



November 30, 2025

First Sunday of Advent

The new church year begins with a wake-up call: Christ is coming soon! In today's readings both Paul and Jesus challenge us to wake from sleep, for we know neither the day nor hour of the Lord's coming. Isaiah proclaims the day when God will gather all people on the holy mountain and there will be no more war or suffering. Though we vigilantly watch for the promised day of salvation, we wait for what we already have: Christ comes among us this day as the word and meal that strengthens our faith in the promises of God.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection save us from the threatening dangers of our sins, and enlighten our walk in the way of your salvation, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

About the Prayer of the Day

The prayer of the day, based on collect #778 in the Gregorian Sacramentary, a seventh-century book of prayers, incorporates the imagery of light from today's readings. All sixteen Advent prayers begin with "Stir up," a traditional English translation of the original Latin *excita*.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation. *Alleluia.* (Ps. 85:7)

Readings and Psalm

Isaiah 2:1-5

The visionary message presented in this reading focuses on a future day when God establishes a universal reign of peace. Divine decisions will make war obsolete, and the worshipping community responds: "Let us walk in the light of that Lord now!"

Psalm 122

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD." (Ps. 122:1)

Romans 13:11-14

Paul compares the advent of Christ to the coming of dawn. We live our lives today in light of Christ's coming in the future.

Matthew 24:36-44

Jesus describes his second coming as a sudden, turbulent event that will bring about deep change to our normal, day-to-day lives. Therefore, he urges people to stay awake, be aware, and wait expectantly, because the Son of Man will come unannounced.

Preface Advent

Color Blue

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

God of the people, we come seeking wisdom and instruction. Uphold and strengthen lay leaders, teachers, deacons, pastors, and bishops. Teach us your ways and lead us in your paths.

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

God of the earth, we seek your goodness in the grandeur of creation. Empower us to care for forests and oceans, as we see you in the world around us. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

God of the nations, grant wisdom to leaders, judges, and mediators. Cast out words of hate and transform them into words for building up community. Remake implements of war to sow peace. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

God of healing, bring comfort and strength. We pray for our kindred and companions who are ill or despairing (*especially . . . and those affected by HIV and AIDS as we remember World AIDS Day*). Surround all with care and consolation.

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

God of new possibilities, when addiction wounds, jealousy tears down, and relationships fray, show us how to journey with one another. Nurture therapists, counselors, and sponsors in their care for others. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of all time, build up our lives that we would reflect your grace. At the last, bring us with all the saints (*especially*) to your holy city where peace and goodness make a home.

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

Amen.

Ideas for the Day

- Happy New Year! As Lutherans, our lives are shaped by the church year, of which Advent marks the beginning. Encourage worshipers (including yourself!) to take up the theme of a “new year” as they look ahead. Now might be a time to introduce a new liturgical setting or prayer petition into the worship service. What hopes and dreams for the new year exist in the hearts of your worshipers? Consider making a spiritual “New Year’s resolution” together, such as strengthening habits of prayer or Bible-reading, seeking Sabbath rest, or caring for neighbors in a new way.
- The popular Left Behind book series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins draws much of its inspiration from this week’s gospel reading, in which Jesus asserts that “as in the days before the flood . . . one will be taken, and one will be left” (Matt. 24:38, 40). In the novel, true believers are “raptured” and those “left behind” are counted as unsaved. A careful reading of Jesus’ words and the story of Noah, however, makes clear that Noah and his family (that is, those being saved) were actually the ones “left behind.” Many worshipers may have read this series or watched the movie adaptations and may even hold its broad outlines to be true. This is an opportunity to speak directly but graciously to that popular misinterpretation.
- Jesus tells his followers that they “must be ready,” for he is coming “at an hour [they] do not expect” (Matt. 24:44). Thoughts of Jesus’ return often evoke fear, but Jesus doesn’t tell us to be afraid. He tells us to be ready. How and why do we get ready for big events in our lives—holidays, visitors, weddings, births, etc.? Are there parallels to how we can get ready to receive Jesus when he returns? Can “being ready” lessen fears surrounding Christ’s return, and instead increase our faith and anticipation?

Let the Children Come

Today we awaken to a new liturgical year and hear a call to keep awake for Jesus’ presence in and around us. Waking up can be hard. Invite children to share what helps them wake up. They can bring items from home to show how they wake up each day. God shows up in all kinds of ways to help us pay attention to what matters most. This can be soothing, nourishing, or sometimes even a little scary. God knows just the right way to get our

attention and to help us see the need around us with fresh eyes and open hearts.

Assembly Song Offering Song for Advent

Blessed is the one ACS 929

Come now, O Prince of peace/*Ososó, ososó* ELW 247, LS 13

He came down ELW 253

Gathering

^{1R HG} Come to be our hope, O Jesus/*Tú, Jesús, nuestra esperanza/Vem, Jesus, nossa esperança* ACS 904, GS2 18

Creator of the stars of night ELW 245

^{HG} The King shall come ELW 260, LBW 33, LS 5

My Lord, what a morning ELW 438, TFF 40, WOV 627

^{HG} Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding ELW 246

Hymn of the Day

These suggestions reflect most closely the day’s readings and themes and could be used as the hymn of the day or in another appropriate place in the service.

^{HG} Wake, awake, for night is flying ELW 436, LBW 31 *WACHET AUF*

^{HG} Lo! He comes with clouds descending ELW 435, LBW 27

HELMSLEY

^{HG} Freedom Is Coming ACS 903, TFF 46 *FREEDOM IS COMING*

^{HG} Keep your lamps trimmed and burning ACS 949 *KEEP YOUR*

LAMPS

^{HG} O Lord, how shall I meet you ELW 241, LBW 23 *WIE SOLL ICH*

DICH EMPFANGEN

Communion

^{HG} Each winter as the year grows older ELW 252

^{1R} God the sculptor of the mountains ELW 736

Sending

^{HG} Rejoice, rejoice, believers ELW 244, LBW 25

Come now, O God ACS 902

Soon and very soon ELW 439, TFF 38, WOV 744, LS 2,

W&P 128

Fling wide the door ELW 259, LBW 32

Additional Assembly Songs

These suggestions are also suitable for the day or season and could be used as gathering, sending, offering, or communion song as appropriate.

^{2R} Awake, O Spirit of the watchmen LBW 382

The King of glory W&P 136, LS 8

The advent of our God LBW 22

^{1R HG} Stay awake, be ready LS 1

^{PS} Me alegré cuando me dijeron LLC 413

Un nuevo amanecer/*A dawn of hope* LLC 469

For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits GTG 89

^{1R} = relates to 1st reading

^{2R} = relates to 2nd reading

^{HG} = relates to hymn of the day

^{PS} = relates to psalm

^{HG} = relates to holy gospel

^P = available in Prelude Music Planner

- 1R Mountain of God VT 11
Light is kindled in the darkness giamusic.com/unbound
A Way in the Wilderness (Hermanson, *Isaiah*)
johnhermanson.net
- HG O Children Wait (Swearingen, Lumen) thereverbcollective.com
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Brown, *A Lacey Brown Christmas*) laceybrownmusic.bandcamp.com
Our Song in the Night (Van Patter, *Lamentations*) bifroststarts.music.bandcamp.com
- 1R Plowshare Prayer (LaJoye, *Plowshare Prayer*) spencerlajoye.bandcamp.com
- 2R Wake Up (Leonard/Jordan/Chaffer) CCLI

Music for the Day

Choral

- P ♪ Bach, J. S. “Zion Hears the Watchmen Singing” from *Bach for All Seasons Choirbook*. U, org. AFP 9780800658540.
- P Haugen, Kyle S. “Lost in the Night.” SAB, pno. AFP 9780800659240.
Schalk, Carl. “Stir Up Your Power, O Lord, and Come.” SAB, org. MSM 50-0205.
- ♪ Thomas, André J. “Keep Your Lamps.” SATB, opt perc. HIN HMC577.

Children’s Choir

- P Patterson, Mark. “Advent Prayer” from *ChildrenSing: Seven Anthems for Elementary Age Singers*. U, pno, opt hb/hc. AFP 9780800677695.
- P Patterson, Mark. “Light One Candle” from *Young ChildrenSing*. U, kybd, opt hc/Orff. AFP 9780800676803.
- Thangaraj, M. Thomas. “I Was Glad” from *Halle, Halle: We Sing the World Round*. U/2 pt, opt shruti box/str inst. CG CGC41.

Keyboard / Instrumental

- ♪ Bach, J. S. “Wachet auf” from *Schübler Chorales*. Org. Various editions.
- P ♪ Farlee, Robert Buckley. “Helmsley” from *Pull Out the Stops*, vol. 3. Org. AFP 9781506496092.
- P ♪ Howarth, Mary. “Keep Your Lamps” from *God of Hope: Global Hymn Tunes for Piano*. Pno. AFP 9781506496023.
- P Organ, Anne Krentz. “Haf trones lampa färdig” from *Piano Plus: Hymns for Piano and Treble Instrument, Advent/Christmas*. Pno, B-flat or C inst. AFP 9780800638542.

Handbell

- ♪ Mallory, Ron. “Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying.” 3-5 oct hb, opt 3 oct hc, L2+. LOR 20/1661L.
- Moklebust, Cathy. “Lost in the Night.” 3-5 oct hb, opt 3 oct hc, vln, L2+. CG CGB1014.

- ♪ Stults, Tyleen. “Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending” from *Three Advent Hymns*. 2-3 oct, L2. CPH 977424PDF.

Monday, December 1

Andrew, Apostle (transferred)

Andrew was the first of the Twelve. He is known as a fisherman who left his net to follow Jesus. As a part of his calling, he brought other people, including Simon Peter, to meet Jesus. The Byzantine church honors Andrew as its patron and points out that because he was the first of Jesus’ followers, he was, in the words of John Chrysostom, “The Peter before Peter.” Together with Philip, Andrew leads a number of Greeks to speak with Jesus, and it is Andrew who shows Jesus a boy with five barley loaves and two fish. Andrew is said to have died on a cross saltire, an X-shaped cross.

Wednesday, December 3

Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia, died 1552

Francis Xavier (SAYV-yehr) was born in the Basque region of northern Spain. Francis’s native Basque language is unrelated to any other, and Francis admitted that learning languages was difficult for him. Despite this obstacle he became a missionary to India, Southeast Asia, Japan, and the Philippines. At each point he learned the local language and, like Martin Luther, wrote catechisms for the instruction of new converts. Another obstacle Francis overcame to accomplish his mission work was a propensity to seasickness. All his travels to the Far East were by boat. Together with Ignatius Loyola and five others, Francis formed the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). Francis spoke out against the Spanish and Portuguese colonists when he discovered their oppression of the Indigenous people to whom he was sent as a missionary.

Thursday, December 4

John of Damascus, theologian and hymnwriter, died around 749

Born to a wealthy family in Damascus and well educated, John left a career in finance and government to become a monk in an abbey near Jerusalem. He wrote many hymns as well as theological works. Foremost among the latter is a work called *The Fount of Wisdom*, which touches on philosophy, heresy, and the orthodox faith. This summary of patristic theology remained influential for centuries.