

Advent Liturgy 2018

1st Sunday in Advent

Leader 1: As we prepare our hearts for worship, we look for the light

Response: **Come, Lord Jesus**

Leader 1: As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, we wait for the light

Response: **Come, Lord Jesus**

Leader 2: Each week in Advent we will look at the preparation for Christmas through the eyes of a different character in the story. There may be something of that character in each of us. On this, the first Sunday in Advent, we think of Elizabeth.

Leader 1: I had always hoped for a child, but as I grew older, had come to believe that this was not to be. So, when I realised that I was pregnant, my heart was full of thanks to God.

This was a time of great wonder. When my relative Mary came to visit, I could again feel the Spirit of God at work, just as surely as I felt the child leap inside me. 'Blessed are you among women', I told her, 'and blessed is the fruit of your womb.'

Why did this happen to me? Why did the mother of my Lord come to visit me?

And what of my child – what of John? What will he become? What does God have in store for him?

A candle is lit

My prayer is for those who search for the light.

Leader 2: This is Elizabeth's prayer

Response: **This is our prayer. Amen.**

2nd Sunday in Advent

Leader 1: As we prepare our hearts for worship, we look for the light

Response: **Come, Lord Jesus**

Leader 1: As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, we wait for the light

Response: **Come, Lord Jesus**

Leader 2: Each week in Advent we will look at the preparation for Christmas through the eyes of a different character in the story. There may be something of that character in each of us. On this, the second Sunday in Advent, we think of Joseph.

Leader 1: Mary and I were engaged to be married but we weren't living together. Words failed me when she said she had something to tell me and that she was pregnant. Well I knew the baby couldn't be mine. And then she tells me that it was the work of the Holy Spirit. Have you ever heard anything like it?

But I love Mary and I couldn't see her publicly disgraced. I knew our wedding couldn't go ahead, so I thought I'd break up the relationship quietly.

However, I'd only just reached that decision after much heart searching and had fallen asleep exhausted, when I had a dream like no dream I'd had before.

An angel of the Lord appeared to me and said 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'

I could hardly believe what was happening and yet this agreed with what Mary had told me. What's more I recall what the prophet Isaiah had said:

'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel.'

Well, when I woke up I knew that I had to act on what I had been told, even though I was sure that my life would never be the same again.

A candle is lit

My prayer is for those who hope for the light.

Leader 2: This is Joseph's prayer

Response: **This is our prayer. Amen.**

3rd Sunday in Advent

Leader 1: As we prepare our hearts for worship, we look for the light

Response: **Come, Lord Jesus**

Leader 1: As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, we wait for the light

Response: **Come, Lord Jesus**

Leader 2: Each week in Advent we will look at the preparation for Christmas through the eyes of a different character in the story. There may be something of that character in each of us. On this, the third Sunday in Advent, we think of Mary.

Leader 1: 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,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me—
holy is his name.
His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.
He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors.

A candle is lit

My prayer is for those who find joy in the light.

Leader 2: This is Mary's prayer

Response: **This is our prayer. Amen.**

4th Sunday in Advent

Leader 1: As we prepare our hearts for worship, we look for the light

Response: **Come, Lord Jesus**

Leader 1: As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, we wait for the light

Response: **Come, Lord Jesus**

Leader 2: Each week in Advent we will look at the preparation for Christmas through the eyes of a different character in the story. There may be something of that character in each of us. On this, the fourth Sunday in Advent, we think of Herod.

Leader 1: There is comfort to be found in darkness. I remember when those foreigners came asking about the birth of the Messiah – I was thankful they arrived at night. Who knows what people would have said if they had seen these characters with their strange, eastern clothes. I made sure that they left at night too. There's no point in allowing rumours to get going.

I could have sent them home again, of course. Or simply made them disappear – they wouldn't have been the first. But if there's danger on its way, I've always thought it best to see it coming.

And there's nothing quite so dangerous as talk of a Messiah from Bethlehem.

A candle is lit

My prayer is for those who feel threatened by the light.

Leader 2: This is Herod's prayer

Response: **This is our prayer. Amen.**

Christmas Day

Leader 1: As we prepare our hearts for worship this Christmas day, we look for the light

Response: **Come, Lord Jesus**

Leader 1: As we prepare our hearts for the Kingdom of God, we wait for the light

Response: **Come, Lord Jesus**

Leader 2: Each week in Advent we have looked at the preparation for Christmas through the eyes of a different character in the story. We may have found something of each character within us. Today, on Christmas day, we think of Jesus.

Leader 1: I am born for Elizabeth and for those who search for the light

I am born for Joseph and for those who hope in the light

I am born for Mary and for those who find joy in the light

I am born for Herod and for those who feel threatened by the light

A candle is lit

My prayer is for those who live in darkness and desire to become children of the light.

Leader 2: This is Jesus' prayer

Response: **This is our prayer. Amen.**