



World Vision



Advent One

Breaking Silences: Hope and Hopelessness
So that you may know hope

Watch Hani's story https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_GP0OquayU

Scripture readings:

- Isaiah 64:1-9
- Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
- I Corinthians 1:3-9
- Mark 13:24-37

Reflection poem: Based on Romans 4:18 “Hoping against hope, he believed.”

Walking the Way of Hope, by Jan Richardson

<http://sanctuaryofwomen.com/WomensChristmasRetreat2017.pdf>

Call to Worship: *It Takes Faith to End Violence against Children*

Advent is a time of longing and waiting, where Christians remember the ancient cry of oppressed people for salvation: of patriarchs and prophets, sheep herders and a humble revolutionary virgin peasant girl, culminating at Christmas in the miracle and wonder of God who comes to us as a child.

Every year, more than 1.7 billion children experience violence, neglect or abuse in many forms; physical, sexual and mental, including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation, and child marriage.

But it doesn't need to be this way.

The God who comes as a vulnerable child, experiences, suffers and transforms this violence, and calls on us to do the same on behalf of others today.

The one who said “let the little ones come to me”, that “the kingdom belongs to such as these”, who warns those who would “hinder” or “cause a little one to stumble”.

In a world of division we surely can agree on one thing. That violence against children is a violation of the life God desires for every child. That when children are hurt, we are diminished. That the true measure of any community is how well it attends to its children. That the true measure of our faith is what we believe is possible for a child.

Many faith-based organisations have joined World Vision's campaign *It takes a world to end violence against children*. It aims to catalyse a global movement of people committed to keeping children safe from harm. Its name reflects the fact no one person, group or organisation can solve this problem alone.

As Christians at Advent we believe that it takes more than a world. It takes faith in a God who comes to join with us in the work.

We gather this Advent to express our faith a God who knows what it is to become a child.

Who is willing to identify with the victims; offer forgiveness to perpetrators and through his life, death and resurrection has the power to transform the devastating control of violence over us all.

May our worship and service this day be work together – personal and public – to end violence in the lives of children.

May it help us to confess the worst and rise to the best in ourselves as we help children reach their full potential, and promote a kingdom future of peace and dignity for the next generation.

Lament: *Waiting On The World To Change*

Artist: John Mayer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBlxScj5rIY>

Lament and Confession:

Lament and confession can offer an incarnational grieving with children who suffer from violence. We seek to identify with these children, and look to God for their rescue and healing and for our forgiveness for staying silent. You may like to use several voices for this lament and have an image of the eyes of a child projected for each different stanza of the lament. The names used are arbitrarily used, these situations are depictions not real people in real situations, so when you use this lament you may use other names and photos that are appropriate to your cultural context but please make sure they will not cause offense.

Today we enter into Advent, a time full of promise – the promise of the Christ child, the promise of salvation being delivered into our hands, the promise of hope that God has not forgotten us and good things are ahead.

Jesus, you bring hope when there is hopelessness. You have brought us hope, yet we have failed to carry that hope into the lives of our children. Forgive us.

People of faith, we are called to bring hope and light into the lives of all, yet so many children live without hope. Jesus forgive us and urge us to be better at being the church, at being those who make time for listening to the children around us; at standing by them when they need security, safety and shelter from harm. Make our lives living examples of how hope can overcome hopelessness.

Play the following song to end

Song: Hey Stranger

Artist: Malcolm Gordon

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJjOjsiuY5U>

Prayer

Have two young children say the Lord's Prayer and invite everyone to say it with them.

Play the following song while praying

Song: Hitting You

Artist: Loudon Wainwright III

We pray for children and their families who suffer from so many forms of violence.

We pray for those in crisis with a breakdown in the ability to deal with life stresses, such as financial problems, relationship break-up or chronic pain and illness.

We pray for those experiencing conflict, disaster, violence, abuse, or loss and a sense of isolation.

For those amongst vulnerable groups who experience discrimination, such as refugees and migrants; indigenous peoples and prisoners.

We wait, we pray and we sing; Come Lord Jesus!

Advent Wreath Candle Lighting

As we light the first candle of the Advent Wreath we seek to join with the movement to end violence against children, and to shine light into the darkness of displaced children.

Nearly 50 million children, across the globe, have migrated across or within borders, or been forcibly displaced. More than half that number – 28 million – are boys and girls who have fled violence and persecution and whose insecurity makes them particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of trafficking for forced labour, sexual violence and forced marriage.

As we light the first candle of our Advent wreath in anticipation of the coming of our Messiah in a refugee child we pray for the children of our community and listen to hear their hopes and dreams.

Song: Hey Mary!

Artist: Sam and Malcolm Gordon

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVoGcumJwng>

Every five minutes, somewhere in our world, a child dies as a result of violence. An estimated 120 million girls and 73 million boys have been victims of sexual violence, and almost one billion children are subjected to physical punishment on a regular basis.

As part of Agenda 2030, the world's governments have set ambitious targets to end violence by 2030, in order to deliver the vision of a world where all children – girls and boys alike – grow up free from violence and exploitation.

World Vision's campaign to end violence against children will support the efforts of those seeking to prevent violence, protect childhood, and help make societies safe for children.

On the first Sunday of Advent, the first purple candle is lit. This candle is typically called the "Prophecy Candle" in remembrance of the prophets, primarily Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ:

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14, NIV)

This first candle represents hope or expectation in anticipation of the coming Messiah.

As we light the HOPE candle we seek to join with the movement to end violence against children and to shine light into the darkness of violence.

We light a candle of HOPE for the children and their families who face violence on a daily bases.

HOPE those suffering in high-income countries from mental illness, particularly depression and drug abuse.

HOPE for those in crisis experiencing breakdown in the ability to deal with life stresses, such as financial problems, relationship break-up or chronic pain and illness.

HOPE for those experiencing conflict, disaster, violence, abuse, or loss and a sense of isolation.

HOPE amongst vulnerable groups who experience discrimination, such as refugees, migrants and indigenous peoples.

Song: Hey Stranger

Artist: Malcolm Gordon

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJjOjsiuY5U>

Prayers of Intercession

We pray for families and their children who have been suffering in so many ways.

We pray for those suffering in high-income countries from mental illness, particularly depression and drug abuse.

We pray for those in crisis with a breakdown in the ability to deal with life stresses, such as financial problems, relationship break-up or chronic pain and illness.

We pray for those experiencing conflict, disaster, violence, abuse, or loss and a sense of isolation.

For those amongst vulnerable groups who experience discrimination, such as refugees and migrants; indigenous peoples and prisoners.

We wait, we pray and we sing; Come Lord Jesus

Blessing: *Blessing* by Jan Richardson

Page 18 <http://sanctuaryofwomen.com/WomensChristmasRetreat2017.pdf>