

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2020

29 NOVEMBER—25 DECEMBER

Lead Story Headline

Advent is a season of expectation and preparation, as the Church prepares to celebrate the coming of Christ as Emmanuel, 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 us to confront the theme of divine judgement.

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 4 Sundays in Advent each have a different theme and point us towards Christmas. In the Church of England the traditional themes of the four Sundays based on the lectionary readings are the Patriarchs, the Prophets, John the Baptist and Mary. Other themes can also be used such as hope, peace, joy and love or waiting, preparation, light and coming.

Candles which are part of the advent wreath are lit during the service and specific prayers are made during their lighting. Advent and Christmas might look very different this year, but we encourage you to use the prayers and readings below and join with others across the nation and the world celebrating advent.



SUNDAY 1— ADVENT 1:

PRAYER:

**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 OBEДИENT 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.
AMEN.**

READINGS:

**ISAIAH 64: 1-9
PSALM 80: 1-7
1 CORINTHIANS 1: 3-9
MARK 13: 24-37**

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SUNDAY 2 — ADVENT 2:

PRAYER:

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.
AMEN.

READINGS:

ISAIAH 40: 1-11
PSALM 85: 1-2, 8-13
2 PETER 3:8-15
MARK 1: 1-8

SUNDAY 3 — ADVENT 3:

PRAYER:

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.
AMEN.

READINGS:

ISAIAH 61: 1-4, 8-11
PSALM 126
1 THESSALONIANS 5: 16-24
JOHN 1: 1-8, 19-38

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SUNDAY 4— ADVENT 4:

PRAYER:

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.
AMEN.

READINGS:

2 SAMUEL 7: 1-11, 16
LUKE 1: 46-55
ROMANS 16:25-27
LUKE 1: 26-38

CHRISTMAS DAY

PRAYER:

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.
AMEN.

READINGS:

ISAIAH 9:2-7
PSALM 96
TITUS 2:11-14
LUKE 2:1-14, (15-20)