

# Love Builds Hope

## An Advent and Christmas Online Service Guide

Thank you for downloading this Advent and Christmas service guide.

We recognise that Christmas 2020 provides particular challenges for churches due to the restrictions on gathering in person and of singing carols together. The following virtual service ideas are provided for your church with the understanding that you will choose and adapt from the two ideas to create a service that works best for your context.

The first idea is designed around the traditional Nine Lessons and Carols format and the second is an interactive service based on the Scripture passages associated with Advent.

However your church chooses to journey towards Christmas this year, we encourage you to include the singing of the carol *When Out of Poverty is Born*, a carol commissioned by Christian Aid and written by Kathy Galloway. We encourage you to sing this as part of your service on the first Sunday of Advent, 29 November 2020, that we might unite in one voice to prepare the way for the dream that will not die. The words of this carol are provided below.

You can find additional prayers and points for prayer on the accompanying advent activity and prayer sheet. Download at [caid.ie/ChristmasChurch](https://caid.ie/ChristmasChurch)

## When Out of Poverty is Born (words: Kathy Galloway; tune: Kingsfold)

When out of poverty is born  
a dream that will not die  
and landless, weary folk find strength  
to stand with heads held high,  
it's then we learn from those who wait  
to greet the promised day,  
'The Lord is coming; don't lose heart.  
Be blest: prepare the way!'

When people wander far from God,  
forget to share their bread,  
they find their wealth an empty thing,  
their spirits are not fed.  
For only just and tender love  
the hungry soul will stay.  
And so God's prophets echo still  
'Be blest: prepare the way!'

When God took flesh and came to earth,  
the world turned upside down,  
and in the strength of woman's faith  
the Word of Life was born.  
She knew that God would raise the low,  
it pleased her to obey.  
Rejoice with Mary in the call,  
'Be blest: prepare the way!'

Music: <https://music.churchofscotland.org.uk/hymn/291-when-out-of-poverty-is-born>

Church Hymnary 4:291

## Advent service suggestion 1: Nine Lessons and Carols

### Introduction:

While the Nine Lessons and Carols format was created by Bishop Benson and held in Truro Cathedral in 1880, the service was made familiar by King's College, Cambridge where it was first used in 1918. The first World War had just ended and somewhere between 50 to 100 million people across the world had lost or would lose their lives due to a global pandemic—the Spanish Flu.

Eric Milner-White had been appointed Dean of King's College and his experience as an army chaplain had convinced him that there was a need for more imaginative worship for that Christmas of 1918.

The nine lessons were rearranged in 1919, and the readings have remained the same for over 100 years. Dean Milner-White emphasised that the main theme of the service 'is the development of the loving purposes of God, seen through the windows and words of the Bible.' \*

As we gather together online in this exceptional year and extraordinary Christmas of 2020, may this 'development of the loving purposes of God' bring us all near to the manger where love comes so close in the vulnerable infant, and where the 'hopes and fears of all the years' are met.

### Planning your service:

We suggest that you appoint and prepare nine different readers to do the nine readings.

First lesson from Genesis 3:8–19

Second lesson from Genesis 22:15–18

Third lesson from Isaiah 9:2, 6–7

Fourth lesson from Isaiah 11:1–3a, 4a, 6–9

Fifth lesson from the Gospel of Luke 1:26–35, 38

Sixth lesson from Luke 2:1, 3–7

Seventh lesson from Luke 2:8–16

Eighth lesson from the Gospel of Matthew 2:1–12

Ninth lesson from the Gospel of John 1:1–14

The carols have been the part of the service that have changed over the years. You may work with the musicians and singers in your community to choose carols that you think are most suitable for participation from home.

\* reference: [www.kings.cam.ac.uk/chapel/a-festival-of-nine-lessons-and-carols/history-of-a-festival-of-nine-lessons-and-carols](http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/chapel/a-festival-of-nine-lessons-and-carols/history-of-a-festival-of-nine-lessons-and-carols)

**We encourage you to include *When Out of Poverty is Born* as one of the carols and suggest that it would come best following the fifth lesson, after the birth of Jesus is foretold by the angel Gabriel to Mary.**

This carol echoes the words of Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55), the song that follows the angel's announcement in the fifth reading of the Nine Lessons and Carols.

### **The dream that will not die**

Suggested introduction before the singing carol.

The foretelling of the birth of her son, the Son of the Most High, awakens in Mary the dream that will not die. A dream of a world where the lowly are lifted up. A dream where those who are hungry are filled, and where those who have misused their power are brought low.

It is a dream that is awakening in us all this year as we realise the true value and worth of people and what really matters. As we sing the words of *When Out of Poverty is Born* together may we imagine how we might build back with justice after the dramatic disruption of coronavirus.

In raising our voices in song may we galvanise and amplify our prophetic voice in calling for a world where all have enough to eat, where all are valued equally and treated with dignity and justice, where all are given opportunity to flourish and live life to the full, free from oppression and restrictions on their lives. And in raising our prophetic voice may we also be active in preparing the way for that better possible world.

A world where pastoralist herdsman and women in Ethiopia no longer lose their lives digging for water to provide for their thirsty cattle. A world where communities struggling with erratic and reduced rainfall are provided with a consistent water supply, drought resistant seeds, cattle and goats, and food for their livestock.

You may wish to show the short Christian Aid Christmas film featuring the stories from communities in Ethiopia as part of your virtual Nine Lessons and Carols service after the singing of *When Out of Poverty is Born*, and to hold an offering for the Christmas Appeal afterwards. Find resources for holding in-person or virtual collections and the video at [caid.ie/ChristmasChurch](https://caid.ie/ChristmasChurch)

You could also invite everyone to light and hold a candle together during the singing of the carol, using the candle shields provided by Christian Aid.

May the love that has brought us close as communities this year, helping each other live through a global crisis, be the love that builds hope for communities living through the crisis of climate change in Ethiopia and across the world.

You might find the following helpful in preparing for your Nine Lessons and Carols service <https://www.reformedworship.org/article/september-1986/nine-lessons-and-carols-christmastide>

## Advent service suggestion 2: Love builds hope

This service outline is intended for an online gathering on Zoom or similar online or social media platform, but can also be adapted for an in-person gathering by omitting the singing and taking necessary coronavirus precautions.

If you choose to use this service, or elements of it, we encourage you to include the Advent carol, *When Out of Poverty is Born* written for Christian Aid by Kathy Galloway. We encourage you to include it on the first Sunday of Advent, 29 November 2020, so that by singing the same song together across the UK and Ireland we might unite in one voice to prepare the way for the dream that will not die.

### Preparation:

Appoint a facilitator for each group if including the discussion group and encourage participants to come prepared with:

- A dinner candle
- Order or print off the candle shield provided by Christian Aid at [caid.ie/ChristmasChurch](https://caid.ie/ChristmasChurch)
- Colouring in pencils/pens
- Mince pies and coffee (or similar Christmas treats to enjoy together at the end)

### Introduction and opening prayer:

Welcome to our Advent service said by the worship leader.

Let us pray, repeating the phrase, **Emmanuel, God with us** after each sentence:

Even if we cannot gather in person

**Emmanuel, God with us**

Even if some Christmas traditions have had to go

**Emmanuel, God with us**

Even if we might not get to hug family and friends

**Emmanuel, God with us**

Even if we cannot sing carols beside each other

**Emmanuel, God with us**

Even if Christmas cheer is harder this year,

**Emmanuel, God with us**

### Opening song:

Choose from song suggestions below

### Reading 1:

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

### Discussion on hope: (15 minutes)

Optional discussion in Zoom breakout groups.

Where are you on the scale of hope this Christmas (0 being low hopes to 10 being high hopes)? This can be a question for personal reflection if people don't feel comfortable to share. If people are happy to share where they are on the scale of hope, encourage them to write their number into the chat function without any judgement.

Is there a verse, phrase, idea or word in Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 that holds hope for us and the world this year?

### Reading 2:

Our second reading is known as the Magnificat. This is Mary's song on hearing that she is to be the mother of the 'Son of the Most High'. It is a radical and revolutionary song of joy and justice, an anthem for all who are denied a full and free life.

Share this reading of Luke 1:46-55. Download our Magnificat video at [caid.ie/ChristmasChurch](https://caid.ie/ChristmasChurch)

### Sermon:

You could include the Christian Aid Christmas Appeal sermon. Download at [caid.ie/ChristmasChurch](https://caid.ie/ChristmasChurch)

### Short song:

Choose from song suggestions below

### Reflective activity:

Get your candle and festive candle shield.

Spend a few moments colouring in your candle shield as you reflect on the sermon and the discussions about hope that you have had today. You might not get it all finished but make a start.

Play the music from the short song again while this colouring reflective activity is being done together.

You can show your candle shield to others by holding it up to your camera if doing this online.

Now put it on your candle and light the candle, hold it while we sing the Christian Aid carol together.

Christian Aid carol: *When Out of Poverty is Born*.

A video recording of this is available to include in your service. Download at [caid.ie/ChristmasChurch](https://caid.ie/ChristmasChurch)

## Film:

Show the Christian Aid film featuring communities in Ethiopia [caid.ie/ChristmasChurch](https://caid.ie/ChristmasChurch). Even though Ethiopia might feel far away from us in these deep winter days, consider what the 'dream that will not die' is for each of these pastoralist farmers facing the crisis of climate change? How do the revolutionary words of Mary's song provide hope for them this Christmas? How might the love that came down in the form of a vulnerable infant be the love that changes the world? The kind of love that builds dreams, community and hope?

## Collection:

Repeat the carol, allowing participants time to make an online donation to the Christian Aid appeal. To know how much you raise, set up a Justgiving page at [justgiving.com/campaigns/christmas-appeal-NIR](https://justgiving.com/campaigns/christmas-appeal-NIR) if you are in NIR or [justgiving.com/campaigns/christmas-appeal-IRE](https://justgiving.com/campaigns/christmas-appeal-IRE) if you are in ROI and share the link or QR code. Alternatively share the link to [caid.ie/ChristmasAppeal](https://caid.ie/ChristmasAppeal) for participants to donate directly.

## Closing blessing:

We close our time together with a blessing for hope.

'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit'. Romans 15:13

May you abound in the hope of the prophets,  
imagining another way

May you abound in the hope of a mother,  
singing revolution

May you abound in the hope of an infant,  
the incarnation of love

May you abound in the love that builds hope  
this day and evermore

And may you have a hopeful Advent and a  
comforting Christmas. Amen.

## Coffee and mince pies:

Gather in Zoom breakout rooms or as one large group if not too large.

You may wish to discuss what your reflections were as you coloured your candle shield.

## Song suggestions:

*Come though Long Expected Jesus*, Charles Wesley

*He Came Down that We Might Have Love*, Traditional  
Cameroon

*Hope is a Candle*, Richard Leach.

*Immanuel*, Michael Card

*Make Way, Make Way, for Christ the King*,  
Graham Kendrick

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*, Philip Brooks

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (18th century,  
based on the ancient Advent Antiphons, translated  
John Mason Neale)

*Wait for the Lord*, Taize

*When Out of Poverty is Born*, Kathy Galloway

Find out more about our  
Christmas appeal and download  
resources at

[caid.ie/ChristmasAppeal](https://caid.ie/ChristmasAppeal)

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