

First Sunday in Advent: HOPE

Leader: What do we wait for?

People: **Our hope is in God.**

We wait for God to tear open the heavens and come down, so that God's presence may be known!

Leader: When we turn away, God's deeds become hidden from us.

We forget God's ways and lose hope in a world of terror and tears.

People: **We are God's people, the work of God's hands.**

The light of God will shine upon us that we may be saved.

Leader: Keep us alert and waiting with hope, expecting that God will come to save us, to forgive us, to restore us and shape us to be the people of God.

People: **We wait for Christ to come with great power and glory!**

(Light the candle of hope.)

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Making Maternal Health a Priority

In Malawi, Misuzi Tembo is pregnant with her first child. It should be a joyful occasion, but with her husband working in South Africa, Misuzi feels anxious facing her pregnancy alone.

Many women in remote Malawian communities go through pregnancy and delivery without their husbands—and without the care of skilled health workers.

In Misuzi's village, frequent maternal deaths had been a cruel reality. Now, mothers and babies are surviving and thriving with support from a Village Safe Motherhood Committee—part of PWS&D's maternal, newborn and child health project—that encourages pregnant women to attend antenatal appointments and promotes increased male involvement.

"I didn't know how important antenatal care is during the first three months," admits Misuzi. "My husband also attended with me in order to learn about my pregnancy."

Misuzi now feels that her health and her baby's health is a priority. With her husband's support, she is hopeful for her family's long, abundant life together.

This Advent, help improve the health of children and their mothers to shape a community's strength and prosperity.

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Second Sunday in Advent: PEACE

Leader: The Baptist cries out:

“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight!”

People: **Help us, Lord, to repent.**

Leader: The way of God is made crooked by our
sin.

Will we confess our failings and repent?
Will we remember God’s steadfast love
and faithfulness?

People: **Restore us again and grant us your
salvation.**

Leader: As we have been baptized with God’s
mercy and grace,
will we have the courage to forgive one
another?

People: **We pray that your light, O Lord,
will guide our feet into the way of
peace.**

(Light the candle of peace.)

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Saving Lives in South Sudan

Leaving home and walking for days with three little children wasn't an easy decision for Sarah.

But she didn't have a lot of options.

A nearly four-year civil war ravaging South Sudan left Sarah's village in ruins. Fleeing to a Protection of Civilians Camp would save her family from mounting violence.

But the journey to safety brought a new challenge—a lack of food. Sarah was deeply concerned for her one-year-old daughter Martha who was suffering from severe acute malnutrition. Without immediate help, she would soon die.

Upon arrival at the camp, Martha was admitted to a PWS&D-supported Canadian Foodgrains Bank project that is providing nutrition support to children as well as pregnant and lactating mothers.

With treatment and a weekly supply of nutrient-rich therapeutic food, Martha is stronger, playful and has an increased appetite.

"I fear what might have happened to my daughter without this program," says Sarah.

This Advent, help those displaced by conflict strengthen their hearts and bodies on the journey to find peace.

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Third Sunday in Advent: JOY

Leader: “Rejoice in the Lord always;
again, I say, rejoice.”

People: **Christ comes to bring good news to
the oppressed,
to offer healing to the broken,
to comfort those who mourn.**

Leader: Rejoice and give thanks,
for God comes to offer good news and
comfort.

People: **Tears of sorrow shall turn to laughter
and weeping into shouts of praise!**

Leader: Enter the joy of the Lord!
Take delight in all of God’s deeds and
promises.

People: **The Lord has done great things for us!
We shall rejoice with praise and
thanksgiving!**

(Light the candle of joy.)

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“I am very happy and enjoy coming to school!”

Shakira is your typical ten-year-old. After pouring over her reading and arithmetic at school, the thing she looks forward to most is recess.

Now that a new play area—with swings, seesaws and a slide—has been built in her schoolyard, she is more enthusiastic than ever about going to school.

Schools participating in PWS&D’s Girls Education Project in Afghanistan received playground equipment to encourage the physical and cognitive development of children. “It helps me learn my lessons very well,” Shakira says of the playground.

Shakira’s teacher reports that the playground encourages better attendance and motivates students to succeed. “Shakira was absent often, but now she comes to school regularly and learns her lessons well. She wants to become a lawyer.”

In addition to training teachers and promoting a child’s right to education, facilitating physical education and recreation is inspiring children to learn, set goals and build bright futures.

This Advent season, help ensure children everywhere thrive.

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Fourth Sunday in Advent: LOVE

Leader: For God so loved the world...

People: that the Lord looked with favour
upon Mary,
to conceive and bear the Son of the
Most High.

Leader: For God so loved the world...

People: that the Son of God took flesh and
dwelt among us.

Leader: For God so loved the world...

People: that the Lord lifted up the lowly
and humbled the proud and powerful.

Leader: For God so loved the world...

People: that God gave us Jesus, God's only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him
may not perish but have eternal life.

(Light the candle of love.)

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Compassionate Health Workers Drive Positive Change in Haiti

“Everyone is excited. Strong programming is very rare in these remote places.”

Dr. Ralph Ternier, director of community care and support at Partners in Health in Haiti, is passionate about a malnutrition treatment program helping over 4,000 children survive and thrive with support from PWS&D.

In communities vulnerable to hunger and illness, Ralph knows that dedicated health professionals are one of the most important ways to ensure long-term, positive transformation.

As part of the nutrition program, community health workers go into remote villages to supervise treatment and administer vaccines for children whose families can't afford to travel to health facilities. Each worker sees around 100 patients every month.

At the hospital, though short-staffed, nurses and doctors are fiercely optimistic as they work tirelessly to provide the best quality of care for every patient.

“He would work for free!” declares Ralph, motioning to a doctor on his team.

This Advent season, help health workers in Haiti continue to provide treatment, love and encouragement to children overcoming illness and malnutrition.

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Christmas Eve/Christmas Day

Leader: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light!

People: **The grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all.**

Leader: Lord, in your mercy, let your hope shine in the night of oppression and turmoil.

People: **Our God, let your light shine in the darkness!**

Leader: Lord, in your mercy, let your peace shine for the families that wander across land, water and wilderness to find refuge from war and persecution.

People: **Our God, let your light shine in the darkness!**

Leader: Lord, in your mercy, let joy shine on the homeless who keep watch by night in the fields, in stables, in parks and in our streets.

People: **Our God, let your light shine in the darkness!**

Leader: Lord, in your mercy, may your love shine for the lowly mother and child, for the marginalized and abandoned.

People: **Christ is born! Christ is our light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome the Light of the World.**

(Light the Christ candle.)

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Christ is Born!

Even in the face of poverty, injustice and disaster, hope finds a way.

For 70 years, our church has been faithfully responding with Presbyterian World Service & Development to God's call to serve those in need. Together with our partners, we are making a positive difference in our global village.

Inspired by God's promise of abundant life, we are responding to hunger, poverty, injustice and disaster. We are responding to care for the poor, sick and vulnerable. Working together, we are helping restore human dignity, ease the pain of want and promote community cooperation that benefits all. As an expression of Christ's hope, peace, joy and love, we are working towards a sustainable, compassionate and just world.

As we celebrate the birth of Christ, let us remember our sisters and brothers around the world. Without you, this transformative work would not be possible. This Christmas, please support PWS&D.

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