

An Order of Worship for Advent

The Advent Wreath is a visual symbol marking the progress of the season of Advent. It originated as a devotion practiced in the home with one's family and can be an opportunity for prayer as we await the coming of Christ at Christmas. Here is a brief service, adapted from An Order of Worship for the Evening (BCP pp. 109-112) that can be used for prayer during the season of Advent.

Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Lesson

One of the following lessons of Scripture for the appropriate week in Advent may then be read

First Week of Advent

Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour. (Matthew 24:42-44)

Second Week of Advent

The word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'" (Luke 3:2b-6)

Third Week of Advent

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. (Luke 3:15-16)

Fourth Week of Advent

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 leaped 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. (Luke 1:39-42)

The Prayer for Light

Then may be said a Prayer for Light, using one of the following prayers

In the Evening

Almighty God, we give you thanks for surrounding us, as daylight fades, with the brightness of the vesper light; and we implore you of your great mercy that, as you enfold us with the radiance of this light, so you would shine into our hearts the brightness of your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

At any Time

Grant us, Lord, the lamp of charity which never fails, that it may burn in us and shed its light on those around us, and that by its

brightness we may have a vision of that holy City, where dwells the true and never-failing Light, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

○ Lord God Almighty, as you have taught us to call the evening, the morning, and the noonday one day; and have made the sun to know its going down: Dispel the darkness of our hearts, that by your brightness we may know you to be the true God and eternal light, living and reigning for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Advent candle(s) are now lighted and the following hymn is said

○ Gracious Light *Phos hilaron*

○ gracious light,
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,
○ Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light,
we sing your praises, ○ God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,
○ Son of God, ○ Giver of Life,
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

The Collect

First Week of Advent

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

Second Week of Advent

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Third Week of Advent

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Fourth Week of Advent

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Blessing

The Lord bless us and keep us. *Amen.*

The Lord make his face to shine upon us
and be gracious to us. *Amen.*

The Lord lift up his countenance upon us
and give us peace. *Amen.*

The Dismissal

Let us bless the Lord

Thanks be to God.

