



Diocese of Bristol
Creating connections

Celebrating Advent at Home: the Jesse Tree

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2017

The word 'Advent' comes from the Latin *Adventus*, which means 'coming'. For us it also means *waiting* – waiting for Christmas, waiting for parties, waiting for presents ... all sorts of waiting. We are not very good at waiting in our society, we expect things to happen quickly, even instantaneously, witnessed by the ubiquity of mobile phones and tablets. Waiting can be boring, but Christian waiting is a special sort of waiting. We see ourselves in the course of the development of history, after the resurrection and before the return of Christ.

We are waiting not just for Christmas but for something beyond it. Sometimes Advent is differentiated between the First Advent and the Second Advent.



The first Advent is the period of 'coming' as we wait for the arrival of Christ as an infant in Bethlehem. The second Advent is the coming of Christ at the end of the age. This idea of a second Advent gives the season of Advent a tremendous aspect, which involves uncertainty (how long?), grandeur (coming on the clouds of heaven), and finality (the end of time).

In the Church year Advent is the first season of the new liturgical cycle. The First Sunday of Advent is the Sunday nearest to the Feast of St Andrew the Apostle (which is on 30th November). This year, then, Advent begins on 3 December. There are always four Sundays in Advent, and they take us through a succession of prophecies and comings, all of which look forward to the arrival of Christ. This makes it a rich and profound season, covering not just four weeks, but many centuries of expectation.

To help give shape to Advent the Church lights Advent candles, a new one on each Sunday of Advent and then a final one on Christmas Day. The Jesse Tree is another Advent tradition. A Jesse Tree, named after the father of David, is a tree that is decorated gradually throughout Advent with symbols or pictures of biblical persons associated with the gradual coming of the Messiah, the Christ. This includes, among others, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Joseph and Mary. The Jesse Tree tradition provides a wonderful teaching opportunity; it is a perfect way to teach and remind children about the preparatory nature of Advent.

Let us take this season of preparation for the coming of our Saviour to reflect on our direction of travel, the longer perspective: to think and pray about our hopes and expectations, our doubts and our puzzles, and, with God's help, to rejoice more fully in the coming of our Saviour.

Colin Lunt

Daily Prayer – a short service for Daily Prayer is included in this booklet. It can be used alone or in groups.

Readings – the readings listed in this leaflet are the regular readings used daily in many Christian churches for this season. The Sunday readings are from Year B of the three-year cycle – Year B focuses particularly on the Gospel of Mark.

Daily Prayer in Advent and Christmastide

THE PREPARATION

V/ O Lord, open our lips

R/ **and our mouth shall
proclaim your praise.**

In Advent:

V/ Our Sovereign and Saviour
draws near.

R/ **Come, let us worship.**

In Christmastide:

V/ Alleluia. The Word was made
flesh and dwelt among us.

R/ **Come, let us worship.
Alleluia.**

In Epiphanytide:

V/ God in Christ has revealed
his glory

R/ **Come, let us worship.**

Followed by the Gloria

R/ **Glorify 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.**

THE OPENING CANTICLE

- 1 Fling wide the gates, open the
ancient doors, *
and the king of glory will
come in.
- 2 Who is this king of glory? *
He is the Lord Christ, strong
and mighty,
the Lord Jesus, victorious
in battle.
- 3 Fling wide the gates, open the
ancient doors, *
and the king of glory will
come in.
- 4 Who is this great king of glory?
*
He is our Lord Jesus Christ,
he is the Lord of hosts,
he is the great king of
glory.

from Psalm 24

**Glorify 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.**

PSALM PRAYER

All-powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good, that Christ may find an eager welcome at his coming, and call us to his side in the kingdom of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings – from the dated section below.

SECOND CANTICLE

- 1 Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel!*
Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!
- 2 The Lord has taken away the judgements against you,
he has turned away your enemies.*
The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.
- 3 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:*
Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.
- 4 The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory;*
he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love;
- 5 He will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival.*
I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.
- 6 I will deal with all your oppressors at that time.*
And I will save the lame and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.
- 7 At that time I will bring you home,*
at the time when I gather you;
- 8 For I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,*
when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

Zephaniah 3.14-20 NRSV

**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.**

THE PRAYERS

A time of silent prayer, extempore prayer, and/or the following may be used.

Advent Intercession

Let us pray that the light of Christ will shine ever more brightly as the day approaches.

We give thanks for your holy Word, mediated through human voices and hands, that tells us so much about your loving purposes for the people you have created. May it be a lantern to our feet, and a light upon our path.

Light has come into the world but those who do evil hate the light. May the radiant light of Christ expose the works of darkness, burn up all that is evil, purify those who show cruelty and harbour hatred, and enlighten all hearts with the flame of love.

The light of Christ banishes the darkness of our world. May that light shine on us and ahead of us, that we may recognise him coming to us in our own lives, be guided in following his way, and ever live in his presence.

Christmastide Intercession

We are touched with humility and joy as we hear the story of Mary who heard the message of the angel, and was full of faith and believed your word. As she committed herself to your plan and knew the glory of your presence in human form, may we have the faith to trust you and the vision to perceive your glory.

As we reflect on the saviour of the world being born in a human family, we pray for families today; that every family may find support, comfort, and refreshment at this time; that we may be full of praise at the wonder of your presence among us, and our homes be illumined with the light of Christ through all the year.

Epiphanytide Intercession

The light of Christ brings hope to those who dwell in darkness. May that glorious and shining light bring hope to those who are oppressed and long for justice, to those who are fearful and long for a place of rest, to those who are lost and long to find the right way, and to those who are in pain and long for peace.

We give thanks for all those who contributed to the growth and development of Jesus Christ – his parents, family, teachers, friends. We pray for all born into this world that they may know the care of a loving human family and be inspired by the good example of others.

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

The collect of the day is said, from the dated section below.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us so we pray:

R/ Our Father ...

THE CONCLUSION

The Blessing

In Advent:

May the Lord, when he comes,
find us watching and waiting.

R/ Amen.

In Christmastide:

May God, who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, bless us and fill us with peace.

R/ Amen.

In Epiphanytide:

May Christ our Lord, enlighten and empower us
with the good news of salvation.

R/ Amen.

ENDING

Let us bless the Lord.

R/ Thanks be to God.

THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

PRAYER

Almighty God, who has promised to be with us to the end of time, accompany us on our Advent journey and draw us ever more into the life of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

READINGS

Sunday 3 December The First Sunday of Advent

*Isaiah 64.1-9 • Psalm 80.1-8
[18-20] • 1 Corinthians 1.3-9 •
Mark 13.24-37*

We are the clay and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64.8)

Monday 4 December

*Isaiah 4.2-6 • Psalm 122 •
Matthew 8.5-11*

For love of the house of the Lord I will ask for your good. (Psalm 122.9)

Tuesday 5 December

Isaiah 11.1-10 • Psalm 72.1-4, 18-19 • Luke 10.21-24

Filled with joy by the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and clever and revealing them to little children.' (Luke 10.21)

Wednesday 6 December

*Isaiah 25.6-10a • Psalm 23 •
Matthew 15.29-37*

He shall refresh my soul and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (Psalm 23.3)

Thursday 7 December

Isaiah 26.1-6 • Psalm 118.18-27a • Matthew 7.21, 24-27

It is not anyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord", who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven. (Matthew 7.21)

Friday 8 December

Isaiah 29.17-24 • Psalm 27.1-4, 16-17 • Matthew 9.27-31

The lowly will find ever more joy in the Lord and the poorest of people will delight in the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 29.19)

Saturday 9 December

Isaiah 30.19-21, 23-26 • Psalm 146.4-9 • Matthew 9.35—10.1, 6-8

The Lord protects the stranger, he sustains the orphan and widow. (Psalm 146.9)

THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

PRAYER

Make us, good Lord, wakeful and watchful as we await the coming of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, that he may find us ready to greet him with gratitude and joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

READINGS

Sunday 10 December **The Second Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 40.1-11 • Psalm 85.[1-2,] 8-13 • 2 Peter 3.8-15a • Mark 1.1-8

Righteousness shall go before him, and peace shall be a pathway for his feet. (Psalm 85.13)

Monday 11 December

Isaiah 35.1-10 • Psalm 85.7-13 • Luke 5.17-26

Strengthen all weary hands, steady all trembling knees and say to the faint-hearted, "Be strong! Do not be afraid. Here is your God, vengeance is coming, divine retribution; he is coming to save you." (Isaiah 35.3-4)

Tuesday 12 December

Isaiah 40.1-11 • Psalm 96.1, 10-13 • Matthew 18.12-14

With justice he will rule the world, he will judge the peoples with his truth. (Psalm 96.13)

Wednesday 13 December

Isaiah 40.25-31 • Psalm 103.8-

13 • Matthew 11.28-30

Jesus said, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11.28)

Thursday 14 December

Isaiah 41.13-20 • Psalm 145.1,8-13 • Matthew 11.11-15

The oppressed and the needy search for water and there is none, their tongue is parched with thirst. I, the Lord will answer them. (Isaiah 41.17)

Friday 15 December

Isaiah 48.17-19 • Psalm 1 • Matthew 11.16-19

It was towards John that all the prophecies of the prophets and of the law were leading. (Matthew 11.13)

Saturday 16 December

Ecclesiasticus 48.1-4, 9-11 or 2 Kings 2.9-12 • Psalm 80.1-4, 18-19 • Matthew 17.10-13

God of hosts, bring us back, let your face shine on us and we shall be safe. (Psalm 80.19)

THE THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

PRAYER

Enkindle our hearts by your Holy Spirit, as we wait in patience for the advent of our Saviour, that we may blaze out with praise at his coming; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

READINGS

Sunday 17 December **The Third Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 61.1-4, 8-11 • Psalm 126 or Canticle: Magnificat (Luke 1.46-55) • 1 Thessalonians 5.16-24 • John 1.6-8, 19-28

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances. (1 Thessalonians 5.16)

Monday 18 December

Jeremiah 23.5-8 • Psalm 72.1, 2, 12, 13, 18-20 • Matthew 1.18-24

When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do. (Matthew 1.24)

Tuesday 19 December

Judges 13.2-7, 24-25 • Psalm 71.3-8 • Luke 1.5-25

On you have I relied since my birth since my mother's womb you have been my portion, the constant theme of my praise. (Psalm 71.6)

Wednesday 20 December

Isaiah 7.10-14 • Psalm 24.1-6 • Luke 1.26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. (Luke 1.26-27)

Thursday 21 December

Song of Solomon 2.8-14 or Zephaniah 3.14-18 • Psalm 33.1-4, 11-12, 20-21 • Luke 1.39-45

Our soul waits longingly for the Lord, he is our help and our shield. (Psalm 33.20)

Friday 22 December

1 Samuel 1.24-28 • Psalm 113 • Luke 1.46-56

His mercy reaches from age to age for those that fear him. (Luke 1.50)

Saturday 23 December

Malachi 3.1-4, 4.5-6 • Psalm 25.3-9 • Luke 1.57-66

"The Lord you are seeking will suddenly enter his Temple; and the angel of the covenant whom you are longing for, yes, he is coming", says the Lord of hosts. (Malachi 3.1)

THE FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

PRAYER

Gracious God, as Mary rejoiced at your nearness, so fill our hearts with joy at your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

READINGS

Sunday 24 December

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7.1-11 • Canticle: Magnificat (Luke 1.46-55) or Psalm 89.1-4, 19-26 [or 89.1-8] • Romans 16.25-27 • Luke 1.26-38

And of his kingdom there shall be no end. (Luke 1.33)

Christmas

PRAYER

O God, who Son was born among us, prepare our hearts for his coming and fill us with the peace of Jesus Christ our Lord.

READINGS

Monday 25 December

Christmas Day

Isaiah 52.7-10 • Psalm 98 • Hebrews 1.1-4 [5-12] • John 1.1-14

But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born not of blood or of the will of the flesh

or of the will of man, but of God. (John 1.12-13)

Tuesday 26 December

Stephen, Deacon, First Martyr

2 Chronicles 24.20-22 or Acts 7.51-60 • Psalm 119.161-168 • Acts 7.51-60 or Galatians 2.16b-20 • Matthew 10.17-22

[Stephen] knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' (Acts 7.60)

Wednesday 27 December

John, Apostle and Evangelist

Exodus 33.7-11a • Psalm 117 • 1 John 1 • John 21.19b-25

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life. (1 John 1.1)

Thursday 28 December

The Holy Innocents

Jeremiah 31.15-17 • Psalm 124 • 1 Corinthians 1.26-29 • Matthew 2.13-18

A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. (Jeremiah 31.15)

Friday 29 December

1 John 2.3-11 • Psalm 96.1-3, 5-6 • Luke 2.22-35

Simeon was an upright and devout man; looking forward to the consolation of Israel. (Luke 2.25)

Saturday 30 December

1 John 2.12-17 • 96.7-10 • Luke 2.36-40

You have come to know the one who has existed since the beginning. (1 John 2.14)

The First Sunday of Christmas

PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God, who has willed that on the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, should depend both the beginning and the end of faith; grant that we may be found with him and in him, who is the Saviour of the world.

READINGS

Sunday 31 December

The First Sunday of Christmas

Isaiah 63.7-9 • Psalm 148 [or 148.7-14] • Hebrews 2.10-18 • Matthew 2.13-23

The one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. (Hebrews 2.11)

Monday 1 January

Naming and Circumcision of Jesus

Numbers 6.22-27 • Psalm 8 • Galatians 4.4-7 • Luke 2.15-21
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. (Numbers 6.26)

Tuesday 2 January

1 John 2.22-28 • Psalm 98.1-4 • John 1.19-28

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. (Psalm 98.3b)

Wednesday 3 January

1 John 2.29-3.6 • Psalm 98.2-7 • John 1.29-34

You must see what great love the Father has lavished on us by letting us be called God's children – which is what we are! (1 John 3.1)

Thursday 4 January

1 John 3.7-10 • Psalm 98.1, 8-16 • John 1.35-42

It was to undo all that the devil has done that the Son of God appeared. (1 John 3.8)

Friday 5 January

1 John 3.11-21 • Psalm 100 • John 1.43-51

Our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active. (1 John 3.18)

THE EPIPHANY

PRAYER

O God, as the heavenly star shone a light on the infant Redeemer, grant that, with the wise men, we may be enlightened and guided by him, who is our Saviour and our Lord.

Saturday 6 January The Epiphany

Isaiah 60.1-6 • Psalm 72. [1-9,] 10-15 • Ephesians 3.1-12 • Matthew 2.1-12

or, if Epiphany is celebrated on Sunday, 1 John 5.5-13 • Psalm 148.12-15,19-20 • Mark 1.6-11

The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. (Matthew 2.10-11)

Sunday 7 January The Epiphany

Isaiah 60.1-6 • Psalm 72. [1-9,] 10-15 • Ephesians 3.1-12 • Matthew 2.1-12

The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. (Matthew 2.10-11)

PRAYER

Loving God, as you came among us in earthly form in a human family, so bless all families and help them to rejoice in the treasure of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Acknowledgements:

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Jesse was the father of King David, from whom the descent of Jesus is traced. The Jesse Tree was particularly popular in the middle ages. Creating a Jesse Tree helps us connect the custom of decorating a Christmas tree to the events leading up to the birth of Jesus. The Jesse tree is named from Isaiah 11.1: 'a shoot shall come out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.' The Jesse tree is decorated with ornaments to illustrate the people, prophecies, and events leading up to the birth of Jesus, recounting God's faithfulness across four thousand years of history.

Draw a circle an inch or two across on paper or card. Draw the symbol for the day in the circle (or cut out pictures from magazines and stick them on the card). Cut out the circle, attach a loop of thread or wool to it, and hang it on your Christmas tree.

THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

3 – 9 December

SUNDAY

topic: The Jesse tree;

ornament: the Jesse tree;

story: the story of Jesse – Isaiah 11.1-10

MONDAY

topic: Adam and Eve;

ornament: tree with fruit or apple;

story: the first sin – Genesis 3

TUESDAY

topic: Noah;

ornament: rainbow or ark;

story: Noah and the flood – Genesis 6.13

WEDNESDAY

topic: Abraham;

ornament: field of stars;

story: Abraham and the covenant – Genesis 15

THURSDAY

topic: Isaac;

ornament: Ram;

story: Abraham and the offering of Isaac – Genesis 22

FRIDAY

topic: Jacob;

ornament: ladder;

story: Jacob's dream – Genesis 28.10-22

SATURDAY

topic: Joseph;

ornament: coat of many colours;

story: God's providence – Genesis 37

THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

10 – 16 December

SUNDAY

topic: Moses;

ornament: the burning bush;

story: God calls Moses – Exodus 3

MONDAY

topic: the Israelites;

ornament: Lamb;

story: Passover and exodus – Exodus 14.1 – 15.21

TUESDAY

topic: Moses and Aaron;

ornament: Tablets of the Torah;

story: God gives the people the Law – Exodus 19-20

WEDNESDAY

topic: Ruth;

ornament: Grain;

story: Ruth's faithfulness – Ruth

THURSDAY

topic: Samuel;

ornament: crown;

story: the beginning of the kingdom – Samuel 10 – 12

FRIDAY

topic: David;

ornament: harp or shepherd's crook;

story: Shepherd to the people – 2 Samuel 5 – 6

SATURDAY

topic: Elijah;

ornament: stone altar;

story: Elijah fights the false gods – 1 Kings 18

THE THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

17 – 23 December

SUNDAY

topic: Isaiah;

ornament: tongs and coal;

story: the call to holiness – Isaiah 6

MONDAY

topic: John the Baptist;

ornament: scallop shell;

story: John the baptist – Luke 3.1-6

TUESDAY

topic: Mary;

ornament: white lily;

story: annunciation – Luke 1.26-38

WEDNESDAY

topic: Elizabeth;

ornament: mother and child;

story: visitation – Luke 1.39-45

THURSDAY

topic: Zechariah;

ornament: pencil and tablet;

story: his name is John – Luke 1.57-66

FRIDAY

topic: Joseph;

ornament: carpenter's square or hammer;

story: do not be afraid – Matthew 1.18-25

SATURDAY

topic: Jesus;

ornament: manger;

story: born in humble circumstances – Luke 2.1-20

THE FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

24 December

SUNDAY

topic: Christ;

ornament: chi-rho symbol;

story: In the beginning was the Word – John 1.1-18



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