

PAX CHRISTI USA COMMUNITY ADVENT SERVICE – week 1

First week of Advent – [Readings are from Wednesday, November 30](#)

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

One of the participants in tonight's service will light the Advent candle on behalf of us all. We invite everyone on the call to light their own candle wherever they are.

First reading: From the letter to the Romans...

Brothers and sisters: If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The Scripture says, No one who believes in him will be put to shame. There is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

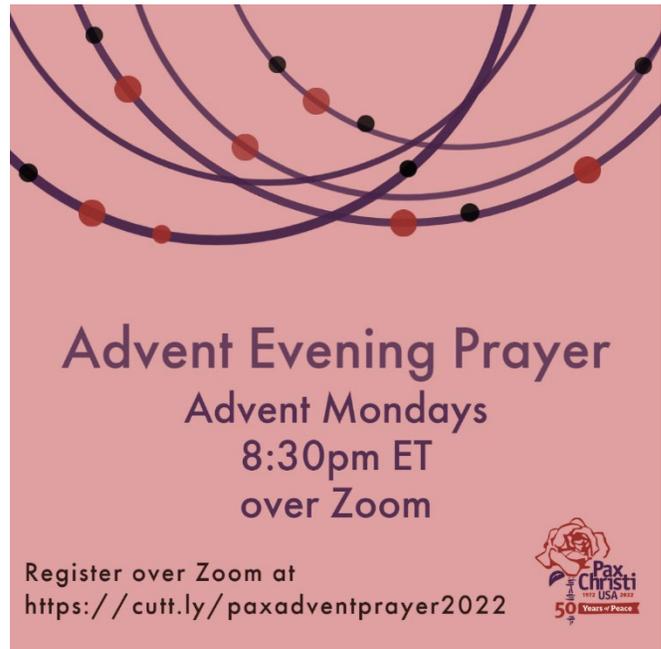
But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can people preach unless they are sent?

As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news! But not everyone has heeded the good news; for Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed what was heard from us? Thus faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ. But I ask, did they not hear? Certainly they did; for their voice has gone forth to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.

The word of God.
THANKS BE TO GOD.

Gospel reading: From the gospel of Matthew...

As Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of people." At once they left their nets and followed him. He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him.



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

A reflection from this year's Advent-Christmas reflection booklet, by Lauren Bailey.

We're reminded today that God is present through all the world and in all that we do. The systems in place make the final question above a bit complex. "How can people preach unless they are sent?" Perhaps a better question is: "How can people who have been sent to preach do so without barriers?"

Women and nonbinary people are called to be faith leaders and preach the word of God, but our Church continues to prioritize patriarchal values over the inclusion that Jesus modeled. If we were to begin creating a Church that is open and accepting of everyone – including in leadership roles – we would all benefit. Scripture teaches us about the importance of listening to God; however, until everyone is encouraged and allowed to follow that call, our church will be falling short of our potential.

Where can barriers to leadership within the church be taken down? How can we contribute to that work?

Silent reflection

We invite you to quietly reflect on tonight's reading and the question: **Where can barriers to leadership within the church be taken down? How can we contribute to that work?** 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 15 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 justice, hear our prayer.

Closing prayer

Jesus, it is You who we seek during this Advent.
For You are the Incarnation,
the Word made flesh
who dwells among us.

It is You, Jesus, our Savior, that we will follow,
and no other earthly principality or power.
May Your spirit of love and nonviolence fill our hearts, and the hearts of people everywhere,
as we strive to make God's reign of justice, peace
and love a reality in our world.

Jesus, Son of God, Human One, Healer, Peacemaker, Redeemer—our only hope,
help us to disarm our hearts and our world of violence, racial hatred and fear.
In this time of peril and pandemic, empower us to abolish war, all weapons—from nuclear
weapons to killer drones to handguns, halt the climate crisis and safeguard all creation.

Help us to respect the dignity of each person, welcome the immigrant and refugees, and to resist
and help transform structures and policies that cause and perpetuate economic exploitation,
poverty, racism, sexism, discrimination, inequality, and social injustice.

Help us, dear Jesus, during this holy Advent season,
to make Your Word flesh,
to rid ourselves and our world of all that wounds, divides and destroys,
and become channels of your peace, justice, mercy, and reconciling love.

For nothing is impossible with God!
Come Lord Jesus! Amen

*(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 15 minutes.)*