



First Sunday in Advent

Hope

*Written by the Rev. Mavis Currie,
Knox Presbyterian Church, St. Thomas, Ont.*

Reader 1: We are people of hope.

Reader 2: God longs for a day when weapons will be replaced with tools for rebuilding.

People: We see your goodness and signs of new life all around us.

Reader 1: The first candle of Advent reminds us that we are called to live as people of hope.

Reader 2: We light this candle to remind us to see God's hope shining in our world.

(Light the candle of hope)

Reader 1: Let us pray:

**People: Holy One, help us
to walk in the light of God.
May our lives reflect the
warmth and wonder of
this flame. Make your
church a place of hope
in our community. Amen.**

Sing verse 1 of #119 Hope is a star



Scholarship Provides Hope for the Future

Despite facing challenges during her childhood, 16-year-old Emmice was doing exceptionally well in school in Malawi.

Raising Emmice alone, her mother found it difficult to find jobs with only a grade eight education. Leaving Emmice with her grandmother, Emmice's mother moved to South Africa in search of employment to help her support her family. But, after a xenophobic attack on her small business, she returned to her family in Malawi empty-handed.

At this time, Emmice was attending her first year at Neno Girls Secondary School, where PWS&D funds bursaries for marginalized students who might be at risk of dropping out without support.

Due to financial troubles, Emmice's mom decided to withdraw Emmice from school. But knowing how successful Emmice's studies had been, the school selected her to receive a bursary, allowing her to continue attending.

Today Emmice is working to earn her high school diploma, which will provide her with more opportunities for the future.

This Advent season, faithfully respond to Christ's call to support those in need. In countries around the world, PWS&D is helping children access opportunities to create brighter futures.

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Peace

*Written by the Rev. Mavis Currie,
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Reader 1: We are people of peace.

Reader 2: God seeks justice and compassion. God listens to the cries of the vulnerable and longs for wars to cease.

People: We pray God's peace is at work in our hearts, our homes, our neighbourhoods and the world.

Reader 1: The second candle of Advent reminds us that we are called to live as people of peace.

Reader 2: We light this candle as an invitation to work for justice and peace.

(Light the candle of peace)

Reader 1: Let us pray:

People: Holy One, help us to fan the flame of peace. May our lives reflect the warmth and wonder of this candle. Make your church a place of peace and sanctuary in our community. Amen.

Sing verse 2 of #119 Hope is a star



A Refugee Mother's Struggles in Pakistan

Jehan and her children fled their home in Afghanistan after the Taliban took over in 2021. "For many days, we were surviving on the streets of Islamabad. A kind man took us in," she explains. Now, they share a house in Pakistan with eight other refugee families.

Jehan found out that she was expecting her sixth child just before her husband died in crossfire between two rival groups in Afghanistan. While she gave birth to a healthy baby girl, the family had left all of their belongings behind when they fled Afghanistan and she had nothing for the newborn. Jehan was also unable to afford food to meet the family's needs.

Earlier this year, Jehan and her family were selected to receive cash assistance from a PWS&D project supporting Afghan refugees in Pakistan. With this aid, she was able to buy food and other life-giving essentials for herself and her kids.

This Advent season, faithfully respond to Christ's call to care for families who have fled danger. Through PWS&D, we can provide vulnerable families with essential life-saving items.

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Third Sunday in Advent

Joy

*Written by the Rev. Mavis Currie,
Knox Presbyterian Church, St. Thomas, Ont.*

Reader 1: We are people of joy.

Reader 2: God causes flowers to bloom in the desert; the wilderness is glad and breaks into song.

People: We open our eyes and we are surprised by joy in our lives!

Reader 1: The third candle of Advent reminds us that we are called to live as people of joy.

Reader 2: We light this candle, recalling moments of laughter, great beauty and deep faith.

(Light the candle of joy)

Reader 1: Let us pray:

People: Holy One, regardless of what happens in our lives or in our world, may we reflect the warmth and wonder of this flame. Make your church a place of joy and life in our community. Amen.

*Sing verse 3 of #119
Hope is a star*



From Outcast to “Owner” in Ghana

When Aruk was a small child, he contracted polio, losing partial use of his legs. For a long time, when people looked at him, they only saw his disability.

One day, a staff member from the Garu Community-Based Rehabilitation program in Ghana noticed Aruk during a survey of his community. Aruk received a tricycle through the project, as well as the opportunity for an education.

Support for small business development through the Garu program meant Aruk received a loan and training to start a business. Aruk started small—selling mobile phone credits, under a simple umbrella. Now Aruk has earned enough money to move into a permanent shop space.

Reflecting on the help he received through the Garu program and what is now possible for him, Aruk comments, “I am so grateful.”

This Advent season, faithfully respond to those in need with compassion and justice. Through support for PWS&D, we are helping create a world where everyone can realize their full potential.

The Garu Community-Based Rehabilitation project is a program of The Presbyterian Church in Ghana and supported by PWS&D.

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Fourth Sunday in Advent

Love

*Written by the Rev. Mavis Currie,
Knox Presbyterian Church, St. Thomas, Ont.*

Reader 1: We are people of love.

Reader 2: God has loved us so much that God has chosen to come as Immanuel, the God who is with us.

People: We are free to love others, because God first loved us.

Reader 1: The fourth candle of Advent invites us to reflect God's love in our lives.

Reader 2: We light this candle so that we can see who we are called to love today.

(Light the candle of love)

Reader 1: Let us pray:

People: Holy One, help us to know we are deeply loved and to share that same unconditional love with others. May our lives reflect the warmth and wonder of this flame. Make your church a place of love and acceptance in our community. Amen.

Sing verse 4 of #119 Hope is a star



Improving Health Across Generations in Guatemala

For eight years, Blanca Juárez Tomas has participated in Flor de Tuichmad'il—a women's collective dedicated to promoting health and nutrition among her community in Guatemala. Blanca shares how being involved in this group has allowed her to support her own well-being and that of the next two generations in her family.

"Before I became part of the women's group Flor de Tuichmad'il...my life was very different. I didn't give as much importance to nutrition for both me and my family. The foods we consumed did not have sources of protein, and we did not take into account the importance of properly washing the food that we ate, which often led to illness.

When I became part of the AMMID association, I learned which foods contain protein and the importance of hygiene at home.

Now, my family is healthier, and I am teaching my children to put these things into practice with my grandchildren so that they can enjoy good health."

This Advent season, faithfully respond to help empower Indigenous women in Guatemala as they lead their communities toward a healthy future.

In Guatemala, PWS&D supports the work of the Maya-Mam Indigenous Association for Development (AMMID).

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The Christ Candle

*Written by the Rev. Mavis Currie,
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Reader 1: We are Christmas people.

Reader 2: We have heard the good news that a child has been born for us, a Son has been given to us, and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Almighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

People: We have seen God kindle hope, peace, joy and love in our lives and in our world.

Reader 1: The centre candle in our Advent wreath is the Christ candle. From this light, all good gifts come.

Reader 2: We light this candle remembering the One who is the Light of the world.

(Light the Christ candle)

Reader 1: Let us pray:

People: Holy One, you sent your son as a baby born in Bethlehem. Give us a strong sense of his birth among us, so that our lives reflect the warmth and wonder of this Christmas flame. Make your church a place that shines with the wonder of your love. Amen.

Sing verse 1 of #153 Joy to the world



Christ is Born!

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

For 75 years, our church has been faithfully putting Christ's words into action—reaching out to people affected by poverty and disaster around the globe. With Presbyterian World Service & Development, we are able to answer God's call to serve those in need, wherever they may be. Together with our partners, we are making a positive impact.

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 marginalized. Together, we are helping to restore human dignity, ease the burden of want, and promote community cooperation that benefits all. As a representation of Christ's hope, peace, joy and love, we are committed to a sustainable, compassionate and just society.

As we celebrate Christ's birth this season, let us remember our neighbours near and far. Your prayers, gifts and actions make this mission possible.

This Christmas, please support PWS&D.

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