

Advent Candle Lighting (Year A) 2022

“You Know What Time It Is.”

First Sunday (for the northern hemisphere)

You know what time it is. The night is far gone, the day is near. It is the in-between time. Right now, the nights are still drawing longer, but soon that will cease, and the daylight will begin to increase. In this in-between time, of fall into winter, we know the promise of spring will come even if we cannot sense it. We know what time it is: time to watch and wait for signs of Christ’s presence in our world and in our lives in a new way. What is being revealed to you in the darkness? What is hidden that is waiting for you to know?

Light the first candle

Prayer: Now is the time for us to wake from sleep. Light of the World, we wait for You. Voice in the Darkness, we wait for You. Prepare us to receive You in our world and in our lives in a new way. Amen.

***Alternative First Sunday (for the southern hemisphere)**

You know what time it is. The night is far gone, the day is near. It is the in-between time. Right now, the days are almost as long as they can be. But we know the seasons will change and turn and long nights will return. In this in-between time, of spring into summer, we cherish the daylight and are reminded that the Light of the World draws near. We know what time it is: time to watch and wait for signs of Christ’s presence in our world and in our lives in a new way. What is being revealed to you as you watch and wait?

Light the first candle

Prayer: Now is the time for us to wake from sleep. Light of the World, we wait for You. Voice in the Darkness, we wait for You. Prepare us to receive You in our world and in our lives in a new way. Amen.

Second Sunday

You know what time it is. A voice has cried out from the wilderness, “Prepare the way of the Lord.” It is time to make things ready, in our lives and in our world, for the Word to be flesh again. It is time to prepare to live as God showed the ancestors of our faith, through the teaching of the prophets and the stories we have passed down until now. Prepare to make all things ready, for Christ to be born in our hearts again, that we might remember who we are, who God intends us to be. Prepare the way of the Lord.

Light the second candle

Prayer: God of our Ancestors, we repent of where we have gone astray. Help us to listen to the voice that cries out from the wildernesses, the margins of our world. Help us to listen to Your voice call us to prepare for justice, Your voice that calls us into the hard work of reparation, Your voice that calls us to pursue the path of peace. Amen.

Third Sunday

You know what time it is. It is not time to sit back and hem and haw. It is not time to question whether to risk or not. It is not time to tell those who have waited so long for justice to continue to be patient. The waiting of Advent is not passive, but active. It is participating in the reign of Christ while waiting for Christ to return in our world and lives in a new way. It is building up the beloved community now while knowing that grief and suffering are still raw and real. It is the time to risk, because if we do not, we are bound to lose. It is the time to act for justice because we know that it will not come unless we demand it. It is the time to seek peace and pursue it, because it will not come without sacrifice. It is the time to live, knowing Christ is with us now even as we wait for Christ to make all things new.

Lighting of the third candle

Prayer: God of Justice and Mercy, we pray for the courage to pursue Your way in this world now even as we pray for Your kin-dom to come, on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Fourth Sunday

You know what time it is. It is the time to rise, to not be afraid. It is the time to shine our light and listen for God's voice in the darkness. It is the time to pursue justice and mercy and love one another. It is the time to listen to the voices of angels among us, to set aside fear and cling to hope. It is the time to know Emmanuel, God is with Us. Not in a time to come, not in a time long ago in the past, but now. This is the time. Wake from sleep, rise up, and rejoice that Christ is the Lord, that God's reign is right here, if we live into it.

Lighting of the fourth candle

Prayer

Glory, Glory, Glory! Lord God Almighty, we declare Your reign is here, among us now. We declare that You are Sovereign in our life and no other. We declare that the time is now, and we pledge ourselves anew to You, our Savior, Redeemer, and God Forever, Christ the Lord. Amen and Amen.

Christmas Eve

You know what time it is. The world has been in labor pains until now. God has midwived us to this point, helping us come to be who we are meant to be. We are God's beloved children. On this night, we remember the birth of Jesus, and know that Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. This is the time when all things, all of us, are made a new creation in Christ. See, everything old has passed away. Everything has become new!

Lighting of the Christ candle

Prayer:

Living Christ, be born again in our hearts this night. May we be transformed for You, to not dwell upon the past, or put all our hope in the future, but to live into who we are now, to build up Your beloved community on earth as it is in heaven. May we remember this moment, with Christmas in our hearts all year long, as a promise and pledge to live into Your reign, now and forever. Amen.

*Alternative Sung Prayer: sing the first verse of Joy to the World, or the last verse of O Little Town of Bethlehem