

WAITING, WAITING

A Song and Service for Lighting the Candles in the Advent Wreath

By Donald F. Marsh

Guidelines

This song and service may be used on successive Sundays in Advent for lighting the candles in the Advent wreath. The themes used here for the four Sundays in Advent are LOVE, HOPE, PEACE and JOY. (We made four banners with those four words on them and put them in place on a sequential pattern.) The corresponding symbols are PROPHET, BETHLEHEM, SHEPHERD and ANGEL. On Christmas Day or Eve, the theme, of course, is the SAVIOR'S birth, with JOSEPH and MARY and the CHRISTCHILD as the symbols.

The same Opening Sentences are read to begin each service, followed by the continued Readings for each Sunday. For each Sunday, a Leader and a Reader are needed, with the congregation reading the People's part from a worksheet or bulletin. (In the absence of the latter, a Second Leader could read the part marked People.)

One stanza of the song "Waiting, Waiting," is sung each Sunday in Advent, with the fifth being saved for Christmas Day or Eve. At the asterisks (*) in each stanza (at the lines beginning, "So light one candle for a manger full of ..."), the appropriate symbolic person lights the candle for the day. Suggested costuming:

- v. 1) PROPHET: Robe made of rough material, such as burlap.
- v. 2) BETHLEHEM: A wrap-around tube of posterboard suspended from shoulder straps or twine, with a Bethlehem scene silhouetted on it. (Or, fasten a Bethlehem poster to the person's back).
- v. 3) SHEPHERD: Your typical Sunday School shepherd's robe and headdress.
- v. 4) ANGEL: Dazzling white gown and halo.
- v. 5) JOSEPH & MARY: In nativity costumes, Joseph with candle, Mary with BABY.

The Advent candles may be decorated with the theme words, LOVE, HOPE, PEACE AND JOY, with SALVATION or CHRISTCHILD (or perhaps a star) on the center candle.

Following the song each Sunday, there is a brief benediction or closing, based on the theme word for that day.

On successive Sundays, following the first Sunday, you may want to light the candles that were lighted the previous Sunday(s) prior to the beginning of the service, with only the candle-lighter for that day costumed and participating in the service. Or, if you wish more repetition of the song, beginning with the second Sunday, following the

Opening Sentences (at ""), the previous stanzas could be sung, with the PROPHET (etc.) re-lighting the candle he or she lighted on previous Sundays. Then, pause for the continued reading for the Second (etc.) Sunday before singing the new stanza and lighting the new candle for that day.

Of course, the entire song, "Waiting, Waiting," can be sung by itself, simply as an Advent song, with or without candle-lighting, costuming, actions, etc.

Feel free to adapt this service to make it fit your own church's circumstances and needs. Hopefully, the song and service may help us prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior more deeply in this glorious season!