

PRAYERS FOR ADVENT

2023



An Invitation from Lexham Press

Adapted from

*Catechism: A Guide to the Ten Commandments,
the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer*

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Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls;
all your breakers and your waves have gone over me.
By day the Lord commands his steadfast love,
and at night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.

Psalm 42:7-8

AN ORDER OF PRAYER

With Confession and Forgiveness

THIS SMALL PAMPHLET OF PRAYER and Bible-reading is an invitation to Advent. The four weeks of Advent are a time to ponder and pray the life of Jesus—in particular, “he was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.”

In his conception and birth, Jesus reveals God’s power. God’s power is not like human power—the violence of soldiers and the distortion of words. God’s power is a word of promise spoken to a virgin: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ... For nothing will be impossible with God” (Luke 1:35, 37). God’s power is the word made flesh: a dear, helpless baby in a feed box for cattle. “Out of the mouth of babes and infants you have ordained strength, because of your enemies, that you might still the enemy and the avenger” (Psalm 8:2). This baby in a feed box is the God put to death on a cross and risen from the dead for us and for our salvation. This is the power of God.

Advent is a time to receive God’s power by receiving his word, just like the Virgin Mary. “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). His powerful word lightens the darkness of our hearts by his gracious visitation, rescues us from our sins, and gives us life everlasting. “LORD, you have been gracious to your land” (Psalm 85:1).

WHEN WE’VE RUN OUT OF WORDS—whether because of sorrow or happiness—God gives us his own words, because God’s word interprets us, our lives, our worries, and our joys. “The Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words” (Rom 8:26). And so, since ancient times, Christian worship has been defined as receiving God’s word and speaking God’s word back to him. This order and logic undergirds the Daily Office: the twin services of Morning and Evening Prayer (also called Matins and Vespers).

This Order of Prayer is a simplified version of the Daily Office. The English version of the Daily Office is mediated through the Book of Common Prayer. The sixteenth-century English Reformer Thomas Cranmer streamlined the eight prayer offices of the medieval church into two and rendered them in common English for common Christians.¹ Thanks

1. The Use of Sarum—the order of services at the Salisbury Cathedral—is surprisingly ecumenical. This Roman Catholic rite structures Anglican rites, and it is approved for use among the Eastern Orthodox. When American Lutherans began to worship in English, they blended elements of Sarum from the Book of Common Prayer with a slightly different continental tradition (for example, compare the collects, or prayers, of the day during the season of Advent).

to Cranmer, all are now welcome to enjoy the hallowed tradition of praying psalms and verses.

This simplified Order of Prayer shows the basic structure and logic of the Daily Office. Once you're used to this Order, you should be comfortable with any edition of the Book of Common Prayer (and there are many!) or any of the various traditional prayer offices. (If you want to explore the tradition of the Daily Office, see *Catechism: A Guide to the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer*, pages xxvii–xxxi).

This order of prayer has five parts: (1) INVOCATION, (2) CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS, (3) THE SERVICE OF THE WORD, (4) PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING, and (5) BENEDICTION. These five parts invite us into God's word, which brings us God present with all his gifts of forgiveness, salvation, and life, and they send us out into the world with words of faith, hope, and love.

Prayer begins with the INVOCATION, the speaking of God's name, because God promises to be present in his name and word.

In CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS, we tell the truth: we have fallen short of God's law by sinning against him and our neighbors; and we hear God's promise of forgiveness and the declaration of forgiveness.

In THE SERVICE OF THE WORD, we hear God's word, which is for our instruction, comfort, and hope. God's word calls us to worship, instructs us, comforts us, and gives us hope; we respond in thanksgiving for God's word with God's word.

In PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING, we ask our merciful God for his mercy; we confess who he is and what he has done and continues to do, and we pray as he taught us.

In the BENEDICTION, we praise and thank God, blessing those present with God's name.

This order of prayer can be prayed individually; just read all the text as if you were reading a book. It can also be used by a group—with a leader speaking the plain text, and the group responding with the words in bold. The psalms and songs can be read in unison or in response—with a leader reading up to the asterisk and the group reading the line after the asterisk.



My heart overflows with a noble song;
I will sing my words to the King;
my tongue is the pen
of a ready writer.

Psalm 45:1

An Order of Prayer



INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 124:8

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Psalm 32:5

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

The Confession of Sin

Let us confess our sins to God:

Most merciful God,
**we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your holy Name.
Amen.**

The Forgiveness of Sin

Almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ,
strengthen us in all goodness,
and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.
Amen.

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

Psalm of Praise

O LORD our Governor, how excellent is your Name in all the world; *
 you have set your glory above the heavens!
 Out of the mouth of babes and infants you have ordained strength,
 because of your enemies, *
 that you might still the enemy and the avenger.
 When I consider your heavens, even the works of your fingers, *
 the moon and the stars, which you have ordained,
 What is man, that you are mindful of him, *
 the son of man, that you visit him?
 You made him little lower than the angels, *
 to crown him with glory and honor.
 You made him to have dominion over the works of your hands,*
 and you have put all things in subjection under his feet:
 All sheep and oxen, *
 even the beasts of the field,
 The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, *
 and whatsoever walks through the paths of the seas.
 O LORD our Governor, *
 how excellent is your Name in all the world! *Psalm 8*

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
 as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Prayer for Hearing the Word

Blessed Lord, you have caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of your holy word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Reading of the Word

Here at least one Bible passage is read; see the Bible-reading plan on pp. 14–16.

After a psalm:

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

After other readings:

The word of the Lord:

Thanks be to God!

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Zechariah's Song, *or* The Benedictus

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; *
 he has come to his people and set them free.
 He has raised up for us a mighty Savior, *
 born of the house of his servant David.
 Through his holy prophets he promised of old *
 that he would save us from our enemies,
 from the hands of all who hate us.
 He promised to show mercy to our fathers *
 and to remember his holy covenant.
 This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham: *
 to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
 free to worship him without fear, *
 holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.
 You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High; *
 for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
 to give his people knowledge of salvation *
 by the forgiveness of their sins.
 In the tender compassion of our God *
 the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
 to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, *
 and to guide our feet into the way of peace. *Luke 1:68–79*

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

The Apostles' Creed

God has made us his people through our baptism into Christ.
Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**I believe in God the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord:
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

**hell: Some English versions of the Apostles' Creed translate this line, "He descended to the dead."*

***catholic church: The phrase "catholic church" means all Christians throughout time and space who confess the Christian faith.*

PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Matthew 9:27; Psalm 123:3

The Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom,
and teach us to pray:

Luke 24:42; Luke 11:1

**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 and the power
and the glory forever and ever.**

Matthew 6:9–13

Amen.

The Petitions

O LORD, show us your steadfast love,
and grant us your salvation.

Psalm 85:7

Let your priests be clothed with righteousness,
and let your saints shout for joy.

Psalm 132:9

O LORD, save your people and bless your heritage!
Be their shepherd and carry them forever.

Psalm 28:9

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

Psalm 51:10

Hear my prayer, O LORD;
let my cry come to you!

Psalm 102:1

Prayers of the Heart

*God is our loving Father.
He wants to hear our questions, fears, and joys.
Here we offer prayers and thanksgivings
for others and ourselves.*

After each prayer:

Thy will be done:

on earth as it is in heaven.

PRAYER FOR ADVENT

One person or all in unison may pray.

Almighty God, give us grace that we may 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 on the last day, when he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to life everlasting; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

BENEDICTION

Let us bless the LORD.

Psalm 103:1

Thanks be to God.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

2 Corinthians 13:14

Amen.



You crown the year with your bounty.

Psalm 65:11

DAILY BIBLE- READING PLAN

For Advent and Christmas

THIS DAILY BIBLE-READING PLAN (or lectionary) is ordered around the church year. The church measures its days and seasons by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Because the church year walks through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, the church year has two center points: Jesus' birth (Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany) and Jesus' death and resurrection (Lent, Easter, and Pentecost). Just as the sun orders our ordinary calendar, Jesus is the sun of the Christian calendar.

Included here is the daily reading plan for Advent and Christmas. Each day has two readings—often, but not always, an Old Testament and a New Testament reading. You can read them together. You could read just one. You could read one in the morning and one in the evening. You could also read them along with the 30-day Psalter (p. 15), in which case you would begin with the psalm readings.

Jesus—in his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension—absorbs our days and interprets them according to his

life, forgiveness, and salvation. Each day and season focuses on part of the second article of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord." But every day is filled with all of Christ: "you crown the year with your bounty" (Ps 65:11).



*Advent begins the first Sunday after Thanksgiving
(traditionally, the Sunday nearest November 30, the Feast of St. Andrew).*

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

DAY	1ST READING	2ND READING
<i>Sunday</i>	Jeremiah 33:14–18	Matthew 21:1–9
<i>Monday</i>	Genesis 3:1–24	Matthew 11:25–30
<i>Tuesday</i>	Genesis 9:1–19	Acts 3:22–26
<i>Wednesday</i>	Genesis 22:1–19	Colossians 1:15–29
<i>Thursday</i>	Genesis 49:1–28	Hebrews 1:1–4
<i>Friday</i>	Numbers 24:14–25	Hebrews 2:1–4
<i>Saturday</i>	Deuteronomy 18:15–19	Ephesians 3:1–12

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

DAY	1ST READING	2ND READING
<i>Sunday</i>	Micah 4:1–7	Luke 21:25–36
<i>Monday</i>	1 Chronicles 17:1–27	Acts 17:16–34
<i>Tuesday</i>	2 Chronicles 7:11–22	1 John 4:9–16
<i>Wednesday</i>	Isaiah 11:1–10	Colossians 1:1–18
<i>Thursday</i>	Jeremiah 23:2–8	Philippians 2:12–18
<i>Friday</i>	Jeremiah 30:1–22	Philippians 3:12–16
<i>Saturday</i>	Jeremiah 33:14–26	Colossians 3:1–11

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

DAY	1ST READING	2ND READING
<i>Sunday</i>	Malachi 3:1-6	Matthew 11:2-10
<i>Monday</i>	Isaiah 2:1-5	Hebrews 10:35-39
<i>Tuesday</i>	Isaiah 24:21-25:5	Luke 21:5-24
<i>Wednesday</i>	Isaiah 25:6-10	Luke 12:35-39
<i>Thursday</i>	Isaiah 26:1-21	James 5:7-11
<i>Friday</i>	Isaiah 51:1-16	Luke 1:1-25
<i>Saturday</i>	Isaiah 52:1-12	Luke 1:26-38

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

DAY	1ST READING	2ND READING
<i>Sunday</i>	Isaiah 40:1-8	John 1:19-28
<i>Monday</i>	Isaiah 40:9-11	Matthew 1:18-25
<i>Tuesday</i>	Malachi 3:1-7	Luke 1:39-45
<i>Wednesday</i>	Malachi 4:1-6	Luke 1:46-56
<i>Thursday</i>	Isaiah 28:14-19	Luke 1:57-66
<i>Friday</i>	Isaiah 7:1-17	Luke 1:67-80
<i>Saturday</i>	Micah 5:1-5	Matthew 1:1-17

CHRISTMAS

DAY	1ST READING	2ND READING
<i>Christmas Day</i>	Isaiah 9:2-7	Luke 2:1-14
<i>December 26</i>	Micah 5:2-4	Luke 2:15-20
<i>December 27</i>	Isaiah 32:1-8	John 1:15-18
<i>December 28</i>	Isaiah 46:3-13	Luke 2:15-20
<i>December 29</i>	Isaiah 49:1-13	Luke 2:22-24
<i>December 30</i>	Isaiah 55:1-13	Luke 2:25-32
<i>December 31</i>	Isaiah 42:1-9	Matthew 2:13-15
<i>January 1</i>	Isaiah 64:1-12	Luke 4:16-21
<i>January 2</i>	Isaiah 61:1-11	Matthew 2:16-18
<i>January 3</i>	Micah 4:1-8	Matthew 2:19-23
<i>January 4</i>	Isaiah 56:1-8	Matthew 3:1-12
<i>January 5</i>	Isaiah 12:1-6	Luke 3:1-9
<i>Epiphany (January 6)</i>	Isaiah 49:1-7	Matthew 2:1-12

30-DAY PSALTER

DAY	MORNING	EVENING
1	1-5	6-8
2	9-11	12-14
3	15-17	18
4	19-21	22-23
5	24-26	27-29
6	30-31	32-34
7	35-36	37
8	38-40	41-43
9	44-46	47-49
10	50-52	53-55
11	56-58	59-61
12	62-64	65-67
13	68	69-70
14	71-72	73-74
15	75-77	78
16	79-81	82-85
17	86-88	89
18	90-92	93-94
19	95-97	98-101
20	102-103	104
21	105	106
22	107	108-109
23	110-113	114-115
24	116-118	119:1-32
25	119:33-72	119:73-104
26	119:105-144	119:145-176
27	120-125	126-131
28	132-135	136-138
29	139-140	141-143
30	144-146	147-150



With you is the fountain of life;
in your light do we see light.

Psalm 36:9



**THE COLLECTED
CHRISTIAN ESSENTIALS**

CATECHISM

A Guide to
the Ten Commandments,
the Apostles' Creed,
and the Lord's Prayer

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AND WESLEY HILL

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