

ADVENT

THE
WORD
MADE
FLESH



WEEK 1:
Bread of Life



WEEK 2:
*Salt of
the Earth*



WEEK 3:
Rock of Ages



WEEK 4:
*Light of
the World*

THE WORD MADE FLESH

A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR ADVENT

INDEX

Notes/Ordering Information	5-6
Newsletter/Bulletin Notices	7-10
Week 1 (Bread of Life).....	11-27
Week 2 (Salt of the Earth)	28-43
Week 3 (Rock of Ages)	44-61
Week 4 (Light of the World)	62-79
Music Guide	80-120

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THE WORD MADE FLESH

A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR ADVENT

ABOUT “THE WORD MADE FLESH”

In this worship series for Advent, we are reminded that Jesus came to us in the flesh and revealed his divine nature to us through the description of physical substances we experience on earth. The theme verse for the entire series is: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Week 1: Bread of Life: Jesus is born in Bethlehem, the House of Bread, to nourish and strengthen us in our faith and feed us with his Word of truth to fill our lives.

Week 2: Salt of the Earth: Jesus calls us to flavor the earth and to savor the good things that come from him through his birth.

Week 3: Rock of Ages: Jesus is our rock, a solid foundation on which to build a life of joy.

Week 4: Light of the World: Jesus brightens our lives through his birth, dispelling the darkness of sin to bring forgiveness to light.

Each service includes: order of service, sermon, children’s sermon, prayers, music for the accompanist

The series includes everything you need for each service with the text of the entire series in .rtf (rich text format), newsletter/bulletin notices, hymns, visual media recommendations, contemporary music song suggestions, pdfs of the worship bulletin, promotional insert and poster for you to print on your own and PowerPoint documents of all the services, with images and text (along with a copyright release) for use on screens.

ORDERING INFORMATION

Other coordinating resources are available. Call Creative Communications for the Parish at 1-800-325-9414, or visit us on the web at creativecommunications.com for current pricing and availability.

Insert **WD7BL**

Poster **WD7PR**

Signature collection **WD7SK**

Complete collection **WD7CK**

THE WORD MADE FLESH

A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR ADVENT

WEEK 1: BREAD OF LIFE

NEWSLETTER NOTICE

Join us for *The Word Made Flesh* special service for the first week of Advent as we celebrate that Jesus is born in Bethlehem, the House of Bread, to nourish and strengthen us in our faith and feed us with his Word of truth to fill our lives.

BULLETIN NOTICE

In this first service in *The Word Made Flesh* series for Advent, we celebrate that Jesus is born in Bethlehem, the House of Bread, to nourish and strengthen us in our faith and feed us with his Word of truth to fill our lives.

THE WORD MADE FLESH

A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR ADVENT

WEEK 1: BREAD OF LIFE

COMPLETE SCRIPT FOR WORSHIP LEADERS

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** is shown on a screen or on the walls of your worship space to set the tone for the service before the service begins or throughout the service at various points:

[shutterstock.com/image-photo/freshly-baked-traditional-bread-on-wooden-141855823](https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/freshly-baked-traditional-bread-on-wooden-141855823)

- This **Theme Verse** is read aloud by the pastor at the start of the service or is read silently by the congregation before the service begins:

*I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger,
and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. John 6:35*

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune St. Thomas SM, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

The advent of our King
 Our prayers must now employ,
 And we must hymns of welcome sing
 In strains of holy joy.

The everlasting Son
 Incarnate deigns to be,
 Himself a servant's form puts on
 To set his servants free.

O Zion's daughter rise
 To meet your lowly King,
 Nor let your faithless heart despise
 The peace he comes to bring.

All glory to the Son,
 Who comes to set us free,
 With Father, Spirit, ever one
 Through all eternity.

- The **Invocation** is spoken responsively by the pastor and congregation and is followed by the **Lighting of the Advent Wreath**:

P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

(One purple candle is lit on the Advent wreath.)

P The name of the city of David, the little town of Bethlehem, means “House of Bread.” It was the birthplace for Jesus our Savior, who called himself the Bread of Life. We light the first candle on our Advent wreath remembering that Jesus, the living Bread from heaven, came to offer himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sins.

C Jesus, Bread of heaven, feed us now and forever.

- The **Confession and Absolution** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

☐ Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord asks us, “Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?” (Isaiah 55:2). We turn away from God’s will to things that can never satisfy us. Let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness.

☑ **Almighty God, we have turned away from your Word and your will for our lives. We try to satisfy our needs by following the temptations of the devil, the world around us and our own sinful desires. Have mercy on us and forgive our sins.**

☐ God has had mercy on us. He sent his Son into the world to be our Savior and, for his sake, forgives our sins. God tells us, “Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live” (Isaiah 55:2-3). I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

☑ **Jesus, Bread of heaven, feed us now and forever!**

- The **Prayer of the Day** is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

☐ Almighty God, with mighty acts of power, you set your people free from slavery in Egypt and led them through the wilderness to the promised land. Even though they complained against you, you graciously fed them with manna, bread from heaven. In grace and mercy, you sent your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to set us free from our slavery to sin. Jesus is the true and living Bread from heaven, who came to give himself for the life of the world. In him, we have forgiveness and peace. By faith, we feed on this heavenly Bread through the study of your Word and through the gift of Jesus’ body and blood in his holy Supper. Bread of heaven, feed us now and forever! Amen.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland 77 77, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Savior of the nations, come,
 Virgin’s Son, make here your home!
 Marvel now, O heav’n and earth,
 That the Lord chose such a birth.

- The **Children's Sermon** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

Needed: samples of different kinds of bread (a slice of sandwich bread, hamburger bun, dinner roll, etc.)

- Ⓟ Let's think about some of the things we like to eat. What kind of sandwiches do you like? (*Show the sandwich slices; let children suggest ideas*). What kind of extra things do you like to put on a hamburger? Cheese? Pickles? (*Show hamburger bun; let children suggest ideas*.) Sometimes we have rolls, like this, as part of our dinners. (*Show the dinner rolls*.) All of these things are different kinds of bread. We often eat bread, sometimes at every meal!

In just a few weeks, at Christmas, we are going to celebrate Jesus' birth. Jesus came to earth to be our Savior. We know how important Jesus is to us. He wants us to know he is a part of our lives every day. He compares himself to things we know and see every day. He said he is the Door, that is, he is the only way to heaven. Jesus called himself the Light of the World, that is, he shines in a world made dark by sin. Jesus also said, "I am the Bread of life." Bread is something we might eat every day. Jesus is our Bread of Life. He is with us every day, and not just a mealtime! We have Jesus, the Bread of Life, in our hearts when we read the Bible and learn about Jesus' teachings and how he died on the cross and rose from the dead for us. As we study God's Word and learn more about Jesus, the Holy Spirit helps our faith to grow stronger. When you are older, you will be able to receive Jesus' body and blood with the bread and wine of Holy Communion. Because Jesus was born in Bethlehem, because he grew up to die on the cross for us and rise from the dead, our sins are forgiven, and we have eternal life. Jesus is with us every day. He makes us strong in faith. He is the Bread of Life! Let's pray:

Jesus, Bread of Life, thank you for dying on the cross for us. Thank you for being with us every day. Amen.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland 77 77, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Not by human flesh and blood,
By the Spirit of our God,
Was the Word of God made flesh—
Woman's offspring, pure and fresh.

- The **Old Testament Reading**, Exodus 16:1-17, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

¶ They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, and the people of Israel said to them, “Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.” So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, “At evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against the LORD. For what are we, that you grumble against us?” And Moses said, “When the LORD gives you in the evening meat to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the LORD has heard your grumbling LORD you grumble against him—what are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the LORD.”

Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, ‘Come near before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.’” And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. And the LORD said to Moses, “I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’”

In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat. This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.’” And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less.

- The **Epistle Reading**, Colossians 3:15-17, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

- The **Gospel Reading**, John 6:27-35, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”

- The **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland 77 77, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Let the earth now praise the Lord,
Who has truly kept his word
And at last to us did send
Christ, the sinner’s help and friend.

What the fathers most desired,
What the prophets’ heart inspired,
What they longed for many a year,
Stands fulfilled in glory here.

As your coming was in peace,
Quiet, full of gentleness,
Let the same mind dwell in me
Which is yours eternally.

Then when you will come again
As the glorious king to reign,
I with joy will see your face,
Freely ransomed by your grace.

- The **Sermon** is delivered by the pastor:

☐ Happy Christian New Year! We've come again to the season of Advent, this sacred time of anticipation and preparation. This season is often a time of comings and goings, of traveling to visit loved ones, to return to places and people to whom we feel a belonging, a kinship. Songs of the season speak of these travels in joyous language: "Over the river and through the woods, to Grandmother's house we go!" and "O'er the fields we go, laughing all the way!" paint a picture of holiday travel by horse and sleigh that probably strikes us as quaint and fun, maybe nostalgic for a time long since passed.

But many parents have experienced that not all children travel joyously on holiday trips. Small children almost universally ask, "Are we there yet?" just a few minutes into a long drive. And many often ask to have a snack or to stop for food long before their parents would like to stop, sometimes not because they are hungry but because they are bored. In a certain way, we can see a similarity here with Moses's people, the Israelites, whom we read about in the Book of Exodus:

"They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, and the people of Israel said to them, 'Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger'" (Exodus 16:1-3).

Moses is taking the Israelites out of Egypt and toward the land of Promise, and the people are grumpy. They are tired, and they are hungry. We can relate to this story. Maybe we relate to Moses and Aaron, who know that the people will be happy when the journey is over and they've arrived at their destination but still have to deal with the grumbings of their people in the meantime. Or maybe we relate to the Israelites, who, after over 40 days of wandering in the desert, are getting "hangry." In their discomfort, they are wondering perhaps if, in fleeing Egypt, they've made a huge mistake. God, like a caring parent, provides for them, providing plentiful quail every evening and miraculous bread every morning, bread that they don't even have to make themselves.

It is this story that is recalled in our reading from John's Gospel. Here, in the sixth chapter, we come upon Jesus having just the day before fed a crowd of five thousand people. Because of

this miracle, the crowd began to call him a prophet. Sensing that the people meant to crown him their earthly king, Jesus had fled across the water, and the crowd only finds him the following day. And so Jesus says to them,

“You are seeking me not because you saw signs but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you” (John 6:26-27).

Both Moses and Jesus tell their respective crowds not to be confused about where their true satisfaction comes from. Moses reminds the Israelites that the bread is from the Lord; Jesus reminds the Galileans that they are thinking with their stomachs and not their spirits—earthly bread is perishable. Jesus says to them,

“Truly, truly, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always,” Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst” (John 6:32-35).

Jesus and Moses warn us not to put stock in the bread that is perishable, goes stale or molds. Bread from heaven is right in front of us, So why do we not see it? We shouldn't chase after fleeting satisfaction. It sounds easy, doesn't it? We know that the things of this world are temporary, and yet so many of us often find ourselves starving after the next thing—passing fancies that are passing away. If we sometimes have a hard time keeping our hearts set on the eternal bread of life, we are not alone. The apostles and later Christian writers often learn the truth of Jesus' words the hard way. Augustine of Hippo, in his famous *Confessions*, writes on the very first page, “...because you have made us and drawn us to yourself, [Lord], our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” For hundreds of pages after he pens this line, Augustine tells us the story of his own misspent youth, years wasted chasing after the admiration of his peers, the comforts and thrills of romantic liaisons, and prestige in his career. He tells us the story of his restless heart. Nothing, he says, could satisfy the aching hunger within him—nothing except God.

In thinking about the long and winding spiritual journey of Augustine, and the desert wanderings of the Israelites, let us all take a moment and think about our own winding journeys. Have we ever been so certain we wanted a certain thing, only to be disappointed? How did you react in the moment? Thinking back to our earlier example of hungry children, perhaps we remember an instance when a hungry child—maybe one of yours, or maybe it was you—was given a plate of food, only to immediately claim that they were no longer hungry.

This fickle child is much like the crowds in our Gospel reading—perhaps you know how this story ends? Jesus' words and deeds, while initially a cause for excitement, are rejected.

The people cannot accept that this Bread of Life is coming to them through this man. Jesus, who is promising them the Bread of Life, is too familiar. The crowd knows his parents. All this talk about eating his body and drinking his blood is too strange. So, despite the crowd of five thousand having been miraculously fed, they leave him. He does not fit the Judeans' expectations.

But he is, as the Advent hymn says, "long-expected." This Advent, as we ponder a Savior who comes to us as bread, we pray the words of this song:

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of ev'ry nation,
Joy of ev'ry longing heart.

Jesus, who offers us the joy of our longing hearts, will come in an unexpected way. We'll find him in a manger, lying in a feeding trough in Bethlehem, the House of Bread, like the true nourishment he is. So let us prepare our hearts to receive Christ, our Bread from Heaven, which does not perish but satisfies every mortal longing and brings us to eternal life.

Amen.

- The **Apostles' Creed** is spoken in unison by the congregation:

☩ I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

- The **Offering** is collected at this time. If desired, this **Mini Movie** (purchased by you from Worship House Media: worshiphousemedia.com) is presented on a screen at this time for reflection on the theme of the service:

worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/116049/the-word-of-god-is

- The **Prayers** are spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P Jesus, you were born in Bethlehem, the city of David, the House of Bread. You are the promised King, the Son of David and the Bread of Life. Even as we prepare to celebrate your birth, lead us from your manger to your cross and empty tomb. You were born among us to save us. Jesus, Bread of Life,

C **Feed us now and forever.**

P Jesus, during your earthly ministry, you fed the multitudes and the people wanted to make you their king because they had eaten their fill of bread. Yet the Bread you would give for the life of the world was your flesh. You would be King but not the kind of king that people wanted. You were the King crowned with thorns and lifted up on a cross. Have mercy on us, dear King. Forgive our sins, and lead us to walk in your ways. Jesus, Bread of Life,

C **Feed us now and forever.**

P Jesus, Bread of Heaven, by faith we are nourished by your holy Word. Guide us in the power of the Spirit as we hear, read and remember the Scriptures so that we grow in grace and faith. Through the gift of your body and blood in Holy Communion, our faith is nourished, and we receive forgiveness for our sins. Jesus, Bread of Life,

C **Feed us now and forever.**

P Jesus, living Bread, we pray for those who are suffering from hunger, want and illness. Give us opportunities to help them in their need. Work through us in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring them comfort and hope as we seek to satisfy their earthly needs and bring to them the promises of your Word. According to your will, bring them healing and strength. Jesus, Bread of Life,

C **Feed us now and forever.**

P Jesus, Bread of Heaven, help us to be bold witnesses for you. We have salvation through faith in your name, and we want to share that good news with others so that they too will be nourished by you, the living Bread. Jesus, Bread of life,

C **Feed us now and forever.**

P Amen.

- The assembly may remain standing if the Lord's Supper is celebrated. The words of institution or another Communion prayer may be used here, then the Lord's Prayer, then the Communion at the table. If the Lord's Supper is not celebrated, continue here with the Lord's Prayer.

- The **Lord's Prayer** is spoken in unison at this time.
- The **Benediction** (John 6:33-34 and 2 Thessalonians 3:16) is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

☐ Jesus said, "The bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

☑ **Give us this bread always.**

☐ Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.

☑ **Amen.**

- The **Closing Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune CWM Rhondda 87 877, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,
 Pilgrim through this barren land.
 I am weak, but thou art mighty;
 Hold me with thy pow'rful hand.
 Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
 Feed me till I want no more;
 Feed me till I want no more.