
Advent, Christmas & Epiphany 2020

An Annotated List of Worship Resources

With all that 2020 brings, how much we need to hear anew the promises of God through the words of the prophets, to experience again the star's light illuminating the night, and to know more fully the presence of Emmanuel, God-with-us! The following resources invite us all into reflection, repentance, renewal and celebration through the Advent, Christmas and Epiphany seasons.

As you plan worship this season, I challenge you to:

- ◇ ***Think beyond the walls of the church building.*** Our neighbors long for hope, peace, joy and love too. Our communities need to know Jesus. Think of ways you can celebrate Advent and Christmas on the front lawn of the church, at the community park, in the town square, and in people's living rooms. Go where people are, and take the good news of Jesus Christ with you!
- ◇ ***Think beyond spoken words.*** We are all drowning in words right now – news headlines, talking heads, stump speeches and social media posts. The Advent and Christmas narratives overflow with imagery. In Jesus, God's Word takes on flesh; he lives and moves and acts. Consider the ways that visual images, instrumental music and meaningful action may draw us deeper into the mystery of God dwelling among us. Incorporate these into your worship alongside the traditional spoken and sung liturgy.

I have collected an extensive list of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany liturgical resources below. Feel free to contact me if you're looking for something specific that you can't find here! I'd be glad to help you find or develop the resources you need.

Peace,

Amy Wagner
WPAUMC Director of
Congregational Development & Revitalization
amy.wagner@wpaumc.org

Denominational Worship Resources

Company's Coming: Advent 2020 from Discipleship Ministries:

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/companys-coming>

- ◇ Sundays from November 29 to January 3
- ◇ Includes planning guide, preaching notes, prayers and liturgies, hymn suggestions, small group guides for adults, youth & children, and graphics.
- ◇ No cost.

Advent Wreath Liturgy from Discipleship Ministries:

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/advent-candle-lighting-liturgy-2020>

- ◇ Weekly Advent Wreath liturgies for Sundays in Advent, and Christmas Eve.
- ◇ May be used with Company's Coming series or independently.
- ◇ Written for multiple voices, but without congregational reading.

The Season of Advent from Millennial Africana Voices (Edited by Rev. Dr. Safiyah Fosua, sponsored by Discipleship Ministries):

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/millennial-centennial-voices-from-the-africana-diaspora>

- ◇ Sundays in Advent, plus Christmas Day and New Year's Eve/Day worship
- ◇ Prayers, Liturgies, Meditations and Spoken Word Poetry

Seeking Jesus, The Advent of Justice & Peace from General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR)

<https://www.r2hub.org/premium-resources/p/advent2020>

- ◇ 5 week lectionary-based Advent resource focusing on lamentation, anticipation and renewal
- ◇ Includes sermon starters, suggested hymns, and children's activities
- ◇ Cost: \$20

Advent & Christmas Music in the Midst of Covid-19 from Discipleship Ministries

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/advent-and-christmas-music-in-the-midst-of-covid-19>

- ◇ Includes music suggestions for Hanging of the Greens, Advent Sundays, Christmas Eve, Watch Night and New Year's Covenant Renewal Services.
- ◇ Includes recommendations for adapted Christmas Cantatas that use both recorded and live voices, and/or may be offered virtually.

Advent Worship Litanies by Upper Room

<https://www.upperroom.org/devotionals/blog-posts/1347> - 2020

<https://www.upperroom.org/devotionals/blog-posts/894> - 2019 (uses hope/peace/joy/love)

- ◇ Weekly Advent candle lighting reflections to be used at home or in worship
- ◇ Includes spoken words for wreath lighting and Read/Reflect/Do/Pray “take home” for each week
- ◇ Ongoing Upper Room resources may also be useful during this season, including: Virtual Prayer Wall, Daily Sight Psalms, Upper Room devotional & eZine, New Every Morning prayer liturgy

ResourceUMC Advent & Christmas Index

<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/seasonal/advent>

<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/seasonal/christmas>

<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/seasonal/epiphany>

- ◇ Some highlights that might be especially useful for 2020:
 - Advent Prayer Stations <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/go-deeper-with-advent-prayer-stations>
 - Epiphany Blessing of Homes: <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/an-epiphany-blessing-of-homes-and-chalking-the-door>
 - New Year Social Media Graphics: <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/new-year-new-beginnings-social-media-graphics>

Books & Studies for Congregational Use

Upper Room Advent & Christmas Book Studies:

<https://bookstore.upperroom.org/Products/CategoryCenter/AC/Advent--Christmas.aspx>

- ◇ Some books have related virtual studies available through the link below

Upper Room Advent & Christmas Virtual / Online Studies:

<https://urelearning.upperroom.org/courses/category/SEASON:%20Advent>

- ◇ Offering daily or weekly (depending on the study) reflections for viewing on demand.
- ◇ Costs for individual enrollment in global classroom range from \$12-\$50 per course.
- ◇ Groups of 5 or more may request a private course with group pricing by emailing URearning@UpperRoom.org
- ◇ 2020 Specific Study is *This Blue Christmas: An Experience of Light and Hope in an Unprecedented Advent* by Todd Outcult.

Cokesbury Advent & Christmas Studies:

<https://www.cokesbury.com/advent2020>

- ◇ Books, dvd/downloadable studies, children's resources and worship supplies
- ◇ ResourceUMC recommends these studies, available through Cokesbury, especially for 2020:
<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/books-studies-for-advent-2020>

Liturgies & Prayers

Feasting on the Word Advent Companion

- ◇ Book of lectionary-based liturgies and preaching guides for four Sundays of Advent, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.
- ◇ Also includes four weeks of alternative worship resources based on John's Gospel, and an Advent Service of Healing and Hope.

Text Week Advent Resources

<http://www.textweek.com/advent.htm>

- ◇ Extensive compilation of links to online Advent prayers, liturgies and worship resources, organized by type (Advent wreath liturgies, Hanging of the Greens, Christmas Eve, etc).
- ◇ The above link leads to seasonal resources; the page also includes weekly lectionary related resources for every Sunday by date.

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgies from the Methodist Church in the UK

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/posts/advent-candle-liturgies/>

Liturgy Link Advent Resources

<https://www.liturgylink.net/category/advent/>

- ◇ A collection of reader-submitted Advent worship resources, including prayers, candle lighting liturgies, confessions and original hymns.
- ◇ Search by liturgical week in menu on left side of page.

Children, Families and At-Home Worship

Faithful Families for Advent & Christmas by Traci Smith

www.traci-smith.com/faithfulfamilieschristmas/

<https://www.cokesbury.com/Faithful-Families-for-Advent-and-Christmas>

- ◇ Book of home-based worship practices for Advent and Christmas, organized into holiday activity categories like decorating, baking, story telling, and giving.
- ◇ Some of my favorite practices for this year, in particular: Silent Night Star Walk, Hot Chocolate Gratitude Party, Christmas Card prayers and Blessing Prayer for Family Far Away.

Praying in Color Advent 2020 by Sybil MacBeth

<https://Prayingincolor.com/handouts>

- ◇ Color-in Advent Calendar templates in which you color one mosaic piece per day to create your own Advent prayer calendar.
- ◇ Not just for children! Scroll down on website for links to leader guides for adult and children Praying in Color sessions.

Worshipping with Children

<http://worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.com/p/popcorn-index.html>

- ◇ The Worshipping with Children blog is not providing 2020 updates, but there are 10 years' worth of archived resources
- ◇ The above link takes you to an index of resources for Advent, Christmas & Epiphany
- ◇ Highlights include a helpful list of children's Advent & Christmas storybooks, a family-friendly Lessons & Carols service, and a celebration of St. Nicholas for use on St. Nicholas' Day (Dec 6) or throughout the season
- ◇ Also provides worship planning helps specific to lectionary years A, B, C

Resource UMC: Celebrating Advent with Kids

<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/new-ways-to-celebrate-advent-with-kids>

- ◇ Not 2020 specific, so some ideas will need to be adapted

Comprehensive, Themed Worship Bundles

***I Believe, Even When...* from Worship Design Studio with Marcia McFee**

www.worshipdesignstudio.com/believe

- ◇ FREE *Parks, Porches and Sidewalk Sings: Fill the Night with Music and Light*
<https://congregationsong.org/christmas-park-porch-and-sidewalk-sings/>

<https://gtow6fko.pages.infusionsoft.net/?fbclid=IwAR1I7NiIRZMibNcNWE3yTvmGcEX6Y1csBNrhU2Ndteqs2sj8tkant8aL60>
 - Offers 10- and 30-minute outdoor caroling services
 - Includes participant song sheets, downloadable accompaniment tracks, leaders' guides, and supplementary ideas
 - A collaboration between The Center for Congregational Song and Worship Design Studio
 - May be used with *I Believe, Even When...* or independently

- ◇ Cost: \$99 for Advent bundle (must create free Worship Design Studio account to purchase); or, \$299 for annual subscription to all Worship Design Studio resources, including Advent bundle.

- ◇ Bundle Includes:
 - Six fully-scripted worship experiences
 - Blue Christmas and Christmas Eve no-touch prayer pilgrimage stations
 - Sermon starters
 - Original composition music for organ, soloist, choir and handbells
 - Webinar tutorials for creating virtual choir videos
 - Visual graphics and media bundle for sanctuary, home and virtual worship
 - Film Festival videos for weekly small group discussions
 - Children's resources
 - Logo and video trailers, social media graphics, and advertising resources
 - Online crowd-sourcing community available through Worship Design Studio app

- ◇ Notes & Observations:
 - Many resources require access to and familiarity with technology
 - May be best for midsize and larger congregations; smaller congregations may need to adapt resources for their context
 - Preview weekly Scriptures & themes here: [https://media2-production.mightynetworks.com/asset/13277774/I Believe Even When Scriptures and Synopses.pdf](https://media2-production.mightynetworks.com/asset/13277774/I%20Believe%20Even%20When%20Scriptures%20and%20Synopses.pdf)

Those Who Dream from Sanctified Art

<https://sanctifiedart.org/those-who-dream-advent-bundle-year-b>

- ◇ Bundle Includes:
 - Daily Devotional (downloadable and printable)
 - Words for Worship – liturgies for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany
 - Longest Night Liturgy
 - Sermon planning guide
 - Visual Art Collection – original images with artists’ reflections and Scripture references for use in worship, small groups, and individual reflection
 - Interactive Story Telling Liturgy for the Sunday after Christmas – designed for use on Zoom or in at-home worship
 - Printable Painted and Paper-Lace Banners with creativity guide for how to use and display in both small-scale (suitable for home use) and large-scale (for sanctuary or outdoor display)
 - Star Words Epiphany Activity with Accompanying Worship Liturgy with idea guide for use with adults, children, families
 - Those Who Dream Advent Poems – a collection of 10 Prayer Poems that may be used for meditation, worship or small group discussion
 - Branding bundle with graphics for print and web
 - Bonus: *Those Who Dream* original theme song by *The Many*, in both soundtrack and video downloads

- ◇ Cost: \$145-\$235 depending on size of congregation. Each resource in the bundle may also be purchased separately.

- ◇ Notes & Observations:
 - Most comprehensive of the bundles reviewed, incorporating visual art, music, poetry and liturgy; providing options for individuals, families and congregations; and offering adaptations for sanctuary worship, virtual worship and at-home worship.

Do Not Be Afraid from Illustrated Ministry

<https://store.illustratedministry.com/collections/advent>

- ◇ Imagery-focused Advent worship bundle following lectionary texts

- ◇ Bundle includes:
 - Full-color and B&W illustrations for display and/or coloring (scaled for use as both individual coloring sheets, or large-scale posters for group use)
 - Children’s moment reflections
 - Bulletin covers
 - Weekly Devotional

- Paper crafts
 - Advent calendar with daily themed activities
 - A Virtual Christmas Pageant
- ◇ Cost: Advent Bundle priced from \$10 - \$70 depending on size of congregation. Each resource in the bundle may also be purchased separately.
- ◇ Notes & Observations:
- Primarily, though not exclusively, intended for worship with children and families
 - Additional items for purchase include Nativity stickers; paper-craft ornaments, Advent wreath, and nativity.
 - Past-year resource bundles also available.

Deck The Halls Advent Worship from The Greater New Jersey Annual Conference

<https://www.gnjumc.org/deckthehalls/>

- ◇ Advent Sermon series developed by Greater New Jersey Annual Conference Staff and offered for free to UMC churches
- ◇ Includes: sermon starters, mission & engagement ideas, worship liturgies, small group discussion guide, logo and graphics bundle, and video trailer
- ◇ Covers four weeks of Advent plus Christmas Eve and Christmas Sunday
- ◇ Separate Epiphany Series will be posted when available at <https://www.gnjumc.org/breakthrough/2021-worship-series/>

Worship Series Written or Recommended by UMC Church Planters

This list was compiled by church planters around the UMC connection on a recent call with Path 1 staff. They were focusing especially on resources that would connect with persons beyond the congregation, and which congregation members could share widely with their friends and family.

Fear Not by Rev. Corey Turnpenny of Get Lit Worship Resources
<https://getlitworship.wordpress.com/2019/10/31/fear-not-advent-series/>

- ◇ Other Advent resources also available on her blog

Maya Angelou and the Freedom Poetry of Advent from SALT*
<https://www.saltproject.org/maya-angelou-and-the-freedom-poetry-of-advent>

- ◇ Daily Advent devotional that weaves together Year B Lectionary texts with Maya Angelou's poetry to address Advent themes
- ◇ Download costs from \$10-\$60 depending on size of congregation
- ◇ Customizable document allows you to add your congregational information, including Christmas worship plans, before distributing

The Honest Advent Book by Scott Erickson
<https://www.Scottericksonart.com/honest-advent-book>

- ◇ Books are available for purchase at \$18.99 or a bulk rate of \$12.50 each for orders of 20+
- ◇ Website also includes related sermon starters, discussion questions, and an Advent Art Show

Church in the Wild Advent Calendar
<https://churchinthewild.org>

- ◇ A creation and Creator focused Advent devotional calendar that encourages getting out into nature and bringing something in to create an ecological Advent worship space at home.
- ◇ In development; will be available on the church's website when completed.