

ALL SAINTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



by Jim Janknegt, "Downtown Nativity"

SEASON OF ADVENT

Daily Worship Guide 2025

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*"Behold, this is our God: we have waited for him,
that he might save us." - Isaiah 25:9*

In U2's famous song "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For," Bono belts out lyrics in a litany of various life experiences, sounding like a celebrant of human effort and achievement. That is until the song's title is repeatedly sung, weaving in and out of Bono's litany and giving it an unmistakably sober tone. "I still haven't found what I'm looking for..." All of us can sing along, can't we? This U2 song is everyone's song and every person's story. Why? Because we are searching people – a people of insatiable seeking and inevitable waiting. But who or what are we looking and waiting for? That is the question of Advent.

The word advent means "coming" or "arrival" and the Church uses it as the title for the first season of the Christian Year – the six annual periods of time that focus the Church's worship and formation upon different aspects of Jesus' life. There is much theology and purpose behind beginning the Christian year with an emphasis on waiting. We do so, as Christians, because we're convinced that our world is not the way it's supposed to be (We aren't the way we're supposed to be!) and yet Christ's gospel insists to us that someday all things will be made new. Someday, Jesus will come again and set our world and hearts perfectly to right through His presence with us. Wars will end, justice will be established, sin will be judged, disease will be cured, injuries will be healed, relationships will be restored, beauty will be seen, truth will be heard, souls will be brand new, and desires will be satisfied. All of this, and more, will happen! Jesus will come.

But how do we know? Why do Christians believe this? We believe Christ will come again because he's already come once, inaugurating the climax of God's great redemption. His first advent was being "conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary," who, along with all of Israel, waited for His arrival as the Messiah. But when Christ came to Israel, he was not what they expected. Israel was looking for an earthly king who would crush their national enemies, but they were given a heavenly king who was crushed by God to pay His own penalty for human sin and defeat all evil and death. Many in Israel were not prepared for that first advent. So the Church, with Israel's example in mind, yearly calls herself to a life of preparation, to a life of waiting in faith and hope to rightly receive Jesus at His second coming. By our affirmation of the gospel story as the story of our world, Christians are those who still haven't found what we're looking for. We are a people looking for Jesus and waiting ultimately for him.

So, how do we wait well? We wait well by preparing for Christ's coming through listening to God's word. That is what this Advent Worship Guide is designed to do – to lead its users into a regular and consistent reading of the Bible that elicits a response of prayer. Think of each week's guide as a brief daily liturgy for personal use or with a group such as a family, roommates, or a Bible study. Each day (or as often as possible) ask the opening reflection question and answer it, then read aloud the opening scripture and prayer, then sing (Yes, actually sing!). Next read the daily scriptures and respond with the affirmation of faith and daily prayers (first the "collect" prayer, then your personal prayers, then the Lord's Prayer), and finally sing again (Yes, actually sing!).

Then all that is left is the waiting. Wait to see what the Lord will do in and through the confluence of His Word meeting your prayers and praise. But remember, the waiting is everything. Who and what we wait for determines how we live before they come. Waiting patiently for the Lord to come to us is the posture and attitude of faith that is the Christian life. We wait for Christ to come to us now by the Holy Spirit and through His means of grace – the Word, Sacraments, and prayer – and we wait for Christ to come to us eventually in the flesh and according to the time set by our Heavenly Father.

So, come Lord Jesus, come! Come to us now by your Spirit through our weekly worship and daily practice to prepare us to meet you at your final advent.

May the Lord bless all our waiting,

Tim

Daily Morning Liturgy

AFFIRM

The Apostles' Creed (text on page 9)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth....

READ & REFLECT

Think deeply and personally about how God speaks to you through today's scripture passages.

PRAY

Personal prayers for yourself, others, and the world.

The Lord's Prayer (text page 9) and Collect of the Week

Our Father who art in heaven...

Almighty God, give us grace to 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 in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

SING

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus; verse 1 (music on pg 10)



Daily Evening Liturgy

CONFESS

Confession of Sin & Assurance of Pardon (text found on page 9)

"God of power and might, you promised through the prophets that the day is coming when you will bring all nations under your rule..."

ILLUMINATE & SING

Light the first Advent candle and sing verse 1 of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" (page 11)

"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."

READ & REFLECT

Think deeply and personally about how God speaks to you through tonight's scripture passages.

PRAY & GIVE THANKS

Personal prayers for yourself, others, and the world. The Lord's Prayer and General Thanksgiving (text on pg. 9)

Daily Readings

Sunday AM

Ps. 146, 147
Isa. 1:1-9
2 Pet. 3:1-10

Sunday PM

Ps. 111, 112, 113
Matt. 25:1-13

Monday AM

Ps. 1, 2, 3
Isa. 1:10-20
1 Thess. 1:1-10

Monday PM

Ps. 4, 7
Luke 20:1-8

Tuesday AM

Ps. 5, 6
Isa. 1:21-31
1 Thess. 2:1-12

Tuesday PM

Ps. 10, 11
Luke 20:9-18

Wednesday AM

Ps. 119:1-24
Isa. 2:1-11
1 Thess. 2:13-20

Wednesday PM

Ps. 12, 13, 14
Luke 20:19-26

Thursday AM

Ps. 18:1-20
Isa. 2:12-22
1 Thess. 3:1-13

Thursday PM

Ps. 18:21-50
Luke 20:27-40

Friday AM

Ps. 16, 17
Isa. 3:8-15
1 Thess. 4:1-12

Friday PM

Ps. 22
Luke 20:41-21:4

Saturday AM

Ps. 20, 21
Isa. 4:2-6
1 Thess. 4:13-18

Saturday PM

Ps. 110
Luke 21:5-19

Weekly REFLECTION



We all need to be told that God loves us, and the mystery of the Annunciation reveals an aspect of that love. But it also suggests that our response to this love is critical. A few verses before the angel appears to Mary in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel, another annunciation occurs; an angel announces to an old man, Zechariah, that his equally aged wife is to bear a son who will "make ready a people prepared for the Lord." The couple are to name him John; he is known to us as John the Baptist. Zechariah says to the angel, "How will I know that this is so?" which is a radically different response from the one Mary makes. She says, "How can this be?"

I interpret this to mean that while Zechariah is seeking knowledge and information, Mary contents herself with wisdom, with pondering a state of being. God's response to Zechariah is to strike him dumb during the entire term of his son's gestation, giving him a pregnancy of his own. He does not speak again until after the child is born, and he has written on a tablet what the angel has said to him: "His name is John." This confounds his relatives, who had expected that the child would be named after his father. I read Zechariah's punishment as a grace, in that he could not say anything to further compound his initial arrogance when confronted with mystery. When he does speak again, it is to praise God; he had nine months to think it over.

Mary's "How can this be?" is a simpler response than Zechariah's, and also more profound. She does not lose her voice but finds it. Like any of the prophets, she asserts herself before God saying, "Here am I." There is no arrogance, however, but only holy fear and wonder. Mary proceeds, as we must do in life, making her commitment without knowing much about what it will entail or where it will lead. I treasure the story because it forces me to ask: When the mystery of God's love breaks through into my consciousness, do I run from it? Do I ask of it what it cannot answer? Shrugging, do I retreat into facile clichés, the popular but false wisdom of that "we all know"? Or am I virgin enough to respond from my deepest, truest self, and say something new, a "yes" that will change me forever?

- Kathleen Norris

Daily Morning Liturgy

AFFIRM

The Apostles' Creed (text on page 9)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth....

READ & REFLECT

Think deeply and personally about how God speaks to you through today's scripture passages.

PRAY

Personal prayers for yourself, others, and the world.

The Lord's Prayer (text page 9) and Collect of the week

Our Father who art in heaven...

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

SING

Oh Come, Oh Come, Messiah! (music on page 11)



Daily Readings

Sunday AM

Ps. 148, 149, 150

Isa. 5:1-7

2 Peter 3:11-18

Sunday PM

Ps. 114, 115

Luke 7:28-35

Monday AM

Ps. 25

Isa. 5:8-12, 18-23

1 Thess. 5:1-11

Monday PM

Ps. 9, 15

Luke 21:20-28

Tuesday AM

Ps. 26, 28

Isa. 5:13-17, 24-25

1 Thess. 5:12-28

Tuesday PM

Ps. 36, 39

Luke 21:29-38

Wednesday AM

Ps. 38

Isa. 6:1-13

2 Thess. 1:1-12

Wednesday PM

Ps. 119:25-48

John 7:53-8:11

Thursday AM

Ps. 37:1-18

Isa. 7:1-9

2 Thess. 2:1-12

Thursday PM

Ps. 37:19-42

Luke 22:1-13

Friday AM

Ps. 31

Isa. 7:10-25

2 Thess. 2:13-3:5

Friday PM

Ps. 35

Luke 22:14-30

Saturday AM

Ps. 30, 32

Isa. 8:1-15

2 Thess. 3:6-18

Saturday PM

Ps. 42, 43

Luke 22:31-38

Daily Evening Liturgy

CONFESS

Confession of Sin & Assurance of Pardon (text found on page 9)

"God of power and might, you promised through the prophets that the day is coming when you will bring all nations under your rule..."

ILLUMINATE & SING

Light the first Advent candle and sing verse 2 of

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel" (music on page 11)

"O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
In ancient times didst give the law in cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel."

READ & REFLECT

Think deeply and personally about how God speaks to you through tonight's scripture passages.

PRAY & GIVE THANKS

Personal prayers for yourself, others, and the world. The Lord's Prayer and General Thanksgiving (text on pg. 9)

Weekly REFLECTION



Among the most familiar Christmas texts is the one in Isaiah: "The Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel" (Is. 7:14). Less familiar is its context: Isaiah has been pleading with King Ahaz to put his trust in God's promise to Israel rather than in alliances with strong military powers like Syria. "If you will not believe, you shall not be established," Isaiah warns Ahaz (7:9). Then the prophet tells the fearful king that God is going to give him a baby as a sign. A Baby. Isn't that just like God, Ahaz must have thought. What Ahaz needed, with Assyria breathing down his neck, was a good army, not a baby.

This is often the way God loves us: with gifts we thought we didn't need, which transform us into people we don't necessarily want to be. With our advanced degrees, armies, government programs, material comforts and self-fulfillment techniques, we assume that religion is about giving a little of our power in order to confirm to ourselves that we are indeed as self-sufficient as we claim.

Then this stranger comes to us, blesses us with a gift, and calls us to see ourselves as we are - empty-handed recipients of a gracious God who, rather than leave us to our own devices, gave us a baby.

- William Willimon

Daily Morning Liturgy

AFFIRM

The Apostles' Creed (text on page 9)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth....

READ & REFLECT

Think deeply and personally about how God speaks to you through today's scripture passages.

PRAY

*Personal prayers for yourself, others, and the world.
The Lord's Prayer (text page 9) and Collect of the Week*
Our Father who art in heaven...

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

SING

Silent Night (music on page 12)



Daily Readings

Sunday AM

Ps. 63, 98
Isa. 13:6-13
Heb. 12:18-29

Sunday PM

Ps. 103
John 3:22-30

Monday AM

Ps. 41, 52
Isa. 8:16-9:1
2 Peter 1:1-11

Monday PM

Ps. 44
Luke 22:39-53

Tuesday AM

Ps. 45
Isa. 9:1-7
2 Peter 1:12-21

Tuesday PM

Ps. 47, 48
Luke 22:54-69

Wednesday AM

Ps. 119:49-72
Isa. 9:8-17
2 Pet. 2:1-10

Wednesday PM

Ps. 49
Mark 1:1-8

Thursday AM

Ps. 50
Isa. 9:18-10:4
2 Pet. 2:10-16

Thursday PM

Ps. 33
Matt. 3:1-12

Friday AM

Ps. 40, 54
Isa. 10:5-19
2 Pet. 2:17-22

Friday PM

Ps. 51
Matt. 11:2-15

Saturday AM

Ps. 55
Isa. 10:20-27
Jude 17-25

Saturday PM

Ps. 138, 139
Luke 3:1-9

Daily Evening Liturgy

CONFESS

Confession of Sin & Assurance of Pardon (text found on page 9)

"God of power and might, you promised through the prophets that the day is coming when you will bring all nations under your rule..."

ILLUMINATE & SING

*Light the first Advent candle and sing verse 4 of
"O Come, O Come Emmanuel" (music on page 11)*

"O come, thou Dayspring, 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."

READ & REFLECT

Think deeply and personally about how God speaks to you through tonight's scripture passages.

PRAY & GIVE THANKS

Personal prayers for yourself, others, and the world. The Lord's Prayer and General Thanksgiving (text on pg. 9)

Weekly REFLECTION



Before we say, "But I can't work out how a virgin conception could possibly happen," we should remember that we can't actually "work out" how God makes anything "happen"! How did he create all things out of nothing? Or part the Red Sea? Or raise Jesus from the dead? We would need to be God himself to be able to "work out" all he does! Christianity is a supernatural faith from start to finish, and the virgin conception is but one element in it.

Matthew's point is that this unique event is nothing less than a new creation. The words "genealogy" (in Matthew 1:1) and "birth" (in verse 18) both translate the same Greek word – *genesis*. God was beginning again in Jesus Christ.

There is another important lesson that the virgin conception teaches us. God brings it about, not man. Joseph did nothing. Yet God also works in our humanity – Jesus didn't drop down into the manger from heaven, but was conceived by Mary. But she was passive, not active. She couldn't conceive the Saviour on her own.

The message? From beginning to end, it is God who saves; we cannot save ourselves. God sets us to one side here, in order to bring us to his side in Jesus Christ.

– Sinclair Ferguson

WEEK FOUR

Daily Morning Liturgy

AFFIRM

The Apostles' Creed (text on page 9)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth....

READ & REFLECT

Think deeply and personally about how God speaks to you through today's scripture passages:

PRAY

*Personal prayers for yourself, others, and the world.
The Lord's Prayer (text page 9) and Collect of the Week*
Our Father who art in heaven...

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

SING

O Little Town of Bethlehem (music on page 13)

Daily Readings

Sunday AM

Ps. 24, 29
Isa. 42:1-12
Eph. 6:10-20

Sunday PM

Ps. 8, 84
John 3:16-21

Monday AM

Ps. 61, 62
Isa. 11:1-9
Rev. 20:1-10

Monday PM

Ps. 112, 115
Luke 1:1-25

Tuesday AM

Ps. 66-67
Isa. 11:10-16
Rev. 20:11-21:8

Tuesday PM

Ps. 116-117
Luke 1:26-38

Christmas Eve

Ps. 45-46
Isa. 35:1-10
Rev. 22:12-17, 21

Christmas Eve

Ps. 89:1-29
Luke 1:67-80



Daily Evening Liturgy

CONFESS

Confession of Sin & Assurance of Pardon (text found on page 9)

"God of power and might, you promised through the prophets that the day is coming when you will bring all nations under your rule..."

ILLUMINATE & SING

*Light the first Advent candle and sing verse 5 of
"O Come, O Come Emmanuel" (music on page 11)*

"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."

READ & REFLECT

Think deeply and personally about how God speaks to you through tonight's scripture passages.

PRAY & GIVE THANKS

Personal prayers for yourself, others, and the world. The Lord's Prayer and General Thanksgiving (text on pg. 9)

Weekly REFLECTION



God becomes human, really human. While we endeavor to grow out of our humanity, to leave our human nature behind us, God becomes human, and we must recognize that God wants us also to become human – really human. Whereas we distinguish between the godly and the godless, the good and the evil, the noble and the common, God loves real human beings and the real world against all their accusers. . . . But it's not enough to say that God takes care of human beings. This sentence rests on something infinitely deeper and more impenetrable, namely, that in the conception and birth of Jesus Christ, God took on humanity in bodily fashion. God raised his love for human beings above every reproach of falsehood and doubt and uncertainty by himself entering into the life of human beings as a human being, by bodily taking upon himself and healing the nature, essence, guilt, and suffering of human beings. Out of love for human beings, God becomes a human being. He does not seek out the most perfect human being in order to unite with that person. Rather, he takes on human nature as it is.

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Daily RESOURCES

The Apostles' Creed

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 Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.



Confession of Sin for Advent

Leader: God of power and might, you promised through the prophets that the day is coming when you will bring all nations under your rule.

People: We confess that we have not expected your coming kingdom. We live casual lives, ignoring your promised judgment. We accept lies as truth, exploit our neighbors, abuse your creation, resist your justice, and refuse your peace. In your mercy, forgive our wandering and rebellious hearts. Grant us the humility to return to you, the strength to walk in your way, and the wisdom to seek those things that will endure; for the sake of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ who will come again to judge the world in righteousness. Amen.

Leader: May 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.

People: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer & General Thanksgiving

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 debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. We pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

MUSIC

1. Come, Thou long - ex - spect - ed Je - sus, born to set Thy
 2. Joy to those who long to see Thee, Day - spring from on
 3. Born, Thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and
 peo - ple free; from our fears and sins re - lease us,
 high ap - pear; come, Thou prom - ised Rod of Jes - se,
 yet a King, born to reign in us for - ev - er,
 let us find our rest in Thee. Is - rael's Strength and
 of Thy birth we long to hear! O'er the hills the
 now Thy grac - ious king - dom bring. By Thine own e -
 Con - so - la - tion, hope of all the saints Thou art;
 ang - els sing - ing news, glad tid - ings of a birth:
 ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;
 dear De - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion,
 "Go to Him, your prais - es bring - ing;
 by Thine all suf - fi - cient mer - it,
 joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.
 Christ the Lord has come to earth!"
 raise us to Thy glor - ious throne.

(Words: Charles Wesley, Mark E. Hunt Music: Rowland H. Prichard; CCLI license #2476739)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive Is - ra -
 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy tribes, on Sin - ai's
 O come, thou Rod of Jes - se, free thine own from Sa - tan's tyr - an -
 O come, thou Day - spring, come and cheer our spi - rits by thine ad - vent
 O come, thou Key of Da - vid, come and o - pen wide our heav'n - ly
 el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here, un - til the Son of God ap -
 height, in an - cient times didst give the law in cloud and maj - es - ty and
 ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple save, and give them vic - t'ry o'er the
 here; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night, and death's dark shad - ows put to
 home; make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to mis - er -
 pear. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.
 awe. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.
 grave. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.
 flight. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.
 y. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

(Words: trans. John Mason Neale; Music: arr. Thomas Helmore; CCLI license #2476739)

O Come, Messiah, Come

1. Oh come! Oh come, Mes - si - ah! Oh come, our Al - le - lu - ia!
 2. Oh come! Oh come, Me - si - ah! Oh come, our Al - le - lu - ia!
 Oh sing! Oh sing Ho - san - na! Oh come, Mes - si - ah, come!
 Oh sing! Oh sing Ho - san - na! Oh come, Mes - si - ah, come!
 Com - fort and joy, Al - pha, O - me - ga He.
 Sor - row and toil no long - er ru - lers be.

(Words & Music: Isaac Wardell, arr. Isaac Wardell, Mason Neely, & Alex Foote; CCLI License #2476739)

Silent Night

MUSIC



The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, key of F# major (three sharps), and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are arranged in three systems, with the first system having three numbered parts. The music features a mix of eighth, quarter, and half notes, with some measures containing rests. The final measure of the fourth staff ends with a double bar line.

1. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! All is calm,
 2. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
 3. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Son of God,

all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
 at the sight! Glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face,

Ho - ly in - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
 heav'n - ly hosts— sing al - le - lu - ia; Christ, the Sav - ior, is
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy

peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior is born!
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.

(Words: Joseph Mohr, Music: Franz Gruber, CCLI license #2476739)

O Little Town of Bethlehem



1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie;
2. For Christ is born of Mar - y; and gath - ered all a - bove,
3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is giv'n!
4. O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



a - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go by.
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
 cast out our sin and en - ter in; be born in us to - day.



Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing Light;
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth!
 No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
 And prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.
 where meek souls will re - ceive him still, the dear Christ en - ters in.
 O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el.

(Words: Phillips Brooks, Music: Lewis H. Redner, CCLI license #2476739)

The Candles

The Advent Wreath generally consists of four candles (three purple or blue, and one pink) set in a circle of evergreen with a fifth white candle in the center, the Christ candle. The light of the candles reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world who comes into the darkness of our lives to bring newness, life, and hope, calling us to be lights in the world as we reflect God's grace to others (Isa 42:6). The primary reason for lighting one candle on the first week, plus another the second, and so on, is to symbolize the various aspects of our waiting experience – especially the darkness of fear and hopelessness receding and the shadows of sin falling away as more and more light is shed into the world. Finally, as the Christ candle is lighted at Christmas, the light that has been growing throughout the season is plainly visible, and those who have been waiting rejoice together that the promises of long ago have been fulfilled.

"O" Antiphons

Traditionally, the seven antiphons are recited or sung before the Magnificat on the seven days before Christmas Eve. Each antiphon begins with "O" and is followed by a messianic title. Each ends with an invocation and plea for the Messiah to come. The texts are derived from Old Testament passages that anticipate the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of God's people. The Latin words for the messianic titles are, from first to last, Sapientia, Adonai, Radix, Clavis, Oriens, Rex, and Emmanuel. Surprisingly, the first letters of each word form a backwards acrostic: ERO CRAS. In Latin, this means "I shall be there tomorrow."

Each of the antiphons and the appropriate dates are listed below. Although the antiphons are an ancient tradition, they are very familiar to us in the Christmas hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel". If you are so inclined, perhaps you can sing the antiphons using the corresponding verses of the hymn.

December 17: O Wisdom. . . you come forth from the mouth of the Most High. You fill the universe and hold all things together in a strong yet gentle manner. O come to teach us the way of truth. (Verse 2)

December 18: O Adonai. . . and leader of Israel, you appeared to Moses in a burning bush and you gave him the Law on Sinai. O come and save us with your mighty power. (Verse 3)

December 19: O Stock of Jesse. . . you stand as a signal for the nations; kings fall silent before you whom the peoples acclaim. O come to deliver us, and do not delay. (Verse 4)

December 20: O Key of David. . . and scepter of Israel, what you open no one else can close again; what you close no one can open. O come to lead the captive from prison; free those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. (Verse 5)

December 21: O Rising Sun. . . you are the splendor of eternal light and the sun of justice. O come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. (Verse 6)

December 22: O King. . . whom all the peoples desire, you are the cornerstone which makes all one. O come and save man whom you made from clay. (Verse 7)

December 23: O Emmanuel. . . you are our king and judge, the One whom the peoples await and their Savior. O come and save us, Lord, our God. (Verse 1)

Advent ABOUT THE SEASON

the Jesus Storybook Bible®

CELEBRATING 18 YEARS

2025 Advent Reading Plan

The days leading up to Christmas are called “Advent.” Advent means the “arrival.” It means the long waiting is almost over. As we wait for Christmas, we’ll go on a journey together. We’ll read a story every day and tell the story of God’s Secret Rescue plan—from the very beginning ... and wait, along with God’s people ... for Christmas.

Dec 1 Psalm 19 and Hebrews 1

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“The Story and The Song” (pg.12-17)

Dec 7 Genesis 22

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“The Present” (pg.62-69)

Dec 2 Genesis 1-2

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“The Beginning: A Perfect Home” (pg.18-27)

Dec 8 Genesis 29-30

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“The Girl No One Wanted” (pg.70-75)

Dec 3 Genesis 3

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“The Terrible Lie” (pg.28-37)

Dec 9 Genesis 37-46

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“The Forgiving Prince” (pg.76-83)

Dec 4 Genesis 6-9

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“A New Beginning” (pg.38-47)

Dec 10 Exodus 3-13

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“God to the Rescue!” (pg.84-91)

Dec 5 Genesis 11

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“A Giant Staircase to Heaven” (pg.48-55)

Dec 11 Exodus 14-15

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“God Makes a Way” (pg.92-99)

Dec 6 Genesis 12-21

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“Son of Laughter” (pg.56-61)

Dec 12 Exodus 16-17, 19-40

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“Ten Ways to be Perfect” (pg.100-107)

Dec 13 Joshua 3 and 6

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“The Warrior Leader” (pg.108-115)

Dec 14 1 Samuel 16

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“The Teeny Weenie...True King” (pg.116-121)

Dec 15 1 Samuel 17

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“The Young Hero and the Horrible Giant”
(pg.122-129)

Dec 16

Psalms 51, 2 Samuel 7;
paraphrase of Psalm 23

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“The Good Shepherd” (pg.130-135)

Dec 17 2 Kings 5

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“A Little Servant Girl and the Proud
General”(pg.136-143)

Dec 18

Isaiah 9, 11, 40, 50, 53, 55, 60

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“Operation ‘No More Tears!’” (pg.144-151)

Dec 19 Daniel 6

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“Daniel and the Scary Sleepover” (pg.152-159)

Dec 20 Jonah 1-4; Hebrews 1:1-2

Read along in The Jesus Storybook
Bible “God’s Messenger” (pg.160-169)

Dec 21

Nehemiah 8-10, Malachi
1, 3 and 4, Ezra 7

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“Get Ready!” (pg.170-175)

Dec 22 Luke 1-2

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“He’s Here!” (pg.176-183)

Dec 23 Luke 2

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“The Light of the Whole World” (pg.184-191)

Dec 24 Matthew 2

Read along in The Jesus Storybook Bible
“The King of all Kings” (pg.192-199)

ERO CRAS

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