

# Words for Worship for Advent - Epiphany

Written by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed



FROM  
GENERATION  
TO GENERATION...

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## ABOUT THIS LITURGY OUTLINE

- *Italicized lines are notes for worship leaders.*
- Unbolded lines are to be spoken by worship leaders and, when appropriate, printed in bulletins or projected on screens.
- **Bolded lines are to be spoken by the congregation and printed in bulletins or projected on screens.**

## A BENEDICTION FOR THE SERIES

As you leave this place, may you go knowing that  
from generation to generation,  
we have been claimed and loved.

From generation to generation,  
God has been by our side.

From generation to generation,  
we are not alone.

The God of yesterday and the God of tomorrow  
knows you by name, loves you, and calls you forth,  
saying, "Go be the person you are called to be,  
love wildly, do justice, and come back soon."

May it be so. Amen.

*There's room for every story*



## CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY

*The candle lighting liturgy is written for four voices, with an introduction from a worship leader. We encourage you to invite readers of different ages and from different generations to lead this liturgy each week. This choice reflects the intergenerational theme as well as our desire to include many voices. If including diverse ages is not possible, then feel free to reassign and reallocate the script below to fit the readers you have.*

Worship Leader: Over a hundred people, from the ages of two to eighty years old, were asked the question, “What gives you hope?” From the voices of different generations, hear their answers: <sup>1</sup>

Adult: My two-year-old son.

Child: Dogs wagging their tails.

Older Adult: Talking with young people.

Teenager: Kindness from strangers.

Adult: Spending time in the woods.

Child: Waffles.

Older Adult: Hands clasped in prayer.

Teenager: Social progress.

Adult: The way my son calls everybody “buddy.”

Child: The ringing of church bells.

Older Adult: Babies trying over and over to take their first step.

Teenager: The turning of seasons.

Adult: Christian community.

Child: Books.

Older Adult: Friendship with my adult children.

Teenager: Advocates for justice.

Adult: Hearing children in the pews sing the hymns.

Child: The sunrise every single morning.

Older Adult: What gives you hope?

Teenager: Today we light the candle of hope to remind ourselves that God is at work in this world.

*Another worship leader or reader lights the candle.*

Teenager: From generation to generation, God has brought good news of love and compassion, justice and community. Let us rest and abide in that good news. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Before writing this liturgy, Rev. Sarah Speed created a google form with writing prompts and questions. We shared it widely with our larger online community, inviting people of all ages to respond. The candle lighting liturgies pull from the responses we received. If you desire, you could similarly offer these questions to your own community and include their responses in your liturgies each week.

*There's room for every story*

## CALL TO CONFESSION

In God's house, everyone is welcome—  
those who seem like they have it all together,  
and those who feel like their world is falling apart.  
No matter who we are, there's room for us here.  
With that confidence, we turn to God in prayer,  
speaking the truth of our lives.  
Let us pray:

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of today and God of tomorrow,  
you say, "Bring your full self. There's room for you here."  
**But we say, "Our lives are too messy."**  
You say, "Bring your hopes and your dreams. There's room for you here."  
**But we say, "It's too risky to hope."**  
You say, "Bring your grief and your prayers. There's room for you here."  
**But we say, "Some things are easier to forget."**  
God of today and God of tomorrow,  
we know in our hearts that there's room for us here.  
**Forgive us for withholding our full selves from you.**  
**Forgive us for giving only our Sunday best.**  
Help us remember, today and tomorrow,  
**There's room for every story. Amen.**

## WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

Family of faith,  
We who feel scattered are held together.  
We who have lost our way are forgiven and found.  
And we who are lonely are brought into the fold and are told,  
"There's room for you here."  
From generation to generation, this is the good news of the gospel.  
In Jesus Christ we are held, forgiven, found, and welcomed.  
Thanks be to God! Amen.

*There's room for every story*

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of the ages,  
in scripture we hear stories of people like us—  
ordinary people,  
people who longed to know you,  
people who longed to follow you,  
people who made mistakes,  
people who tried to grow—  
old, young,  
native, immigrant,  
new to the faith, lifelong believer.  
In scripture we hear stories of people like us,  
so just as you walked with them,  
help us to hear and remember all the ways that you walk with us.  
We are listening.  
We are grateful.  
We are yours.  
Amen.

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe in a God**  
**who promised to Abraham,**  
**who wrestled with Jacob,**  
**who walked with Ruth,**  
**who spoke with Moses,**  
**who grieved with Bathsheba,**  
**who danced with David,**  
**who dreamed with Joseph,**  
**and who hoped like Mary.**  
**We believe in a God who has been**  
**loving, inviting, transforming, and challenging us**  
**from generation to generation.**  
**And we believe that same God**  
**is here with us now,**  
**saying, “Come on in; there’s room for you here.”**  
**Amen.**

*There's room for every story*

## PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE

God of Abraham and Isaac,  
God of Tamar and Ruth,  
God of Mary and Joseph,

We bow our heads today hoping to catch a glimpse or a shimmer of you.  
We know that you are here with us, just as you walked with every generation before, so  
we bring you our prayers.

Thank you for creating space for us.  
Thank you for seeing our scattered thoughts,  
our imposter syndrome,  
our fragments of doubt, and still saying,  
“Come on in.”

Thank you for seeing our ordinary selves  
with anxious concerns  
and unflattering habits and saying,  
“I have bigger plans for you.”

Thank you for seeing  
our fragile egos,  
and our uncertain relationships,  
and saying,  
“You still belong here.”

Your expansive love makes room for us to breathe, and we want to love with our lungs and  
hearts full. So today we pray—teach us how to make that same room for others.

When we come face to face with stories that are different from ours, show us how to add  
chairs to the table. When we find ourselves face to face with stories that frustrate and  
test our patience, show us how to build bridges instead of walls. When we find ourselves  
face to face with stories that feel foreign or unrelatable, remind us to open the door and  
to listen fully.

From Abraham to Mary, you made room for every story—and that love continues to make  
room for us. Teach us to do the same for our neighbor so this world will know love.

With hope we pray, using the words your son taught us to say:

**Our Father...**

*Continue with the Lord's Prayer in the language and wording most familiar to you.*