



**A short Act of Commissioning  
for congregations as we prepare to invite friends and family,  
classmates, neighbours and colleagues  
to special services this Advent and Christmas**

*Designed to be included in a Eucharist or Service of the Word  
on either Sunday 20 November or Sunday 27 November 2022*

**How to use**

Churches across the Church of England are being encouraged to use this short liturgy at all services on either 20 or 27 November.

The liturgy, which is specially prepared for this year's 'Follow The Star: The Great Invitation' theme for use in the Church of England, is designed to include the giving out of invitations to or details of special services during Advent and Christmas to which we may invite those close to us.

It is intended that congregations will be given invitations to give to friends and family, classmates, colleagues and neighbours. In some contexts where cards are delivered more widely within the community they could be given instead or additionally at this time.

This is designed to be used after a post-communion prayer as part of an act of sending, but could be easily adapted for use during the intercessions or at the start of the service after the gathering. On both Sundays, the Bible readings set for the day offer opportunity for preachers to further reflect on why we are called to invite others to know that goodness of God which we have been privileged to receive.

## Introduction

*Priest/leader* In around a month's time we shall hear afresh the words of the angels to shepherds who felt uninvited and thought they would be unwelcome at the birth of a king, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all peoples.' The stories we will hear this Advent and Christmas are an unending song of invitation, echoing through all ages, for all people to know the love, hope and salvation offered by our Lord Jesus Christ. In the New Testament [Romans 10.14-15], we are asked to consider how people will be able to hear unless they have been invited and we are encouraged that beautiful are the feet of God's messengers. As Christians we are called to be God's great invitation, those who are sent in God's name to all the people and places we shall be this week.

We pray now that the Spirit of God will empower, equip and embolden us to be God's great invitation, inviting our friends and family, classmates, colleagues and neighbours to know that goodness of God which we have been privileged to receive.

*Please stand if you are comfortably able to do so.*

*Priest/leader* People of God: prepare! God, above all, maker of all, is one with us in Christ.

**All** **Come, Lord Jesus!**

*Priest/leader* God, the mighty God, bends down in love to earth.

**All** **Come, Lord Jesus!**

*Priest/leader* God with us, God beside us, God sending us to a world in need.

**All** **Come, Lord Jesus!**

*Priest/leader* Will you dare to walk into God's future, trusting God to be your guide?

**All** **By the Spirit's power, we will.**

*Priest/leader* Will you dare to pray for the Spirit of God to help you witness to the Light of the World?

**All** **By the Spirit's power, we will.**

*Priest/leader* Will you dare to pray that God would guide you to invite those God is calling and continue to pray for them throughout this Advent?

**All** **By the Spirit's power, we will.**

*Priest/leader* Lord, by the leading of a star  
you revealed your glory to strangers.  
Teach us to know you  
and to make you known to others  
this Christmas and always.

**All** **Amen.**

**All** **Lord Jesus Christ, alive and at large in the world,  
help us to follow and find you there this Advent,  
in the places where we work, meet people, spend money, and make plans.  
Make us disciples of your kingdom, to see through your eyes,  
and hear the questions you are asking,  
to be a living invitation to our friends and family, classmates and colleagues  
so that they may know more of your love  
and we may welcome all with your trust and truth,  
and to change the things that contradict God's love,  
by the power of the cross and the freedom and empowering of your Spirit.  
Amen**

*Adapted from a prayer by John V Taylor 1914-2001*

## Giving of resources

*At this point, if not previously given out, invitations are given out to the congregation.*