

ADVENT 1B

Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; 1Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13: 24-37

Additional resources for Advent 1B: Advent Wreath with three purple candles, one pink candle, one larger white candle; *BORROWED LIGHT*, Thomas H Troeger, Oxford University Press, New York, 1994; *AS ONE VOICE*, Volume two, Willow Production Pty Ltd, Manly Vale, NSW 2093, 1997

CALL TO WORSHIP: *Based on verses from Psalm 80*

Let us worship God who strengthens us to be faithful always -
enlightening our lives with joy and hope.

Our hope rests in you alone O God -

restore us to you and make us radiant with the joy of your salvation.

TIS 42: "Lord make us turn to you..." Psalm 80 selected verses

TIS 452: "God of mercy, God of grace show the brightness of your face"

TIS 156/AHB 91: "Morning has broken"

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE:

ADULT: As we celebrate the beginning of the season of Advent,

we join with Christians around the world to light the candle of hope.

CHILD/YOUNG PERSON: We wait with hope and anticipation for God's love to be revealed.

ADULT: As we wait in the clear blue-sky'd light of summer, we hear anew that the world will be pierced with an even greater light.

CHILD/YOUNG PERSON: We wait with hope and expectation for the Light of the World to be revealed. We light this candle as a symbol of our hope.

A purple candle is lit.

TIS 286: Verse 1 only "Light one candle for hope" or

AS ONE VOICE, VOLUME TWO 3: Verse 1 and refrain "Christ be our light"

A WORD WITH THE CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

Amy lived in a small town in the Blue Mountains and she loved living there with her older brother and her mum and dad. Their house was in a very long street on a ridge overlooking a valley which stretched as far as the eye could see. On Christmas Eve some years ago, firefighters from the bush fire brigade came knocking on the doors of every house in their street warning them about a big bush fire burning a long way up the valley but heading in their direction. "You have to be prepared" was their message. "Now! - you mustn't waste any time". So Amy and her family, like all the neighbours, got to work, cleaning out all the gutters and picking up any rubbish lying around, gathering up loose leaves and branches. Her dad packed the old station wagon with their special possessions - photo albums, their first drawings from kindy, pictures, special china, it was hard to know what to leave out, then he drove the car further up the mountains to a friend's place which wasn't close to any bush at all. When they had done all this, Amy walked along to the very end of their street where there was an enormous flat rock. It was crowded with people from all along the street sitting watching for signs of smoke in the distance. Amy recognised a few of the younger folk, but there were many people she didn't know at all - everyone was very friendly and a woman made a space so Amy could sit there and watch as

well. She felt pretty scared as she looked and saw smoke a long way away in the distance. "We'll be right" said the woman, "we've all prepared as well as we can and there's going to be a firefighter here with us every day so we'll be safe." Sure enough there was a firefighter at the front of the rock looking up the valley through the biggest binoculars Amy had ever seen. Amy felt less frightened then.

It was very hot on Christmas Day and Amy ran along to the flat rock but the smoke didn't seem any closer so she went off with her family to spend the day as planned with family further down the mountain. The next day the whole family went along to the flat rock and it seemed as though everyone from the street were there. The smoke was certainly a lot closer but the firefighter assured them that he and his fellow firies were there to make sure they would be safe. "Trust me" he said with confidence - and they did - and as they gathered at the flat rock over the next four days, watching the smoke come closer, everyone agreed how their togetherness and the presence of the firefighter with them did help make them feel less afraid. The next day was dreadful as the fire had arrived and travelled all along the valley just behind their homes - and the firefighters were there watching and hosing the flames down, and Amy stood right there with her family - and watched and waited - and the firefighters were right - because of their their skill and care - and because everyone in the street had heeded the warnings and prepared so well - all the people and properties were saved. And when it was all over and the new year had come, wonder of wonders - the agapanthus lining the inside of their back fence still bloomed. And - isn't it interesting to note that the name agapanthus comes from two Greek words - agape - love, and anthus - flower!

And towards the end of that year, when Advent came again, Amy 's thoughts went back to the bushfire and she remembered how they had been so well prepared for what lay ahead, and how the presence of the firefighter with them each day had given them confidence to believe that they would be safe. It's a bit like the message of Advent, she thought, preparing our homes and our hearts to welcome Jesus and she knew that she would be able to do that because she trusted in God's presence with her each day.

ALL TOGETHER EVERYBODY 294: "God give you joy"

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

How good are we at watching for signs of God's presence in the world - in our lives, our homes?

(silent reflection)

Advent God, forgive us when we pay more attention to satisfying our own needs, than seeking you and your will for our lives - for being more interested in possessing the material things of life, rather than your spiritual gifts. Turn our lives around so that we are looking in the right direction - towards you. Only then can we hope to recognise the signs of your presence in the world. This we pray in Jesus' name.
Amen

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Hear the good news: In Jesus Christ we have been enriched in every way - in everything we say and in everything we know - in addition, through God's grace, we do not lack any spiritual gift as we wait with

anticipation for Jesus to be revealed. He is the one will keep us strong to the end, so that we shall be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(based on 1Cor.1:5-8)

Thanks be to God.

OLD TESTAMENT: Isaiah 64:1-9;

EPISTLE: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-37

BORROWED LIGHT 129: "As servants working an estate"

Suggested tune TIS 316/AHB 240 Forest Green

SERMON

TIS 275/AHB 203 `Hail to the Lord's anointed' first verse only whilst seated

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

We have been enriched, O God, in every way through the love which was so beautifully and clearly revealed by Jesus. We give thanks to you for initiating this act of love by entering our human history in the way we all enter it - as a baby born of woman's flesh.

We draw our breath in wonder at such a normal yet such a surprising act. As we wait once more for this wonder-full event to take place, help us never to lose that sense of wonder and mystery which accompanies birth. We pray for those who have lost any sense of wonder because of the stress of just living from day to day: those who are worn out from the effort of making ends meet - from feeding and clothing and keeping alive themselves and their families.

(silent reflection)

We pray for families where relationships have broken down and where children feel unloved and unwelcome;

where family members are forced out of their homes because of violence and abuse.

(silent reflection)

We pray for all people who are made to feel unwelcome because of their race; their colour; their religion.

We pray for attitudes which truly reflect Jesus' commandment to love one another.

(silent reflection)

We pray for people for whom this Advent season points to a heightened sense of failure rather than any promise of fulfilment;

for people who identify this season with lost dreams;

for people who know only loneliness and recycled memories....

(silent reflection)

TIS 275/AHB 203: verse 2 and 3 sung softly whilst seated

Prayers for local, national and international situations and events.

STAND AND SING TIS 275/AHB 203 verses 4 and 5

THE LORD'S PRAYER

OFFERING

OFFERTORY PRAYER

O God, receive and bless these gifts which we bring in response to your many gifts to us. May they reflect our gratitude for the diverse gifts with which you have enriched our lives - especially the gift of Jesus Christ, whose birth we await with eagerness and anticipation. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

TIS 276/AHB 207: "There's a light upon the mountain"

TIS 616/AHB 547: "O day of God draw near"

Alternate tune Franconia TIS 448/AHB 376

BENEDICTION:

Live your lives this week blessed by the knowledge that you are
shaped by the hand of God,
enriched by the grace of Jesus Christ
kept alert by the power of the Holy Spirit