



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MISSOURI

LITURGICAL RESOURCES FOR THE SEASON OF ADVENT

The Season of Advent takes its name from the Latin word adventus, meaning "coming" or "visit." Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. For Christians Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year. During Advent we prepare for and anticipate the coming of Christ. We remember the longing of our Jewish ancestors for a Messiah and our own longing for, and need of, forgiveness, salvation, and new beginning.

THE BIDDING FOR ADVENT

A hymn may be sung. Once the community has gathered the Presider greets the assembly.

Presider Light and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord.

People **Thanks be to God!**

Presider Dear friends in Christ, as we travel towards Bethlehem in this journey of Advent, we come together in the midst of a busy season to take a breath. To slow down as we anticipate Jesus' coming once more into the world. We are invited for a time to breathe in together the life that God gives us; to listen for the beating of God's heart and the blessings and lessons this season brings. As we gather for this time of worshipful anticipation let us in the silence rest in God's presence.

A prolonged silence is kept.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Presider May Christ, the One whose coming we await, fill our homes and hearts with joyful anticipation as we journey to the manger. Amen.

Presider Each week we light an Advent candle as a symbol of our journey. With its light comes our prayers and our stories.

ADVENT WEEK 1: The candle of this first week of Advent is a candle of **HOPE**. Today the flame of this candle reminds us of the hope that came to this world when Jesus was born and his presence with us. Jesus said "I came so that everyone would have life, life in all its fullness."

Once the candle is lit, the Presider continues

Presider You called the patriarchs and matriarchs to live by the light of faith and to journey in the hope of your promised fulfillment. May we be obedient to your call and be ready and watchful to receive your Christ, a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Amen.

ADVENT WEEK 2: The candle of this second week of Advent is a candle of **PEACE**. Today the flame of this candle reminds us of the peace that Jesus brings into this world and his presence with us. Jesus said "I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give. It isn't like the peace that this world can give. So don't be worried or afraid."

Once the candles are lit, the Presider continues

Presider Of old you spoke by the mouth of your prophets, but in our days you speak through your Son, whom you have appointed the heir of all things. Grant us, your people, to walk in his light, that we may be found ready and watching when he comes again in glory and judgment. Amen.

ADVENT WEEK 3: The candle of this third week of Advent is a candle of **JOY**. Today the flame of this candle reminds us of the joy that Jesus brings into this world and his presence with us. Jesus said "Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete."

Once the candles are lit, the Presider continues

Presider Your prophet John the Baptist was witness to the truth as a burning and shining light. May we your servants rejoice in his light, and so be led to witness to him who is the Lord of our coming kingdom, Jesus our Savior and Sovereign of the ages. Amen.

ADVENT WEEK 4: The candle of this fourth week of Advent is a candle of **LOVE**. Today the flame of this candle reminds us of the love that came to this world when Jesus was born and his presence with us. Jesus said "As the God has loved me, so I have loved you; remain in my love."

Once the candles are lit, the Presider continues

Presider Your light has shone in our shadowed world through the child-bearing of blessed Mary; grant that we who have seen your glory may daily be renewed in your image and prepared like her for the coming of your Son, who is the Lord and Savior of all. Amen.

The Liturgy continues with the Greeting and Collect for Purity. One of the following greetings may be used.

THE GREETING

Presider Blessed are you, Sovereign God, just and true:

People *To you be praise and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Or

Presider Blessed be the Holy One whose coming we await,

People *And blessed be the One who comes to set all people free. Amen.*

Or

Presider Blessed are you, Lord God of our ancestors, in Christ you bring salvation to our world.

People *Blessed be God for ever and ever. Amen.*

Then may be added

Presider In the tender compassion of our God

People *The dawn from on high shall break upon us,*

Presider To shine on those who dwell in the shadow of death,

People *To guide our feet into the way of peace.*

THE COLLECT FOR PURITY

Presider Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid:

People **Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, so that we may truly love you, and worthily praise your holy name; through our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.**

In the season of Advent the confession of sin follows the opening collect.

THE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Deacon Holy God, we have fallen short in loving you and loving our neighbors; we stand beside each other and ask for the forgiveness of our sins. *Silence is kept for a time.*

Deacon Most Holy God, in the midst of this season of expectation and new life, we confess:

People **We have resisted the light of your love; we have not fully shared the gifts entrusted to us; and we have not treasured the gifts of others around us. Holy Trinity, make us holy. Holy God, make us whole. Amen.**

The Presider offers assurance of God's forgiveness.

Presider May the Trinity of Love bring you back to God and forgive you all your sins; be assured of God's eternal love in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The liturgy continues with the Collect of the Day.

THE ADVENT CREED:

Our Advent Creed seeks to affirm our trust in God found in Jesus Christ.

Deacon Let us stand and affirm our hope in the light of Christ.

Deacon Do you believe and trust in God?

People **We believe in God, eternal, almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Deacon Do you believe and trust in Jesus the Christ?

People **We believe in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of all, the Only Begotten One; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, lived and loved among us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; who descended to the dead, and on the third day rose again; Jesus, Our Savior, ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the loving God, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

Deacon Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

People **We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic and apostolic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead, and life everlasting. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE: ADVENT

Deacon O God whose Messiah's coming we await, keep us awake and alert to watch for the signs of your coming. As the fig tree puts forth its leaves and the portents of the new day dawns, keep us awake and alert for the second advent of Christ our Savior.

A member of the community leads the Prayers of the People.

Leader Keep us awake and alert to our humble calling to be the church of Christ in the world. Empower all bishops, priests and deacons to proclaim justice and truth as they care for your holy people especially Michael our Presiding Bishop, Deon our bishop, N. our clergy. Christ our hope;

People ***Shine in our hearts.***

Leader Keep us awake and alert to the needs and wants of the nations of the world. Enlighten the leaders of the nations (*especially N.*) to attend to the needs of the lowest and the least, the last and the left-out, that justice and peace may be our strength and equity our common good. Christ our hope;

People ***Shine in our hearts.***

Leader Keep us awake and alert to the needs of the sick and suffering. Embolden our love that we may care with compassion for those in need, especially N., are there others? *Silence is kept for a time.* Give them to know of the healing care of Jesus. Christ our hope;

People ***Shine in our hearts.***

Leader Keep us awake and alert to the needs of friends and strangers. Energize this community of faith to reach out with compassion to transform our neighborhoods and communities to reflect the beloved community of peace. Christ our hope;

People ***Shine in our hearts.***

Leader Keep us awake and alert to those who mourn, those who grieve and those who are despondent or depressed. Enable us to be Christ's hands of healing and wholeness that we may be agents of comfort and hope. Christ our hope;

People ***Shine in our hearts.***

Leader Keep us awake and alert to the shortness of our time. Enfold those who have ended their course on earth and have joined the martyrs and saints in the region of light (especially N.). May we, in our own time, come to the joys of your eternal reign. Christ our hope;

People ***Shine in our hearts.***

Leader Keep us awake and alert to... (*Petitions for thanksgivings, creation, stewardship, local concerns, etc. may be added here.*) Christ our hope;

People ***Shine in our hearts.***

The Presider offers to concluding prayer.

Presider Shine forth O God of Hosts, encourage, embolden and energize your people to keep awake and alert to the coming of Jesus the Christ, that he, at his second Advent, may find us ready to greet him and eager to serve those in need; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE: ADVENT THROUGH EASTER (EXCLUDING LENT)

SEASONS: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany & Easter

THEME: Light & Reconciliation

Please note that the responses, "Christ be our light; Shine in our hearts" may be omitted. Silence then follows the petitions.

While two voices are listed in the prayers, the prayers may be offered by one voice.

SEASONAL INTRODUCTIONS

ADVENT:

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined." In this season of anticipation and hope, let us be seekers of the light and peddlers of hope found in Christ Jesus our Savior.

CHRISTMAS:

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." As we welcome the birth of the Christ-Child in this season of hope, may we in our prayers and actions shine with the radiance of love's true light.

EPIPHANY:

"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you." Guided by the leading of a star, may we reflect in our daily life and work the glory and radiance of Christ our light.

EASTER:

"Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised." In the light of resurrection's power, we are given new birth in Christ Jesus. Having been made new, let us offer our prayers to the Holy One.

ADVENT:

Leader You who dwell in the darkness and the light, in the silence and in the sound; dwell in the hearts of your people that in hope, peace, joy and love we may be agents of your heavenly reign and await with anticipation the coming of Christ the Morning Star. Christ be our light.

People **Shine in our hearts.**

CHRISTMAS :

Leader You who fashioned this holy night/day/season with the radiance of the Word made flesh and filled the air with the song of angels; fashion us, like Mary the Godbearer, in to a people who seek the Christ-Child in the face of the outcast, the outsider, and the other. Fill our hearts with the song of the angels that we may be makers and pursuers of peace. Christ be our light.

People **Shine in our hearts.**

EPIPHANY:

Leader You who by the leading of a star guided the Magi to the brightness of the Holy Child of Bethlehem; lead us by the guiding of Jesus our Savior to the light of revelation, that we may value and honor the varied gifts of our sisters and brothers and together present the offering of our life's labor at the feet of our Savior. Christ be our light.

People **Shine in our hearts.**

EASTER:

Leader You who in dawn's first light summoned creation anew through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead; summon us afresh to be sentinels of light, hope and resurrection that in a world gripped by death, despair, and desolation we may be beacons of life, joy and love. Christ be our light.

People **Shine in our hearts.**

Voice 1 You who framed the brightness of the first light in creation; dispel the arrogance, animosity, and anger that shatters the unity of your holy Church.

Voice 2 Fill your faithful people with the radiant light of truth, that we may be made one in faith, hope, and love. Christ be our light.

People **Shine in our hearts.**

Voice 1 You who delivered your people from the misery of bondage in slavery to the land of promise; set us free us from enslavement to division, disunity, and distrust in our public life and labor.

Voice 2 Illumine those in authority with the light of vision, that they may lead the peoples of the nations to greater unity and concord. Christ be our light.

People **Shine in our hearts.**

Voice 1 You who patterned the stars and called the sun in to being, who appointed the moon and chartered the cosmos.

Voice 2 Pattern the hearts of people everywhere to see in each other the beauty of the universe and the splendor of creation, that divisions of race, class, gender, and ethnicity may dissolve into one common humanity. Christ be our light.

People **Shine in our hearts.**

Voice 1 You who shower comfort and hope to the lowest, the lost, and the least; shower the light of compassion on the sick, the sorrowful and the suffering especially those we name [_____].

Voice 2 Help us to be your compassion and hope in the world. Christ be our light.

People **Shine in our hearts.**

Voice 1 You who welcome into the brilliant light of eternity the souls of those who have died; welcome those whose lives have been cut short by violence, warfare, and strife.

Voice 2 Shine the light of hope on our faithful dead, especially those we now name [_____]. Christ be our light.

People **Shine in our hearts.**

Voice 1 You who delight in the complexity of creation and the splendor of each creature; help us to delight in the diversity of the earth, our island home.

Voice 2 Inspire your people to care for the earth and its creatures and repent and return when we abuse, misuse, and neglect our fellow creatures. Christ be our light.

People **Shine in our hearts.**

CONCLUDING COLLECT:

May Christ, the Morning-Star who knows no setting, find us ever burning with the light of love, the spirit of truth, and the wellspring of hope; that following the way of Jesus and filled with the flame of the Holy Spirit, we may be a holy people whose lives and living inspire, incite, and inflame your world with compassion and care. Through Jesus the Christ the light of the world. Amen.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

After all have received communion the Presider says

Presider God is with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray.

People ***Eternal God, for whom we await, you have fed us with the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation: keep us ever watchful, that we may be ready to stand before the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.***

ADVENT DISMISSAL

Presider Our worship is ended, our service in the world begins. As we await our coming Savior, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**