



## Soon and Very Soon: Prompts for Advent Sermons



*These ideas are shared for the Church's use in worship.*



### Soon and Very Soon

*This theme is drawn from the Introduction to Soon and Very Soon (Advent Devotional): "The events of this time have accelerated my need for God to make good on some promises already."*

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: God's Promise of Peace (Leviticus 26:4-6 and Psalm 85)  
*Beyond the absence of war, what does God's peace look like? What does peace taste like? What does it feel like in the body, in the community?*
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday: God's Promise of Justice (Deuteronomy 10:17-19 and Psalm 9)  
*Imagine: a justice so thorough that the memory of injustice can be erased (Ps 9:6)! Imagine: an equity so complete that nations are not needed to define and defend the people (Ps 9:15)!*
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: God's Promise of Nearness (Genesis 28:11-16 and Psalm 145:13b-21)  
*The message "I am with you" comes from God most often in the Bible when life is turbulent and the way forward is uncertain. Sound familiar?*
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: God's Promise of Joy (Isaiah 35:1-4 & 10 and Psalm 96)  
*Is the land glad today? Are the crocuses rejoicing? Are those who live in fear relieved of anxiety and dancing in the streets? What is God's joyful song that we are called to sing in harmony with the earth and its people?*



### Advent Commandments

*This theme is drawn from the Gospel of Matthew, Revised Common Lectionary readings.*

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: Keep Awake (Matthew 24:36-44)  
*We may not know the day or hour, but are we ready to live fearlessly, now, in God's ever-dawning presence? Notice that Jesus's speech continues to the end of Matthew 25, where the work we should be about is described.*

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday: Repent (Matthew 3:1-12)

*Repentance is part of the work of preparation – and both activities have individual and collective elements. As crowds come to John for baptism, their repentance becomes a community event. Preparing the path of God also requires communities to engage in love and justice.*

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: Go and Tell (Matthew 11:2-11)

*Good news stories of healing and transformation are longed for in a world overflowing with bad news. But notice Jesus's observation later in the chapter (v. 18-19): people find it easier to believe bad news than to rejoice in good news. "Go and tell" also needs us to "Hear and believe."*

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Rejoice (Matthew 1:18-25)

*The path and purpose of God are not always what we have in mind. How many of us can receive a message like "Your world will be turned upside down," and not be afraid ... let alone, receive that message and rejoice?*



## Preaching the Candles

*This theme is based on the four virtues of traditional Advent candle wreaths.*

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: Hope (Psalm 33)

*"Hope" is often followed by a preposition: "hope for" or "hope in." Do the things we hope for align with the character of the God in whom we hope? Should they align – in our faith and in our daily lives?*

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday: Peace (Psalm 121)

*Psalm 121 doesn't promise certainty or constancy or calm, which are significant parts of "peace" for many people. What sets our hearts at peace? What sets our communities and relationships at peace?*

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: Joy (Psalm 100)

*Joy is powerful! It is both grounding and igniting. Joy gathers like clouds, booms like thunder, and shines like the heavens. What idols of ours are put to shame before God's radiating joy?*

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Love (Psalm 136)

*Let the people affirm repeatedly and for all eternity: "God's steadfast love endures forever." How often do we need the reassurance of God's love! How often do we need the reminder to live with love!*

