hearts to recognize Christ's coming,
as Elizabeth recognized his presence
in Mary's radiant obedience to your desire,
an open our souls to receive the one
who came to love your flock. *Amen.*

Brothers and sisters,
as we joyfully await the glorious coming of the Christ,
let us pray for the needs of the church, our community, and the world.

God of promise,
you have given us a sign of your love
through the gift of Jesus Christ, our Saviour,
who was promised from ages past.
We believe as Joseph did
the message of your presence
whispered by an angel,
and offer our prayers for your world,
confident of your care and mercy for all creation. Amen.

Holy God,
your prophets call us to look forward to the dawn of a new day;
may we who witness the promised springtime
prepare the way for the coming Sun of Justice, Jesus your Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God now and for ever. Amen.

God,
you exult over us with joy;
as we celebrate what has past
renew us by your love
that we may face the future with hope and joy;
through our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God now and for ever. Amen.

Intimate God,
we yearn for the light of your coming
and the warmth of your embrace;
focus our hearts on the truly important
and keep us centred on that still point, Jesus our Emmanuel,
who is alive with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God now and for ever. Amen.

LECTIONARY NOTES 1

Micah 5:2-5a

Micah was the last of the eighth-century prophets. He was from south-western Judah, west of Hebron. He is preoccupied with social justice and is totally independent of political and religious leaders. Times are bad: Assyria has captured Damascus and Samaria. Jerusalem was besieged in 701 BC. But danger was internal too: leaders accepted bribes; merchants cheated their customers; pagan gods were worshipped along with the Lord. Micah preaches about sin and punishment; people have rejected God. The coming punishment is due to their sin. Even so, there is hope for the future: a remnant will form the nucleus of a new Israel, and its leader will be a true shepherd, one who brings peace.

Micah wrote at a time when the Assyrian army had invaded the northern kingdom, Israel, and when corruption was rife in Judah. The rich cheated and robbed the poor; priests and prophets adapted their words to suit their audiences. In 701 BC, Jerusalem was besieged and Judah became a vassal state of Assyria. The invaders occupied part of the coastal plain, menacing Micah's home city, Moresheth, and the surrounding area. The prophet
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speaks “the word of the LORD that came” (1:1) to him: in 4:9-5:1, he tells of the humiliation and difficulties Israel must experience in the near future. Despite “many nations [being] ... assembled against you” (4:11), God will give the Israelites victory over their enemies: this is God’s plan.

But a time will come when a ruler will arise from the Ephrathah clan of the tribe of Judah (Ephrathah being the area round Bethlehem); he will “rule in Israel” (v. 2) and will be of ancient lineage (“from of old ...”). (David being from Bethlehem, people understood the lineage to be his; as Matthew 2:5-6 shows, at the time of Jesus, they understood this figure to be the Messiah, the ideal future king, who would bring misery to an end and usher in God’s glorious kingdom.) God will “give them up” (v. 3, allow his people to be oppressed) until the right time. The woman in v. 3 is this king’s mother. When he is born, oppression will end and all Israelites will be reunited. He will be like a shepherd, feeding his people (“flock”, v. 4) through the power and authority of God. He will bring an era of peace. He will rule in Jerusalem (v. 7).

Psalm 80:1-7

Psalms is a collection of collections. The psalms were written over many centuries, stretching from the days of Solomon's temple (about 950 BC) to after the Exile (about 350 BC.) Psalms are of five types: hymns of praise, laments, thanksgiving psalms, royal psalms, and wisdom psalms. Within the book, there are five "books"; there is a doxology ("Blessed be ... Amen and Amen") at the end of each book.

Psalm 80 is a prayer for deliverance from Israel’s enemies, calling on God to “shine forth” (smile), be favourably disposed towards his people. God was seen as enthroned invisibly on the “cherubim”, the half-human, half-animal winged creatures on the Ark. From the mention of three northern tribes in v. 2 we can guess that this psalm was written shortly before the conquest of the northern kingdom in 721 BC. Vv. 3, 7 and 19 are a refrain: please take us back, God, into the covenant relationship with you! The nation’s current plight is seen as due to God’s anger (v. 4). Vv. 5 and 6 tell of the present evils besetting the nation; in contrast, vv. 8-11 recall God’s gracious hand in the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan. Why, asks v. 12, have you made Israel vulnerable? Please Lord, look after us! Vv. 17-19 seek deliverance: may you be with our king, “the one at your right hand”, so we will never desert you (v. 18). Give us strength (“life”) to seek favours from you. Be with us, so that “we may be saved” (v. 19).

Hebrews 10:5-10

Apart from the concluding verses (which may have been added later), this book is a treatise (or sermon) rather than a letter. Its name comes from its approach to Christianity: it is couched in Judaic terms. The identity of the author is unknown; Origen, c. 200 said that "only God knows" who wrote Hebrews. The book presents an elaborate analysis, arguing for the absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Christ as revealer and mediator of God's grace. Basing his argument on the Old Testament, the author argues for the superiority of Christ to the prophets, angels and Moses. Christ offers a superior priesthood, and his sacrifice is much more significant than that of Levite priests. Jesus is the "heavenly" High Priest, making the true sacrifice for the sins of the people, but he is also of the same flesh and blood as those he makes holy.

In v. 1, the author has stated that the sacrifices offered annually in the Temple on the Day of Atonement (according to Jewish law) foreshadow (point forward to) “the good things [that are] to come” through Christ. He then argues: if the temple sacrifices were “good

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things”, i.e. cleansing of all inner guilt that sin causes, why did these sacrifices need to continue? (v. 2) These sacrifices, he says, did not *wipe the slate clean* (v. 3); they can’t (v. 4).

Now, quoting Psalm 40, the author explains that God prefers obedience (“a body ...”, v. 5) to sacrifices: doing God’s will is what counts (v. 7). In v. 8 the author interprets the psalm. He lists the four types of sacrifice offered in the Temple, offered according to Mosaic “law” (v. 8). Jesus, he says (v. 9), came to do away with “the first” (the sacrificial system) and to inaugurate “the second” (the self-offering of Jesus). It is “by God’s will” (v. 10), carried out through Christ, that we have been “sanctified”, been made ceremonially clean and been perfected, made complete, through Christ’s death on the cross – “once for all” time.

Luke 1:39-45,(46-55)

An angel has appeared to Zechariah in the Temple, and later the angel Gabriel has come to Mary. Zechariah has been told that his wife Elizabeth will bear a child in her old age; Mary has heard that she will bear a son to be called Jesus and “Son of the Most High” (v. 32), of God. God will make him a king of David’s line; he will rule Israel for ever.

Now Mary visits her “relative” (v. 36) Elizabeth. In telling us that “the child” (v. 41, John the Baptist) “leaped” in Elizabeth’s womb, Luke intends us to understand that John recognizes his Lord, Jesus. Elizabeth’s reaction, empowered by the Holy Spirit, is to praise Mary. Elizabeth “exclaimed with a loud cry” (v. 42, or voice) – the way marvellous prophecies were given in the Old Testament. V. 43 translates a Semitic idiom: today Elizabeth might say: *How can I be thought worthy of being visited by the mother of my Lord?* V. 45 portrays Mary as the model believer: she trusted that God would keep his promise made through Gabriel, preposterous as it sounded.

Mary thanks God (vv. 47-55) in a poem known as the *Magnificat*, the first word of its Latin translation. Speaking today, she might begin: *From the depth of my heart, I declare the Lord’s greatness and rejoice in God my Saviour.* “Servant” (v. 48) can also be rendered *slave* or *handmaid*: in v. 38, she has acknowledged that she is a “servant of the Lord”, i.e. obedient to him in all things. She will be hailed by people of every age (“generations”, v. 48) in the new era of salvation launched by her son. Why? Because of the seemingly impossible “things” (v. 49) God has done for her. Vv. 51-53 universalize her experience, to reflect how God deals with all humanity. While the verbs are in the past tense in English, the Greek tense has the sense of:

how God customarily acts – as he always has and will continue to do – and what he is starting to do in the conception of Jesus.

The “proud” (v. 51), the arrogant, are alienated from God by their very “thoughts”; he reverses fortunes, raising up those in need (“lowly”, v. 52, “hungry”, v. 53) and rejecting the rich, those who think they don’t need God.

Luke 1:46b-55

Mary is visiting Elizabeth and Zechariah. God’s messenger, Gabriel, has told her that she will bear Jesus, “the Son of God” (v. 35), successor to David and founder of an eternal kingdom. With God, “nothing will be impossible” (v. 37) – it was possible for Sarah to bear a child. Mary now thanks God in a poem known as the *Magnificat*, the first word of its Latin translation. Speaking today, she might begin: *From the depth of my heart, I declare the Lord’s greatness and rejoice in God my Saviour.* “Servant” (v. 48) can also be rendered *slave* or *handmaid*: in v. 38, she has acknowledged that she is a “servant of the Lord”, i.e. www.churchnewsireland.org

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obedient to him in all things. She will be hailed by people of every age (“generations”, v. 48) in the new era of salvation launched by her son. Why? Because of the seemingly impossible “things” (v. 49) God has done for her. Then a reminder (v. 50): God is compassionate to all who hold him in awe throughout time.

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The “proud” (v. 51), the arrogant, are alienated from God by their very “thoughts”; he reverses fortunes, raising up those in need (“lowly”, v. 52, “hungry”, v. 53) and rejecting the rich, those who think they don’t need God. Vv. 54-55 sum up the *Magnificat*: in his compassion, God has fulfilled and continues to fulfill his promises to the patriarchs.

LECTIONARY NOTES 2

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

There’s a temptation contained in this week’s readings to view salvation as God’s work of rescue for which we do nothing but receive. Of course, on one level, we are nothing more than recipients of God’s grace. But, the Gospel does not portray God as a super hero who swoops into save us while we just look on in amazement. In the Micah reading, a shepherd is promised for God’s people. This is God’s work. But, that shepherd comes from an insignificant town, which means that the work of this shepherd will require response from the people to whom he comes. In the Psalm, God is asked to save God’s people, but the need for the people to return to God is clearly stated. In the Hebrews reading, Jesus is revealed as the one who obeys and sacrifices in order to save us, but this is placed in the context of a discourse around covenant and our response to the work of Christ which makes us holy. Finally, in the Gospel, Mary’s visit to Elizabeth is testimony to the divine initiative in both the birth of John and of Jesus, but both mothers are participants in the process of incarnation, and Mary’s song reveals that, although God is the Saviour, the justice that God brings happens as it takes hold of the lives of people. The challenge this week, then, is to recognise God’s work without becoming mere apathetic spectators of God’s salvation. We are called to be participants with God in God’s saving work, starting with our own lives as we respond in faith and repentance to the sacrifice of Christ. Then, once we have allowed God’s Reign to be conceived in us (like Mary), we become participants in the process of salvation, seeking through our attitudes and actions to bring salvation and justice to others in whatever way we can. So, God’s Reign comes to us, and then through us to others. Christ sacrifices himself for us, and then we sacrifice ourselves for others. God is born within us, and then we become midwives helping to birth God in others and in our world.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: The two aspects of this week’s theme both have a significant implications for our work for justice. Firstly, the work of repentance requires us to take responsibility for our part in the brokenness in our world and acknowledge our responsibility to others. But, repentance is not just about praying a prayer or saying sorry. We need to change our behaviour. Even as the insignificant Bethlehem became the birth place of the Saviour, so small, seemingly insignificant actions can have a huge impact on the world. As we learn to live in accordance with the values of God’s Reign – simplicity, generosity, peace, justice, grace, love, forgiveness, justice – we contribute to the healing

of our world. Then, secondly, we are called to commit ourselves to manifesting and proclaiming God's Reign in our world, and helping others to respond. We do this work by calling our leaders to account, and by responsible participation in the global community through advocacy, political participation, activism, contribution, and, where necessary, peaceful confrontation. Power is found in this work as we commit to hope, and embrace the signs of growing interconnectedness and collaboration between countries, faiths and sectors of society. These are the signs of Advent in the real world.

LOCAL APPLICATION: The small acts of repentance toward those we have hurt in our families and communities, and the small acts of turning from apathy to daily justice through learning, participating, voting and teaching, all herald God's Advent among us in practical ways. Add to this the power of hope in God's Spirit to empower us, and in Christ's example to lead us, and we begin to live out the truth that small things really do make a huge difference in the world. Then, as we begin to manifest the values of God's Reign in our own lives, homes, neighbourhoods and communities, we can begin to work alongside others, calling them to embrace the Gospel call for themselves. This is not about getting people to pray a "sinner's prayer" or sign a commitment card. It's about modelling a whole new way of living – a way that recognises our connectedness, our interdependence, our responsibility for our own lives and for one another – and challenging those around us, through the fruit of our lives, to join the movement of God's Spirit in our world. The constant rhythm of Advent, from God coming to us to God coming through us, is an invitation that can be offered to everyone, and as we allow our lives to make the invitation, the signs of Advent are seen among us in our daily lives.

SERMON OUTLINE

Lk.1:39-55 Mary set out (Visitation)

Today we set out with Mary to visit the beautiful little Judean village of **Ein Karem** (Arabic = Spring of the Vineyard) - about 7 miles from Jerusalem - within walking / commuting distance of the Temple for Zechariah the priest

From the 5thC there was a church built here - the present one built by the Franciscans in 1935 with the **Magnificat** on plaques in 41 different languages... a picturesque setting

1. Mary's Greeting: as she *entered the house of Zechariah* - God was at work in Elizabeth with a 2-fold effect:-

- a) *the child leapt in her womb* - was pre-natal John excited
- b) *Elizabeth was filled with the HSp* > her pronouncement

2. Mary's Greatness: Elizabeth *exclaimed with a loud cry* (42), "*Blessed are you among women and blessed indeed is the fruit of your womb*". God was going to perform a mighty miracle in her - the birth of His only Son Jesus! She is called the **Blessed Virgin Mary** - held in the highest honour & esteem...

3. Mary's Gratitude: (46f) as she responds with the **Magnificat** - her magnificent song of praise to God...

- a) **her Soul** - *magnifies the Lord* - bursting with good news
- b) **her Saviour** - *my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour* (47).
- c) **her Strength** - *he has shown strength with his arm* (51)..

Difficult times lay ahead - Bethlehem, Egypt, Nazareth >> travelling with J >> cross & resurrection >> early church...

She needed His strength - so too do we - as *we set out* in faith wherever that leads us

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By Norman Porteous

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

"Sacrifice," Frederick Buechner Sermon Illustrations. On Hebrews 10

<http://frederickbuechner.com/content/weekly-sermon-illustration-sacrifice>

"Learning to Focus," the Rev. Dr. Casey Baggott, On Luke 1: 46 - 55, *Day 1*

http://day1.org/4401-learning_to_focus

"Reflections at the End of Advent," the Rev. Ben E. Helmer, *Sermons that Work*, Episcopal Digital Network

Don't you love it when people ask you, "Are you ready for Christmas?" A good answer is, "No, but it's coming anyway, so let's all be joyful!"

This week we pay for that bridge week between Thanksgiving and Advent by having a truncated fourth week in Advent. It barely begins before we move to Christmas Eve, then Christmas itself. But, truly, we're never ready. Advent is a deliberate escape from the frantic pulse of getting ready.

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2012/11/27/4-advent-c-2012/>

Elizabeth's Song (Luke 1:39-45) A longish sermon from a Reformed Theological Seminary - but contains much useful material e.g., consequence of Christ's coming as a blessing on womankind.

<http://www.preaching.com/resources/preaching-online/11596898>

Blessed is she who believed - Looks at the faith of Mary, Elizabeth and John the Baptist

John the Baptist wasn't a "late-bloomer" by any stretch of the imagination. He had a commission from God before his birth to be a royal messenger to prepare the way for the Lord. The angel announcing the promise of John's birth to his father Zechariah, said that John would be "great before the Lord"...and then went on to give the surprising promise that John would be "filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15).

<http://thejoshuavictortheory.blogspot.co.uk/2009/12/sermon-on-luke-139-45-for-4th-sunday-in.html>

"Mary's Visit to Elizabeth," Gospel Analysis, *Sermons from Seattle*.

Detailed background and exegesis. (scroll down)

http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series_b_the_virgin_maryGA.htm

"The Place Where Heaven Will Touch the Earth," Rev. Dr. Wiley Stephens, *Day 1*

I am Micah. You know me because I wrote one of the books of prophecy that is found in what is called by some the Old Testament and others the Hebrew Bible. I lived in the latter part of the eighth century before the birth of Jesus Christ. I came from Moresheth, a village located 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem. It was a part of Judah called Shephelah. This is

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an area about fifty miles long of gently sloping limestone hills and fertile valleys separating the Judean hill country from the western coastal plain.

If you go by that part of the world today, you will find orchards and crops in the valleys and herds of sheep and goats on its steeper regions.

http://day1.org/1612-the_place_where_heaven_will_touch_the_earth

"Head of Household," the Rev. Dr. Scott Black Johnston, Day 1

Men are strangely quiet in Luke's first chapter. Zechariah is silenced. Joseph says nothing at all. What is the gospel writer up to here? In the hush, our gaze is drawn toward two women-cousins who rush to greet each other, females with wombs filled by miraculous cavorting babies, and spirits set afire by the living God. Pure hysteria.

http://day1.org/1021-head_of_household

"Standing on the Threshold," Dianne Bergant, CSA, America

There is electricity in a crowd waiting in line, or in a huddle, anxious for doors to be opened. This is true at a movie or sports event or on the first day of a sale. They can hardly wait; they feel that they are on the threshold of something marvellous. That's where we are today. The readings prepare us for the upcoming feast, giving us glimpses into the mysteries we will be celebrating. They bring together the major themes of the first three Sundays of Advent: promise, repentance, transformation and joy. We now stand on the threshold, eager for the doors to be opened so that we can step inside and enjoy the marvels prepared for us there.

<http://americamagazine.org/content/the-word/standing-threshold>

CHILDREN

[Worshiping with Children](#), Advent 4, Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown.

<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2012/06/year-c-fourth-sunday-of-advent-december.html>

["Sermon of the Week,"](#) / ["Mensajes para ninos,"](#) Sermons 4 Kids, Charles Kirkpatrick, Object Lessons & Children's Sermons, Colouring Pages, Puzzles. Sermons4Kids.com.

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/>

[Children's Sermon](#), Faith Formation Journeys

<http://faithformationjourneys.org/?p=500>

["Christmas Cliches,"](#) Dianne Deming, *Children's Sermons Today*

<http://childrenssermonstoday.blogspot.co.uk/2012/12/christmas-cliches.html>

[Gathering](#), from the United Church of Canada. Includes sermon seeds, liturgical ideas, "with children," hymn suggestions, choral suggestions etc, 2015.

<http://www.united-church.ca/planning/lectionary#gathering>

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HYMN SUGGESTIONS

[O Come, O Come, Emmanuel](#)
[O Little Town Of Bethlehem](#)
[Just As I Am](#)
[Joy To The World](#)
[Cradled In A Manger Meanly](#)
[Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus](#)
[A King Is Born](#)
[That's Why We Praise Him](#)
[Here I Am To Worship](#)
[Do You Hear What I Hear?](#)

Please commend this resource to colleagues - they simply send an email to churchnewsireland@gmail.com with the message Passwords in the title