

The Fourth Sunday of Advent Morning Prayer

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Love (Dec. 20)

Reader One: Because too many people are wandering in the wilderness, because too many people are sitting in the valley of the shadow of death, we light candles.

Reader Two: Because people all over the world are suffering and we are too busy to notice, we light candles.

Reader One: Today we stop everything and light these candles: one for hope, one for peace, one for joy, and one for love... *(Light the fourth candle in your Advent wreath.)*

Reader Two: May the light from these candles overwhelm the world.

Reader One: May the light from these candles illuminate the valley of the shadow of death.

Reader Two: May the light and the fire from these candles burn away everything that is preventing God's love from being born among us.

Reader One: Brother and sisters, be not afraid, even now - even now - God's love is overwhelming the world!

Christ Candle

Reader One: Because injustice and despair threaten to overwhelm us, we pray for hope. *(Light the first candle in your Advent wreath.)*

Reader Two: Because so many swords have not yet been beaten into ploughshares, we pray for peace. *(Light the second candle in your Advent wreath.)*

Reader One: Because grief and loss weigh so heavily, we pray for joy. *(Light the third candle in your Advent wreath.)*

Reader Two: Because hatred is still so strong, and because people all over the world are suffering, we pray for love. *(Light the fourth candle in your Advent wreath.)*

Reader One: God has come to us as a child. Christ is present in our world.
(*Light the Christ Candle in your Advent wreath, often a candle in the center.*)

Reader Two: May the light and the fire from these candles burn away everything that is preventing the God of hope and peace and joy and love from being born among us.

Reader One: Brothers and sisters, be not afraid, even now - even now – the light of Christ is overwhelming the world!

Advent

Watch, for you know not when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning; lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.
Mark 13:35, 36

In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. *Isaiah 40:3*

The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. *Isaiah 40:5*

Confession of Sin

The Celebrant says to the people

Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of Almighty God, to set forth his praise, to hear his holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and our salvation. And so that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind to worship him, let us kneel in silence, and with penitent and obedient hearts confess our sins, that we may obtain forgiveness by his infinite goodness and mercy.

Celebrant and People together,

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 Name. Amen.

The Priest alone says

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

The Invitatory and Psalter

Celebrant Lord, open our lips.

People And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Celebrant and People

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

The Song of Mary *Magnificat* *Luke 1:46-55*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; ****for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.***

From this day all generations will call me blessed: **** the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is God's Name.***

He has mercy on those who fear him ****in every generation.***

He has shown the strength of his arm, **** he has scattered the proud in their conceit.***

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, **** and has lifted up the lowly.***

He has filled the hungry with good things, **** and the rich he has sent away empty.***

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, **** for he has remembered his promise of mercy,***

The promise he made to our fathers, **** to Abraham and his children for ever.***

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *

The Gospel & Sermon

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth;
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He 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, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. 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.

The Prayers

God of many names, God beyond all names; the beginning and the end of every story, the meaning of every life; infinite Mystery both hidden and revealed: ***Hear us when we pray to you.***

Blessed are You who join us together in the communion of Christ's Body. Renew and energize your holy Church, in this parish and throughout the world, that we may be a resurrection people, manifesting your steadfast love in our common life of praise and service. ***Hear us when we pray to you.***

O perfect Wisdom, direct and rule the hearts of the leaders and shapers of society, raise up prophets of justice and peace, and empower your people for the holy vocation of repairing the world. May we entrust all our labors to the work of Providence. ***Hear us when we pray to you.***

O Deliverer, You unlock every door and make a way where there is no way. Set free all who are afflicted or distressed in body, mind or spirit. Resurrect their hope, grant them peace and refreshment, and restore their joy. ***Hear us when we pray to you.***

O compassionate One, hold us in your mercy: heal the sick, mend the broken, protect the vulnerable, shelter the refugee, strengthen the weary, rescue the lost, and give courage to all who struggle. ***Hear us when we pray to you.***

O Morning Star, bright splendor of the light eternal, illumining all things with your radiance: Come, enlighten all who sit in darkness, and those who dwell in the shadow of violence and death. Grant us your peace and teach us to live in the dawn of your unfailing promise. ***Hear us when we pray to you.***

O Lover of souls, when we wander far away, lead us back to You; when we refuse your embrace, do not give up on us; when we forget You, do not forget us. ***Hear us when we pray to you.***

O Desire of every heart, the answer to every longing: You are the strong force that draws us into the mystery of love divine. Forgive us those things which distract and delay us, and lead us ever deeper into the Way, the Truth and the Life. ***Hear us when we pray to you.***

God who has come, God who does come, God who is yet to come: Make us an Advent people, ready and alert to welcome and receive You in the stranger's face, the loving act, the moment of grace, the presence of healing, the birth of possibility, the gift of wonder. Let every heart prepare You room. ***Hear us when we pray to you.***

A Collect for Sundays

O God, you make us glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Give us this day such blessing through our worship of you, that the week to come may be spent in your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. ***Amen.***

The Celebrant then concludes with

O Emmanuel, God-with-us, You show us the face of divinity, and reveal the fullness of our humanity. Come: renew your creation, restore us all in Christ, and enable us to become who we are, your faithful and loving people. We pray in the name of Jesus. ***Amen.***