

A BLENDED WORSHIP ADVENT SERVICE

By Bob Pond

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Summary:

This is a brief outline of an Advent service that happened at a Briercrest Seminary chapel in 2006.

Length: 2 pages

The advent service is quite traditional in style. However this service proposes both traditional and contemporary styles blended together.

The responsive prayers, special readings, hymns, lighting of candles on wreath, prayer of invocation and penitence will be the traditional aspect of the service.

The contemporary elements of the worship service are the use of a computer and a digital projector; the background pictures which will make the singing more experiential. The setting of the chairs (no pews) in a V shape is also another element of the contemporary style; allowing for more symbolic settings.¹ While most of the advent songs tend to be traditional, a special effort has been made to keep a balance between the two styles with some contemporary songs appropriate for Advent and the Lord's second coming. The absence of a pulpit with a music stand instead and a room that will be dimly lit, for the event, also speaks of contemporary styles of worship.

In this service there will be an act of entrance; of the Word being read and preached; with a response (if time permits communion would be appropriate) in spontaneous prayers of thanksgiving and testimony with a short corporate prayer of penitence; and finally the dismissal in song Scripture reading and blessing.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICE

Prelude – the prelude will be the instrumental song “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”.

Welcome – The welcome will be done by way of PowerPoint encouraging the people to prepare themselves for worship.

Entrance – The prayer of invocation by the leader and responsive prayer will be traditional in nature. However, the opening song is contemporary and will help the worshippers to be ushered in the “presence” of our transcendent God. The song following after will still be contemporary but will have a hint of the “light of the World” in it so as to start to prepare the worshippers towards the theme of advent.

Word – The second aspect of the worship will be much more traditional with four separate Scripture readings followed by a candle being lit for each reading. One stanza of the theme song “O Come O Come Emmanuel” will also be sung for each reading. As this will be happening, the wreath will be moved closer and closer toward the congregants; it will be a symbolic act of the Light getting closer to humanity.

Once this done it will be followed by “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”, just before the speaker comes forward for a five to ten minute devotional on Advent.

Response – Since time will not permit, the Lord's Table will not be observed. However the response to God's Word will still be acted out. There will be a traditional prayer of penitence in relations to advent which will be done corporately followed by spontaneous prayers of thanksgiving and personal testimony to what God may have been doing in one's heart during the service.

Dismissal/Blessing – Two contemporary songs will be done here with special accent on the second coming of Christ. It will then be followed by a Scripture reading in Revelation which will focus on the call for Jesus to come quickly. It will be followed by the dismissal and blessing with a focus, again, on the Lord's second coming.

At the very end there will be a time for reflection and personal meditation accompanied by the instrumental song “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”. During that short period of time, there will be a verse up on the screen (Isaiah 9:2) “*The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.*”

ORDER OF SERVICE

¹ The wreath will be moved from the front toward the congregants at each reading.

Welcome by way of the PowerPoint slide.

Prelude: 5 minutes before the service, “Come Thou Long expected Jesus” (Public Domain) will be played instrumentally.

ENTRANCE

Prayer of Invocation by Leader

Responsive Prayer (*appropriate to advent*)

Opening Song: God of Wonders Beyond our Galaxies (Mark Byrd, Steve Hindalong, 2000 New Spring Publishing)

Song: Here I am to Worship (Tim Hughes, 2000 Kingsway’s Thankyou Music)

Explanation/clarification: An explanation of the emphasis on advent (the coming yet not here – delayed gratification). It is also about the second coming/advent. So we’re looking back at the advent drama of the first coming of Christ but we’re also looking into the future of the second coming of Christ; it is a dual advent.

WORD

Theme Song: O Come O Come Emmanuel 1st stanza (Public Domain)

1st Scripture Reading: John 1:1-5; Jeremiah 33:14-16; Isaiah 9:1; Matthew 3:2

1st Candle lighted

Theme Song: O Come O Come Emmanuel 2nd stanza

2nd Scripture Reading: Malachi 3:1; Luke 3:2-6; Philippians 1:6-11

2nd Candle lighted *move the wreath toward the people*

Theme Song: O Come O Come Emmanuel 3rd stanza

3rd Scripture Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-20; Luke 3:16-17; Philippians 4:4-5

3rd Candle lighted *move the wreath toward the people*

Theme Song: O Come O Come Emmanuel 4th stanza

4th Scripture Reading: Luke 1:39-45; Micah 5:2-5; Luke 21:25-28; Matthew 24:30-33

4th Candle lighted *move the wreath toward the people*

Song: Come Thou Long Expected Jesus (Public Domain)

Prayer: For the ministry of the Word (devotion/sermon)

Devotional: Your speaker.

RESPONSE

Prayer of penitence: done corporately (PowerPoint)

In Prayer or Testimony: Anyone who wishes to give thanks in prayer or share something about God’ goodness or something related to the light of Christ coming into their lives.

DISMISSAL/SENDING

Song: Save Us, (Dave Lubben, 2001 Vertical Worship Songs)

Song: Days of Elijah, (Robin Mark, 1996 Daybreak Music)

Scripture Reading: Revelation 22: 16-20

Dismissal and Blessing: by leader

Postlude: Personal Moment of Meditation, 1 minute. Accompanied by the instrumental song “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus” (Public Domain)

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