

## ADVENT ONE

## HOPE



The need is clear – give water for Christmas, the essence of survival.

Please adapt this material for your place. There is a short [video](#) available. We encourage you to share it.

## CALL TO WORSHIP

E te whānau, dear friends in Christ,  
In this season of preparation, we come together to worship our God,  
The One who is hope.

Let us be restored by the living waters of God at this time.  
Haere mai. Come. Rest in the living waters.

Haere mai. Come. Pray by the living waters.



Christian World Service  
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Haere mai. Come. Be strengthened through the living waters.

All are welcome, you are welcome, in the name of Christ.

God's hope be with you.

**And also with you.**

We are here to listen to God's promises.

**Let us worship together in truth.**

We are here to once again receive God's mercy.

**Let us gather together upon this foundation of grace.**

We are here as the people of God.

**Let us be open to the Spirit as we gather in this place.**

## LIGHTING THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE: HOPE

### **Read Partner Story from Uganda: Give Water, Give Life**

Great Grandmother Farazia is 78 years old and lives in the dry south of Uganda. She saves every coin she can for a new rainwater tank. Every month she takes her money to the village caregivers meeting where it is recorded in her account. She can see the difference a tank makes to other families affected by HIV and AIDS like hers.

With a tank, her grandchildren will not have to walk for hours to collect water that needs to be filtered when they get home.

With clean water, they will be healthy and go to school every day. They will have energy for their chores and can grow better food. She wants this for her grandchildren. It is her prayer.

**Their Need is Clear. Give Water, Give Life.**

### **Lighting the Advent Candle of Hope**

Gracious God

For those, like Farazia, who dare to hope for a better way

**We give you thanks**

For those who are the bringers of light

**We praise you**

For the relentless pursuit of this hope

**We light this candle**

**Amen.**

## THE READINGS

### *Isaiah 2: 1-5*

Isaiah's vision is a compelling one, addressing our deep longing for peace. As we begin the church year, it is a good focus for the months ahead. There is more to come.

### *Psalms 122*

This prayer of peace for Jerusalem is a prayer for today. Residents live with uncertainty and injustice. Tensions are rising as positions are taken that undermine the existence of all those nations and peoples who have made it their home.

### *Roman 13: 11-14*

Paul exhorts us to avoid the potential traps in this season like drunkenness and quarrelling. If we put on the 'armour of light', we will be able to last the distance!

### *Matthew 24: 36-44*

At the beginning of Advent, Matthew calls us to be vigilant, to pay attention to what is happening. What is on the horizon for us? Can we hear the clamour of the people who are desperate for change and new life? Are we ready for the unexpected?



The ground is rock hard but great grandmother Farazia knows she must keep digging. She needs to get seeds into the ground so she can feed her family. The little money she gets, comes from selling the bananas she grows on her small plantation. In all her 78 years she cannot remember so many droughts but they just keep coming and now with five people to feed she tries to ignore her aching limbs.

The work is hard but she loves her grandchildren who remind her of her own children and their parents lost to AIDS. Every day her prayer is the same. She wants them all to grow up and have children of their own. Right now, she wants them to have clean water.

In the south of Uganda where she lives, rainfall is failing. The waterholes and streams they relied on dry up quickly after the rain so now it is a three to five kilometre trek to fill up their containers – and the water is polluted and heavily mineralised. The walk often twice a day means Farazia's grandchildren miss school and have little time for chores like watering the vegetables on which they depend. If only she could have a rainwater tank to store the rain when it comes.

Farazia lost her children but also her only grandson who died from the cholera he picked up in the water. Five years ago, Betty the oldest was raped on the way home from collecting water, later giving birth to Arinda. Betty now works in the local town saving all the money she can to help her family.

Once a month Farazia attends the association for caregivers of orphans and vulnerable children in her village set up by the Centre for Community Solidarity. The group has been such a strength to her through difficult times. She has learnt about the virus that claimed her children, how to make charcoal, and to learn new ways to grow food with the changing climate. When she can, she adds a little money to her savings account – her goal to raise \$366 for her half share of a new rainwater tank.

She has seen how much a tank lifts the fortunes of families like hers. With water on tap, she knows the children will be healthier and safer. They will have a much better chance of escaping the misery that has accompanied them in these early years.

Once a year, there is a lottery for the two rainwater tanks allocated to one of the 25 village associations. Members choose a slip of paper, but so far, she has not been lucky. Maybe this year.

Farazia is not the only one without water. According to the United Nations, one in three people does not have access to safe water. In this year's appeal, CWS invites you to focus deeply on the sixth Sustainable Development Goal, Clean Water and Sanitation, one of 17 agreed at the United Nations forming a positive agenda for a better future.

Water is not a luxury but a necessity. Safe water, sanitation and good hygiene are the basics of life.

*"I take this great opportunity on my behalf and fellow members of different groups both who have received tanks and those yet to get, to wholeheartedly thank CWS and all the loving people of New Zealand to have loved, cared and generously supported the people of Isingiro and their needy orphans and vulnerable children whom they don't know. Although I have not yet constructed a rainwater tank at my homestead to reduce this water burden, I am confident with a hope that the past can tell the future. The consistent CCS and CWS relationship and support in past years builds our courage, confidence and hopes that one day me and others un-served will see tanks constructed full of water ending the painful water crisis.*



*The contributions to CWS for CCS have done amazing change to our lives and livelihoods and to the children we care for. May God bless New Zealand, CWS and all with generous hearts New Zealanders."*

Regards from Farazia Kyarimpa

## SERMON NOTES

Advent is a time of preparation and waiting. We do not wait alone but in the company of all people who share this planet our home. Let us keep company with those who are determined to meet people's basic needs for water, food and justice and in places of pain. When the planet is experiencing great change and violence is on the increase, let us seek hope in the ancient stories that have supported people through the centuries.

What if we began our strategic plans with Isaiah's vision to be achieved in five years? Or put more resources into healing and peacemaking rather than violence and war?

Where are the places that need water – real water and the living water of faith?

In this Advent season, let us put aside the rush to excess and overspending and focus on the bare essentials for life.

*Give Water for Christmas, the essence of survival.*

## ADVENT LITANY

God of Water

The One who drew the water out of the formless void, gathered it together and proclaimed its goodness  
Draws creation into the goodness of the water of life.

The One who parted the seas leading the promised people to freedom and safety  
Parts oceans of impossibility and rivers of division.

The One who rose out of the waters of the Jordan  
Brings new life, in humility, out of the depths.

The One who met the thirsting woman at the well  
Is the spring welling up to eternal life.

The One who revealed the crystal river flowing from the throne into the city  
Continues in faithfulness and promise towards the healing of the nations.

This is the God of Water. This is the One of whom Hagar named a spring - The Well of the Living One who sees me.

This is the God who sees me.

This is the God who calls us into the waters.

This is the God who calls us up, out of the waters, to share the waters with all.

## PRAYER FOR OTHERS

Merciful God

As we walk the journey of Advent,

Help us to prepare for your coming in our hearts and in our lives.

May we dare to hope where all seems hopeless.

May we hope despite our shortcomings.  
May we hope despite our unbelief.  
May we hope despite our expectations.  
Let your hope descend.

We pray at this time for the people of Uganda, especially for those who long for the essentials of life. For Farazia, who hopes for a better future and will not give up on her family.

Lord God, we ask these things through the One who is the light to all people, Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.

## MAKE A PRAYER STATION

*You may like to set up prayer stations for the season of Advent and the 2019 Christmas Appeal for people to engage with when they choose or they could be used on one-off occasions for study/home/youth groups. You could add a new station each week or swap them. The stations are designed to be simple to set up and use materials that readily at hand in your communities.*

### **Station One: Hope Blossoms**

#### *Materials needed*

- A copy of the instructions (below) to leave with the other materials at this station
- Small squares of paper (between 10x10cm and 15x15cm)
- Large bowl of water
- Felt pens

#### *Instructions*

What is it that you hope for? What is it that you really long for? Write or draw your hopes on a square piece of paper. Fold each corner of the paper into the middle so that you end up with a smaller square of paper. Now, place your prayer of hope in the bowl of water with the folded side facing up. Watch and wait as your prayer of hope opens up and blossoms on the water. Ask God how where you might share hope with others in your daily life.

## BENEDICTION

Go out to the world and share the hope of Christ

**We go out in hope, knowing that it is God who strengthens and guides us in his light. Amen.**

## NOTES

Special thanks to Farazia and her grandchildren for sharing their story. Thanks to the staff of the Centre for Community Solidarity for the stories and visuals, to Alice Bates for her work on the liturgy and Black Advertising for editing the video.

SUPPORT THE CHRISTMAS APPEAL.

