



## **SHARE THE LIGHT – A CELEBRATION OF HOPE**

### **ALL-AGE WORSHIP RESOURCES FOR ADVENT**

#### **LEADER'S NOTES**

Thank you for being willing to host a CMS Share the Light all-age Advent Carol Service. We hope that you find the material useful.

The outline below is not intended to be definitive, but to give you ideas for approaching Advent in a new way as an opportunity to focus on mission. Do feel free to amend ideas, miss things out, or replace things as necessary, so that it works well for your community and in a style that is familiar. Suggested music is included in the service, but the list below includes more suggestions.

This service of all-age worship is intended to be suitable for members of the congregation to invite non-Christian friends to. It also aims to encourage those who are already committed Christians to see Advent as a time to focus on deepening their own faith and exploring what their hope in Christ means.

The idea underlying this service is an Advent tradition followed by some Christians in the Philippines. It involves a nine-day festival of preparation for Christmas, starting on 16th December and featuring a daily service, called the Service of the Rooster because it begins at 5am each morning! Its purpose is to present Advent as a period of spiritual awakening and preparation for Christmas, which the whole community takes part in.

All can hear the Gospel before going off to work. It also takes place in the USA among the Filipino communities there, as a way of building community and reclaiming the spiritual aspect of preparing for Christmas – as well as bringing an important reflection of hope for displaced Filipinos.

During the festival, beautiful, brightly coloured star lanterns called 'Parols' are created and carried in processions. The Parols symbolise light, peace, joy and forgiveness and decorate houses and churches and are hung in the windows and churchyards. They stand as a brilliant witness to the belief that the Light of Christ is for the whole world and is to be shared.

#### **Before the service**

You will need to prepare some or all of the following in advance, depending on what you choose to use:

- A 'Tree of Hope': this can be a Christmas Tree, or just a tree branch in a pot, decorated with simple white lights. It should be placed somewhere clearly visible to all, preferably in the centre of the congregation or worship space.
- Luggage labels to hang on the tree
- Pencils/pens
- Audio material on the Share the Light CD
- Advent lanterns (see pages 9 and 10). It is ideal if the lanterns are made in advance and decorated during the service.
- Materials to decorate lanterns (see page 9 for ideas)
- Sweets, cakes, and drinks for the celebration



### **Music suggestions**

Beauty for brokenness  
Behold the darkness shall cover the earth  
Be still, for the presence of the Lord  
Brother, sister, let me serve you  
Change my heart, O God  
Colours of day (Light up the fire)  
I, the Lord of sea and sky  
Jesus is the name we honour  
Longing for light, we wait in darkness (Christ, be our Light)  
Long ago, prophets knew  
Light of the world, you stepped down into darkness  
O come, O come Emmanuel  
This little light of mine  
We'll walk the land with hearts on fire  
We're going to shine like the sun  
When our God came to earth



## **SERVICE PLAN**

### **WELCOME**

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

#### **Leader**

Relax your body...  
Open your mind...  
Engage your spirit...  
This is the house of God  
Prepare to worship.

Life is an indescribable gift  
Our worship is a celebration of that gift  
And of the giver  
In our worship we have rediscovered  
God's marvellous affirmation of life.

Today we invite you to bring all that you are  
Into worship  
Your struggles and failures,  
Your joys and fears,  
Your faith and your doubts.  
Your culture,  
Your sensuality,  
Your whole self.

Bring your self and be at home now  
God is here  
And all are welcome.

Jonny Baker/CMS (adapted) Used with permission from *Alternative worship* by J Baker,  
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### **OPENING SONG**

Christ Be Our Light – B Farrell

### **BIBLE READING**

Isaiah 60:1-3  
God promises – Your light has come!

### **SONG**

Be still, for the presence of the Lord

### **BIBLE READING**

Revelation 21:1-4, 22-25



## **READING: HOPE FULFILLED IN THE PHILIPPINES**

### **Reader:**

CMS mission partners Lee and Sally Proudlove are working in the Philippines, and share their experience of celebrating Advent there:

“We’re working with a small group of Christians planting a church in a very poor area.

“Some members of our church have been here for 10 years, waiting and praying for a church building, and it was finally built in time for the Missa De Gallio, our carol services, this last Advent.

“Everyone pulled out all the stops to get it ready for the services, and members of the community – even people who weren’t members of the church – turned out to help. So our first services were the Missa De Gallios after 10 years’ wait. The whole church was decorated with star-shaped paper lanterns and candles.

“The service happens first thing in the morning, and people walk to the church in the dark. Lots of kids come. The tradition here is that the adults bring sweets and cakes for the kids, so all the kids get very excited about having sweets at the end of the service. Then we all have breakfast and coffee together before going off to start the day.

“The tradition here is that we do this every day for eight days, so it has a real community feel. A combination of the tingles at midnight service, with the fun of a church picnic.”

## **SHORT TALK: WHAT ARE WE HOPING FOR?**

- At Advent we join with Christians around the world in hopeful waiting for the coming of Christ. Sadly, though, our waiting often loses its edge in the rush of commercialism and the busyness of Christmas which seems to start earlier every year.
- What do we hope for as Advent begins and Christmas approaches? The hopes of children may be centred around presents; for adults, it may be the hope of a peaceful or happy Christmas. Invite members of the congregation to share what their hopes are. Then play the short excerpt (on the CD) from young people in the Philippines sharing their thoughts on hope, and what their hopes are for their future.
- Remind people that although the hopes we have are very important, Christians share in a far greater hope which goes beyond anything we often ask for or can even imagine. In fact, it is a hope which goes beyond this world. Look again at the words used in the reading from Isaiah 60 – “Nations shall come to your light” and how they prefigure the great promise of Revelation 21:22-24.
- Some Christians in the Philippines see Advent as a time for remembering the bigger hope they share – a time of going deeper, as individuals and as a community, in preparation for Christ’s coming. In some churches, like Lee’s and Sally’s, the Missa De Gallio (meaning ‘Service of the Rooster’) which takes place early each morning before people go out into the fields to farm the land or go out to sea to fish is a way of using Advent as a time to draw nearer to God and to one another. The star-shaped lanterns they make are hung in the church and outside in the churchyards – and even in the



shopping streets – to remind all who see them of the Light of Christ.

- The challenge of Advent is this: What are our hopes? Is our hope in God the guiding force of all we are and all we do? How can we deepen our faith and hope in the days leading up to Christmas?

### **ACTIVITY: MAKING LANTERNS OF HOPE**

Make simple star-shaped lanterns of hope to hang around the church, or to hang in the windows of people's homes as beacons of light in a dark world. You may find it easier to have made the lanterns earlier (see pages 9 and 10) and simply invite people to decorate them now. Encourage people to make them as bright and colourful as possible to reflect the hope of Advent and the coming of Christ. When the lanterns are completed, hang them around the church.

As the lanterns are being made, you might wish to have music in the background – either some worship music from the Philippines (on the CD) or the following song, which people can join in singing as they make the lanterns:

Who will set us free?

Bernando Maria Perez

*Sound the Bamboo* (Asian Institute for Liturgy and Music 1990)

### **READING: HOPE FULFILLED IN THE COMMUNITY**

Invite a member of your community to share how their faith in Jesus affects their daily life, and what their hopes are for the future.

### **SONG**

Light of the world, you stepped down into darkness

### **ACTIVITY: PRAYER**

Hand out luggage labels and encourage people to write or draw ONE thing they hope and pray for this Advent. It may be a prayer for the world, for someone in need, or for their own lives. Make sure that there is sufficient time for people to reflect, and play some quiet music in the background. When the labels are completed, invite people to come and hang them on the Tree of Hope – and switch on the lights.

The congregation then joins in the following prayers. Ideally the prayers should be led by a leader in each corner of the building. You can say or sing this response from the Taizé community. The music is available on the Taizé website ([www.taize.fr](http://www.taize.fr)). Otherwise, you could ask the Sunday School to create their own response.

#### **Leader**

We turn to face the East... (congregation turns to face East)  
and we thank you for your promise that a new dawn,  
the dawn of your Kingdom, is rising.  
Help us to watch for its coming with hope and trust  
and forgive us when we fail to see its signs around us.



**All**

**Wait for the Lord, whose day is near;  
Wait for the Lord: keep watch, take heart! (© A&PT)**

**Leader**

We turn to face the South... (congregation turns to face South)  
and we wait upon the word of God.  
Lord God, stir up our hearts and minds with real passion for your truth.  
Forgive us that we are sometimes reluctant to be stirred by your Spirit.  
Speak to us as we wait this Advent.  
Show us again what your coming means to us,  
and draw close to us, we pray.

**All**

**Wait for the Lord, whose day is near;  
Wait for the Lord: keep watch, take heart!**

**Leader**

We turn to face the West... (congregation turns to face West)  
and we pray for the many people who will be shopping today,  
preparing for the coming of Jesus without understanding who he is or what he means  
for the world.  
We pray for them, and for ourselves, that as we prepare for Christmas, the message of  
Christ's peace might touch our hearts.

**All**

**Wait for the Lord, whose day is near;  
Wait for the Lord: keep watch, take heart!**

**Leader**

We turn to face the North... (congregation turns to face North)  
and we pray for Christians around the world today as we prepare for the coming of  
Jesus.  
We pray for Christians in the Philippines, and especially for the work of Lee and Sally  
and their community.  
We ask you to fill us with hope, with vision, with courage,  
and to unite us in our shared hope of a glorious future.

**All**

**Wait for the Lord, whose day is near;  
Wait for the Lord: keep watch, take heart!**

**Leader**

We turn to face one another... (congregation turns to face inwards)  
and we give thanks that we share the light of Christ with one another.  
We pray that you would strengthen us in love and faith.  
And now we turn to face outwards... (congregation turns to face outwards)  
and we pray that you would bless us and use us to share your light with others.



**All**

**Wait for the Lord, whose day is near;  
Wait for the Lord: keep watch, take heart!**

**Leader**

We pray for the coming of God's Kingdom, here in this place, and throughout the world, as Jesus taught us to pray.

**All**

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

## **SENDING OUT**

**Reader**

Holy Father,  
Some day  
The burden of today's toil –  
The comings and goings,  
The successes and failures,  
The hopes and near despairs –  
Will all be transformed  
Into blessed reality!  
Hope will be no more...  
I reach the point of near absurdity:  
Of thanking you that I live  
During the difficult phase  
In which hope is still  
The beginning of the beginning  
Of the day!  
Day is still struggling,  
And has many struggles ahead  
To be born.  
From the mingled light and shadow  
Of hope  
We greet you, Lord God.

From a Base Christian Community in the Philippines. Reproduced with permission from *Bread of Tomorrow*  
Ed J Morley © Christian Aid



### **FINAL SONG AND LANTERN PROCESSION**

Sung in a lively, gospel-music style (works very well unaccompanied) as people make their way with their lanterns to the place where food and drink await!

Soon, and very soon, we are going to see the King

### **CELEBRATION**

Worship should flow naturally into a time of celebration, sharing food and drink together. Following the tradition from the Philippines, sweets and cakes should be eaten as a symbol of the hope we share in Christ. If possible, encourage people to take gifts of sweets and biscuits (star-shaped biscuits are particularly appropriate) to people they know who are unable to be at the service, as an expression of sharing the light.



## MAKE AN INDIAN STAR

Large paper 3-D stars are a popular decoration in India, particularly for the Hindu festival of Diwali, the festival of lights. Between mid-October and mid-November houses and streets are aglow with earthen lamps and coloured lights on verandas, rooftops, walls and windowsills. Children wear new clothes for the festival and families gather to let off fireworks.

As this is also the time of year when Christians begin their Advent and Christmas preparations, they too hang up colourful stars to remind them of the star-light that led the wise men from the east to Jesus, who later described himself as “the light of the world”. Christians are called to shine as lights in the darkness and these stars are one way in which the Christian minority in India can witness to their faith among their neighbours.

On page 10 is a template for making one of these Indian stars. A young CMS supporter from Lincoln designed it. Photocopy the template onto card. You will need 5 cards to make one star. Cut out each shape, adding some decoration. With a hole-punch create a number of holes in each “arm” of the star to let light through. Fold along every dotted line and draw the sides together to make each section. For this use glue, double-sided tape or a stapler. Finally join together the five sections. This can be fiddly and it is best to work with a group or a partner. Younger children will need a lot of help.

Hang the stars up as a reminder of our partnership in mission with the Christian family in India.



## INDIAN STAR TEMPLATE

