God Bless Us Every One:  
The Redemption of Scrooge

*Overview of the worship scripts from Dr. Marcia McFee*

This series is designed to give you everything you need–all words, hymn and song suggestions, choral and handbell suggestions, leader introductions, etc. But also please know that if you want to adapt to fit your current order of worship, you can easily lift any of the suggested material and place it in a more familiar structure. You may especially want to do this with a more contemporary worship service style (we’ve suggested contemporary music suggestions and songs that will easily cross over).

This overview will give you a sense of what’s included each week.

The order of worship is the same each Sunday (except for Advent 2, where we give you a full communion prayer script). This goes with the concept I teach that repetition is a good thing and a solid foundation is necessary in order to be creative within it. Doing series can give you the opportunity to try on a slightly different order of worship for a season but keep it the same during that season, therefore offering some sense of familiarity and a rhythm.

**WE GATHER**

**Music for Gathering**
Commonly known as the “Prelude,” this part is at the discretion of your musicians.

**Welcome/Announcements**
Even if you don’t usually do announcements at the beginning, I want to encourage you to try it this season so nothing interrupts the flow of the journey.

**Threshold Moment - Procession of Advent Candles**
A “threshold moment” is a concept I teach that introduces people to the journey and the theme of the day at the beginning of the service so that everything is seen through that lens. For this service, we have utilized a portion of an anthem from the 2009 Disney version of *A Christmas Carol* that will repeat every Sunday with a leader part introducing the message, a prayer and a short statement made by one of the persons bringing in the Advent Candle(s). Our visual arts suggestions include using candlesticks or lanterns that have a Victorian feel to match the time period of the theme story. The song will become familiar to your congregation over the series and soon they will be singing along. Watch a workshop trial run of this [HERE](#).
Opening Hymn/Song of Advent

We have chosen hymns and songs (depending on your style of worship) as suggestions, most of them familiar. But you can also feel free to adapt, using something more beloved by your congregation if you choose. For some of our suggestions, national music consultant Chuck Bell offers new piano accompaniment arrangements to familiar hymns that cross the bridge between worship styles and a couple of the songs are arranged for guitar by author, Matt Rawle.

The Peace

Every week the scripts offer you the chance to invite folks to pass the peace with one another using a specific phrase for each week:

“Peace be with you.”
“May you be filled with hope.”
“May you know that you are loved.”
“Joy can be yours!”

WE PROCLAIM

A Blessing of the Children

I call this “A Blessing of the Children” in this series to weave in the word “bless” from our series title but also because time with children in worship is not just a blessing for the children, but a blessing of the children for all of us. Indeed, a child has the last word in Dicken’s tale, “God bless us every one!” I am pleased that the foremost expert on children in worship, Mark Burrows, has created suggestions for every Sunday so that you can not only do something that goes right with the theme, but you can also learn more about making Children’s Time in worship excellent. These are easy for anyone to learn and lead.

Scripture

The scripture selections are a combination of ones used in the corresponding chapter of the book The Redemption of Scrooge by Matt Rawle but also keep the story of Jesus’ birth in mind. You may want to change or add to our suggestions.

Carol

Because Matt Rawle mentions several carols in his book, we include a well-loved “carol” at this point. It is my hope that you will weave references to the carol in the sermon, which Rawle’s book does quite powerfully. If you are concerned about singing carols in Advent, consider reading my two-cents on this at THIS blog post. We suggest repeating the refrain or a verse after the dramatic reading.
Dramatic Reading
In this series I have written short “choral readings” for each Sunday for 6 voices. These can be the same 6 people or they can change. It always starts and ends with quotes from *A Christmas Carol* related to the thematic progression over the four weeks and a nod to the scripture. Here is an example from the first week:

*Reader 1:* “Bah! . . . Humbug! . . . Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? . . . What’s Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer?”

2: he was sitting there making change
3: a creditor with a cold heart
4: making decisions about people’s lives
5: will they eat? will they not?
2: will they have a roof over their head? will they not?
3: will their children live? will they not?
4: will they go to debtors prison? will they not?

5: it is a story born a long time ago and far away.

**All: or is it?**

2: still…
3: we live in a world where the chasm between have’s and have not’s
4: hoarding and generosity
5: privilege and oppression

**All: continue…**

2: will they eat? will they not?
3: will they have a roof over their head? will they not?
4: will their children live? will they not?

5: he was sitting there making change
2: and then… at the toll of a bell and the blink of a night
3: his life was changed forever

**All: “God has thrown the mighty from their thrones”**

4: are we ready for such redemption?
5: what will it mean?
2: facing our fears
3: forgiving ourselves
4: compassion for others
5: working to change tragic trajectories

6: “[Christmas is] a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when [people] seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!”

The Word in Music
We have suggested choral anthems or ensemble/band possibilities for each week. You may wish to choose your own with a similar theme. I realize that one of your Advent Sundays may consist of the tradition of a “music Sunday” or “cantata.” If you have not chosen that repertoire yet, there are several songs in a musical version of A Christmas Carol that you may want to consider to replace this anthem spot and the sermon portion of the service. We recommend placing this on the second Sunday of Advent since there is a wonderful moment in Scrooge’s journey into his past when he remembers the joy of music as a beautiful and healing part of his life.

Proclamation of the Word
The sermon is up to you, friends—we don’t give you that! BUT the book, The Redemption of Scrooge is so full of wonderful inspiration, you will not find it difficult at all to bring a transforming word filled with fodder from the book but also your own exegesis and experience. We do give you some suggestions of sermonic directions in the script. You may also choose to include a clip from one of the movie versions of the story or one of the Advent meditations from our friends at theworkofthepeople.com if you use projected media.

WE RESPOND

Prayers of the People
We have composed a refrain called “Ring Out Your Truth” that is very easy and repetitive and sounds lovely in a canon. Because the tolling bells of Scrooge’s adventurous night is our “anchor image” (main symbol for the series), we have prepared handbell parts for this song. If you have handbells but no handbell choir, this is SO simple you could use this to train some budding handbell players! The scripts have all the “rubrics” (instructions such as “the piano continues to play under the next section”) so you can practice what I call “layering” which is a way of creating a more sensory-rich experience where the art forms (in this case verbal and musical) get to play together. Listen to this refrain in the series trailer HERE.
Note: on the second Sunday of Advent (first Sunday of December) I have written a Communion prayer utilizing “Ring Out Your Truth” as the sung responses and this replaces the Prayers of the People.

Offering
We leave this up to you to do in the manner to which you are accustomed. We have suggested a suite of piano solos from Worship Design Studio Associate Chuck Bell especially composed for each Sunday in Advent. Listen to those HERE.

WE GO FORTH

Closing Hymn/Song
Singing at the end of a service should feel full so we have made suggestions of hymns/songs that you will recognize. Again, always adapt to your context as needed.

Blessing
We suggest that the choir and handbells (if applicable) come to stand in the outside aisle and the people who brought in the Advent Candles bring them the center of the center aisle (if you have one) during the final hymn. The congregation is invited to stand and face the candles in the center and the blessing by the pastor takes place there.

Here is an example from the first week:

“There’s a little Scrooge in each of us
yearning to thaw, yearning to love again.
This week may you be visited by a surprising peace
that may surpass your understanding.
And when you feel it, even if for just a fleeting moment,
know the miracle has just begun in you, for the sake of the whole world.

May you be blessed by our God who loves you deeply;
by Jesus, the true gift of God to each of us–this season and in all our days;
and the Spirit who shows up just in time!”

Benediction Song
The benediction song is from the TV movie musical version of A Christmas Carol and is a simple song that your congregation will learn quickly. Listen HERE.

Music for Going Out
Commonly known as “postlude”—your choice.

I hope this helps you get an at-a-glance feel for the scripts!
If you haven’t purchased the series yet, click HERE.