

# Service of Holy Communion

Advent Season

# **Welcome in the name of Jesus Christ!**

Please join in with all the words in bold in this service book.

## **Introduction to the season**

Advent is a season of expectations and preparation as the Church prepares to celebrate the coming (adventus) of Christ in his incarnation.

It also looks ahead to his final advent as judge at the end of time. The readings and liturgies not only direct us towards Christ's birth, they also challenge the modern reluctance to confront the theme of divine judgement.

The commercial pressures in the run up to Christmas can make it hard to sustain a sense of alert watchfulness, but the fundamental Advent prayer remains 'Maranatha'- 'Our Lord, come' (1 Corinthians 16.22)

Advent falls at the darkest time of the year and the natural symbols of darkness and light are powerfully at work throughout Advent and Christmas.

The lighting of candles on an Advent wreath or ring was imported into Britain from Northern Europe in the nineteenth century and is now a common practice.

## WE GATHER TOGETHER

### The Greeting

The light and peace of Jesus Christ be with you  
**And also with you!**

Brothers and sisters,  
 this Advent we are called to prepare  
 to celebrate the coming of Christ;  
 a coming that we recall in the Child of Bethlehem;  
 a coming that we experience now in the gift of his Spirit,  
 in the breaking of the bread,  
 in the joy of human lives that are shared;  
 a coming we wait for  
 when God gathers up all things in Christ.  
 Let us in this holy season reflect on the coming of Christ  
 who brings light to the world.  
 Let us leave behind the darkness of sin,  
 walk in the light that shines on our path,  
 and renew within ourselves the hope of glory  
 to which he beckons us.  
**Come, O long expected Jesus, come.**

### *The lighting of the Advent Candle*

Each of the five candles on the Advent ring has a different meaning:

|               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| Advent 1      | The Patriarchs   |
| Advent 2      | The Prophets     |
| Advent 3      | John the Baptist |
| Advent 4      | The Virgin Mary  |
| Christmas Day | The Christ       |

## Advent 1

God of Abraham and Sarah  
and all of the patriarchs of old,  
you are our Father too.  
Your love is revealed to us in Jesus Christ,  
Son of God and Son of David.  
Help us in preparing to celebrate his birth  
to make our hearts ready for your Holy Spirit  
to make his home among us.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ,  
the Light who is coming into the world.  
**Lord Jesus, Light of the World,  
born in David's city of Bethlehem,  
born like him to be a king:  
be born in our hearts this Christmastide,  
be king of our lives today.**

## Advent 2

God our Father,  
you spoke to the prophets of old  
of a Saviour who would bring peace.  
You helped them to spread the joyful message  
of his coming kingdom.  
Help us, as we prepare to celebrate his birth,  
to share with those around us  
the good news of your power and love.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ,  
the Light who is coming into the world.  
**Lord Jesus, Light of the World,  
the prophets said you would bring peace  
and save your people in trouble.  
Give peace in our hearts this Christmastide  
and show all the world God's love.**

### Advent 3

God our Father,  
 you gave to Zechariah and Elizabeth in their old age  
 a son called John.  
 He grew up strong in spirit,  
 prepared the people for the coming of the Lord,  
 and baptized them in the Jordan  
 to wash away their sins.  
 Help us, who have been baptized into Christ,  
 to be ready to welcome him into our hearts,  
 and to grow strong in faith by the power of the Spirit.  
 We ask this through Jesus Christ,  
 the Light who is coming into the world.  
**Lord Jesus, Light of the World,  
 John told the people to prepare,  
 for you were very near.  
 As Christmas draws closer day by day,  
 help us to be ready to welcome you now.**

### Advent 4

God our Father,  
 the angel Gabriel told the Virgin Mary  
 that she was to be the mother of your Son.  
 Though Mary was afraid,  
 she responded to your call with joy.  
 Help us, whom you call to serve you,  
 to share like her in your great work  
 of bringing to our world your love and healing.  
 We ask this through Jesus Christ,  
 the Light who is coming into the world.  
**Lord Jesus, Light of the World,  
 blessed is Gabriel who brought good news;  
 blessed is Mary your mother and ours.  
 Bless your Church preparing for Christmas;  
 bless us your children  
 who long for your coming.**

*Please stand for our first **Hymn***

*Please sit*

## **Prayer of Confession**

When the Lord comes, he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness, and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Therefore, in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

**Father eternal, giver of light and grace,  
we have sinned against you  
and against our neighbour,  
in what we have thought,  
in what we have said and done,  
through ignorance, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We have wounded your love  
and marred your image in us.  
We are sorry and ashamed,  
and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us,  
forgive us all that is past;  
and lead us out from the darkness  
to walk as children of light.  
Amen**

May God who loved the world so much  
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour  
forgive you your sins  
and make you holy to serve him in the world,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**The Collect** (*the special prayer for this week*)

## **WE LISTEN AND RESPOND TO THE WORD OF GOD**

*After the first reading:*

This is the word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God**

*Please stand*

**Hymn**

*Please remain standing*

**Gospel Reading**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
according to .....

**Glory to you O Lord**

*At the end of the Gospel*

This is the Gospel of the Lord  
**Praise to you O Christ**

*Please sit*

**Sermon**

**Prayers of Intercession**

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

*At the end:*

Merciful Father,  
**accept these prayers for the sake of your  
Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

*Please Stand*

### **The Apostles' Creed**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic  
Church, the communion of saints, the  
forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### **HOLY COMMUNION**

*Please remain standing*

### **The Peace**

In the tender mercy of our God,  
the dayspring from on high shall break upon us,  
to give light to those who dwell in darkness  
and in the shadow of death  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**And also with you!**

*Please greet those around you and offer a sign of peace.*

## **Hymn**

*After the hymn please remain standing for*

## **The Prayer at the Preparation of the Table**

As the grain once scattered in the fields  
and the grapes once dispersed on the hillside  
are now reunited on this table in bread and wine,  
**so, Lord, may your whole Church  
soon be gathered together  
from the corners of the earth  
into your kingdom.  
Amen.**

*Please sit*

## **The Eucharistic Prayer- the great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

The Lord is here.  
**His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right and good  
to give thanks and praise,  
almighty God and everlasting Father,  
through Jesus Christ your Son.

*For the First and Second Sundays of Advent*

For when he humbled himself to come among us  
in human flesh, he fulfilled the plan you formed  
before the foundation of the world  
to open for us the way of salvation.  
Confident that your promise will be fulfilled,  
we now watch for the day when Christ our Lord  
will come again in glory.

And so we join our voices with angels and archangels  
and with all the company of heaven  
to proclaim your glory  
for ever praising you and saying....

*For the Third and Fourth Sundays of Advent*

He is the one foretold by all the prophets,  
whom the Virgin Mother bore  
with love beyond all telling.  
John the Baptist was his herald  
and made him known when at last he came.  
In his love Christ fills us with joy  
as we prepare to celebrate his birth,  
so that when he comes again  
he may find us watching in prayer,  
our hearts filled with wonder and praise.

And so, with angels and archangels,  
and with all the company of heaven,  
we proclaim your glory, and join in their unending  
hymn of praise saying....

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;  
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,  
and according to your holy will,  
these gifts of bread and wine  
may be to us the body and blood  
of our Lord Jesus Christ;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,  
took bread and gave you thanks;  
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper  
he took the cup and gave you thanks;  
he gave it them, saying:  
Drink this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it,  
in remembrance of me.

Christ is the bread of life:  
**When we eat this bread and drink this cup,  
we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,  
until you come in glory.**

And so, Father, calling to mind  
his death on the cross,  
his perfect sacrifice made once  
for the sins of the whole world;  
rejoicing in his mighty resurrection  
and glorious ascension,  
and looking for his coming in glory,  
we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.

As we offer you this our sacrifice  
of praise and thanksgiving,  
we bring before you this bread and this cup  
and we thank you for counting us worthy  
to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people  
and gather into one in your Kingdom  
all who share the one bread and one cup,  
so that we, in the company of all the saints,  
may praise and glorify you for ever,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord;

by whom, and with whom, and in whom,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,  
for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed by 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,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

## The Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread  
To share in the body of Christ.

**Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

## Invitation to Communion

Draw near with faith.  
Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ  
which he gave for you,  
and his blood which he shed for you.  
Eat and drink  
in remembrance that he died for you,  
and feed on him in your hearts  
by faith with thanksgiving.

**We do not presume  
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,  
trusting in our own righteousness,  
but in your manifold and great mercies.  
We are not worthy  
so much as to gather up  
the crumbs under your table.  
But you are the same Lord  
whose nature is always to have mercy.  
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,  
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ  
and to drink his blood,  
that our sinful bodies  
may be made clean by his body  
and our souls washed  
through his most precious blood,  
and that we may evermore dwell in him  
and he in us. Amen**

*Whether you are a regular member at St John's or a visitor, a child or an adult, EVERYONE is invited to come to the Lord's Table to receive the bread and the wine, or a blessing.*

*If you are coming for a blessing, please keep your hands by your side.*

*Our welcomers will indicate when it is time for you to come forward.*

*Gluten free wafers and non-alcoholic wine are available. Please let us know when you come to Communion if you would like to receive either of these.*

*If you would like us to bring Communion to you in your seat, please let one of our welcomers know.*

### **Prayer after Communion**

**Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with the body and blood  
of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies  
to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work to your praise and glory.  
Amen.**

### **Hymn**

## **WE LEAVE WITH GOD'S BLESSING**

### **The Blessing**

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,  
scatter the darkness from before your path,  
and make you ready to meet him  
when he comes in glory;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
be with you and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**

As we await our coming Saviour,  
let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ, Amen.**

*Church notices will be given and you are invited to stay for  
coffee and fellowship after the service*

### Acknowledgements

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