

MAKING OUR WAY TO CHRISTMAS



ADVENT 2020

25 VERSES FOR THE SEASON



This advent and Christmas season is likely to be like none we have experienced before. Who knew what the year 2020 would be like back in January; a year where things have been uncertain, and the journey for all has been challenging, never knowing what would happen or change from week to week, but still we have been serving and worshipping an unchangeable and faithful God.

Advent is the time of waiting and hoping and longing for the promises of God to be fulfilled, and Christmas is the time when we remember that God came down, to a broken and hurting world, and stepped into the mess with love, hope, light and peace. If anything, there is no year in the lifetimes of most of us when these messages have been more needed and need to be more central to our lives.

I encourage you to set some time aside to use this season to focus on God and his promise and the coming of Jesus.

Enclosed in this pack are advent candles for you to light each Sunday and a verse to read for each day and reflect on along with some prayers that you may like to use. Know that God is active, present and working wherever we are, and the love of God binds us together, even when we have to be apart.

From December 3rd we will resume our Thursday Morning Prayer service at 10 am then again on the 10th, & 17th December, returning on January 14th.

We will also be holding a Christmas day service, however tickets need to be pre-booked due to limited numbers because of Covid restrictions. Booking will go live on December 1st at 9 am. Visit www.httchurch.org/christmas for information on all our online and in church services, along with links to our booking page and links to all our online services on our YouTube channel

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Revd. Cara Kear

Spiritually preparing one's heart by focusing on the colours of Advent in the weeks leading up to Christmas is a great way for us to keep Christ the centre of Christmas. The Four Last Things – Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell – have been traditional themes for Advent meditation. The characteristic note of Advent is therefore expectation and preparation rather than penitence, although the character of the season is easily coloured by an analogy with Lent. Hope, Love, Joy and Peace are what the advent readings and candles represent. There is a sense of alert watchfulness, but the fundamental Advent prayer remains ‘Maranatha’ – ‘Our Lord, come’ (1 Corinthians 16.22).

The Advent wreath, typically a circular garland of evergreen branches, is a symbol of eternity and unending love. There are four candles, one for each Sunday leading to Christmas and a fifth candle for Christmas day. These three principal colours of Advent are packed with rich meaning.

Purple is the first Advent candle and is traditional liturgical colour. In the northern hemisphere, the Advent season falls at the darkest time of the year, and the natural symbols of darkness and light are powerfully at work throughout Advent and Christmas. This hue symbolizes repentance Christians show their devotion to God and prepare their hearts for his arrival. Purple is also the liturgical colour for the season of Lent, which similarly involves a time of reflection, repentance, self-denial, and spiritual readiness.

Purple is also the colour of royalty and the sovereignty of Christ, who is known as the "King of Kings." So, purple in this application demonstrates the anticipation of and reception of the coming King celebrated during Advent. The first candle of the Advent wreath, the prophecy candle, or candle of hope because it symbolizes the promises the prophets delivered as messages from God; promises that foretold Christ's birth is purple. The second is called the Bethlehem candle, or the candle of preparation, and it is also purple. Likewise, the fourth Advent candle colour is purple.

Pink (or **rose**) is the third Advent candle on the wreath used during the third Sunday of Advent (*Gaudete* or 'Rose Sunday'), It is named the shepherd candle or candle of joy.

Pink or rose represents joy or rejoicing and reveals a shift in the season of Advent away from repentance and toward celebration. The last days of Advent were marked by the sequence of Great 'O' Antiphons, which continue to inspire modern Advent hymns and meditations.

White is the fifth Advent candle positioned in the centre of the wreath it is called the Christ candle its colour representing purity, light, regeneration, and godliness. White is also a symbol of victory.

The fifth candle represents Jesus Christ himself who is born to save people from their sins, pure Saviour. It is a celebration of the fulfilment of prophecy as represented in Christ's birth and hope in the final fulfilment when Christ comes again, and Christians join him. Jesus is the light come into a dark and dying world.




Advent: 25 VERSES

1. Mark 4:39 'He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Silence, be still'. And the wind abated and there was a great calm'.
2. **Psalm 96:1 'O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.**
3. Matthew 5:9 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God'.
4. **Isaiah 43:2 'When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.'**
5. Luke 18:14b 'all who humble themselves will be exalted'.
6. **Deuteronomy 15:10 'Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake'.**

7. I Peter 1:13 'Therefore, prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed'.
8. Daniel 2:22 God 'reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with him'.
9. **John 8:12 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life'.**
10. Psalm 25:1 'To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
11. **Psalm 16:8 'I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.**
12. Corinthians 3:9 'For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building'.
13. **Nahum 1:7 'The Lord is good, a stronghold in a day of trouble; he protects those who take refuge in him'.**
14. Proverbs 11:17 'Those who are kind reward themselves, but the cruel do themselves harm'.





15. **Romans 1:20** 'Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made'.

16. **Matthew 1:21** 'She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus'.

17. **Luke 1:38** 'Then Mary said, "Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word"'.
Lord'.

18. **Luke 1:45** 'Blessed is she who believed that there will be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord'.

19. **Luke 1:46** 'And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord'.

20. **Luke 1:47** 'and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour'.

21. **Luke 1:49** 'for the **Mighty One** has done great things for me, and holy is his name'

22. Luke 2:7 'and she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn'.
23. **John 1:14 'And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth'.**
24. Philippians 1:4 'Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others'.
25. **Philippians 1:5 'Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.**



A Prayer if you are struggling

I call you God.
Are you my God?
I speak!
Do you hear?
Are my words of any worth to you?
Do they make a difference?

I have accepted the invitation to pray
And so here I am.
The world feels a mess.
The pandemic instils fear and anxiety.
It causes sickness and death.
It strikes our NHS.
It causes division among family and friends.
It's wrecking our economy.
It's driving the poorest into the dust.

Please hear me.
Please come to our help.
Give us what we need to see this through.
And at its ending,
may it mark a new beginning
Of friendship,
Peace and kindness.
Of generosity, hope and faith.
Amen.

Bishop Bev Mason, *Prayers for Our Nation*.

Advent Prayer

Christmas is coming, Lord,
Yet little cause for cheer.
Is there any point in tinsel and glitter?
Will there be any coming together?
What of the funny foibles and quirksiness
that drive us to distraction;
the silly jokes and games;
the overspend, overfeed, over-indulged
that have made Christmas, Christmas.
With so much stripped away,
bring us back to the heart of Christmas
when love became incarnate.
May the flame of the Christmas lantern
illuminate my mind;

And the love that came down at Christmas,
fill my heart;
May the angels' song of peace and goodwill
Bless again the earth.
Give to each one cup of kindness,
One measure of joy
and stir up in us good Christmas cheer
For the love of the him who gave Christmas
its name:
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Bishop Bev Mason, *Prayers for Our Nation.*

Advent Prayer

God of all joy,
we come before you in praise and
thanksgiving
for all who have brought us joy.
Lead us from the darkness
and uncertainty of this world
into an Advent of expectation
that the light will come,
the light has come
and will not be overcome.
We pray that through prayer and reflection
and through your grace
the Christ-child may be born in us
anew this Christmas.
Amen

Rev Petra Shakeshaft



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