



**Morning Prayer**  
**First Sunday of Advent**  
**29<sup>th</sup> November 2020**



# An Order for Morning Prayer on Sunday

29 November 2020

## First Sunday of Advent



### Preparation

Grace, mercy and peace  
from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with you  
**and also with you.**

This is the day that the Lord has made.  
**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

We have come together in the name of Christ  
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,  
to hear and receive God's holy word,  
to pray for the needs of the world,  
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,  
that by the power of the Holy Spirit  
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

### Prayers of Penitence

When the Lord comes,  
he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,  
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.  
Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

**Lord God,  
we have sinned against you;  
we have done evil in your sight.  
We are sorry and repent.  
Have mercy on us according to your love.  
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.**

**Renew a right spirit within us  
and restore to us the joy of your salvation;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May the Father of all mercies  
cleanse us from our sins,  
and restore us in his image  
to the praise and glory of his name,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Blessed is the Lord,  
**for he has heard the voice of our prayer;**

Therefore shall our hearts dance for joy  
**and in our song will we praise our God.**

Blessed are you, Lord our God,  
creator and redeemer of all;  
to you be glory and praise for ever.  
From the waters of chaos you drew forth the world.  
and in your great love fashioned us in your image.  
Now, through the deep waters of death,  
you have brought your people to new birth  
by raising your Son to life in triumph.  
May Christ your light ever dawn in our hearts  
as we offer you our sacrifice of thanks and praise.  
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:  
**Blessed be God for ever.**

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;  
let us pray with one heart and mind.

*Silence is kept.*

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,  
so may the light of your presence, O God,  
set our hearts on fire with love for you;  
now and for ever.

**Amen.**

# **† The Word of God**

## **Psalmody**

*Psalm 80. 1-8, 18-20*

- 1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
you that led Joseph like a flock;
- 2 Shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim,  
before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.
- 3 Stir up your mighty strength  
and come to our salvation.
- 4 Turn us again, O God;  
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
- 5 O Lord God of hosts,  
how long will you be angry at your people's prayer?
- 6 You feed them with the bread of tears;  
you give them abundance of tears to drink.
- 7 You have made us the derision of our neighbours,  
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.
- 8 Turn us again, O God of hosts;  
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
- 18 Let your hand be upon the man at your right hand,  
the son of man you made so strong for yourself.
- 19 And so will we not go back from you;  
give us life, and we shall call upon your name.
- 20 Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts;  
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now:  
and shall be for ever. Amen.

## First Reading

Isaiah 64.1-9

1 O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,  
so that the mountains would quake at your presence –  
2 as when fire kindles brushwood  
and the fire causes water to boil –  
to make your name known to your adversaries,  
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!  
3 When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,  
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.  
4 From ages past no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you,  
who works for those who wait for him.  
5 You meet those who gladly do right,  
those who remember you in your ways.  
But you were angry, and we sinned;  
because you hid yourself we transgressed.  
6 We have all become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.  
We all fade like a leaf,  
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.  
7 There is no one who calls on your name,  
or attempts to take hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us,  
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.  
8 Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.  
9 Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,  
and do not remember iniquity for ever.  
Now consider, we are all your people.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The reading may be followed by a time of silence.*

# Old Testament Canticle

## A Song of the Wilderness

*Isaiah 35.1, 2b-4a, 4c-6,10*

- 1 The wilderness and the dry land shall rejoice,  
the desert shall blossom and burst into song.
- 2 They shall see the glory of the Lord,  
the majesty of our God.
- 3 Strengthen the weary hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.
- 4 Say to the anxious, 'Be strong, fear not,  
your God is coming with judgement,  
coming with judgement to save you.'
- 5 Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
- 6 Then shall the lame leap like a hart,  
and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy.
- 7 For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;
- 8 The ransomed of the Lord shall return with singing,  
with everlasting joy upon their heads.
- 9 Joy and gladness shall be theirs,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.

## Second Reading

Mark 13.24-37

Jesus said to his disciples: <sup>24</sup>In those days, after that suffering,  
the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light,

<sup>25</sup>and the stars will be falling from heaven,

and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

<sup>26</sup>Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in clouds” with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup>Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

<sup>28</sup>From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.

<sup>29</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>30</sup>Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. <sup>31</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>32</sup>But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup>Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup>It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. <sup>35</sup>Therefore, keep awake – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, <sup>36</sup>or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. <sup>37</sup>And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.’

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The reading may be followed by a time of silence.*

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead

**And Christ shall give you light.**

You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God.

**Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.**

Set your minds on things that are above,

not on things that are on the earth.

**And Christ shall give you light.**

When Christ our life appears you will appear with him in glory.

**Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,**

**and Christ shall give you light.**

## **Gospel Canticle**

### **Benedictus**

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,  
who has come to his people and set them free.
- 2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,  
born of the house of his servant David.
- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old  
to save us from our enemies,  
from the hands of all that hate us,
- 4 To show mercy to our ancestors,  
and to remember his holy covenant.
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:  
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
- 6 Free to worship him without fear,  
holy and righteous in his sight  
all the days of our life.
- 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
- 8 To give his people knowledge of salvation  
by the forgiveness of all their sins.

- 9 In the tender compassion of our God  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- 10 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 to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.

**Sermon** (There is a reflection at the end of this booklet)

## **The Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe 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 to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come 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.**



## Prayers

In joyful expectation of his coming to our aid we pray to Jesus.

Come to your Church as Lord and judge.

We pray for ...

Help us to live in the light of your coming  
and give us a longing for your kingdom.

Maranatha:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to your world as King of the nations.

We pray for ...

Before you rulers will stand in silence.

Maranatha:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to the suffering as Saviour and comforter.

We pray for ...

Break into our lives, where we struggle with sickness and distress,  
and set us free to serve you for ever.

Maranatha:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to us as shepherd and guardian of our souls.

We remember ...

Give us with all the faithful departed  
a share in your victory over evil and death.

Maranatha:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come from heaven, Lord Jesus, with power and great glory.

Lift us up to meet you,

that with St Anne, St Andrew, St Edmund and all your saints and  
angels

we may live and reign with you in your new creation.

Maranatha:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay;  
give new courage to your people,  
who trust in your love.

By your coming, raise us to share in the joy of your kingdom  
on earth as in heaven,  
where you live and reign with the Father and the Spirit,  
one God for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

Merciful Father,  
**accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

**Amen.**

*The Collect is said.*

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,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

*The Lord's Prayer is said*

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**



## **The Conclusion**

### **The Blessing**

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,  
and keep us in eternal life.  
**Amen.**

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## First Sunday of Advent

by Bridget Nichols

ADVENT, it is sometimes said, is a penitential season with subtle shadings of joy, and the frameworks that have given themes to its Sundays both exploit the richly dramatic interweaving of these two strands. Current provisions take us from the Patriarchs and Prophets to John the Baptist and Mary, the exemplary human beings with whom God keeps faith until he appears as the promised Messiah in Jesus. An older scheme confronted the Second Coming more directly, taking worshippers through the four last things: death, judgement, heaven, and hell.

Whatever the balance in our Christmas preparations between joy and terror, the message of Advent is consistent: "Keep watch. . . . Keep awake." The warning to be vigilant comes three times in quick succession in Mark's description of Jesus's bracing his disciples for the coming of the Son of Man (13.24-end). There is no clue to the timing: the only certainty is that, before this event takes place, the Temple that Peter, James, John, and Andrew (13.3) have just been admiring will be destroyed, and that suffering, atrocities, and persecution will follow.

It cannot be a literary accident that, in the very next chapter, Peter, James, and John will be found sleeping three times in Gethsemane, when Jesus has been depending on them to keep watch with him as he wrestles with the prospect of death. Either they have failed to see imminent danger in their preoccupation with events further ahead, or sheer emotional exhaustion has overcome them.

No wonder Jesus has to resort to the obvious when he wakes them the third time with the words "The hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners" (14.41). Did they spend the rest of their lives wishing that they could have had that hour back to keep awake and keep faith with Jesus? All of them would go on to keep faith, three of them (including Andrew,

whose feast day is transferred to 1 December this year) meeting violent deaths. But this lost opportunity must have left its mark.

Having another chance is not, however, always the answer - or, at least, not the whole answer. The third part of the prophecy of Isaiah dramatises a dialogue between God and the people whose parents and grandparents may have seen the First Temple destroyed before they were taken into exile (63.1-64.11). Back in their own country, they long for God's return in demonstrations of power to be present and active among them, but need to learn that their own sin has fractured the relationship.

God has hidden his face, withdrawing the gaze of approval (Genesis 1.31) which guarantees life itself (Psalm 104.29). What is left to hope for? Only the wager that God remains constant, even when God's creatures do not; that the potter will not disown the clay he has moulded, and may even be prepared to start again, remoulding it in a purer and more beautiful form (64.8).

The prophet yearns for the restoration of a rhythm of faithfulness: God's call, human response; God's strengthening presence through periods of waiting; human faithfulness in holding to the promise of God's presence. This is what Paul wants the Corinthian Church to understand. No one knows when "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" will come, but it will come. They are to live now as those called into his fellowship, while keeping awake to meet him when he appears.

The collect, one of Cranmer's own compositions (modernised), responding to the Advent Sunday Epistle in the Prayer Book lectionary (Romans 13.8-14), urges us also to practise "in the time of this mortal life" for the time when Christ will "come in his glorious majesty to judge the living and dead".

Our information about this coming is just as mysterious as that available to the disciples and the Corinthian Church. In the time between, we must learn to be watching people, watching with those driven from their homelands by war and invasion, the

families of hostages, the medical teams and volunteers keeping vigil with patients with the Ebola virus, and the ordinary everyday sufferers around us. Advent teaches us the accents of waiting - anguish and self-examination often, but always hope and joy in a faithful God.