

Advent Prayers



Church of the Redeemer
Advent Four to the Saturday Following

Introduction

We invite you to enter into a time of intentional prayer this Advent through the use of this resource.

The season of Advent is the four Sundays (and following weekdays) before Christmas Day. The season's name comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means "arrival". We use this time to get ready for "the birth in time of the timeless Son of God" – and to get ready for the same Son of God to come again at the end of time. It is a time that we look back to his birth and yet also look ahead to the time that is yet to come.

Our theme this year is the Jesse Tree. Isaiah says to us: *A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.* So what makes Jesse so important? Jesse was David's father and the image of a new branch growing out of David's lineage points us to Jesus. In our readings we hear the stories that tell of that lineage – looking back and looking forward, not unlike the season that we are in. What all of that has to say to us in this time and place will form part of our prayer and reflection.

The order for daily prayer contains elements that are traditional forms familiar to many and contemporary aspects that are also familiar. Use as much or as little of the order as you need to give shape to your time of prayer. It matters not the time of day that you set aside for prayer – morning, noon, or night as your schedule allows. As each of us pauses to pray, we know that others within the parish have joined with us, each in our own time and space, for a continuum of prayer throughout the day.

You are welcome to keep this booklet for use again. In addition, we will include some part of each day's reading or reflection on our Facebook page.

In Peace we pray...

Advent Four to the Saturday Following

December 20 to December 26

We enter into a time of quiet. We offer to God our selves and in the silence know that God embraces us as God's very own. We offer to God our hopes and our concerns through our prayers and in the silence listen for God.

We begin by saying

A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel.

Matthew 1.23

We continue with the Psalm

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; *
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, *
stir up your strength and come to help us.

Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

O Lord God of hosts, *
how long will you be angered
despite the prayers of your people?

You have fed them with the bread of tears; *
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

You have made us the derision of our neighbours, *
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

Ps 80.1-7

We continue with the reading and the reflection beginning on page eight. In silence we ask what the reading has to say to us today. Is there something in the reflection that draws us more deeply into the reading? What does God have to say to us? What do we have to ask God?

When the time is right, we conclude our time of silence with the canticle below.

The Canticle ~ Song of Mary

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; *
he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed; *
the Almighty has done great things for me
and holy is his name.

He has mercy on those who fear him, *
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm *
and has scattered the proud in their conceit,

Casting down the mighty from their thrones *
and lifting up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things *
and sent the rich away empty.

He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, *
to remember his promise of mercy,

The promise made to our ancestors, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Luke 1.46-55

We continue in prayer for those people and situations that we hold up before God (The Intercessions) and continue concluding collect, the Lord's prayer and the closing sentences.

The Intercessions

We offer prayers:

For God's creation...

For peace in the world...

For the Church and all who serve in Christ's name...

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who suffer...

For forgiveness from those whom we have injured or offended...

For those who have gone before us in faith...

We conclude our prayers

Sunday to Wednesday:

God of promise,
you look with favour on the lowly,
you scatter the proud and you fill the hungry.
May we, like Mary, respond to your call
and be obedient to your will;
through Jesus Christ who is to come. Amen.

Christmas Eve to Saturday:

God whose Word became flesh,
breathe a new song of joy
and praise into the world,
so that we may bear
the good news of your salvation
and proclaim your promise of peace
to the ends of the earth;
through Christ the Word. Amen.

[let us pray as our Saviour taught us,]

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen

OR

God, who cares for us,
The wonder of whose presence fills us with awe,
Let justice, kindness and love shine in our world.
Let your secrets be known here as they are in heaven.
Give us the food and the hope we need for today.
Forgive us our wrongdoing
as we forgive the wrongs done to us.
Protect us from pride and from despair
and from the fear and hate which can swallow us up.
In you is truth, meaning, glory and power,
while worlds come and go. Amen.

We conclude

Our Lord says, 'I am coming soon.'
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.
May the Lord, when he comes,
Find us watching and waiting.

Christmas Eve to Saturday

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

The Readings and Reflections

Sunday

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

Luke 1.39-45

Reflection

Can you imagine what it must have been like for Elizabeth? The hopes and dreams over the years laid to rest. A life that she had become settled to accept and then...

Word comes that she will have a child

Did she risk opening herself to those hopes and dreams again? Did she dare also leap for joy as the child within her leapt?

What hopes and dreams have you set aside because you thought them no longer likely? Will you open yourself to new possibilities? Will you dare to leap for joy as the promise within you grows?

Monday

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, 'No; he is to be called John.' They said to her, 'None of your relatives has this name.' Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, 'His name is John.' And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbours, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, 'What then will this child become?' For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

Luke 1.57-67

Reflection

What is your name?

Why were you given it? Is it a family name or one that a parent liked because it didn't have attachment to legacy?

His name is John. It wasn't a family name and yet it was a sign of who he was to become.

What is your name? Do you see it as a sign of who you are, child of God?

Tuesday

But Moses said to God, 'If I come to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your ancestors has sent me to you", and they ask me, "What is his name?" what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "I AM has sent me to you." ' God also said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you":

This is my name for ever,
and this my title for all generations.

Exodus 3.13-15

Reflection

He asked 'But who is God and how do you know...?'

The best answer I could give was

God is...

God is mystery

God is presence

God is beyond words

God is...

...for all generations...

Wednesday

I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and no one shall shut; he shall shut, and no one shall open.

Isaiah 22.22

Reflection

The key placed there

Open

It shall be

Shut

By no one

The key

Shut

And no one shall

Open

Promise fulfilled

Christmas Eve

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Luke 2.1-7

Reflection

She rests there. A chill in the air but the warmth of the animals surrounds them—a young mom and her tiny newborn.

He watches them. He remembers how he almost walked away from this and yet in this tiny one is such promise.

In this moment we see them—exhausted, joyful, hope-filled. Such is what we wait for. The promise of God-with-us.

Christmas Day

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

Luke 2.8-14

Reflection

Go!
You will see what you need

Go now!
Find the manger

Go on!
The One waits there for you

Peace be with you

Saturday

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Luke 2.15-20

Reflection

You have heard. You have seen.
Now tell!

Share the good news.
Go out into the world
with hope
with joy
with love
with promise

God is with you.

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