

advent | 2023

a guide for prayer



the church of the incarnation
harrisonburg, va

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acknowledgements

cover art:

The Glory of the Cross

Sawai Chinnawong | 2003 | Acrylic on canvas

morning prayer art (p. 5):

Madonna of the Beggars (Madonna di Loreto)

Caravaggio | 1604 | Italian

evening prayer art (p. 10):

Christ and His Mother Studying Scriptures

Henry Ossawa Tanner | 1909 | Oil on canvas

Christmas prayer art (p. 17):

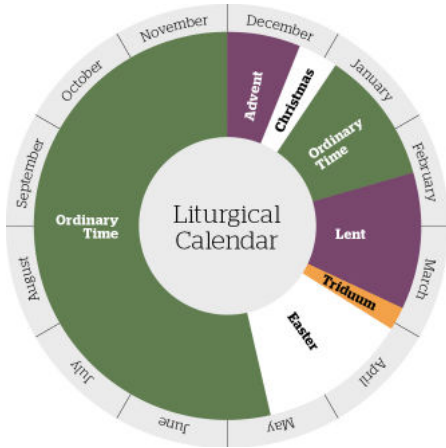
Ancient of Days

William Blake | 1794 | British | Print

Several pieces of artwork came from or were inspired by the devotionals produced by Biola University. A special thanks to Anna Keath Smith for curating much of the other artwork in this guide.

introduction

We all naturally use some way to keep track of time. If you're a student or have students at home, semesters structure the calendar until the school year ends with the reprieve of summer break. We watch the changing seasons as the year passes from spring to winter. The



Christian year invites us into its own deeply formative way to tell time. It orients our lives around the life of Jesus and his Church, allowing that story to shape our yearly rhythms of life. Advent, meaning “arrival” or “appearance,” kicks off the Christian year in expectation of the coming Messiah. From there, the Church follows the life of Jesus, from his birth at Christmas through the light of his life in Epiphany, the road to the Cross during Lent, and the exuberant celebration of his resurrection at Easter. After our Lord ascends to the throne on

Ascension Day and then sends the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, we move into Ordinary Time, where we joyfully acknowledge God's presence with his Church in her daily mission.

the seasons of Advent & Christmas

The Christian year begins in anticipation. We commonly think of Advent in terms of anticipating Jesus' birth; yet the true heart of Advent lies in preparing for his second coming. It's a time to watch, wait, and stay awake (Mark 13). It's a season in which we take a hard look at the darkness, injustice, and longing of the world and say with the Psalmist, “How long, O Lord?” (Psalm 13).

This rubs sorely against the way in which we're used to spending the weeks leading up to Christmas. It will feel strange and uncomfortable to sit in lament during the early weeks of December, while the fanfare of shopping and Christmas jingles are all around us. It will feel equally strange to insist on continuing to celebrate and feast for twelve days following Christmas Day! But in this way, we follow centuries of Christians before us who knew and embraced the rhythms of sober preparation and patient waiting—rhythms we can offer to a busy and broken world.

morning & evening prayer

Both morning and evening prayer in this devotional follow the basic liturgy of the Daily Office found in *The Book of Common Prayer*. Praying the Daily Office is a wonderful way to establish and maintain a habit of prayer. There is incredible freedom in following a liturgy of prayer. By taking up the ancient prayers of Scripture and the church, we're invited out of our own biases and leanings to engage all different facets of prayer: confession, thanksgiving, praise, intercession (praying for others), etc.

In this guide, morning prayer always begins with the page titled "Every Morning" (p. 6) and evening prayer with the page titled "Every Evening" (p. 12). The pages that follow guide us through the four weeks of Advent and the twelve days of Christmas. Each week we pray different collects, or prayers, and read different Scriptures. For example, when praying morning prayer during Week 2 in Advent, you would begin by praying your way through page 6, as you would every morning. Then you would flip to page 8 to find the readings, collect, and benediction for that week.

Many people practice the morning devotions privately, while the evening devotions are best observed with friends, family, roommates, or a small group.

the Jesse tree

In the evenings, we rehearse the big story of God's redemption by reading through the major characters and events of Scripture and decorating a Jesse Tree. The Jesse Tree is a tradition that helps us visualize God's story of redemption. Isaiah depicts the family tree of Jesse, the father of King David and his heirs, having become a rotten and hollow stump (Isaiah 11:1). But out of this stump, God brings new life and restores the throne of King David by sending his Son Jesus, born of David's line.

The evening Scripture readings pair with an ornament that is hung each night on the Jesse Tree. You may wish to light a candle as you pray the Phos Hilaron (O Gladsome Light). The Jesse Tree itself may take any number of forms, such as a felted silhouette or a small evergreen.

daily morning prayer



every morning

call to prayer

In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. *Isaiah 40:3*

confession

Kneel as you are able, and silently confess your sins.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father: We have sinned against you, through our own fault, in thought, and word, and deed, and in what we have left undone. For the sake of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, forgive us all our offenses; and grant that we may serve you in newness of life, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Grant to your faithful people, merciful Lord, pardon and peace; that we may be cleansed from all our sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

the psalm

Pray the psalm appointed for the day, ending with:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

the lessons

Read the Scriptures appointed for the day (see pp.7–10).

the Lord's prayer

Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be your Name.
Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, and power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

first week in Advent

collect for the first week in Advent

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

Prayers may be offered for ourselves and others.

benediction

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

2 Corinthians 13:14

Scriptures

Sun, 12.3

Ps 81
1 Pet 1:1-12
Mark 1:1-13

Mon, 12.4

Ps 82
1 Pet 1:13-end
Mark 1:14-31

Tues, 12.5

Ps 83
1 Pet 2:1-12
Mark 1:32-end

Wed, 12.6

Ps 84
1 Pet 2:13-end
Mark 2:1-22

Thur, 12.7

Ps 86
1 Pet 3
Mark 2:23-3:12

Fri, 12.8

Ps 87
1 Pet 4:1-11
Mark 3:13-end

Sat, 12.9

Ps 85
1 Pet 4:12-end
Mark 4:1-34



The Census at Bethlehem | Pieter Bruegel | 1566 | Flemish

second week in Advent

collect for the second week in Advent

Blessed Lord, who caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and the comfort of your holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayers may be offered for ourselves and others.

benediction

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen. *2 Corinthians 13:14*



Psalms Frontispiece, The Saint John's Bible

Donald Jackson | 2004 | Gilded illuminated manuscript

Scriptures

Sun, 12.10

Ps 120
1 Peter 5
Mark 4:35-5:20

Mon, 12.11

Ps 121
2 Peter 1:1-15
Mark 5:21-end

Tues, 12.12

Ps 122
2 Peter 1:16-end
Mark 6:1-29

Wed, 12.13

Ps 123
2 Peter 2
Mark 6:30-end

Thur, 12.14

Ps 124
2 Peter 3:1-7
Mark 7:1-23

Fri, 12.15

Ps 125
2 Peter 3:8-end
Mark 7:24-8:10

Sat, 12.16

Ps 126
1 Thess. 5:12-28
Mark 8:11-end

third week in Advent

collect for the third week in Advent

O Lord Jesus Christ, you sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise make ready your way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient toward the wisdom of the just, that at your second coming to judge the world, we may be found a people acceptable in your sight; for with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Prayers may be offered for ourselves and others.

benediction

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

2 Corinthians 13:14



Tree of Jesse from an
English Psalter in Latin
c. 1190-1210

Scriptures

Sun, 12.17

Ps 127
1 John 1
Mark 9:1-29

Mon, 12.18

Ps 128
1 John 2:1-17
Mark 9:30-end

Tues, 12.19

Ps 129
1 John 2:18-27
Mark 10:1-31

Wed, 12.20

Ps 130
1 John 2:28-3:10
Mark 10:32-end

Thur, 12.21

Ps 131
1 John 3:11-end
Mark 11:1-26

Fri, 12.22

Ps 133, 134
1 John 4:1-6
Mark 11:27-12:12

Sat, 12.23

Ps 132
1 John 4:7-end
Mark 12:13-34

fourth week in Advent

collect for the fourth week in Advent

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and as we are sorely hindered by our sins from running the race that is set before us, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

Prayers may be offered for ourselves and others.

benediction

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen. *2 Corinthians 13:14*

Scriptures

Sun, 12.24

Ps 50

1 John 5

Mark 12:35-*end*



*Lausanne Pillar 1:
The Gospel for Every Person
Bryn Gillette | 2016*



daily evening prayer

every evening

call to prayer

Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.

Mark 13:35–36

phos hilaron (o gladsome light)

O gladsome light, pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven, O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed! Now as we come to the setting of the sun, and our eyes behold the vesper light, we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices, O Son of God, O Giver of Life, and to be glorified through all the worlds.

Jesse tree Scripture readings

Hang the appointed ornament on the Jesse Tree and discuss the passage.

nunc dimittis (the song of Simeon)

Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all people; to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of your people, Israel.

Luke 2:29–32

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

the Lord's prayer

Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be your Name. Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, and power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

first week in Advent

collect for mission

O God and Father of all, whom the whole heavens adore:
Let the whole earth also worship you, all nations obey you,
all tongues confess and bless you, and men, women, and
children everywhere love you and serve you in peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers may be offered for ourselves and others.

benediction

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in
believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Romans 15:13



Mary and Eve
Scott Erickson | 2017
American

Scriptures

Sun, 12.3

Creation (Globe)
Gen 1:1—2:3

Mon, 12.4

Fall (Fruit & Snake)
Gen 2:15—3:24

Tues, 12.5

Noah (Ark)
Gen 6:11–22;
7:17–8:1; 9:8–17

Wed, 12.6

Abraham (Stars)
Gen 12:1–7;
15:1–6

Thur, 12.7

Jacob (Ladder)
Gen 28:10–22

Fri, 12.8

Joseph (Coat)
Gen 37; 45:1–11

Sat, 12.9

Moses
(Burning Bush)
Ex 2:1–10,
23–25;
3:1–12

second week in Advent

collect for mission

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. Amen.

Prayers may be offered for ourselves and others.

benediction

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Romans 15:13

Scriptures

Sun, 12.10

10 Commandments
(Tablets)
Ex 20:1–17

Mon, 12.11

Joshua (Shofar)
Josh 1:1–9;
6:1–21

Tues, 12.12

Ruth (Wheat)
Ruth 1:1–2:13;
4:1–21

Wed, 12.13

Samuel (Crown)
1 Sam 3:1–21

Thur, 12.14

David (Sling)
1 Sam 16:1–13;
17:1–4, 41–50

Fri, 12.15

Elijah (Altar)
1 Kings 17:1–7;
18:17–41

Sat, 12.16

Jonah (Fish)
Jonah 1:1–3;
17–2:10



Monk by the Sea | David Caspar Friedrich | 1808–1810 | German

third week in Advent

collect for mission

O God, you manifest in your servants the signs of your presence: Send forth upon us the Spirit of love, that in companionship with one another your abounding grace may increase among us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers may be offered for ourselves and others.

benediction

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Romans 15:13



Hidden Life in Nazareth | Ivanka Demchuk | 2021

Scriptures

Sun, 12.17

Isaiah (Stump)
Isa 6:1–7; 9:2–7

Mon, 12.18

Daniel (Lion)
Dan 6

Tues, 12.19

Nehemiah (Wall)
Neh 1:1–2:8
6:15–16

Wed, 12.20

Mary (Lily)
Luke 1:26–38

Thur, 12.21

Elizabeth
(Mother & Child)
Luke 1:39–56

Fri, 12.22

John the Baptist
(Shell)
Luke 1:57–80

Sat, 12.23

Joseph (Hammer)
Matt 1:18–25

fourth week in Advent

collect for the evening

O Lord, support us all the day long through this trouble-filled life, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in your mercy grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. Amen.

Prayers may be offered for ourselves and others.

benediction

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

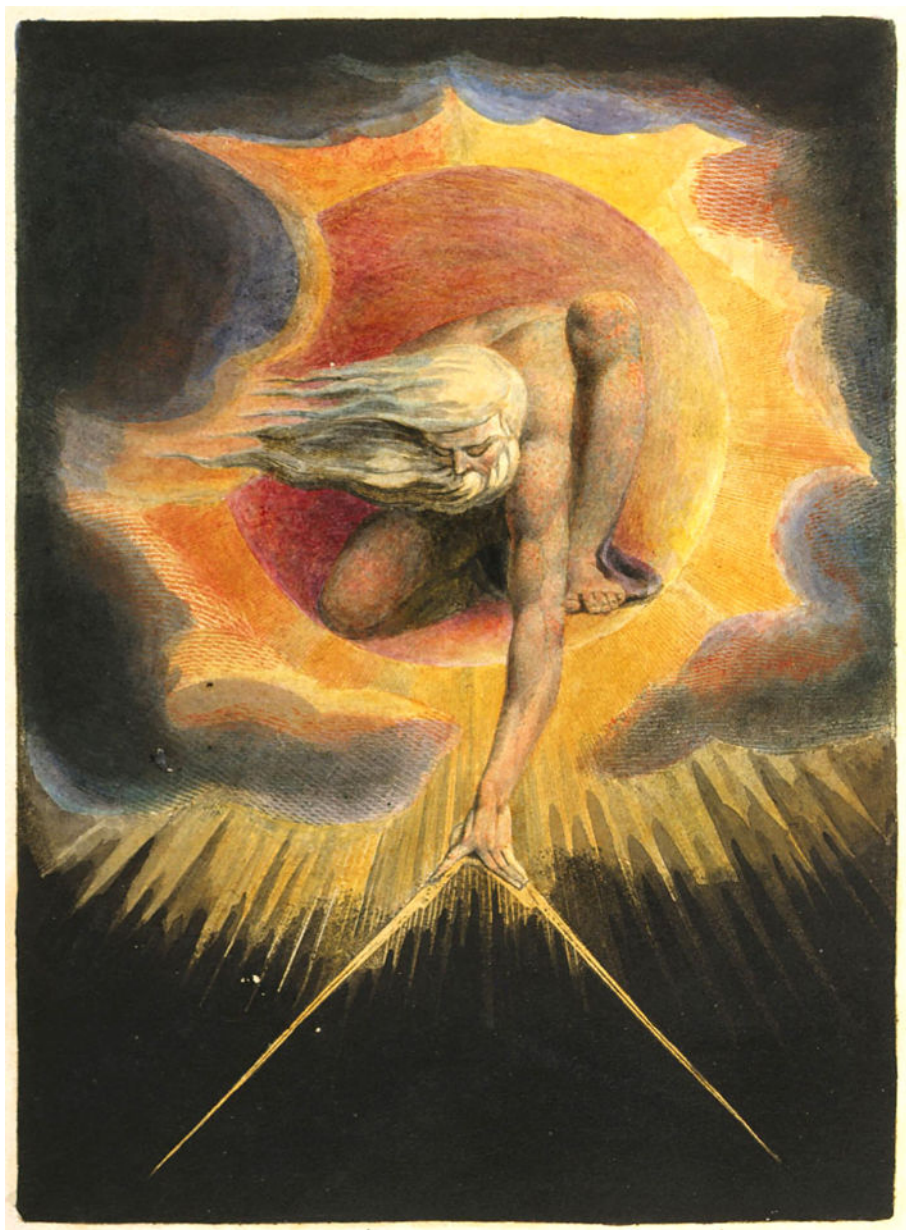
Romans 15:13

Scriptures

Sun, 12.24
Jesus' Birth
(Manger)
Luke 2:1-7



Good Shepherd's Lullaby
Brendan Rigdon
Oil on canvas
American



morning + evening prayer
for the Christmas season

morning prayer

Christmas season Dec. 25—Jan. 5

Scriptures

Mon, 12.25

Isaiah 48

Tue, 12.26

Isaiah 49:1–7

Wed, 12.27

Isaiah 49:8—
end

Thu, 12.28

Isaiah 50

Fri, 12.29

Isaiah 51

Sat, 12.30

Isaiah 52:1–12

Sun, 12.31

Isaiah 52:13—
53:12

Mon, 1.1

Isaiah 54

Tue, 1.2

Isaiah 55

Wed, 1.3

Isaiah 56

Thu, 1.4

Isaiah 57

Fri, 1.5

Isaiah 58

call to prayer

Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:10-11

the psalm & lessons

Choose a psalm to pray, and read the appointed Scriptures for the day.

the Lord's prayer

Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be your Name. Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, and power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

a collect for Christmas

Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

benediction

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21

evening prayer

Christmas season Dec. 25—Jan. 5

call to prayer

Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. *Revelation 21:3*

the psalm & lessons

Choose a psalm to pray, and read the appointed Scriptures for the day.

the Lord's prayer

Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be Your Name.
Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, and power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

a collect for Christmas

Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, kindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

benediction

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.
Ephesians 3:20-21

Scriptures

Mon, 12.25

1 John 4:7-16

Tues, 12.26

Heb 2:10-18

Wed, 12.27

Col 1:9-20

Thur, 12.28

2 John 1-13

Fri, 12.29

3 John 1-15

Sat, 12.30

Jas 4:13-17;
5:7-11

Sun, 12.31

Col 2:6-12

Mon, 1.1

1 John 2:12-17

Tues, 1.2

Heb 11:1-12

Wed, 1.3

Heb 11:13-22

Thur, 1.4

Heb 11:23-31

Fri, 1.5

Heb 11:32-12:2



Join us for Christmas Eve!

Sunday, December 24
75 N Mason St.

10:00 a.m.

A Service of Lessons and Carols
with Communion

5:00 p.m.

A Service of Lessons and Carols

Cookies and Cocoa to follow at both services.