

Joint Liturgical Group
of Great Britain

*Show forth
your light*

Three Celebrations for Advent

Prepare the Way of the Lord

The Jesse Tree

The Advent Refrains

Notes

Three ecumenical Acts of Worship with selected Sequences for use one of the Sunday evenings or weeknights of Advent

As an alternative to using one of the local churches these celebrations of Advent may be held in a concert hall or a public meeting place.

The First Advent Celebration — **Prepare the Way of the Lord**

is a Sequence of Scripture Readings interspersed with Advent hymns, songs and carols.

The Second Advent Celebration — **The Jesse Tree**

is a Sequence of Scripture verses and verses from Advent Hymns built around ten suggested Monograms each depicting a moment in the Story of Salvation.

The Third Advent Celebration — **The Advent Refrains**

is a Sequence of seven Scripture verses and seven verses from Advent Hymns built around the traditional 'Advent Antiphons'.

Each of the three Sequences of the Advent Celebration is set within the same framework as follows:

- Introduction
 - The Advent Greeting
 - The Advent Wreath (with the Blessing of God for the gift of Light)
 - A hymn or song welcoming Christ the Light
 - The Introduction by the Leader
 - The Lord's Prayer
- An Advent Sequence *either*
 - The First Advent Sequence – **Prepare the Way of the Lord** *or*
 - The Second Advent Sequence – **The Jesse Tree** *or*
 - The Third Advent Sequence – **The Advent Refrains**
- Conclusion
 - A final short and appropriate Advent carol
 - An Advent Invocation
 - A Time of Waiting
 - An Advent Collect
 - An Advent Blessing

Introduction

The Advent Greeting

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.

The Advent Wreath

An Advent Wreath is prominently displayed and the candle for the appropriate Sunday of Advent is lit.

Blessed are you, Sovereign God,
creator of light and darkness!
Through patriarchs and prophets
you reveal your promises,
through the testimony of John
you show forth your light
and through the child-bearing of Mary,
the Word becomes flesh.

In your tender compassion
the dawn from on high is breaking upon us
to dispel the lingering shadows of night.
As we look for your coming among us
open our eyes to your presence
and strengthen our hands to do your will,
that the world may rejoice to give you praise.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God forever.

A Hymn or Song

The following or some other hymn or song welcoming Christ the Light.

Creator of the stars of night,
your people's everlasting light,
O Christ, redeemer of us all,
we pray you, hear us when we call.

As light to all in needful hour
you came in love's redeeming power,
and born of Mary, full of grace
you saved the lost of Adam's race.

At your great name, exalted now,
all knees will bend, all hearts will bow:
all things in heav'n and earth shall own
that you are Lord and King alone.

All praise, O Christ, for ever be,
to you whose advent sets us free,
whom with the Father we adore,
and Holy Spirit evermore. Amen

Anonymous Latin Hymn 9th century translated John Mason Neale (1818–1866) alt.

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- *Longing for light (Christ be our Light)* — Bernadette Farrell
 - *Light of the world, you stepped down into darkness* — Tim Hughes
 - *or another hymn or song welcoming Christ the Light.*
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The Introduction

The leader uses these or similar words

Sisters and brothers, we have come together in our Father's presence to rejoice in the great promises of Advent. In this service let us hear in the words of Scripture the good news of the Christ foretold in the prophets. Let us celebrate the reign of God's coming kingdom in our hymns and songs and carols of praise.

As we rejoice with all who wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus let us pray for the world over which Christ rules and for the unity and mission of the church built upon the faith of the apostles and prophets.

Let us pray for those to whom the promised Christ brings peace in need or sickness, in anxiety or loneliness, in darkness or their grief.

Let us remember all those we love, all who have asked for our prayers and let us commend to God all who have died in the hope of the final Advent of reconciliation and joy.

This our Advent prayer and praise let us offer to God our Father in the words that Christ himself has given 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,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

First Advent Sequence

Prepare the Way of the Lord

A series of Bible readings are selected and interspersed with appropriate carols, hymns, anthems and some periods for reflective silence.

When possible, each reading is read by a different person. The readings may be read without announcement or conclusion. One or more of the Scripture passages may take the form of a dramatic presentation.

Reading 1

Isaiah 40:1–8

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah — a voice cries in the wilderness

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together;
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.'

A voice says, 'Cry out!'

And I said, 'What shall I cry?'

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.

Reading 2

Jeremiah 23:5–6

A reading from the Prophet Jeremiah — the Righteous Branch of David

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'

Reading 3

Zechariah 9.9-10

A reading from the Prophet Zechariah — The Coming Ruler of God's People

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!

Lo, your king comes to you;

triumphant and victorious is he,
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim

and the warhorse from Jerusalem;
and the battle-bow shall be cut off,
and he shall command peace to the nations;
his dominion shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Reading 4

Haggai 2.5b-9

A reading from the Prophet Haggai — I will fill this house with splendour

My spirit abides among you; do not fear. For thus says the Lord of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendour, says the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the Lord of hosts. The latter splendour of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the Lord of hosts.

Reading 5

Isaiah 35.1-6

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah — the Return of the Redeemed to Zion

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
'Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert.

Reading 6

Isaiah 61.1-3, 11

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah — The Good News of Deliverance

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

Reading 7

Philippians 4.4-8

A reading from the Letter to the Philippians — the Lord is at hand

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Reading 8

Romans 12.1-2, 8, 11-12

A reading from the Letter to the Romans — The Day is near

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect. Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light.

A reading from the Gospel of Mark — Repent and Believe the Good News

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way;
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

“Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” ’,

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, ‘The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased. And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.’

The Advent Celebration continues on page 18.

Second Advent Sequence

The Jesse Tree

A large outline of a tree, preferably green in colour, is prominently displayed. The tree is either free standing or fixed to a blue background.

During the first three weeks of Advent adults and children come forward placing a selection of gold or silver monograms on the tree as the appropriate Bible verses are read. Additional monograms may simply be hung straight on to the tree.

Each of the monograms symbolizes a moment or event in salvation history such as:

- the sun, moon and stars for creation [Reading 1]
- an apple for the fall [Reading 2]
- an ark or dove for the flood [Reading 3]
- a ladder for Jacob [Reading 4]
- a burning bush for Moses [Reading 5]
- a harp for King David [Reading 6]
- a temple for Solomon [Reading 7]
- an angel for the annunciation [Reading 8]
- a rose or lily for the Blessed Virgin [Reading 9]
- a carpenter's square or hammer for Joseph [Reading 10]
- the manger for the Nativity

Additional or alternative monograms can include:

- a field of stars for Abraham
- a ram for Isaac
- a coat of colours for Joseph
- the two Ten Commandment tablets
- a clay pitcher for Gideon
- a crown for Samuel
- an altar for Elijah
- tongs for Isaiah
- tears for Jeremiah
- a shell for John the Baptist
- a star for the magi
- the XP or an IHS for Jesus the Saviour
- a fish or a cross for Christ.

Between each monogram or group of monograms, verses from Advent hymns may be sung.

Before any monograms are brought forward to the Jesse Tree a reader says:

Introduction

Isaiah 11.1-3

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

Reading 1

Genesis 1.14-18a

A reading from the Book of Genesis — The sun, moon and stars

And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness.

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.*

Reading 2

Genesis 3.5-6

A reading from the Book of Genesis — An 'apple' for the 'fruit' of disobedience

The serpent said, 'God knows that when you eat of the tree in the middle of the garden your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.

O come, O Rod of Jesse, free
Your own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell your people save,
And give the victory o'er the grave.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

Reading 3

Genesis 8.10-12

A reading from the Book of Genesis — An ark or dove for the flood

Noah waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark; and the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. Then he waited another seven days, and sent out the dove; and it did not return to him any more.

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by your 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.*

Reading 4

Genesis 28.12-13

A reading from the Book of Genesis — A ladder for Jacob

Jacob dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the LORD stood beside him and said, 'I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring.

O come, O 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.*

Reading 5

Exodus 3.1b-2, 4, 6-7

A reading from the Book of Exodus — A burning bush for Moses

Moses led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. When the Lord saw that Moses had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush and Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Then the LORD said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them and to bring them out to a land flowing with milk and honey.

O come, O come, O Lord of might
Who to your 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.*

18th century, based on the ancient Advent Antiphons translated by John Mason Neale (1818–1866)

Reading 6

I Samuel 16.13, 17b-18, 21-23

A reading from the First Book of Samuel — A harp for King David

Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed David in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him from that day forward. King Saul commanded his servants, 'Provide for me someone who can play the harp well, and bring him to me.' And David came to Saul, and entered his service. Saul loved David greatly, and he became his armour-bearer. Saul sent to David's father, Jesse, 'Let David remain in my service, for he has found favour in my sight.' And whenever the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, David took the harp and played it with his hand, and Saul would be relieved and feel better, and the evil spirit would depart from him.

Hills of the North, rejoice,
River and mountain-spring,
Hark to the advent voice;
Valley and lowland, sing,
Christ comes in righteousness and love,
He brings salvation from above.

Isles of the Southern seas,
Sing to the listening earth,
Carry on every breeze
Hope of a world's new birth:
In Christ shall all be made anew,
His word is sure, his promise true.

Reading 7

I Kings 8.22-24a, 28a-30

A reading from the First Book of Kings — A temple for Solomon

Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands to heaven. He said, 'O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and steadfast love for your servants who walk before you with all their heart, therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you promised to your servant my father David.

O LORD my God, may your eyes be open night and day towards this house, the place of which you said, "My name shall be there". Hear the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray towards this place; O hear in heaven your dwelling-place; heed and forgive.

Lands of the East, arise!
He is your brightest morn,
Greet him with joyous eyes,
Let praise his path adorn:
Your seers have longed to know their Lord;
To you he comes, the final word.

Shout, as you journey on,
Songs be in every mouth,
Lo, from the North they come,
From East and West and South:
In Jesus all shall find their rest,
In him the universe be blest.

Charles E Oakley (1832–1865)

Reading 8

Luke 1.30-35

A reading from the Gospel of Luke — An angel for the Annunciation of the Lord

The angel said to Mary, 'Do not be afraid, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.'

The Angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
'All hail', said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favoured lady.' Gloria!

'For known a blessed mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honour thee,
thy son shall be Immanuel, by seers foretold;
most highly favoured lady.' Gloria!

Reading 9

Luke 1.46-49

A reading from the Gospel of Luke — A rose or lily for the Blessed Virgin

And Mary said,
'My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
'To me be as it pleaseth God', she said,
'My soul shall laud and magnify his holy name':
most highly favoured lady. Gloria!

Reading 10

Matthew 1.20-25

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew — A carpenter's square or hammer for Joseph

An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel',
which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took Mary as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Of her, Immanuel, the Christ was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say,
'Most highly favoured lady.' Gloria!

Basque Carol adapted Sabine Baring-Gould (1834–1924)

The Advent Celebration continues on page 18.

Third Advent Sequence

The Advent Refrains *sometimes called 'The Advent Antiphons'*

The readings begin without announcing book, chapter or verses. Each reading is followed by the Antiphon with a congregational response together with the verse of a hymn.

Reading 1

I Corinthians 2.7-10

O Sapientia

But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written,

'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the human heart conceived,
what God has prepared for those who love him'

— these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High,
reaching from one end to the other mightily,
and sweetly ordering all things:

Come and teach us the way of prudence.

Hark, the glad sound! the Saviour comes,
the Saviour promised long;
let every heart prepare a throne
and every voice a song.

Reading 2

Acts 7.31-35

O Adonai

An angel appeared to Moses in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning bush. When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight; and as he approached to look, there came the voice of the Lord: "I am the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Moses began to tremble and did not dare to look. Then the Lord said to him, "Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. I have surely seen the mistreatment of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to rescue them. Come now, I will send you to Egypt."

'It was this Moses whom God now sent as both ruler and liberator through the angel who appeared to him in the bush, who led his people out, having performed wonders and signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for forty years.

O Adonai, and leader of the House of Israel,
who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush
and gave him the law on Sinai:

Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm.

On him the Holy Spirit pours
the promised sacred fire;
his power and wisdom, zeal and love
the anointed Son inspire.

Reading 3

Romans 15.7-12

O Radix Jesse

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

‘Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles,
and sing praises to your name’;
and again he says, ‘Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people’;
and again, ‘Praise the Lord, all you Gentile and let all the peoples praise him’;
and again Isaiah says, ‘The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the
Gentiles shall hope.’

O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign among the peoples;
before you kings will shut their mouths,
to you the nations will make their prayer:
Come and deliver us, and delay no longer.

He comes the prisoners to release
in Satan’s bondage held;
the gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.

Reading 4

Revelation 3.8, 11-13

O Clavis David

‘And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David,
who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens:

Look, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

O Key of David and sceptre of the House of Israel;
you open and no one can shut;
you shut and no one can open:
**Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house,
those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.**

He comes to cleanse the human soul
from fear and from sin,
and by the entrance of his grace
brings light and life within.

Reading 5

Revelation 22.12-13, 16-17

O Oriens

'See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone's work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.'

'It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.'

The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.'

And let everyone who hears say, 'Come.'

And let everyone who is thirsty come.

Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.

O Morning Star,

splendour of light eternal and sun of righteousness:

**Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death.**

He comes the broken heart to bind,

each wounded soul to heal,

and in the gospel for the poor

his riches to reveal.

Reading 6

Acts 4.5-12

O Rex Gentium

The next day the rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. When they had made the prisoners Peter and John stand in their midst, they inquired, 'By what power or by what name did you do this?'

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders, if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. This Jesus is

“the stone that was rejected by you, the builders;
it has become the cornerstone.”

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.'

O King of the nations, and their desire,
the cornerstone making both one:

**Come and save the human race,
which you fashioned from clay.**

We hear the trumpets sound aloud

God's year of jubilee;

debts are in Christ remitted now

and slaves to sin set free.

O Emmanuel

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.'

O Emmanuel, our King and our lawgiver,
the hope of the nations and their Saviour:
Come and save us, O Lord our God.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace,
your welcome shall proclaim,
and heaven with joy resounds to ring
with your beloved name.

Scottish Paraphrases, 1781

The Advent Celebration continues on page 18.

Conclusion

Each of form or sequence of the Advent Celebration continues with the following,

Advent Carol

A final short and appropriate Advent carol.

An Advent Invocation

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus Christ,
in the beginning you gave us the tree of life,
Come Lord Jesus.

Come Lord Jesus.

Lord Jesus Christ,
on the tree of the cross you took away our sins;
Come Lord Jesus.

Come Lord Jesus.

Lord Jesus Christ,
You are the new branch from the tree of David,
Bringing hope to all the world;
Come Lord Jesus.

Come Lord Jesus.

A Time of Waiting

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel.

Who has come to his people and set them free.

We wait for your loving-kindness, O God.

In the midst of your temple.

A significant period of silence follows.

Let us pray

Here in our midst, O God of mystery,
you disclose the secret hidden for countless ages.

For you we wait; for you we listen.

As we hear your voice may we, like Mary,
embrace your will and become the dwelling-place of your Word.

Grant this through him whose coming is certain,
whose day draws near;

your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

Amen.

An Advent Collect

Almighty God,
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and to put on the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;
that on the last day,
when he shall come again in his glorious majesty
to judge the living and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

An Advent Blessing

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 the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

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