

Advent

Advent

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Introduction to the Season

Advent is a season of expectation and preparation, as the Church prepares to celebrate the coming (*adventus*) of Christ in his incarnation, and also looks ahead to his final advent as judge at the end of time. The readings and liturgies not only direct us towards Christ's birth, they also challenge the modern reluctance to confront the theme of divine judgement:

Every eye shall now behold him
robed in dreadful majesty. (Charles Wesley)

The Four Last Things – Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell – have been traditional themes for Advent meditation. The characteristic note of Advent is therefore expectation, rather than penitence, although the character of the season is easily coloured by an analogy with Lent. The anticipation of Christmas under commercial pressure has also made it harder to sustain the appropriate sense of alert watchfulness, but the fundamental Advent prayer remains 'Maranatha' – 'Our Lord, come' (1 Corinthians 16.22). Church decorations are simple and spare, and purple is the traditional liturgical colour. In the northern hemisphere, the Advent season falls at the darkest time of the year, and the natural symbols of darkness and light are powerfully at work throughout Advent and Christmas. The lighting of candles on an Advent wreath was imported into Britain from northern Europe in the nineteenth century, and is now a common practice. The Moravian custom of the Christingle has similarly enjoyed great success in Britain since the latter part of the twentieth century, with the encouragement of the Children's Society; Christingle services may take place before or after Christmas. The Third Sunday of Advent was observed in medieval times as a splash of colour in the restrained atmosphere of Advent (*Gaudete* or 'Rose Sunday'), and the last days of Advent were marked by the sequence of Great 'O' Antiphons, which continue to inspire modern Advent hymns and meditations.

Seasonal Material

Invitations to Confession

- A1** When the Lord comes,
he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.
Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.
cf 1 Corinthians 4.5
- A2** A voice cries out in the wilderness,
'Make straight the way of the Lord.'
So let us listen, and turn to the Lord in penitence and faith.
cf John 1.23
- A3** 'The axe is laid at the root of the trees;
every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down.'
But confident in God's mercy we confess our sins. *cf Matthew 3.10*

Kyrie Confessions

- B1** Turn to us again, O God our Saviour,
and let your anger cease from us:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
- Show us your compassion, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation:
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
- Your salvation is near for those that fear you,
that glory may dwell in our land:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

B2

God, through Jesus Christ,
will judge the secret thoughts of all:
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,'
will enter the kingdom of heaven:
Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Let anyone who has an ear
listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches:
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

B3

Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations
into the peace of your kingdom:
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

You come in word and sacrament
to strengthen us in holiness:
Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

You will come in glory
with salvation for your people:
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Gospel Acclamation

G1

Alleluia, alleluia.

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

cf Isaiah 40.3-5

Alleluia.

Intercessions

H/

In joyful expectation of his coming to our aid
we pray to Jesus.

Come to your Church as Lord and judge.

We pray for ...

Help us to live in the light of your coming
and give us a longing for your kingdom.

Maranatha:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Come to your world as King of the nations.

We pray for ...

Before you rulers will stand in silence.

Maranatha:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Come to the suffering as Saviour and comforter.

We pray for ...

Break into our lives,
where we struggle with sickness and distress,
and set us free to serve you for ever.

Maranatha:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Come to us as shepherd and guardian of our souls.

We remember ...

Give us with all the faithful departed
a share in your victory over evil and death.

Maranatha:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Come from heaven, Lord Jesus, with power and great glory.

Lift us up to meet you,

that with [*N and*] all your saints and angels

we may live and reign with you in your new creation.

Maranatha:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Silence is kept.

Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay;
give new courage to your people,
who trust in your love.

By your coming, raise us to share in the joy of your kingdom
on earth as in heaven,
where you live and reign with the Father and the Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.

Amen.

H2

Watchful at all times,
let us pray for strength to stand with confidence
before our Maker and Redeemer.

That God may bring in his kingdom with justice and mercy,
let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

That God may establish among the nations
his sceptre of righteousness,
let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

That we may seek Christ in the Scriptures
and recognize him in the breaking of the bread,
let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

That God may bind up the brokenhearted,
restore the sick
and raise up all who have fallen,
let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

That the light of God's coming may dawn
on all who live in darkness and the shadow of death,
let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

That, with all the saints in light,
we may shine forth as lights for the world,
let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

We commend ourselves and all for whom we pray
to the mercy and protection of our heavenly Father:

Silence is kept.

Almighty God,
as your blessed Son Jesus Christ
first came to seek and to save the lost;
so may he come again to find in us
the completion of his redeeming work;
for he is now alive
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

Amen.

Introductions to the Peace

- J1** In the tender mercy of our God,
the dayspring from on high shall break upon us,
to give light to those who dwell in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
- J2** God will speak peace to his people,
to those who turn to him in their hearts.
- J3** May the God of peace make you completely holy,
ready for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- J4** Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.

Prayers at the Preparation of the Table

- K1** As this bread was scattered
and then gathered and made one,
so may your Church be gathered into your kingdom.
Glory to you, O God, for ever.
- Wisdom has built her a house;
she has mixed her wine; she has set her table.
Glory to you, O God, for ever.
- K2** Look upon us in mercy not in judgement;
draw us from hatred to love;
make the frailty of our praise
a dwelling place for your glory.
Amen.
- K3** As the grain once scattered in the fields
and the grapes once dispersed on the hillside
are now reunited on this table in bread and wine,
so, Lord, may your whole Church soon be gathered together
from the corners of the earth
into your kingdom.
Amen.

Prefaces

- L1** And now we give you thanks
because you sent him to redeem us from sin and death,
and to make us inheritors of everlasting life;
that when he shall come again in power and great triumph
to judge the world,
we may with joy behold his appearing,
and in confidence may stand before him.
- L2** And now we give you thanks
because when he humbled himself
to come among us in human flesh,
he fulfilled the plan you formed long ago
and opened for us the way of salvation.
So now we watch for the day,
knowing that the salvation promised us will be ours
when Christ our Lord will come again in glory.
- L3** And now we give you thanks
because you prepared the way of your Son Jesus Christ
by the preaching of your servant John the Baptist,
who proclaimed him as the Lamb of God, our Saviour.
- L4** And now we give you thanks
because your Son our Lord was awaited by the prophets,
announced by an angel,
conceived by a virgin,
and proclaimed at last to men and women of every race.
- L5** And now we give you thanks
because in his coming the day of our deliverance has dawned;
and through him you will make all things new,
as he comes in power and triumph to judge the world.

Extended Prefaces

M1

From the First Sunday of Advent until 16 December

It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.
For when he humbled himself to come among us in human flesh,
he fulfilled the plan you formed before the foundation of the world
to open for us the way of salvation.
Confident that your promise will be fulfilled,
we now watch for the day
when Christ our Lord will come again in glory.
And so we join our voices with angels and archangels
and with all the company of heaven
to proclaim your glory
for ever praising you and *saying*:

M2

From 17 December until Christmas Eve

It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.
He is the one foretold by all the prophets,
whom the Virgin Mother bore with love beyond all telling.
John the Baptist was his herald
and made him known when at last he came.
In his love Christ fills us with joy
as we prepare to celebrate his birth,
so that when he comes again he may find us watching in prayer,
our hearts filled with wonder and praise.
And so, with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your glory,
and join in their unending hymn of praise:

Blessings and Ending

P1 Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,
scatter the darkness from before your path,
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;
and the blessing ...

P2 May God himself, the God of peace,
make you perfect and holy,
and keep you safe and blameless, in spirit, soul and body,
for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;
and the blessing ...

P3 May God the Father,
who loved the world so much that he sent his only Son,
give you grace to prepare for life eternal.
Amen.

May God the Son,
who comes to us as redeemer and judge,
reveal to you the path from darkness to light.
Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit,
by whose working the Virgin Mary conceived the Christ,
help you bear the fruits of holiness.
Amen.

And the blessing ...

P4 May God the Father, judge all-merciful,
make us worthy of a place in his kingdom.
Amen.

May God the Son, coming among us in power,
reveal in our midst the promise of his glory.
Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit make us steadfast in faith,
joyful in hope and constant in love.
Amen.

And the blessing ...

P5 Our Lord says, 'I am coming soon.'
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

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

An Alternative Dismissal for Advent Sunday

Q/

Acclamation

After the post-communion prayers a hymn may be sung and/or the following acclamation may be used

With love and compassion,
come, Lord Jesus.

With judgement and mercy,
come, Lord Jesus.

In power and glory,
come, Lord Jesus.

In wisdom and truth,
come, Lord Jesus.

The Dismissal Gospel

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.' *Mark 1.14, 15*

At the end the reader says

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Blessing

This or another blessing may be used

May God the Father, judge all-merciful,
make us worthy of a place in his kingdom.

Amen.

May God the Son, coming among us in power,
reveal in our midst the promise of his glory.

Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit make us steadfast in faith,
joyful in hope and constant in love.

Amen.

And the blessing ...

As we await our coming Saviour,
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

(or)

As we await our coming Saviour,
go in the peace of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

Short Passages of Scripture

- S1** Now is the time to wake out of sleep,
for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.
Romans 13.11
- S2** The night is far spent, the day is at hand:
let us therefore cast off the works of darkness
and let us put on the armour of light. *Romans 13.12*
- S3** Break forth together into singing,
you waste places of Jerusalem;
for the Lord has comforted his people. *Isaiah 52.9*
- S4** Lift up your heads, O gates;
be lifted up, you everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in. *Psalms 24.7*
- S5** Watch at all times, praying that you may have the strength to
escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the
Son of Man. *Luke 21.36*
- S6** Stand up and raise your heads,
because your redemption is drawing near. *Luke 21.28*
- S7** Our Lord says, 'Surely, I come quickly.'
Even so; come, Lord Jesus. *Revelation 22.20*
- S8** Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,
and shall call his name Immanuel. *Isaiah 7.14*

Carol Services in the Advent Season

Bidding Prayers and Introductions

1

In the name of God, who has delivered us from the dominion of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, we welcome you: grace to you and peace.

We are gathered together to proclaim and receive in our hearts the good news of the coming of God's kingdom, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate with confidence and joy the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We pray that we may respond in penitence and faith to the glory of his kingdom, its works of justice and its promise of peace, its blessing and its hope.

And as we seek to renew our allegiance to God's loving purpose, we pray for all who at this time especially need his pity and protection: the sick in body, mind or spirit; those who suffer from loss of dignity or loss of hope; those who face the future with fear, or walk in the shadow of death.

May God, of his grace and mercy, grant to all his people a new trust in his good providence and a new obedience to his sovereign word, for to him is most justly due all glory, honour, worship and praise, world without end.

All **Amen.**

2

In the name of God, who has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and made a place for us in the kingdom of his beloved Son, we welcome you: grace to you and peace.

As we meet to celebrate anew the coming of God's kingdom, we hear revealed the mystery of God's loving purpose for us – how that when we were far off, he met us in his Son and brought us home; how he humbled himself to take our human nature, that we might share his divine glory.

Let us then so celebrate this coming with our carols and hymns of praise, that our lives may be charged with his life; that we may bear witness to his glory and so bring light to those who sit in darkness. So first we pray for those among whom the Christ was born: the poor and helpless, the aged and young children; the cold, the hungry and the homeless; the victims of poverty, injustice and oppression, the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and the unloved; those in despair or in the shadow of death.

Then, as we hear again the message of peace on earth and goodwill among all his people, we pray for the leaders of the nations, that all may be inspired to work together for the establishment of justice, freedom and peace the world over.

And that we may bear true witness to this hope in a divided world, we pray for the peace and unity of Christ's Body, the Church universal, that the whole earth may live to praise his name.

Finally, as we rejoice with the saints in heaven and on earth, we remember all who have gone before us with the sign of faith, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we offer up our prayers for the coming of his kingdom, in the words he himself has taught us, saying:

The Lord's Prayer follows.

And may the Lord when he comes find us watching and waiting, now and at all times.

All **Amen.**

3

It is time for us to wake out of sleep, for deliverance is nearer to us now than it was when first we believed. It is far on in the night; day is near. Let us therefore cast off the deeds of darkness and put on our armour as soldiers of the light.

The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
and also with you.

All

My brothers and sisters, we enter today [*celebrate at this time*] the solemn season of Advent in which the Church bids us prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ; a coming that we recall in the Child of Bethlehem; a coming that we experience in the gift of his Spirit, in the bread of the Eucharist, in the joy of human lives that are shared; a coming we wait for when God gathers up all things in Christ. Let us in this holy season reflect on the coming of Christ who brings light to the world. Let us leave behind the darkness of sin, walk in the light that shines on our path, and renew within ourselves the hope of glory to which he beckons us. And as we turn towards the light, let us have on our hearts all those who see no light, for whom all is darkness and despair. Let us pray that they too may be illumined by Christ who is our light.

The whole congregation prays silently, after which the president draws the prayers together in the Collect of Advent Sunday

Almighty God,
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and to put on the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;
that on the last day,
when he shall come again in his glorious majesty
to judge the living and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

Patterns of Readings

These sequences may be shortened or varied according to local circumstances and a sermon may be preached.

Sequence 1: The King and his kingdom

1	Zechariah 9.9,10 Psalm 72.1-8	Rejoice greatly, your king comes to you
2	Jeremiah 23.5,6 Psalm 21.1-7	I will raise up for David a righteous branch
3	Psalm 118.19-29 Psalm 24	Open to me the gates of righteousness
4	Isaiah 9.2,6,7 Psalm 28.7-10	The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light
5	Isaiah 7.10-15 Psalm 132.10-16	Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son
6	Romans 12.1,2; 13.(8)11-14	Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed
Canticle		Te Deum Laudamus – A Song of the Church (<i>Common Worship: Daily Prayer</i> , page 636)
Gospel	<i>In Advent</i> Matthew 25.1-13 <i>At Christmas</i> Matthew 1.18-25	Keep awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour An angel tells Joseph of the coming birth of Jesus

Sequence 2: The forerunner

1	Exodus 3.1-6 Psalm 99	The burning bush
2	Isaiah 40.1-11 Psalm 103.8-17	A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord
3	Isaiah 52.7-10 Psalm 147.1-6	How beautiful on the mountains
4	Malachi 3.1-5 Psalm 97	Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me
5	Isaiah 61.1-3,11 Psalm 146	The Spirit of the Lord is upon me
6	Philippians 4.4-7	The Lord is at hand
Canticle		Benedictus (The Song of Zechariah) (<i>Common Worship: Daily Prayer</i> , pages 610–612)
Gospel	Luke 1.5-25	The birth of John the Baptist is foretold

Sequence 3: A vigil for prisoners and those who sit in darkness

1	Isaiah 43.1-7 Psalm 46.1-4, 11,12	I have called you by name, you are mine
2	Psalm 107.1-3, 10-16 Psalm 130	When they cried to the Lord, he delivered them from their distress
3	Isaiah 61.1-3,11 Psalm 146	The spirit of the Lord is upon me
4	Isaiah 42.5-9 Psalm 43	Bring the prisoners out of darkness
5	Isaiah 62.1-7, 10-12 or Micah 4.1-5 Psalm 85.1-7	You shall be called Sought Out, a city not forsaken They shall beat their swords into ploughshares
6	Ephesians 2.11-22	He is our peace, who has made us one
Canticle		Benedictus (The Song of Zechariah) (<i>Common Worship: Daily Prayer</i> , pages 610–612)
Gospel	Matthew 25.31- end	I was in prison and you visited me

Sequence 4: Looking for the light

1	Genesis 1.1-5 Psalm 136.1-9	And God said: Let there be light
2	Psalm 13 Psalm 43	Give light to my eyes, lest I sleep in death
3	Isaiah 45.2-8 Psalm 97	I form light and create darkness
4	Baruch 4.36 – 5.9 or Isaiah 60.1-5a Psalm 84.8-12	Look to the east
5	Isaiah 9.2,3,6,7 Psalm 36.5-10	The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light
6	1 Thessalonians 5.1-11,23,34	You are not in darkness, for you are all children of light
Canticle		A Song of the New Jerusalem (<i>Common Worship: Daily Prayer</i> , page 585)
Gospel	Luke 12.35-40 or John 3.16-21	Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning I am the light of the world

Conclusions

1

Restore us, O Lord God of hosts:

All **show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

Will you not give us life again

All **that your people may rejoice in you?**

Show us your mercy, O Lord,

All **and grant us your salvation.**

2

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,

All **who has come to his people and set them free.**

Hosanna to the Son of David.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

All **Hosanna in the highest.**

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David.

All **Hosanna in the highest.**

Blessed be the name of the Lord,

All **now and for ever. Amen.**

3

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

All **and blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever.**

Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.

All **Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.**

4

We wait for your loving-kindness, O God,

All **in the midst of your temple.**

The glory of the Lord shall be revealed

All **and all flesh shall see it together.**

Show us your mercy, O Lord,

All **and grant us your salvation.**

5

We wait for your loving-kindness, O God,
All in the midst of your temple.

Our help is in the name of the Lord,
All who made heaven and earth.

Let us bless the Lord.
All Thanks be to God.

6

The night is far spent, the day is at hand.
 Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness
 and put on the armour of light.

Come, O Lord, comfort the soul of your servant.
All Even so, Lord, come.

O Lord Jesus Christ, come
All at evening time, with light,
 and in the morning, with your glory,
All to guide our feet into the way of peace.

He who receives our prayers says:
 Surely I come quickly.
 I am the root and offspring of David,
 I am the bright and morning star.
All Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Blessings and a further ending for use in Advent may be found on page 41.

The Advent Wreath

The Advent Wreath has four red or blue candles in a ring around a white or gold candle. Alternatively, there may be three purple candles, reflecting the liturgical colour for Advent, with a pink candle for the Third Sunday, when rose-pink vestments are traditionally worn. The first candle is lit on Advent Sunday; additional ones are lit, one on each Sunday, and the white or gold one on Christmas Day.

The new candle each week may appropriately be lit during the Prayers of Penitence. In this case the material entitled 'Prayers of Penitence at the Advent Wreath' is used. Alternatively, the candles may be lit after the Gospel Reading, before the Peace, or after Communion, where the prayer(s) used at the lighting becomes a natural Post-Communion prayer. All five candles may appropriately be alight during services through the Christmas season.

There are several traditions about the meaning or theme of each candle. The scheme that accords best with the Common Worship Principal Service Lectionary is:

Advent 1	The Patriarchs
Advent 2	The Prophets
Advent 3	John the Baptist
Advent 4	The Virgin Mary
Christmas Day	The Christ

Each of the four Sundays then reminds us of those who prepared for the coming of Christ. 'The Patriarchs' can naturally focus on Abraham, our father in faith, and David, the ancestor in whose city Jesus was born. 'The Prophets' gives an opportunity to reflect on the way the birth of the Messiah was 'foretold'. John, who proclaimed the Saviour, and Mary, who bore him in her womb, complete the picture.

The prayers below reflect these four themes. The second, third and fourth prayers in each case are written with children in mind, and the third is to be said by the congregation together. Only one prayer need be used on any occasion, though the second and third fit well together in each case.

1

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, God of our ancestors:
to you be praise and glory for ever.
You called the patriarchs to live by the light of faith
and to journey in the hope of your promised fulfilment.
May we be obedient to your call
and be ready and watchful to receive your Christ,
a lamp to our feet and a light to our path;
for you are our light and our salvation.
Blessed be God for ever.

2

God of Abraham and Sarah,
and all the patriarchs of old,
you are our Father too.
Your love is revealed to us in Jesus Christ,
Son of God and Son of David.
Help us in preparing to celebrate his birth
to make our hearts ready for your Holy Spirit
to make his home among us.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the light who is coming into the world.
Amen.

3

**Lord Jesus, light of the world,
born in David's city of Bethlehem,
born like him to be a king:
be born in our hearts at Christmas,
be King of our lives today.
Amen.**

4

People of God: awake!
The day is coming soon
when you shall see God face to face.
Remember the ways and the works of God.
God calls you out of darkness
to walk in the light of his coming.
You are God's children.
**Lord, make us one as we walk with Christ
today and for ever.
Amen.**

1

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, just and true:
to you be praise and glory for ever.
Of old you spoke by the mouth of your prophets,
but in our days you speak through your Son,
whom you have appointed the heir of all things.
Grant us, your people, to walk in his light,
that we may be found ready and watching
when he comes again in glory and judgement;
for you are our light and our salvation.

Blessed be God for ever.

2

God our Father,
you spoke to the prophets of old
of a Saviour who would bring peace.
You helped them to spread the joyful message
of his coming kingdom.
Help us, as we prepare to celebrate his birth,
to share with those around us
the good news of your power and love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the light who is coming into the world.

Amen.

3

**Lord Jesus, light of the world,
the prophets said you would bring peace
and save your people in trouble.
Give peace in our hearts at Christmas
and show all the world God's love.**

Amen.

4

People of God: be glad!
Your God delights in you,
giving you joy for sadness
and turning the dark to light.
Be strong in hope therefore;
for your God comes to save.
You are God's children.
**Lord, make us one in the love of Christ
today and for ever.**

Amen.

1

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, just and true:
to you be praise and glory for ever.
Your prophet John the Baptist was witness to the truth
as a burning and shining light.
May we your servants rejoice in his light,
and so be led to witness to him
who is the Lord of our coming kingdom,
Jesus our Saviour and King of the ages.
Blessed be God for ever.

2

God our Father,
you gave to Zechariah and Elizabeth in their old age
a son called John.
He grew up strong in spirit,
prepared the people for the coming of the Lord,
and baptized them in the Jordan to wash away their sins.
Help us, who have been baptized into Christ,
to be ready to welcome him into our hearts,
and to grow strong in faith by the power of the Spirit.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the light who is coming into the world.
Amen.

3

**Lord Jesus, light of the world,
John told the people to prepare,
for you were very near.
As Christmas grows closer day by day,
help us to be ready to welcome you now.
Amen.**

4

People of God: return!
You are called to be God's own.
From the mountains announce the good news.
God comes in justice and peace,
to all who follow his ways.
You are God's children.
**Lord, make us one in the peace of Christ
today and for ever.
Amen.**

1

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, merciful and gentle:
to you be praise and glory for ever.
Your light has shone in our darkened world
through the child-bearing of blessed Mary;
grant that we who have seen your glory
may daily be renewed in your image
and prepared like her for the coming of your Son,
who is the Lord and Saviour of all.

Blessed be God for ever.

2

God our Father,
the angel Gabriel told the Virgin Mary
that she was to be the mother of your Son.
Though Mary was afraid,
she responded to your call with joy.
Help us, whom you call to serve you,
to share like her in your great work
of bringing to our world your love and healing.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the light who is coming into the world.

Amen.

3

**Lord Jesus, light of the world,
blessed is Gabriel, who brought good news;
blessed is Mary, your mother and ours.
Bless your Church preparing for Christmas;
and bless us your children, who long for your coming.**

Amen.

4

People of God: prepare!
God, above all, maker of all,
is one with us in Christ.
Maranatha!

Come, Lord Jesus!

God, the mighty God,
bends down in love to earth.
Maranatha!

Come, Lord Jesus!

God with us, God beside us,
comes soon to the world he has made.
Maranatha!

Come, Lord Jesus!

We are God's children,
we seek the coming Christ.
Maranatha!

Come, Lord Jesus!

1

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, King of peace:
 to you be praise and glory for ever.
 The new light of your incarnate Word
 gives gladness in our sorrow,
 and a presence in our isolation.
 Fill our lives with your light,
 until they overflow with gladness and praise.

Blessed be God for ever.

2

God our Father,
 today the Saviour is born
 and those who live in darkness are seeing a great light.
 Help us, who greet the birth of Christ with joy,
 to live in the light of your Son
 and to share the good news of your love.
 We ask this through Jesus Christ,
 the light who has come into the world.

Amen.

3

**Lord Jesus, Light of light,
 you have come among us.
 Help us who live by your light
 to shine as lights in your world.
 Glory to God in the highest.**

Amen.

4

People of God: shout and sing!
 Tell the good news of peace on earth.
 Lord, bring us today into Christ's peace.
 All God's people *say/shout*:

Amen!

Angels dance
 and the bright star shines.
 All creation bows to the Lord of all.
 Lord, bring us today into Christ's light.
 All God's people *say/shout*:

Amen!

One with us,
 yet born to save,
 he will show us the way to God.
 Lord, bring us today into Christ's love.
 All God's people *say/shout*:

Amen!

People of God: shout and sing:

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Amen.

Prayers of Penitence at the Advent Wreath

Advent 1

Heavenly Father,
you have created a universe of light:
forgive us when we return to darkness.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus,
you are the light of the world:
cleanse and heal our blinded sight.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Holy Spirit,
you give us light in our hearts:
renew us in faith and love.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Advent 2

Heavenly Father,
you call us to repent of our sins:
soften our proud and stubborn hearts.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus,
you declared the forgiveness of God:
teach us to forgive one another.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Holy Spirit,
you search our hearts and show us the truth:
direct us in your way of righteousness.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Advent 3

Heavenly Father,
 you call us to prepare for the coming of your Son:
 forgive us our unreadiness to receive him.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus,
 you were proclaimed by John the Baptist:
 help us also to prepare your way.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Holy Spirit,
 you speak through the prophets:
 make us attentive to hear your word.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Advent 4

Heavenly Father,
 you exalted the humble and meek:
 give us humble and contrite hearts.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus,
 you grew towards birth in the Virgin's womb:
 be planted also in our hearts and lives.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Holy Spirit,
 you overshadowed Mary,
 that she might become the God-bearer:
 fill us with your heavenly gifts.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

This absolution may be used

Almighty God,
 who in Jesus Christ has given us
 a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,
 forgive us our sins,
 open our eyes to God's truth,
 strengthen us to do God's will
 and give us the joy of his kingdom,
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Advent Antiphons

These antiphons, or refrains, all beginning 'O ...', were sung before and after the Magnificat at Vespers, according to the Roman use, on the seven days preceding Christmas Eve (17–23 December). They are addressed to God, calling for him to come as teacher and deliverer, with a tapestry of scriptural titles and pictures that describe his saving work in Christ. In the medieval rite of Salisbury Cathedral that was widely followed in England before the Reformation, the antiphons began on 16 December and there was an additional antiphon ('O Virgin of virgins') on 23 December; this is reflected in the Calendar of *The Book of Common Prayer*, where 16 December is designated *O Sapientia* (O Wisdom). The Common Worship Calendar has adopted the more widely used form. It is not known when and by whom the antiphons were composed, but they were already in use by the eighth century.

17 December – O Sapientia

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

18 December – O Adonai

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

19 December – O Radix Jesse

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

20 December – O Clavis David

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

21 December – O Oriens

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**22 December – O Rex Gentium*

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**23 December – O Emmanuel*

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***Evening Prayer Lectionary***This lectionary may be adopted at Evening Prayer for the week before Christmas.*

<i>O Sapientia</i>	17 December	Psalms 90, 11 Ecclesiasticus 24.1-9 I Corinthians 2.1-13
<i>O Adonai</i>	18 December	Psalms 106 Exodus 3.1-6 Acts 7.20-36
<i>O Radix Jesse</i>	19 December	Psalms 50 Isaiah 11.1-9 Romans 15.7-13
<i>O Clavis David</i>	20 December	Psalms 89.1-34 Isaiah 22.21-23 Revelation 3.7-13
<i>O Oriens</i>	21 December	Psalms 27 Numbers 24.15b-19 Revelation 22.10-21
<i>O Rex Gentium</i>	22 December	Psalms 118 Jeremiah 30.7-11a Acts 4.1-12
<i>O Emmanuel</i>	23 December	Psalms 80 Isaiah 7.10-15 Matthew 1.18-23

The Advent Prose

**Pour down, O heavens, from above,
and let the skies rain down righteousness.**

Turn your fierce anger from us, O Lord,
and remember not our sins for ever.
Your holy cities have become a desert,
Zion a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation;
our holy and beautiful house,
where our ancestors praised you.

**Pour down, O heavens, from above,
and let the skies rain down righteousness.**

We have sinned and become like one who is unclean;
we have all withered like a leaf,
and our iniquities like the wind have swept us away.
You have hidden your face from us,
and abandoned us to our iniquities.

**Pour down, O heavens, from above,
and let the skies rain down righteousness.**

You are my witnesses, says the Lord,
and my servant whom I have chosen,
that you may know me and believe me.
I myself am the Lord, and none but I can deliver;
what my hand holds, none can snatch away.

**Pour down, O heavens, from above,
and let the skies rain down righteousness.**

Comfort my people, comfort them;
my salvation shall not be delayed.
I have swept your offences away like a cloud;
fear not, for I will save you.
I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel,
your redeemer.

**Pour down, O heavens, from above,
and let the skies rain down righteousness.**