

SAFFRON WALDEN AND VILLAGES TEAM MINISTRY
PRAYERS FOR SUNDAYS IN ADVENT: 29 NOVEMBER
AND 6, 13 AND 20 DECEMBER 2020

This prayer sheet is specially designed for those who are praying at home during this time of Coronavirus. It covers services during Advent, with readings and suggested hymns for each week. Text of the readings will be set out in the Grapevine, which will be sent round each week as usual. We hope that this sheet will continue to connect you to the rhythm of our worship together.

You might like to light a candle, symbolising Jesus as the Light of the World: and to say the prayers and readings out loud. Remember that even if you are by yourself at home, you are still part of God's Church, praying across the world.

*This season marks the Church's new year. '**Advent**' means 'coming', and we prepare ourselves for the coming of Jesus Christ. It is a serious as well as a joyful time, as we look **back** to his first coming as a human child at Christmas, God becoming one of us with all our vulnerability and weakness, and also look **forward** to the time when Christ will come again to make all things new. Many churches use purple vestments and altar frontals for these Sundays.*

Introduction

We gather together, united in purpose though separate in place, in the name of God, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

*We say together (or why not **sing**!) an opening hymn: see pages 5-12.*

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

We have come together as the family of God in this community. And especially today we thank you, heavenly Father, for the hope of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ at Christmas and for the joy and light which he brings to this dark world. Help us to pray to you in faith, to sing your praise with gratitude, and to listen to your word with eagerness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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.

Turn to us again, O God our Saviour, and let your anger cease from us:
Lord have mercy *Lord have mercy*
Show us your compassion, O Lord, and grant us your salvation:
Christ have mercy *Christ have mercy*
Your salvation is near for those who fear you, that glory may dwell in our land:
Lord have mercy *Lord have mercy*

Hearing God's forgiveness

May almighty God, who sent his Son into the world to save sinners, bring you his pardon and peace, now and for ever. **Amen.**

As God's forgiven people, we say
Thanks be to God for his endless grace.

Readings *We now follow the readings on the Grapevine:*

Collect (the special prayer for each Sunday)

November 29th (Advent Sunday):

First Reading: Isaiah, Chapter 64, verses 1-9

Gospel: St Mark, Chapter 13, verses 24-37

December 6th (Second Sunday in Advent):

First Reading: Isaiah, Chapter 40, verses 1-11

Gospel: St Mark, Chapter 1, verses 1-18

December 13th (Third Sunday in Advent)

First Reading: Isaiah, Chapter 61, verses 1-4 and 8-11

Gospel: St John, Chapter 1, verses 6-8 and 19-28

December 20th (Fourth Sunday in Advent):

First Reading: Second book of Samuel, Chapter 7, verses 1-11 and 16

Gospel: St Luke, Chapter 1, verses 26-38

Reflection *You may wish to read the Reflection on the Grapevine. In a moment of quiet, think what message this may have for you, and ask God to help you live it out in your life this week.*

We declare our faith together

**We believe and trust in God the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us with power from on high.
This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

You may like to base your own prayers around the themes below: feel free to expand and to use your own words

Father, we thank you for the promise of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. May we await his coming with faith and with trust, recognising our own sinfulness but trusting always in his saving love. Make us ready to meet him when he comes: and keep alert, watching and waiting for your kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for your Church throughout the world, especially for Christians who face hardship or persecution. We pray for all the people, communities and churches of this Saffron Walden and Villages Team Ministry, and for our Bishops. We thank you for the appointment of our new Team Rector, and pray that you will bless him and his family richly as they prepare to join us.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for your world; for all world leaders; and for peace. As we await the coming of your Son, born far from home, we pray for all refugees; all those living without peace or security; all those who are poor or hungry; all who face the coming of Christmas with anxiety. May we act positively to help their need.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for all those suffering from COVID-19: all who cannot meet their families or loved ones; all who are uncertain about their future or possible new restrictions. Support all doctors, nurses and carers, and inspire all medical researchers as they work on vaccines. May we all act responsibly for each other.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for our communities in town and villages. Bless all who are sick or in any kind of need. Bless our families, friends and neighbours, both near and far, especially those in need of any kind whom we name before you in the silence of our hearts Hold them in your loving arms, and be with them always.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

*In a moment of silence, offer to God any other needs on your heart.
Merciful Father, accept these prayers, for the sake of your Son, our Saviour
Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Sharing God's Peace

In the tender mercy of our God, the dayspring from on high shall break upon us,
to give light to those who walk in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

As you say this, hold in your mind all who are joining in these prayers today.

The Lord's Prayer *Let us pray together as Jesus has taught us*

**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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the
kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

We ask God's grace for the week ahead

Heavenly Father, sustain us in our joys and in our anxieties. Enfold us in your
peace in our waking and in our sleeping, and may we know your presence with
us now and always: in the name of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

We say (or sing!) a final hymn: see pages 5-12.

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon us, scatter the darkness from before
our path, and make us ready to meet him when he comes in glory; and may the
blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, be with us all
now and evermore.

As we await our coming Saviour, may we go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

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SUGGESTED HYMNS

SUNDAY 29th November

Lo, he comes with clouds descending,
once for mortal sinners slain;
thousand thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of his train:
Alleluia!
God appears on earth to reign.

Every eye shall now behold him
robed in dreadful majesty;
we who set at naught and sold him,
pierced and nailed him to the Tree,
deeply grieving,
shall the true Messiah see.

Those dear tokens of his passion
still his dazzling body bears,
cause of endless exultation
to his ransomed worshippers:
with what rapture
gaze we on those glorious scars!

Yea, Amen, let all adore thee,
high on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory,
claim the kingdom for thine own:
Alleluia!
Thou shalt reign, and thou alone.

--

The advent of our King
Our prayers must now employ,
And we must hymns of welcome sing
In strains of holy joy.

The everlasting Son
Incarnate deigns to be;
Himself a servant's form puts on,
To set his servants free.

Daughter of Sion, rise
To meet thy lowly King;
Nor let thy faithless hear despise
The peace he comes to bring.

As Judge, on clouds of light,
He soon will come again,
And his true members all unite
With him in heav'n to reign.

All glory to the Son
Who comes to set us free,
With Father, Spirit, ever One,
Through all eternity.

SUNDAY 6th December

Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
My hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord.

Is it I, Lord?

I have heard you calling in the night.

I will go, Lord,

If you lead me.

I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them,
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord.....

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord....

SUNDAY 13th December

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
naught be all else to me save that thou art;
thou my best thought in the day and the night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
I ever with thee, and thou with me Lord;
thou my great Father, and I thy true heir;
thou in me dwelling, and I in thy care.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight,
be thou my armour, and be thou my might;
thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tow'r:
raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.

Riches I heed not, nor all the world's praise,
thou mine inheritance through all my days;
thou, and thou only, the first in my heart;
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art!

High King of heaven, when battle is done,
grant heaven's joy to me, O bright heav'n's sun;
Christ of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

--

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
does his successive journeys run;
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
till moons shall wax and wane no more.

People and realms of every tongue
dwell on his love with sweetest song;
and infant voices shall proclaim
their early blessings on his Name.

Blessings abound where'er he reigns:
the prisoners leap to their chains,
the weary find eternal rest,
and all the humble poor are blest.

To him shall endless prayer be made.
And praises throng to crown his head;
His name like incense shall arise
With ev'ry morning sacrifice.

Let ev'ry creature rise and bring
peculiar honours to our King;
angels descend with songs again,
and earth repeat the loud Amen.

SUNDAY 20th December

At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,
every tongue confess him King of glory now.
'Tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord,
who from the beginning was the mighty Word.

At his voice creation sprang at once to sight,
all the angels' faces, all the hosts of light,
thrones and dominations, stars upon their way,
all the heav'nly orders in their great array.

Humbled for a season to receive a name
from the lips of sinners unto whom he came,
faithfully he bore it, spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious when from death he passed.

Bore it up triumphant, with its human light,
through all ranks of creatures to the central height,
to the throne of Godhead, to the Father's breast,
filled it with the glory of that perfect rest.

In your hearts enthrone him; there let him subdue
all that is not holy, all that is not true:
crown him as your captain in temptation's hour;
let his will enfold you in its light and power.

Truly, this Lord Jesus shall return again,
with his Father's glory, with his angel train;
for all wreaths of empire meet upon his brow,
and our hearts confess him King of glory now.

--

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
Tender to me the promise of his word;
In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his Name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
His mercy sure, from age to age the same;
His holy Name, the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by.
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight.
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul; the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure,
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
To children's children and for evermore!