

Advent during a time of pandemic



Introduction

During this season of Advent we think about moving from darkness to light as we wait in expectation, preparing for Jesus.

This year we are going to shine as lights in the darkness by telling our story through decorated windows, and we are going to pray.

Greeting

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
and also with you.

Light your Advent Candle

Confession: Saying sorry to God

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.

Turn to us again, O God our Saviour, and let your anger cease from us:

Lord, have mercy.

Show us your compassion, O Lord, and grant us your salvation:

Christ, have mercy.

Your salvation is near for those that fear you,
that glory may dwell in our land:

Lord, have mercy.

Our God forgives all who truly repent.

Our God has mercy upon you, pardons and delivers you from all your sins,
confirms and strengthens you in all goodness,
and will keep you in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Collect: Special Prayer for this Season

Almighty God, as your kingdom dawns, turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness, that we may be ready to meet you in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

Readings and reflections

This year, the apocalyptic tone of our Advent readings seem more relatable than before. As we explore the darkness during this season, let's always remember the Light that came into the world, and that remains in the world, living in you, me and such a great cloud of witnesses through the world, through time, through eternity.

Advent Sunday: Isaiah 64:1-9; Mark 13:24-37

- As we hear these ancient words that speak of suffering, darkness and a foreboding sense of chaos? There truly is nothing new under the sun. Then, God was faithful. Now, God is faithful. Dwell on this truth; ask for comfort and peace.
- During this time I have heard people claiming they know these are the end times. However, not even Jesus knew! Our call is to be watchful, to read the signs of the times, to lovingly hold a mirror up in our generation so all might see God. What or who helps you stay alert to the voice and activity of God?
- Today, do you know someone who is struggling to find peace? Someone who needs words of comfort? What will you do to share God's love with them?

2nd Sunday of Advent: Isaiah 40:1-11; Mark 1:1-8

- John, in his great proclamation, is echoing words from Isaiah 40 and reappropriating them to this time. How might we reappropriate them for our time?
- John was helping people to turn around; to move from darkness to light. Are there parts of your life that you long for God's light to shine? Pray today that the light of Christ would shine into those situations, fears, broken relationships...
- How will you prepare the way of the Lord today; in your own heart, in a conversation with a friend, in a loving action...?

3rd Sunday of Advent: Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11; John 1:6-8, 19-28

- We, like John, are called to testify to the Light. Give thanks for those who have testified to the Light in your life. Ask God to strengthen you to testify to the Light.
- ‘Who are you?’ it is a powerful question. Spend some time thinking who you are. It’s a strange questions, but stick with it, allow the relationships, abilities, roles and other things that define you to come to mind. Remember how wonderfully unique you are. Above all, bring to mind that you are beloved of your Father in heaven.

4th Sunday of Advent: 2 Samuel 7:1-11,16; Luke 1.26-38

- How do you think Mary must have felt when she heard the message of the angel? How much courage must her ‘yes’ have taken?
- ‘Do not be afraid’, words so often associated with angelic visitations. How do you calm your fears in the face of undeniably frightening things?
- Then Mary said, ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’ Pray this prayer with Mary. Be open to what God will do.

The Creed - what we believe

Let us declare our faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We believe in God the Father,

from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

We believe in God the Son,

who lives in our hearts through faith,

and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit,

who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers

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

Come to your Church as Lord and judge.

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.

Before you rulers will stand in silence. Maranatha: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Come to the suffering as Saviour and comforter.

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.

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 all your saints and angels we may live and reign with you in your new creation. Maranatha:Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

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.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Peace

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.

Blessing and Dismissal

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

And the Blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us, now and always.Amen.

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

Use this space to make notes and add people and situations that come to mind for prayer or action