



Advent Prayer Services

Index

Advent 1 - The Creative Breath Page 3

Symbols: A large Candle and beneath it a bowl of water

Advent 2 - Light and Darkness Page 8

Symbols: An outside lantern with small candle.

Advent 3 - Obedience Page 13

Symbols: A candle and in front of it a stone

Advent 4 - Birth and Re-Birth Page 18

Symbols: A candle and in front of this a rose flower.

The Word Page 23

A Short Meditation and introduce to 'Nunc Dimitis'.

Nunc Dimitis Page 24

A short-order Compline to conclude the day.

Advent 1 - The Creative Breath

Responses are in **bold print**

Symbols: A large Candle and beneath it a bowl of water

The candle is lit

A few moments of silence

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.
Through him all things were made;
without him nothing was made that has been made.'

'... And the Spirit (*the breath*) of God was hovering over the waters.'

John 1:1-3, Genesis 1:2

Lord of the morning,
of dawn chorus, rising sun,
mist on water.

Lord of the noontime,
of chattering voices, laughter and fun,
sparkling water, everyone.

Lord of the evening,
of quiet breeze, setting sun,
gentle waters, day that's done.

O Lord, our Lord,
How majestic is your name in all the earth.

You have set your glory above the heavens,
And from the lips of children ordained praise.

O Lord, our Lord,
How majestic is your name in all the earth.

Creative God, breath of all life,
Through whom all things,
are created and sustained;
all sons and daughters,
flocks and herds,
all birds of the air,
and fish of the sea.

You walked this earth
as child and Creator.
You touched the soil,
quenched your thirst,
embraced this world,
brought life and light,
love and laughter,
into dark and death-filled lives.

**Creative God, breath of all life,
through whom all things are created and sustained;
We bring to you our sacrifice of a contrite and willing heart**

A few moments of silence



O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
Who orders all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go.

**Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come again and with us ever dwell.**

Reflective Music

Psalm 20:6-8

Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; he answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand.

Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm.

A moment of silence...

During the silence, you may like to read and reflect on the words that have been read, gaze at the candle - or simply enjoy the peace and calm...



May this eternal truth be always on our hearts;
That the God who breathed this world into being;
Placed stars into the heavens;
And designed a butterfly's wing;
Is the God who entrusted his life,
to the care of ordinary people,
became vulnerable that we might know,
how strong is the power of Love.
A mystery so deep it is impossible to grasp.
A mystery so beautiful it is impossible to ignore.

Scripture Reading

Hymn

Intercessions - A Circle Prayer

*Imagine throwing a pebble into the centre of a pond,
and the circles of ripples that move out from the centre.*

We pray firstly for those closest to us, our immediate family and closest friends - for their health, needs, joys and fears...

(Silent prayer)

God of creation, God of Salvation,
Hear the prayers of our hearts.

We pray for our extended family and friends who we might not see each week - for their love and concern, for their wellbeing...

(Silent prayer)

God of creation, God of Salvation,
Hear the prayers of our hearts.

As the ripples reach out toward the land
we pray for those who we only have contact with annually or less
for a blessing this Advent-time...

(Silent prayer)

God of creation, God of Salvation,
Hear the prayers of our hearts.

And as the ripples reach their furthest point we pray for this world and its people - for the needs of this week and the future...

(Silent prayer)

God of creation, God of Salvation,
who speaks to us through thunder and whisper,
who loves us as if there were but one of us to love,
Hear the prayers of our hearts.

The Lord's Prayer

**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.**

Closing Prayer

Lord, thou hast given us thy Word for a light to shine upon our path;
grant us so to meditate on that Word, and to follow its teaching,
that we may find in it the light that shines more and more,
until the perfect day; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Jerome, c 342 – 420



Advent 2 - Light and Darkness

Responses are in **bold print**

Symbols: An outside lantern with small candle.

The lantern is lit

A few moments of silence

'Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.'

John 1:3-5

**In the beginning, Lord, I was alone;
Like the earth before your Spirit moved over the waters.
I was formless and empty
and darkness filled the depths of my heart.**

Then, it was as if you declared 'Let there be Light'
and out of the darkness I began to see hope
like a shimmering ray of love
breaking through the parting clouds
at the conclusion of the night.

**In the beginning, Lord I was alone,
but when I saw you in the light I was no longer afraid.
You held out your hand and though I had a choice,
I had no choice, because to refuse
was to embrace again the darkness.**

In the beginning, Lord I was alone,
now I am again a part of your creation
loved, wanted, needed, family.

**In the light of your presence,
I hold out my heart that others,
might glimpse through it your reflection
and be drawn from the darkness that I once embraced,
into the light of your sunrise, the brightness of your face.**

**Lord Jesus, Son of God, Saviour of the world,
Be the centre of all that we are, and the life that we lead.**

**Lord Jesus, Light in this dark World, illuminate our hearts and minds,
Be the centre of all that we are, and the life that we lead.**

Reflective Music

John 1:6-9

'There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.'

A moment of silence...

During the silence, you may like to read and reflect on the words that have been read, gaze at the lantern - or simply enjoy the peace and calm.



In the lonely places,
the wilderness where we stand forlorn,
windswept and alone...

Your voice calls out;

Prepare a way for the Lord.

In the dark places,
the shadows where we hide our fears
and embrace our tears...

Your voice calls out;

Prepare a way for the Lord.

For the desert places in which we walk,
the streets we roam,
the paths we cross,
guide our feet.

Take us to places where you would go.

Give us words that you would use,
that in this Advent season of promise and preparation
we might point the way with John the Baptist
to the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

A few moments of silence



O come, Thou Day-spring, from on high,
And cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come again and with us ever dwell.

Scripture Reading

Hymn

Intercessions - A Circle Prayer

Circle us, Lord.

Circle us with the light of your presence,
bright within this dark world.

Enable us to be overcomers of fear and temptation.

Enable us to be victors over sin and despair.

Enable us to become that which you would desire.

(Silent prayer)

Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation,

Circle us with the light of your presence.

Circle us, Lord.

Circle our family within the shelter of your outstretched arms.

Protect them in each moment of their daily lives.

Protect them in the decisions that they face.

Protect their homes and relationships.

(Silent prayer)

Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation,

Circle our families with the light of your presence.

Circle us, Lord.

Circle this nation with Advent love and hope.

Create a desire to listen to the Advent message.

Create a willingness to understand and respond.

Create a need to reach out to the Christ Child.

(Silent prayer)

Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation,

Circle our nation with the light of your presence.

Circle us, Lord.

Circle this world with the joy of your Salvation.

Where there is sickness and disease bring healing.

Where there is hunger and despair bring hope.

Where there is torture and oppression bring release.

(Silent prayer)

Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation,

Circle this world with the light of your presence.

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Closing Prayer

Lord, thou hast given us thy Word for a light to shine upon our path;

grant us so to meditate on that Word, and to follow its teaching,

that we may find in it the light that shines more and more,

until the perfect day; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Jerome, c 342 - 420

Advent 3 - Obedience

Responses are in **bold print**

Symbols: A candle and in front of it a stone

A rock is often used as a symbol for Christ. In the wilderness, Moses struck a rock and it poured forth water to refresh the people. A rock can also symbolize obedience to Christ. Saint Peter, whose name means "rock," is sometimes thus represented.

The candle is lit

'You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end. '

Luke 1:31-33

There were safer places,
more comfortable places,
palaces and wealthy places,
yet you chose a daughter of the soil
who would have otherwise lived a good and honest life,
grown and harvested crops,
cooked and washed and cared for others,
and been forgotten,
to be your temporary home,
to be exalted for all time.

**My soul glorifies the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed.**

When does an ordinary life become extraordinary?
A mundane day become revolutionary?
A moment in time change history?

**When God enters in,
forgives sin, and allows us to begin again.
When we repeat those words of Mary,
'May it be to me as you say'**

Reflective Music

Luke 1:35-38

'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month.

For nothing is impossible with God.'

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered.

"May it be to me as you have said."

A moment of silence...

During the silence, you may like to read and reflect on the words that have been read, gaze at the candle - or simply enjoy the peace and calm....



Into the daily cycle of our lives,
when all seems well with us and with the world.
When our yoke is easy,
and the burden light...

You break in.

And scatter our complacency.

Into the daily cycle of our lives,
when we are comfortable and at our ease.
When the fire is lit, but eyes are closed.

You break in

And challenge our dependency.

You break into our daily prayers
humble hearts, lay souls bare....

You break in.

You break in.

You break in when defences are down
with an Angel's shout, or the quietest sound...

You break in.

You break in.

And we change.

And all things change.

When you break in...



O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come again and with us ever dwell.

Scripture Reading

Hymn

Intercessions - A Circle Prayer

Imagine throwing a pebble into the centre of a pond, and the circles of ripples that move out from the centre.

We pray firstly for those closest to us, our immediate family and closest friends - for their health, needs, joys and fears.

(Silent prayer)

God of creation, God of Salvation.

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As the ripples reach out toward the land we pray for those who we only have contact with annually or less - for a blessing this Advent-time

(Silent prayer)

God of creation, God of Salvation.

Hear the prayers of our hearts.

And as the ripples reach their furthest point we pray for this world and its people - for the needs of this week and the future.

(Silent prayer)

God of creation, God of Salvation

Who speaks to us through thunder and whisper

Who loves us as if there were but one of us to love

Hear the prayers of our hearts

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Closing Prayer

May God the Father bless us;
may Christ take care of us;
the Holy Ghost enlighten us all the days of our life.
The Lord be our defender and keeper of body and soul,
both now and for ever, to the ages of ages.
Amen.

Æthelwold c 908-984



Advent 4 - Birth and Re-Birth

Responses are in **bold print**

Symbols: A candle and in front of this a rose flower.

The rose, usually shown in stylized form, has been a common Christian symbol since the 1200's. It may be used to represent the Messianic promise, the nativity of Christ, the Virgin Mary (her rose is white for purity), or martyrdom (a red rose). It is used often in Gothic architecture and many churches and Cathedrals have a 'Rose Window'.

The candle is lit

A few moments of silence

'While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.'

Luke 2:6,7

Beneath the surface of your story is an inescapable fact;
You entered this world as vulnerable as any one of us,
in order to nail that vulnerability to the cross.

Our fears, our insecurities and our sins,
all that can separate us from God
exchanged by your Grace for Love.

We cannot comprehend the reasoning
only marvel that Salvation comes to us
through a baby born in a stable,
who reaches out to a world in need.

Reflective Music

John 3:5-8

'Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.'

A moment of silence...

During the silence, you may like to read and reflect on the words that have been read, gaze at the candle - or simply enjoy the peace and calm.



If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins,
O Lord, who could stand?

But with you there is forgiveness;
Therefore you are feared.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
And in his word I put my hope.

There is a transformation that takes place
within the warmth of your embrace.

That certain knowledge
that you are refuge, shelter,
fortress and stronghold
against which no army can succeed.

That you are Brother, Sister, Mother, Father,
the love that knows no bounds.

That you are God,
and I am lost outside of your arms.

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
And renew a faithful spirit within me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
And an willing spirit to sustain me.

O Lord, open our lips,
And our mouths will forever declare your praise.



O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come again and with us ever dwell.

Scripture Reading

Hymn

Intercessions - A Circle Prayer

Circle us, Lord.

Circle us with the light of your presence, bright within this dark word.

Enable us to be overcomers of fear and temptation.

Enable us to be victors over sin and despair.

Enable us to become that which you would desire...

(Silent prayer)

Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation,

Circle us with the light of your presence.

Circle us, Lord.

Circle our family within the shelter of your outstretched arms.

Protect them in each moment of their daily lives.

Protect them in the decisions that they face.

Protect their homes and relationships...

(Silent prayer)

Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation,

Circle our families with the light of your presence.

Circle us, Lord.

Circle this nation with Advent love and hope.

Create a desire to listen to the Advent message.

Create a willingness to understand and respond.

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(Silent prayer)

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Circle our nation with the light of your presence.

Circle us, Lord.

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Where there is hunger and despair bring hope.

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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.

Closing Prayer

May God the Father bless us;

may Christ take care of us;

the Holy Ghost enlighten us all the days of our life.

The Lord be our defender and keeper of body and soul,

both now and for ever, to the ages of ages.

Amen.

Æthelwold c 908-984

The Word...

It happened that an old man and an old women saw a word one day.
A word that looked familiar,
a word they thought they had seen many times before.
An insignificant word and one of many like it
that had passed in front of their eyes that day

Not a word to write home about.
Not even a particularly well-presented word
and probably not a word you'd find in better circles.
Just a rather scruffy word wrapped up in a small cloth parcel.

But as they looked a curious thing happened,
they knew that this was the word
that they had been waiting for all these years.
They know that this was the word
that might fill the world with new talk.
They knew that this was the word
that would make sense of all words.
They didn't know how they knew.. they just knew!

After they had managed
to catch their breath from surprise,
the old women rushed out to tell anyone
who cared to listen about the word she had seen.
She sang a song about how this word
would change everything.
The old man held the word
in his tired but trembling hands
and he also sang a song from the top of his heart.

The word was brought to the temple
by Mary and Joseph.
The old women was Anna -
the prophetess in the temple.
The old man was Simeon whose song we now say together....

A Simple Compline....

Nunc Dimitis

**Lord now you let your servant go in peace:
your word has been fulfilled.**

**My own eyes have seen the salvation:
which you have prepared in the sight of every people;
a light to reveal you to the nations:
and the glory of your people Israel.**

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now:
and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

Collect

Stir up your power, O God, and come among us.
Heal our wounds, calm our fears and give us peace;
through Jesus our Redeemer.

Amen.

Blessing

Restore us again, O God of hosts;
show us the light of your countenance
and we shall be saved.
Bless and keep us, this night and always.

Amen.