

PAX CHRISTI USA COMMUNITY ADVENT SERVICE – week 1

First week of Advent – [Readings are from Thursday, December 2nd](#)

Welcome

Opening song

Singer will be the only one unmuted but feel free to sing along wherever you are!

Lighting of candles on the Advent wreath

From their home, the Lowell family in Montgomery County, MD will light the Advent candle tonight on behalf of us all. We invite everyone on the call to light their own candle wherever they are.

First reading: From the prophet Isaiah...

On that day they will sing this song in the land of Judah:

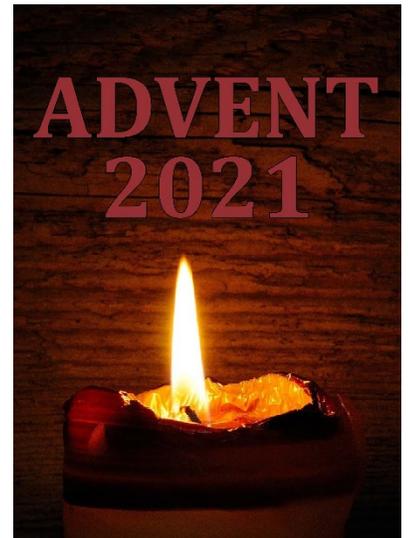
“A strong city have we;
God sets up walls and ramparts to protect us.
Open up the gates
to let in a nation that is just,
one that keeps faith.
A nation of firm purpose you keep in peace;
in peace, for its trust in you.”

Trust in God forever!
For God is an eternal Rock.
God humbles those in high places,
and the lofty city God brings down;
God tumbles it to the ground,
levels it with the dust.
It is trampled underfoot by the needy,
by the footsteps of the poor.

The word of God.
THANKS BE TO GOD.

Gospel reading: From the gospel of Matthew...

Jesus said to his disciples:
“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’
will enter the reign of heaven,
but only the one who does the will of my Abba in heaven.
“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them
will be like a wise person who built their house on rock.



The rain fell, the floods came,
and the winds blew and buffeted the house.
But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock.
And everyone who listens to these words of mine
but does not act on them
will be like a fool who built their house on sand.
The rain fell, the floods came,
and the winds blew and buffeted the house.
And it collapsed and was completely ruined.”

The gospel of our God.
PRAISE TO YOU LORD JESUS CHRIST.

A reflection from this year’s Advent-Christmas reflection booklet, by Vickie Machado. Vickie is a religion professor, a former member of the Gainesville FL Catholic Worker, and on the leadership team for Eco-Stewards, a creative community that shapes, inspires and connects young adult leaders through storytelling and place-based pilgrimages focused on faith and the environment. She’s involved with the Pax Christi Young Adult Caucus and is their representative on the Pax Christi USA National Council. She lives in Gainesville, Florida.

“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise person who built their house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like fools who built their houses on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the houses. And they collapsed and were completely ruined.” (Mt 7:24-27)

Just like a rainstorm, hard times test the integrity of a society. Somewhere along the way, the very structure of our country was built on sand, so when the rains of a global pandemic came, we saw much of life crumble. We saw unemployment, long lines for food, protest in the streets, sickness and death. What can be said for a country that has built its wealth with the lives of enslaved peoples on land stolen from indigenous populations? How structurally sound is a society that for years marginalized immigrants and disproportionately incarcerates Black and Brown populations, some through wrongful convictions?

> How do we begin to rethink and rebuild a foundation that truly upholds equality and freedom for all?

Silent reflection

We invite you to quietly reflect on tonight's reading and the question: **How do we begin to rethink and rebuild a foundation that truly upholds equality and freedom for all?** After our prayer service is over, we encourage you—if you are with others—to share your answer to tonight's question. If you aren't with others but would like to share in a small group after tonight's prayer, we'll send everyone who stays on the call into breakout rooms with a few other people to share for about 20 minutes immediately following the prayer service.

(In preparation for the Prayers of the Faithful, feel free to enter into the chat any prayers you have that you want those of us on this call to lift up over the coming week.)

Prayers of the faithful

Our response is: God of peace, hear our prayer.

Closing prayer

(In 1-2 minutes everyone who wants to stay on the call will be sent to breakout rooms to discuss tonight's reading, reflection and Advent question. Breakout rooms will automatically close after 20 minutes.)