



**Waiting for the hour [Emancipation]  
December 31, 1862.  
Carte de visite. Washington, 1863**

## **WATCH NIGHT**

### **MUSIC & WORSHIP RESOURCES**

**Monday, December 31, 2007**

**Leo Davis, Lectionary Team Liturgist**

#### **Worship Planning Notes**

This is a service of African American congregations that began as people anticipated “watching out” for the last years of slavery. This service of watching and waiting continues. Watch Night worship is a time for reflection, testimony, and song. It is the time when we voice our determination to fully live out the year to come.

Altar Focus: A big clock with the hands struck at five minutes to midnight can be placed on an altar that has been covered with Kente cloth. When the service begins is optional.

It would be ideal to hold a church and community potluck before the service and have the service begin at 10:30 p.m.

As persons enter the sanctuary, songs from the Sweet Honey in the Rock: Raise Your Voice! DVD, named in the audio-visual suggestions section, can be played as background music. Songs from the DVD can also be played at various moments during the worship service. It is strongly encouraged that the DVD be utilized if the church is technically suitable. Worship leaders and media technicians should work together to use the DVD to help set the mood for the liturgical moment on the calendar—Watch Night.

During the service, instead of making New Year's resolutions, various members of the congregation should offer Covenant declarations as part of their testimonies. These declarations are commitments made to God in the presence of the community concerning the incoming year. The worship should be designed so that it is inclusive of all ages and is festive and holy.

As you review the material below, we trust that it will provide you will ideas to glorify God and uplift all who attend your service.

## 1. Litany

### “Watch Night”

**Male Lay Member:** We gather with quiet invocations and fervent shouts in prayer houses built by our ancestors. It is the anniversary of freedom's eve and the beginning of a new year and our voices ache with jubilee songs; our feet are moving, our bodies are possessed, and our spirits are remembering.

**Female Lay Member:** It was on New Year's Day long ago, when enslaved Africans, their children, and their children's children became irrevocably free. On the first day of January, A.D. 1863 all persons held as slaves within any state or designated part of the state were freed.

**Youth Male:** The freedom words that were woven into sweet-grass baskets, hidden in the words of Negro Spirituals, preached aloud at campground meetings, sung to black babies in sleepy-time songs, would become the law of the land.

**Congregation:** Alleluia! Praise the Lord.

**Youth Female:** After 100 days of waiting, three years of a bloody civil war, and more than two centuries of servitude, in answer to the petitioner's plea: “How long my Lord, how long; truly there was a reason why,” freedom's eve became freedom's day.

**Choir Member:** So many were gathered on that New Year's Eve in 1862. Some had skin as dark as the midnight sky, some as pale as the sand on a sea-island beach; truly there was a reason why.

**Deacon/Elder:** Embraced by traditions from across the seas, our ancestors had the griots tell those wonderful stories of home. Truly, there was a reason why they created drum sounds with their feet, their handclaps, and their rhythm sticks that spoke of a future free of shackles. They waited and watched 'til the morning came. They trusted the words of Lincoln when he declared that slaves: SHALL BE THEN, HENCEFORWARD, AND FOREVER FREE.

**Minister:** They believed the words of Leviticus: It shall be a jubilee for you. And each of

you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family. But could they really have faith (this time) that the righteous would truly be blessed? For the comings and the goings of life can never be foretold.

**Congregation:** How long, my Lord, how long?

**Female Lay Member:** There was no word at midnight nor at daybreak. But past dusk on New Year's Day came a message tapped across telegraph wires, and spoken at great mass meetings: The proclamation had been signed, Emancipation is forever, God's chosen would be free.

**Male Lay Member:** It was written: Upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice warranted by the constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

**Youth Male:** Today more than a century later, in churches, chapels, and houses of prayer, on the anniversary of freedom's eve on Watch Night we gather to welcome yet another year, and to bring jubilee while waiting anew for the midnight hour.

**Congregation:** With whispers and shouts, singing and silence, libations and thanksgiving, remembering that we were not always free.

## 2. Hymn or Anthem

Hymn

(a) O God Our Help in Ages Past. By Isaac Watts. Arr. by William Croft. Tune, (MONOAH) This hymn originated in the 18th century and is based on Psalm 90. It reminds the church of "help" in the past, "shelter" in the present, and our "hope" for the future.

Hymn

(b) O for a Faith That Will Not Shrink. By William H. Bathurst. Arr. by Nathan Carter. Tune, (MONOAH)

## 3. Spirituals or Traditional Songs

(a) My Soul's Been Anchored in De Lord. Arr. by Glenn L. Jones

(b) I Want Jesus to Walk with Me. Arr. by Moses G. Hogan

(c) Don't You Let Nobody Turn You 'Round. Arr. by Lena I. McLin

(d) Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning. Arr. by Andrae Thomas

(e) Oh Day Yonder Come Day. Arr. by Bessie Jones and Bernice Johnson Reagon

## 4. Modern Songs

The suggested selections below are designated for small to larger ensembles, with experienced vocalists.

(a) Restoring the Years. By Donald Lawrence

(b) For Every Mountain. By Kurt Carr

(c) Jesus, You Brought Me All the Way. By Kenneth W. Louis

## 5. Offertory Song or Instrumental

Organ Offertory  
Go Down Moses. Arr. by Fela Sowande

## **6. Song or Instrumental for the Period of Prayer**

Meter Hymn

(a) Father, I Stretch My Hands to Thee. By Charles Wesley. Arr. by Evelyn Simpson-Curenton

Instrumental

(b) Awesome God. By Rich Mullins

## **7. Congregational Songs or Songs for Praise Teams**

The following selections would be best performed by a small ensemble (e.g. a Praise Team), with a vocally suitable worship leader. The hymn singing should lend itself to congregational participation at the direction of the worship leader.

(a) New Season. By Israel Houghton and Derrick W. Thomas

(b) Your Latter Will Be Greater. By Israel Houghton and Derrick W. Thomas

(c) I Call You Faithful. By Bobby Price and Kevin Walker

(d) Order My Steps. By Glenn Burleigh

(e) Hold to God's Unchanging Hand. By Jennie Wilson, refrain by F. I. Eiland

(f) I Don't Feel No Ways Tired. By Curtis Burrell

## **8. Invitational Song or Instrumental**

Speak to My Heart. By Donnie McClurkin

This song can be used as an instrumental or vocal solo selection.

## **9. Benediction Song or Instrumental**

My Tribute. By Andraé Crouch

## **10. Audio Visual Suggestions**

American Masters: Sweet Honey in the Rock: Raise Your Voice!

# 2 I Remember, I Believe

# 7 In the Morning When I Rise

#13 Ballad of the Broken Word/Give the People Their Right to Vote!

#14 Prayer 2 the ONE

#15 Women Gather

#16 Nature Song

#17 Intro-Run

#18 Run

#19 Come Unto Me

#20 Old Ship of Zion

## 11. Other Recommendations

For additional worship recommendations for Monday, December 31, 2007, please see the Cultural Resource area of this website.

### Cites and Additional Information for Music and Material Listed

1. **Watch Night:** Written by Karen Hurst, Philadelphia, PA. Used with permission

## 2. Hymn or Anthem

Hymns

(a) O God Our Help in Ages Past. By Isaac Watts. Music by William Croft. Tune, (MANOAH)

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001. #170

African Methodist Episcopal Hymnal, revised edition. Nashville, TN: AME Publishing House, 2006. #61

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Hymnal. Charlotte, NC: A.M.E. Zion Publishing House, 1957. #605

The Hymnal of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. Memphis, TN: CME Publishing House and Triad Publications II, Inc., 1987. #19

Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal. Chicago, IL: G.I.A. Publications, 1987. #230

The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. Nashville, TN: Triad Publications, 2001. #46

King, D. E. The New Progressive Baptist Hymnal: Aids to Worship Through Living Standard Hymns, Favorite Gospel Songs, Choice Anthems, Best Loved Chants, and Responsive Readings for Live People Who Join in Soulful Worship in Living Churches and Related Activities. Washington, D.C.: Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., 1982. #19

Church of God in Christ. Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. Memphis, TN: Church of God in Christ Pub. Board in association with the Benson Co., 1982. #15

(b) O for a Faith That Will Not Shrink. By William H. Bathurst. Arr. by Nathan Carter. Tune, (MANOAH)

Location:

GIA Publications, Inc.  
7404 South Mason Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60638  
Phone: 1-800-442-1358

Online location: [www.giamusic.com](http://www.giamusic.com)

### **3. Spirituals or Traditional Songs**

(a) My Soul's Been Anchored in De Lord. Arr. by Glenn L. Jones

Location:

J. W. Pepper & Sons Incorporated

2480 Industrial Boulevard

Paoli, PA 19301

Phone: 1-800-345-6296

Online location: [www.jwpepper.com](http://www.jwpepper.com)

(b) I Want Jesus to Walk with Me. Arr. by Moses G. Hogan

Location:

J. W. Pepper & Sons Incorporated

Phone: 1-800-345-6296

Online location: [www.jwpepper.com](http://www.jwpepper.com)

(c) Don't Let Nobody Turn You 'Round. Arr. by Lena J. McLin

Location:

J. W. Pepper & Sons Incorporated

Phone: 1-800-345-6296

Online location: [www.jwpepper.com](http://www.jwpepper.com)

(d) Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning. Arr. by Andrae Thomas

Location:

J. W. Pepper & Sons Incorporated

Phone: 1-800-345-6296

Online location: [www.jwpepper.com](http://www.jwpepper.com)

(e) Oh Day Yonder Come Day. Arr. by Bessie Jones and Bernice Johnson Reagon

Location:

J. W. Pepper & Sons Incorporated

Phone: 1-800-345-6296

Online location: [www.jwpepper.com](http://www.jwpepper.com)

### **4. Modern Songs**

(a) Restoring the Years. By Donald Lawrence

Location:

NTIME MUSIC COMPANY

4913 Albemarle Road #103

Charlotte, NC 28205

Phone: 704-531-8961

Online location: [www.ntimemusic.com](http://www.ntimemusic.com)

(b) For Every Mountain. By Kurt Carr

Location:

NTIME MUSIC COMPANY  
Phone: 704-531-8961  
Online location: [www.ntimemusic.com](http://www.ntimemusic.com)

(c) Jesus, You Brought Me All the Way. By Kenneth W. Louis

Location:

GIA Publications, Inc.  
Phone: 1-800-442-1358  
Online location: [www.giamusic.com](http://www.giamusic.com)

### **5. Offertory Song or Instrumental**

Go Down Moses. Arr. by Fela Sowande

Location:

Lois Fyfe Music  
2814 Blair Blvd.  
Nashville, TN 37212

Online location: [sales@loisfyfemusic.com](mailto:sales@loisfyfemusic.com)

### **6. Song or Instrumental for the Period of Prayer**

(a) Father I Stretch My Hands to Thee. By Charles Wesley. Arr. by Evelyn Simpson-Curenton

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #128

(b) Awesome God. By Rich Mullins

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #126

The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. #44

### **7. Congregational Songs or Songs for Praise Teams**

(a) New Season. By Israel Houghton and Derrick W. Thomas

Location:

New Season with Israel and New Breed. New York: Word/Epic Records, 2001.

(b) Your Latter Will Be Greater. By Israel Houghton and Derrick W. Thomas

Location:

New Season with Israel and New Breed. New York: Word/Epic Records, 2001.

(c) I Call You Faithful. By Bobby Price and Kevin Walker

Location:

NTIME MUSIC COMPANY  
Phone: 704-531-8961  
Online location: [www.ntimemusic.com](http://www.ntimemusic.com)

(d) Order My Steps. By Glenn Burleigh

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #333

The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. #526

(e) Hold to God's Unchanging Hand. By Jennie Wilson, refrain by F. I. Eiland

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #404

African Methodist Episcopal Hymnal. #513

The Hymnal of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. #248

The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. #51

The New Progressive Baptist Hymnal. #248

Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #406

(f) I Don't Feel No Ways Tired. By Curtis Burrell

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #414

Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal. #159

Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #364

### **8. Invitational Song or Instrumental**

Speak to My Heart. By Donnie McClurkin

Location:

Donnie McClurkin, New York: Word Entertainment, 2004.

NTIME MUSIC COMPANY

Phone: 704-531-8961

Online location: [www.ntimemusic.com](http://www.ntimemusic.com)

### **9. Benediction Song or Instrumental**

My Tribute. By Andraé Crouch

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #111

### **10. Audio Visual Suggestions**

American Masters: Sweet Honey in the Rock: Raise Your Voice!

Location:

Phone: 1-800-531-4727

Online location: [www.shoppbs.org](http://www.shoppbs.org)