

The Order of Service for Home Worship

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Hymn 1: Lo, he comes with clouds descending

1. Lo, he comes with clouds descending,
Once for mortal sinners slain;
Thousand thousand saints attending
Swell the triumph of his train.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Christ appears on earth to reign.
2. Ev'ry eye shall now behold him
Robed in dreadful majesty;
We who set at naught and sold him,
Pierced and nailed him to the tree,
Deeply wailing, deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
Shall the true Messiah see.
3. Those dear tokens of his passion
Still his dazzling body bears,
Cause of endless exultation
To his ransomed worshippers:
With what rapture, with what rapture, with what rapture
Gaze we on those glorious scars!
4. Yea, amen, let all adore thee,
High on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory,
Claim the Kingdom for thine own.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou shalt reign, and thou alone.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Father of glory, holy and eternal, look upon us now in power and mercy. May your strength overcome our weakness, your radiance transform our blindness, and your Spirit draw us to that love shown and offered to us by your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

As we come into the presence of our heavenly Father let us seek his forgiveness of our sins that we may know his peace is our hearts.

Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations into your kingdom of peace.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you come in word and sacrament to strengthen us in holiness.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you will come in glory to judge the living and the dead.

Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

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

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

2. 1-5

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 122

Response: I was glad when they said, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord'.

I was glad when they said to me,
'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'
Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem. (R)

Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together.
To it the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, as was decreed for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the Lord.
For there the thrones for judgement were set up,
the thrones of the house of David. (R)

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
'May they prosper who love you.
Peace be within your walls,
and security within your towers.' (R)

For the sake of my relatives and friends
I will say, 'Peace be within you.
' For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,
I will seek your good. (R)

A reading from Paul's letter to the Romans

13. 11-14

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.
This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

"Therefore, you also must be ready," says the Lord, "for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. Matthew.

24. 36-44

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said, 'But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven,

nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. 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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Meditation; *Today we celebrate Advent Sunday at the beginning of a new Church's year. In our lectionary we enter year A, the year of Matthew and most of our Gospel readings each week will come from the first Gospel. During Advent we reflect upon the relationship between God and his people from the very beginning. Today we think of the patriarchs, the first to hear the call of God and the first to respond to his call. We think of Abraham, Jacob and Moses. These people heard the call of God and it completely changed their lives. Abraham left his tribal homelands and journeyed to an unknown land trusting only in God's promises to bring him to a new land where his family would grow and prosper. Moses, raised as a Prince in the court of Pharaoh, left his life of privilege to lead his people into the unknown of the wilderness again trusting only in God's promises that he would lead them to the Promised Land. It was to these Old Testament patriarchs that God first revealed his presence and the presence of his Kingdom to those he called to be his people. The Kingdom of God, first revealed to the Patriarchs, was revealed most fully to the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus Christ the Messiah. Throughout Advent we celebrate the Kingdom of Christ, as we do every Sunday, and we give thanks that he has called us to live as citizens of his Kingdom, that he has brought us into fellowship with him and with one another into one great family, the family of God, the Communion of Saints. As we look back today to the time of the Patriarchs and as we celebrate the Kingdom of Christ we look forward to the coming of the Kingdom in all its fullness, all its glory. We take to heart the petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy Kingdom Come," which is the call, the prayer, of Advent. In our Gospel reading today Jesus warns us that like the people of Noah's time did not know that the time of the flood, we do not know the time when the Lord will come to us. Like Noah, who prepared for the flood by building the ark, Jesus calls on us to live in a state of constant preparedness, always ready to*

receive him when he comes to us. As we face an uncertain future we can learn much from the Patriarchs we celebrate today. Like them we are called to travel forward into the unknown trusting only in God's promise to us that he will lead us to the promised land of heaven, a land of milk and honey, an eternal home which will not disappoint. Like those who have gone before us, the journey will not always be easy and so we make St. Paul's prayer for the Romans be our prayer this advent, "may we, this Advent, lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light;"

Intercessions:

In the power of the Holy Spirit and in union with Christ let us bring our prayers for the Church and for the world to our heavenly Father.

We pray for the Church throughout the world, for the leaders of the Church among them Mary our Bishop. We pray for the clergy and people of our diocese and for our own parish; Open our eyes for signs of your will and the presence of his kingdom.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the people of the world, for the victims of violence and oppression, for all suffering the effects of natural disaster and for those suffering from famine or drought; May all nations be governed with justice that all may live in peace.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our own community, for our families, friends and neighbours. We give thanks for all who serve the needs of the vulnerable; Fill us with love for each other and keep us faithful to the ways of Christ.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are in need, for those who are sick, for those who are bereaved, for the lonely and isolated and for all in any kind of need. We hold in our hearts before God those known to us who are in need at this time and all whose names are recorded in our parish intercession books; may they be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and consoled with the love of Christ.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who have died. We remember before God our own departed loved ones and we pray for the recently departed and those whose anniversary of death falls at this time. May they share the eternal glory of heaven in the company of all the saints.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We bring all our prayers to our heavenly Father as we pray together:

**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 compassion of our God the dawn from heaven will break upon us, to shine on those who live in darkness, under the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace. The peace of the Lord be with you and with all those whom you love.

And also with you.

Let us pray:

God, our deliverer, awaken our hearts to prepare the way for the advent of your Son; that, with minds purified by the grace of his coming, we may serve you faithfully all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Blessing:

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Christ the sun of righteousness shine on you and scatter the darkness from before you and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Hymn 2: O come, O Come Emmanuel.

- 1. 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 to thee, O Israel.**
- 2. O come, thou rod of Jesse free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**
- 3. O come, thou day spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**
- 4. 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 to thee, O Israel.**
- 5. O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
Who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient time didst give the Law,
In cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**