

Daily Readings for Advent and Christmas 2013



As the season of Advent begins (Sunday 1 December this year) most of the world is already halfway to Christmas, and so the Advent season itself is generally overlooked or sidestepped, apart from the popular 'Advent calendar', although this is only used as a sort of 'countdown to Christmas'. However, in Christian tradition an emphasis is given to grand and cosmic themes in this special season, placed as it is at the beginning of the Church's year.

At the start of Advent we hear in our bible readings some powerful and challenging prophecies from Isaiah which look ahead, not to the birth of a holy infant, but to the end of time and final days of salvation: 'The desert and the parched land will exult; the steppe will rejoice and bloom' (Isaiah 35). The beginning of Advent challenges us to think about the bigger things of life, not so much, 'What do I want for Christmas?', as, 'What do I truly long for in the fullness of time?' It is a question not easily answered, and one which we should give ourselves time to live with as we accompany these prophecies through the days of Advent.

A feature of Advent in churches which can also be used at home is the Advent candle. Lit at the beginning of a prayer time it reminds us of the light shining in the darkness, illuminating its surroundings. It is like a beacon, shining out, and reminds us to be alert, to stay awake, to be on the look-out for what God is doing. And what God is doing is not only about the future, but about the present. Can that light illuminate our hearts and our lives right now?

If I think about Christ's coming, what should I do to prepare for that coming? Or, to put it another way, 'Am I ready if Christ should suddenly appear?' It is all very well making preparations, but will I ever be fully ready?

Advent is a very busy time. Is it too busy for us to find time to consider the important questions of Advent? Perhaps we can use the idea of the Advent light, bringing the light to confront the dark areas of our lives and of the world – to bring hope where there is despair, liberty where there is captivity, and peace where there is war and conflict.

Daily Prayer – a short service for Daily Prayer is included in this booklet. It can be used alone or in groups.

Readings – the readings listed in this leaflet are the regular readings used daily in many Christian churches for this season. The Sunday readings are from Year A of the three-year cycle – Year A focuses particularly on the Gospel of Matthew.

Daily Prayer in Advent and Christmastide

THE PREPARATION

V/ O Lord, open our lips
R/ **and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

In Advent:

V/ Our Sovereign and Saviour draws near.
R/ **Come, let us worship.**

In Christmastide:

V/ Alleluia. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.
R/ **Come, let us worship. Alleluia.**

In Epiphanytide:

V/ God in Christ has revealed his glory
R/ **Come, let us worship.**

Followed by the Gloria

R/ **Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit :
as it was in the beginning, is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

THE OPENING CANTICLE

- 1 The earth is the Lord's and all that fills it, *
the compass of the world and all who dwell therein.
- 2 For he has founded it upon the seas *
and set it firm upon the rivers of the deep.
- 3 'Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord, *
or who can rise up in his holy place?'
- 4 'Those who have clean hands and a pure heart, *
who have not lifted up their soul to an idol, nor sworn an oath to a lie;
- 5 'They shall receive a blessing from the Lord, *
a just reward from the God of their salvation.'
- 6 Such is the company of those who seek him, *
of those who seek your face, O God of Jacob.
- 7 Lift up your heads, O gates; be lifted up, you everlasting doors; *
and the King of glory shall come in.
- 8 'Who is the King of glory?' *
'The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord who is mighty in battle.'
- 9 Lift up your heads, O gates; be lifted up, you everlasting doors; *
and the King of glory shall come in.
- 10 'Who is this King of glory?' *
'The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.' Psalm 24

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit :
as it was in the beginning, is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

THE WORD OF GOD

PSALMODY AND READING(S)

See below for psalms and readings for the day, pages 8 to 15.

ANTIPHONS ON THE MAGNIFICAT

Advent 1: Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God; *
you will conceive and give birth to a Son. Alleluia.

Advent 2: Blessed are you, Mary, for your great faith; *
all that the Lord promised you will come to pass. Alleluia.

Advent 3: A virgin shall conceive; *
she shall bring forth a Son, Emmanuel, God-with-us. Alleluia.

Advent 4: from 17-24 December see dated sections below.

Christmastide: He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation: * for in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. Alleluia.

Epiphany: Behold, my servant whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights: * the anointed one on whom my Spirit rests.

CANTICLE : MAGNIFICAT (THE SONG OF MARY)

- 1 My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; *
he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.
- 2 From this day all generations will call me blessed; *
the Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his name.
- 3 He has mercy on those who fear him, *
from generation to generation.
- 4 He has shown strength with his arm *
and has scattered the proud in their conceit,
- 5 Casting down the mighty from their thrones *
and lifting up the lowly.
- 6 He has filled the hungry with good things *
and sent the rich away empty.
- 7 He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, *
to remember his promise of mercy,
- 8 The promise made to our ancestors, *
to Abraham and his children for ever. *Luke 1.46-55*

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit :
as it was in the beginning, is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS

A time of silent prayer, extemporary prayer, and/or the following may be used.

ADVENT INTERCESSION

O God, as we reflect in this season on the coming of Christ in majesty, work among us by your Holy Spirit to prepare us for that coming.

Help us to overcome the limitations of our short-sightedness and our selfish thoughts and to discover what are the deepest desires within our hearts that only you can see clearly, that we may grow in faith, humility and joy.

Give strength and courage to all who have a vision of a better world, and guide them in their work to reach towards their vision.

Be with those whose hope is failing or is lost. Comfort those who are afflicted by fears or anxieties; heal those who are ill or injured; and bring us all to rejoice in the salvation you bring.

CHRISTMASTIDE INTERCESSION

As we read and study the story of our Saviour's arrival on earth, Lord, increase in us both love and thankfulness, and reshape us after the model of our Saviour.

We know that Christ came to bring peace. We pray for all people of good will that they may be encouraged and enabled in their work of peacemaking and reconciliation. Strengthen the bonds of common humanity.

We pray also for people of ill-will, that they may turn from bitterness and anger to find mercy and love in your presence.

Bless all mothers and children, especially babies born in adverse circumstances and in times of war and persecution. As Christ blessed humanity by his very presence, so help us to value all human life.

EPIPHANY INTERCESSION

Dear God, as the wise men followed a sign in the heavens to come into the presence of the holy child, so guide all who seek you that they may rejoice to find their Saviour and to be found in him.

Touch us afresh with the good news you bring to us. May the birth of Christ be a continuing revelation to us in our hearts, and to all who encounter him.

We thank you for the ministry of Jesus on earth, and for the faithfulness of disciples. May all who hear the teaching of Jesus turn from the darkness of folly and ignorance, toward the light of Christ and follow the way that leads to salvation.

THE COLLECT

The Collect of the day is said – see dated weeks below – or the following:

In Advent:

O God, who has revealed your only-begotten Son to the nations
by the guiding light of a star,
enlighten all who seek the truth, and by the light of faith
bring us all to rejoice in the brightness of your eternal presence;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

R/ **Amen.**

In Christmastide:

Eternal God,
who has sent your Son to rescue us
from the darkness of sin and death,
shine your light into our hearts
and transform us into lights that shine for your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

R/ **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught us so we pray:

R/ **Our Father ...**

THE CONCLUSION

THE BLESSING

In Advent:

May the Lord, when he comes,
find us watching and waiting.

R/ **Amen.**

In Christmastide:

May God, who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light,
bless us and fill us with peace.

R/ **Amen.**

In Epiphanytide:

May Christ our Lord, enlighten and empower us
with the good news of salvation.

R/ **Amen.**

ENDING

Let us bless the Lord.

R/ **Thanks be to God**

The First Week of Advent



Prayer

O Lord our God, grant that we may rejoice with upright hearts, being gathered together in unity that, at the coming of your Son our Saviour, we may go forth to meet him in purity of heart; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Readings

Sunday 1 December

The First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 2.1-5 • Psalm 122 • Romans 13.11-14 • Matthew 24.36-44

He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples. (Isaiah 2.4)

Monday 2 December

Isaiah 4.2-6 • Psalm 122 • Matthew 8.5-11

For love of the house of the Lord I will ask for your good. (Psalm 122.9)

Tuesday 3 December

Isaiah 11.1-10 • Psalm 72.1-4, 18-19 • Luke 10.21-24

Filled with joy by the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and clever and revealing them to little children.' (Luke 10.21)

Wednesday 4 December

Isaiah 25.6-10a • Psalm 23 • Matthew 15.29-37

He shall refresh my soul and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (Psalm 23.3)

Thursday 5 December

Isaiah 26.1-6 • Psalm 118.18-27a • Matthew 7.21, 24-27

It is not anyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord", who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven. (Matthew 7.21)

Friday 6 December

Isaiah 29.17-24 • Psalm 27.1-4, 16-17 • Matthew 9.27-31

The lowly will find ever more joy in the Lord and the poorest of people will delight in the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 29.19)

Saturday 7 December

Isaiah 30.19-21, 23-26 • Psalm 146.4-9 • Matthew 9.35—10.1, 6-8

The Lord protects the stranger, he sustains the orphan and widow. (Psalm 146.9)

The Second Week of Advent



Prayer

Make us watchful and attentive, O God, as we await the coming of your Son our Lord, that when he comes and knocks he may not find us sleeping in sins, but awake and rejoicing in his praises; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Readings

Sunday 8 December

The Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 11.1-10 • Psalm 72.1-7,18,19 [for Psalm 72.1-7] • Romans 15.4-13 • Matthew 3.1-12

The spirit of the Lord will rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding. (Isaiah 11.2)

Monday 9 December

Isaiah 35 • Psalm 85.7-13 • Luke 5.17-26

Strengthen all weary hands, steady all trembling knees and say to the faint-hearted, "Be strong! Do not be afraid. Here is your God, vengeance is coming, divine retribution; he is coming to save you." (Isaiah 35.3-4)

Tuesday 10 December

Isaiah 40.1-11 • Psalm 96.1,10-13 • Matthew 18.12-14

With justice he will rule the world, he will judge the peoples with his truth. (Psalm 96.13)

Wednesday 11 December

Isaiah 40.25-31 • Psalm 103.8-13 • Matthew 11.28-30

Jesus said, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11.28)

Thursday 12 December

Isaiah 41.13-20 • Psalm 145.1,8-13 • Matthew 11.11-15

The oppressed and the needy search for water and there is none, their tongue is parched with thirst. I, the Lord will answer them. (Isaiah 41.17)

Friday 13 December

Isaiah 48.17-19 • Psalm 1 • Matthew 11.16-19

It was towards John that all the prophecies of the prophets and of the law were leading. (Matthew 11.13)

Saturday 14 December

Ecclesiasticus 48.1-4,9-11 or 2 Kings 2.9-12 • Psalm 80.1-4,18-19 • Matthew 17.10-13

God of hosts, bring us back, let your face shine on us and we shall be safe. (Psalm 80.19)

The Third Week of Advent



Prayer

Lord our God, purify our consciences by your daily visitation, that when your Son our Lord comes, he may find in us a place prepared for him; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Readings

Sunday 15 December

The Third Sunday of Advent

*Isaiah 35.1-10 ; Psalm 146.4-10 or
Canticle: Magnificat ; James 5.7-10 ;
Matthew 11.2-11*

Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isaiah 35.10)

Monday 16 December

*Numbers 24.2-7, 15-17 • Psalm 25.3-8
• Matthew 21.23-27*

Lord, make me know your ways. Lord, teach me your paths. (Psalm 25.4)

Tuesday 17 December

Zephaniah 3.1-2, 9-13 • Psalm 34.1-6, 21-22 • Matthew 21.28-32

At that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord. (Zephaniah 3.9)

Antiphon for the Magnificat:

O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from one end to the other mightily, and sweetly ordering all things: * Come and teach us the way of prudence. (cf. Ecclesiasticus 24.3; Wisdom 8.1)

Wednesday 18 December

Genesis 49.2, 8-10 • Psalm 72.1-5, 18-19 • Matthew 1.1-17

“She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1.21)

Antiphon for the Magnificat:

O Adonai, and leader of the House of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and gave him the law on Sinai: * Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm. (cf. Exodus 3.2; 24.12)

Thursday 19 December

Jeremiah 23.5-8 • Psalm 72.1, 2, 12, 13, 18-20 • Matthew 1.18-24

When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do. (Matthew 1.24)

Antiphon for the Magnificat:

O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign among the peoples; before you kings will shut their mouths, to you the nations will make their prayer: * Come and deliver us, and delay no longer. (cf. Isaiah 11.10; 45.14; 52.15; Romans 15.12)

Friday 20 December

Judges 13.2-7, 24-25 • Psalm 71.3-8 • Luke 1.5-25

On you have I relied since my birth since my mother's womb you have been my portion, the constant theme of my praise. (Psalm 71.6)

Antiphon for The Magnificat :

O Key of David and sceptre of the House of Israel; you open and no one can shut; you shut and no one can open: * Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house, those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death. (cf. Isaiah 22.22; 42.7)

Saturday 21 December

Isaiah 7.10-14 • Psalm 24.1-6 • Luke 1.26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. (Luke 1.26-27)

Antiphon for The Magnificat:

O Morning Star, splendour of light eternal and sun of righteousness: *
Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death. (cf. Malachi 4.2)

The Fourth Week of Advent



Prayer

O Lord our God, make us ready by your divine power; that at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, we may be found worthy of the banquet of eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Readings

Sunday 22 December

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

*Isaiah 7.10-16 • Psalm 80.1-8, 18-20
[for 80.18-20] • Romans 1.1-7 •
Matthew 1.18-25*

Stir up your mighty strength and come to our salvation. (Psalm 80.3)

Antiphon for The Magnificat:

O King of the nations, and their desire, the cornerstone making both one: *
Come and save the human race, which you fashioned from clay. (cf. Isaiah 28.16; Ephesians 2.14)

Monday 23 December

*Malachi 3.1-4, 4.5-6 • Psalm 25.3-9 •
Luke 1.57-66*

“The Lord you are seeking will suddenly enter his Temple; and the angel of the covenant whom you are longing for, yes, he is coming”, says the Lord of hosts. (Malachi 3.1)

Antiphon for The Magnificat:

O Emmanuel, our King and our lawgiver, the hope of the nations and their Saviour: * Come and save us, O Lord our God. (cf. Isaiah 7.14)

Tuesday 24 December

Christmas Eve

*2 Samuel 7.1-5, 8-11, 16 • Psalm 89.2,
19-27 • Acts 13.16-26 • Luke 1.67-79*

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked with favour on his people and redeemed them.” (Luke 1.68)

Christmas



Prayer

O God, who has made this most sacred night to shine with the illumination of

the true light; grant that, as we have known the mystery of that light upon earth, so may we perfectly enjoy it in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Readings

Wednesday 25 December Christmas Day

Isaiah 52.7-10 • Psalm 98 • Hebrews 1.1-4 [5-12] • John 1.1-14

But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. (John 1.12-13)

Thursday 26 December Stephen, Deacon, First Martyr

*2 Chronicles 24.20-22 or Acts 7.51-60 • Psalm 119.161-168 • Acts 7.51-60 or Galatians 2.16b-20 * Matthew 10.17-22*

[Stephen] knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' (Acts 7.60)

Friday 27 December John, Apostle and Evangelist

Exodus 33.7-11a • Psalm 117 • 1 John 1 • John 21.19b-25

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life. (1 John 1.1)

Saturday 28 December The Holy Innocents

Jeremiah 31.15-17 • Psalm 124 • 1 Corinthians 1.26-29 • Matthew 2.13-18

A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. (Jeremiah 31.15)

The First Sunday of Christmas



Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, who has hallowed this day by the incarnation of your Word, and the child-bearing of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grant that your people may share in this celebration; that those who have been redeemed by your grace may rejoice as your adopted children; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Readings

Sunday 29 December

The First Sunday of Christmas

Isaiah 63.7-9 • Psalm 148 [or 148.7-14] • Hebrews 2.10-18 • Matthew 2.13-23

The one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. (Hebrews 2.11)

Monday 30 December

1 John 2.12-17 • Psalm 96.7-10 • Luke 2.36-40

When they had done everything the Law of the Lord required, they went back to Nazareth. And as the child grew to maturity, he was filled with wisdom;

and God's favour was with him. (Luke 2.39-40)

Tuesday 31 December

1 John 2.18-21 • Psalm 96.1,11-13 • John 1.1-18

You have been anointed by the Holy One, and have all received knowledge. (1John2.20)



Prayer

O God, the enlightener of all nations, grant that your people may enjoy perpetual peace; and pour into our hearts that radiant light which you shone into the minds of the wise men; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Wednesday 1 January

The Most Holy Name of Jesus

Numbers 6.22-27 • Psalm 8 • Galatians 4.4-7 • Luke 2.15-21

And he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. (Luke 2.21)

Thursday 2 January

1 John 2.22-28 • Psalm 98.1-4 • John 1.19-28

As long as what you heard in the beginning remains in you, you will remain in the Son and in the Father. (1 John 2.24)

Friday 3 January

1 John 2.29-3.6 • Psalm 98.2-7 • John 1.29-34

You must see what great love the Father has lavished on us by letting us be called God's children – which is what we are! (1John 3.1)

Saturday 4 January

1 John 3.7-10 • Psalm 98.1, 8-16 • John 1.35-42

It was to undo all that the devil has done that the Son of God appeared. (1John3.8)

The Epiphany

Sunday 5 January

The Epiphany

Isaiah 60.1-6 • Psalm 72. [1-9,] 10-15 • Ephesians 3.1-12 • Matthew 2.1-12

The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. (Matthew2.10-11)

Acknowledgements: The weekday readings are from the Daily Eucharistic Lectionary. The Sunday readings are from Year A of the *Common Worship Lectionary*. The weekly prayers used are adapted from the Gelasian Sacramentary, the oldest extant copy of which is dated to the eighth century. The version of Daily Prayer has been compiled by Colin Lunt. Illustration p.1 by Clemens Schmidt; other illustrations are from *Clip Art for Sundays and Solemnities* / Julie Lonneman. (Chicago : Liturgy Training Publications, 2003). CPL • Advent daily 2013.odt • 2013-11-20

Celebrating Advent at Home

For this short family celebration a Christmas Crib scene is needed. Begin with an empty stable. On the first week add an angel; the second week add Joseph; the third week add Mary; the

fourth week add the manger; on Christmas Day add the baby Jesus. At the beginning of the prayer time a candle may be lit; the Bible verse is read, then the weekly prayer; in conclusion the Lord's Prayer may be said, followed by a seasonal blessing or the Grace.

Week 1 : The Angel

Reading: God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth in Galilee with a message for a virgin named Mary. (Luke 1.26)

Prayer: Lord God, you sent the angel Gabriel as a messenger to bring good news to Mary about the coming of your son. May your holy angels protect and guide us and all those we love. **Amen.**

Week 2 : Joseph

Reading: An angel came to Joseph in a dream and said: 'Joseph, the baby that Mary will have is from the Holy Spirit. Go ahead and marry her'. (Matthew 1.20)

Prayer: Lord God, you chose Joseph to be a human father and husband, and to care for Mary and Jesus: look after all who have family responsibilities. May all children grow up in a caring family. **Amen.**

Week 3 : Mary

Reading: The angel told Mary, 'Don't be afraid! God is pleased with you, and you will have a son. His name will be Jesus. (Luke 1.30)

Prayer: Lord God, we thank you for Mary, who accepted the job of being the

mother of Jesus. Help us to show trust and obedience like hers, today and every day. **Amen.**

Week 4 : The Manger

Reading: Mary was engaged to Joseph and travelled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a baby. (Luke 2.5)

Prayer: Lord God, when they went to Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary had to stay in a stable, because there was no other room. Help all those who are seeking shelter and rest; may they find hospitality and help in their time of need. **Amen.**

Christmas : The Baby

Reading: The angel said to the shepherds: 'You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay.' (Luke 2.12)

Prayer: Lord God, today we rejoice that Jesus is born, and we join in the praise of the angels: 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth among those whom he favours'. **Amen.**