

## First Sunday in Advent: HOPE

**Reader 1:** Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

**Reader 2:** Keep awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

**People:** **The world wakens us with worry these days. Where shall we find hope?**

**Reader 1:** In times of worry, Jesus asks us to shine with pure, clear light.  
We light the candle of hope so hope will shine into every dark corner more brightly.

*The candle is lit.*

**All:** **Come, Lord Jesus, and kindle hope in our hearts. Shine in our lives whenever we are worried, to strengthen our trust in you. Help us act on the hope we find in you. Let our faithfulness shine in the world you love. Amen.**

**Reader 2:** As we wait for you, Jesus, we will shine with hope!

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## Community Health Workers Deliver Hope

In the village of Chimsewezgo in Malawi, 29-year-old Lucia felt anxious while pregnant with her second set of twins.

Lucia delivered her first set of twins at home, without the care of a skilled birth attendant. Her children survived, but any complications could have been fatal — for both Lucia and her babies.

Lucia's anxieties faded after she received a visit from a community health worker. The woman told Lucia that safe, compassionate care was available to her during her pregnancy and delivery at the PWS&D-supported Embangweni Mission Hospital.

Lucia attended five prenatal checkups before she returned to the hospital to give birth to her children — Blessings and Frestina. Having also learned about proper newborn care, Lucia felt assured that her joy at her twins' safe delivery would continue throughout their lives.

"The project is helping me raise my children well," shares Lucia. "I learned things that are helping lift up the life of my family."

This Advent season, help health workers serve their communities by teaching mothers about their health.

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## Second Sunday in Advent: PEACE

**Reader 1:** Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near!

**Reader 2:** The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with kid.  
A little child shall lead them.

**People:** **We fear for our children among the wolves and the leopards.  
How will our children find peace?**

**Reader 1:** In fearful times, Jesus asks us to shine with pure, clear light.  
We light the candle of peace to guide us through our fears  
with peace in our hearts, to make peace in the world.

*The candle is lit.*

**All:** **Come, Lord Jesus, and kindle peace in your world.  
Shine in our lives whenever we are afraid, to strengthen our trust in you.  
Teach our children to seek peace with justice as they grow.  
Let their faithfulness shine in the world you love. Amen.**

**Reader 2:** As we wait for you, Jesus,  
we will shine with hope  
and work for peace!

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## Breaking Down Barriers in Afghanistan

Like many young Afghan women, Nadira was led to believe that she had no place inside the classroom.

“No one allowed me to attend school,” she explains. “Today I am illiterate.”

Cultural norms dictating that women have no need to go to school or work outside the home have not stopped Nadira from striving to create profound change in her community.

The support Nadira needed to speak out on these important issues came in the form of gender equality workshops led by PWS&D partners in Afghanistan. Nadira learned about human rights, peace and the negative impacts of taking girls out of school.

“I am very glad that I have attended this session and learned about the importance of education for girls. I know that it is my responsibility to send my children to school.”

With people like Nadira championing equal access to education, more young girls are developing their creativity, ideas and passions at school.

This Advent season, help create a more peaceful, prosperous nation through further advocacy and learning.

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## Third Sunday in Advent: JOY

**Reader 1:** Our souls magnify the Lord! Our souls rejoice  
in God, our Saviour!

**Reader 2:** Waters shall break forth with joy in the  
wilderness.

There will be streams in the desert!

**People:** **But we see the wilderness suffer. Rivers  
flood; fires rage.**

**How can we feel joy when the world knows  
such sorrow?**

**Reader 1:** In times of suffering, Jesus asks us to shine  
with pure, clear light.

We light the candle of joy to brighten the  
world, to lift up the lowly  
and fill the hungry with good things.

*The candle is lit.*

**All:** **Come, Lord Jesus, and kindle joy in our  
lives.**

**Shine in our lives whenever we feel  
discouraged,  
to strengthen our trust in you.**

**Give us wisdom to respond to  
suffering with commitment  
sustained by joy.**

**Let our faithfulness shine  
in the world you love. Amen.**

**Reader 2:** As we wait for you, Jesus,  
we will shine with hope and work  
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## Joy and Pride in Ghana

All too often, people with disabilities suffer abuse and humiliation — or are simply never acknowledged at all.

Abok from Ghana knows this all too well. When he started having recurrent seizures at school, his classmates tormented him incessantly. Abok eventually dropped out of school.

Unable to cure their son using traditional medicine, Abok's parents also became frustrated and neglected to provide the care Abok needed.

Abok lived in misery until years later, when he heard about an initiative that would change his life — a program offering new hope to people living with disabilities.

At the Garu Community Based Rehabilitation Centre, PWS&D partners told Abok that he had epilepsy and put him on medication. They also gave him seeds, tools and training to harvest and sell his own fresh vegetables.

"I earn a good living," Abok reports, beaming with the happiness that come from being self-reliant.

This Advent season, help empower vulnerable men and women with the skills and confidence they need to provide a better life for themselves.

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## Fourth Sunday in Advent: LOVE

**Reader 1:** Do not be afraid! Jesus will save people from their sins.

**Reader 2:** The Lord has given us a sign. A young woman has borne a son.

He is named Emmanuel, God with us.

**People:** **We long for love to heal our hearts and soothe this hurting world.**

**Where are the signs of love in our time?**

**Reader 1:** In times of yearning, Jesus asks us to shine with pure, clear light.

We light the candle of love to warm our hearts with God's love, telling us God is with us.

*The candle is lit.*

**All:** **Come, Lord Jesus, and kindle love in our lives. Shine in our lives whenever we long for love, and strengthen our trust in you.**

**Make us signs of your love for the lonely and hurting.**

**Let our faithfulness shine in the world you love.**

**Amen.**

**Reader 2:** As we wait for you, Jesus, we will shine with hope and work for peace — with joyful hearts and love in our actions!

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## Restoring the Right to Childhood Health and Opportunity

Around the world, approximately 12 million girls are married before the age of 18.

When this happens, girls are robbed of the chance to go to school, find meaningful employment and create positive change in their communities. Child marriage also increases the risk of early pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease.

Ensuring girls realize their right to sexual and reproductive health care, control over their bodies, and the chance to decide if and when they get married is crucial to achieving gender equality and building healthier communities.

PWS&D is striving towards this goal in India, where child marriage is a common practice.

Together, we are supporting community volunteers who are helping girls find their voice in the fight for change. Community health workers teach girls about their rights and provide a network of support to ensure they can stay in school and decide what their future will bring.

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## The Christ Candle

**Reader 1:** The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**Reader 2:** A child has been born for us; a son given to us.

**People:** **This will be a sign for us: we will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth, lying in a manger.**

**Reader 1:** Jesus said, I am the light of the world!  
We light the Christ candle to celebrate this light  
shining from the manger, born for us in Christ Jesus.

*The candle is lit.*

**All:** **Lord Jesus, you have come to be with us so we know God's love will never let us go. Shine in our lives this Christmas to strengthen our trust in you. Make us angels in our time, messengers of your love and peace, your joy and hope. Let our faithfulness shine in the world you love. Amen.**

**Reader 2:** Glory to God in the highest!  
And on earth peace –  
in the name of the Christ Child,  
Prince of Peace,  
our Saviour and our Friend.

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## Christ is Born!

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

For over 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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