

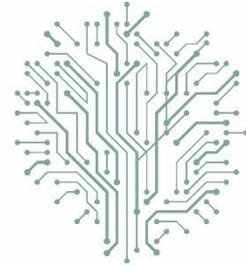
## Closing Responses & Blessing

Lord, send us out, as messengers within our world,  
with words of hope for others,  
with acts of love where there is pain,  
with signs of forgiveness where there is brokenness,  
with healing hands and prayer for those in pain,  
as Christians and followers of Christ.

**Lord, bless us all as we go from this place today.  
Bless us and the people we meet along the way.**

Father,  
Son  
and Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**



SALTBUSH

UNITING THE SCATTERED COMMUNITY

## Simple worship for the scattered Christian community

Third Week of Advent  
Matthew 11: 2-11

### Welcome

An opportunity to welcome people to the gathering

### Lighting of Advent Candle

You are invited to arrange 5 candles for Advent and Christmas Day. This week we light the third candle.

We light this candle on the third week of Advent as people seeking. We remember all who seek Christ in the midst of life and for those, near and far, who long for good news.

Light the third candle.

### Responses & Gathering Prayer

The blind receive sight, the lame walk,  
The lepers are cleansed and the poor have good news  
brought to them.

**Emmanuel, God is with us!**

Lord we gather here, as those with questions,  
As people who search and seek,  
As the sure and the certain amongst the doubtful and  
the hesitant.

And as we come, you welcome us, and you remind us  
of all that is good and hopeful, of touches of grace and  
forgiveness, of healing and wholeness and you say to  
us, "hear and see, what the Lord has done".

**God is with us! Amen.**

## Music for Reflection

Suggested song: [Carry the Dream](#)

<https://johncoleman.bandcamp.com/track/carry-the-dream>

John Coleman © Songs of Wind and Water

## Passing the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

You are invited to turn to those around you and offer them a word of greeting and peace.

## The Word around the Bush

**Matthew 11: 2-11**

2 When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" 4 Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. 6 And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. 9 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you.'

11 Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

## The Message

From your Scattered Community Minister or another leader within your gathering.

## Questions for conversation

- I wonder what you have heard and thought from the Word today?
- I wonder what you heard in the Word for our church?

- What one action can you or your church take in response to the Word today?

## Silence in Two Ways

Spend some time in silence sitting still (suggested 5 minutes). Close your eyes lightly. Sit relaxed but alert.

- You may like to say the prayer phrase "Mar-an-ath-a" (which means come Lord). Say this as four syllables. Do not try to think or imagine anything. If thoughts or distractions come simply return to saying the word.

- Or you may like "sitting with God" — a silent time in which we focus all our mind, heart and soul on the presence of God without trying to create it. Simply be still and open to God.

## Prayers for Others

Eternal God, in this season of Advent, we bring our prayers for others.

Where there is hope, you are there.

Where there is compassion and the desire for wholeness, you are there.

Where there is the struggle for peace, you are there.  
Where the hungry are fed, and the poor empowered, you are there.

Where there is delight in the trees of the land, or the depths of the seas, you are there.

Wherever love is announced, you are there.

In you is such longing for your creation, and for humanity, and we thank you for that presence of you, in Spirit, in people, renewing, calling, and saving.

In that knowledge, and in our simple faith, we bring our prayers for your creation and for the people of this world.

- O Christ we open ourselves in prayer for:  
[\[Silence for personal prayer or invite others to open prayer in between each\]](#)

Your creation ...

*Silence*

For others we have heard about throughout our world..

*Silence*

For other people we know and are close to ...

*Silence*

For our church and our wider community ...

*Silence*

For ourselves ...

*Silence*