



November 29, 2026

First Sunday of Advent

Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, 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 seventh-century Gregorian Sacramentary, is rare in being addressed to Christ. The opening word in Latin was *Excita*, which has long been translated into English as “Stir up.” We pray that Christ’s power will be stirred up among us.

Gospel Acclamation

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

Readings and Psalm

Isaiah 64:1-9

This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. (Ps. 80:7)

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.

Mark 13:24-37

Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

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 hope and expectation, we bring to God our prayers for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Strengthen your church in this season of anticipation. Nourish all people who gather around word and water, bread and cup.

Reassure any whose faith feels dry that you are always near. God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

Come and restore the earth. Give rest to weary lands and renewed life to species at risk. Make us wise stewards of the places we call home. God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

Bring peace among all nations and communities. Embolden leaders to seek creative and sustainable resolutions to war and conflict. Show us new possibilities in places where peace has been elusive (*especially*). God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

Sustain all who are heavy with weariness, grief, illness, or worry (*especially*). Comfort families who are estranged from one another and any who are separated from loved ones.

God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

Inspire liturgists, preachers, musicians, and all who lead our worship and prayer. May we be prepared as we await Christ’s coming this Advent season. God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You embrace all the saints from the far reaches of the earth. We remember with care all who have died and now abide in their eternal home. God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

We entrust these and the prayers of our hearts to you, most holy God, in the name of Christ Jesus our Savior.

Amen.

Ideas for the Day

- The prayer of the day for the first Sunday of Advent in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (p. 18) is one of just a handful that are specifically addressed to Jesus: “Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come.” We more typically pray “through” Jesus. Of course, we can always pray either way, but breaking the usual pattern in worship signals that something significant is happening. This particular variation highlights the urgency of our need for Christ. On the first Sunday of Advent, we declare that we desperately need Jesus here and now, in the present, not just in the past through the stories of Christmas.
- Do the apocalyptic images in the readings for the first Sunday of Advent seem strange? Shouldn’t we be preparing for Christmas? Historically, though, Advent is at least as much about the second coming of Jesus as the first. It might be the focus on Christmas that needs explaining! We (eventually) remember how Jesus arrived in the past in order to prepare for his arrival in the present and future. For more on the apocalyptic themes of Advent, see *Advent: The Once and Future Coming of Jesus Christ*, a collection of sermons from Episcopal priest Fleming Rutledge (<https://bookwi.se/advent/>).
- What does Jesus mean when he says, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” (Mark 13:31)? *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, Fortress, 2003, p. 384) explains that in his cultural context, it went without saying that of course the earth would not pass away, since it was made by God, who called it good. Jesus is not predicting that heaven and earth will be destroyed. Instead, with this outrageous statement, he is reassuring his disciples that even if something utterly impossible happened, it would be *even more impossible* for his word to fail them. They can trust him, even if everything else proves untrustworthy.

Let the Children Come

There is no climbing up to God—put those ladders away! God comes down. This is the core message of the Advent and Christmas seasons: God in Jesus comes to be with us. Incorporate the theme of “God comes down” into worship by pointing out the ways God’s presence and love come to us: in the kindness of others, with the bread and wine at the communion table, through the offering we share with those in need. The Advent hymn “He came down” (ELW 253) is fun for children of God of all ages. Have a basket of shakers available for the song—better yet, have children help distribute them. God coming down is a reason to celebrate!

Assembly Song Offering Song for Advent

Come, now, O Prince of peace/*Ososō, ososō* ELW 247
Light one candle to watch for Messiah ELW 240, WOV 630
We are waiting for Jesus ACS 905

Gathering

^{1R} Kneeling in the dust to form us ACS 1099
Come to be our hope, O Jesus/*Tú, Jesús, nuestra esperanza/
Ven, Jesus, nossa esperança* ACS 904, GS2 18
^{HG} The King shall come ELW 260, LBW 33
^{HG} Come now, O God ACS 902
Christ, Be Our Light ELW 715

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} Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn ELW 242, WOV 633
REJOICE, REJOICE
^{HG} Lo! He comes with clouds descending ELW 435, LBW 27
HELMSEY
^{HG} My Lord, what a morning ELW 438, TFF 40, WOV 627
BURLEIGH
^{HG} Now the heavens start to whisper ACS 901 *SUO GÂN*

Communion

^{2R} All who believe and are baptized ELW 442, LBW 194
^{2R} Jesus, still lead on ELW 624, LBW 341

Sending

^{HG} Rejoice, rejoice, believers ELW 244, LBW 25
Soon and very soon ELW 439, TFF 38, WOV 744, W&P 128
Keep your lamps trimmed and burning ACS 949
Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding! ELW 246, LBW 37

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.

^{1R} Have thine own way, Lord TFF 152
^{2R} Come, thou Daybreak justly rising LIW 53
Await the hand of God CBM 57
^{HG} A story for all people W&P 2
^{1R} Ven, Señor, no tardes LLC 280
^{HG} Tiempo de esperanza LLC 279
Awaken, sleepers W4 393
^{PS} Restáuranos, oh Dios/*Restore Us, O God* SSS 72
Watchman, tell us of the night GTG 97, H82 640

Coming Back Again (Calhoun/Oliver/Jamgochian/White)

CCLI

He Comes (Bluett/Zach) CCLI

He Who Is to Come (Carnes/Stanfill/Curran) CCLI

In a Land by Death O'er Shadowed (Wardell/Bluett/Alattas/
Zach) CCLI

^{1R} O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide (Partain, *The Beauty to
Come*) nathanpartain.bandcamp.com

^{1R} Rend the Heavens (Hastings/Llewellyn/Gilkeson) CCLI

Music for the Day

Choral

Dent, Cedric. "My Lord! What a Morning." SATB, a cap. Gentry
JG2698.

^P Distler, Hugo. "O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide (O Heiland,
reiss die Himmel auf)" from *Chantry Choirbook: Sacred
Music for All Seasons*. SATB, a cap. AFP 9780800657772.

^P Frahm, Frederick. "Come, Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace." U/2 pt
mx, pno. AFP 9781506495255.

^P [♯] Keesecker, Thomas. "Now the Heavens Start to Whisper."
SAB, pno. AFP 9781506426105.

Children's Choir

Biery, James. "Lighting of the Advent Candle" from *Singing
through the Church Year*. U, pno, opt gtr. MSM 90-37.

Burkhardt, Michael. "Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding"
from *Hodie Christus natus est! The Church Year through
Song, Volume 1: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany*. U/2 pt,
Orff, rec, pno. MSM 55-1000.

Vas, Charles. "Jyothi dho Prabhu (Give Us Light)" from *Sing
with the World: Global Songs for Children*. U, opt bell,
drone. GIA G-7339.

Keyboard / Instrumental

^P [♯] Billingham, Richard. "Burleigh" from *Augsburg Organ
Library: Advent*. Org. AFP 9780800658953.

^P Manz, Paul. "Haf trones lampa färdig" from *Augsburg Organ
Library: Advent*. Org. AFP 9780700658953.

^P [♯] Raabe, Nancy M. "Helmsley" from *Day of Arising: A Tapes-
try of Musical Traditions*. Pno. AFP 9780800637460.

^P Sedio, Mark. "Suo Gân" from *A Global Piano Tour*. Pno. AFP
9780800658199.

Handbell

^P [♯] Afdahl, Lee J. "Freu dich sehr" from *Hymn Accompaniments
for Handbells, Volume 1: Advent and Christmas*. 3-5 oct
hb, L2. AFP 9780806698076.

[♯] Dennis, Karissa. "My Lord, What a Morning." 3-5 oct hb, opt
3-4 oct hc, L2+. MSM 30-510.

[♯] Stults, Tyleen. "Three Advent Hymns." 2-3 oct hb, L2. CPH
977424.

^{1R} = relates to 1st reading ^{2R} = relates to 2nd reading [♯] = relates to hymn of the day
^{PS} = relates to psalm ^{HG} = relates to holy gospel ^P = available in Prelude Music Planner

Monday, November 30

Andrew, Apostle

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.

Thursday, 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.

Friday, 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 Fountain of Wisdom*, which touches on philosophy, heresy, and the orthodox faith. This summary of patristic theology remained influential for centuries.