

ADVENT EVENING PRAYER
From the First Sunday of Advent to Christmas Eve

THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

Introductory Responses

Light and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thanks be to God.

or

Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

A light no darkness can extinguish.

Then the Thanksgiving for the Light may be said or sung.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, creator of light and darkness. In this holy season, when the sun's light is swallowed up by the growing darkness of the night, you renew your promise to reveal among us the splendour of your glory, enfleshed and visible to us in Jesus Christ your Son. Through the prophets you teach us to hope for his reign of peace. Through the outpouring of his Spirit, you open our blindness to the glory of his presence. Strengthen us in our weakness. Support us in our stumbling efforts to do your will and free our tongues to sing your praise. For to you all honour and blessing are due, now and for ever.

Amen.ⁱ

Evening Prayer continues with the Psalm of the Day.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

The Psalm

A Psalm from the Daily Office Lectionary, the Weekday Eucharistic Lectionary or the Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings is said or sung.

Evening Prayer continues with the Reading.

The Reading

A Reading from the Daily Office Lectionary, the Weekday Eucharistic Lectionary or the Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings is read. After a period of silent reflection one of the following is said.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

or

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

Thanks be to God.

or

Holy Word, Holy Wisdom.

Thanks be to God.

Evening Prayer continues with the Responsory or the Canticle or both. If two Readings are read, then the Responsory follows the first Reading and the Canticle the second.

The Responsory

The Responsory is said or sung.

My soul waits for you, O Lord;
in your word is my hope.

**My soul waits for you, O Lord;
in your word is my hope.**

Out of the depths have I called to you, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice.

In your word is my hope.

There is forgiveness with you;
therefore you shall be feared.

In your word is my hope.

My soul waits for the Lord,
more than the watch for the morning.

In your word is my hope.

O Israel, wait for the Lord,
for with the Lord there is mercy.

In your word is my hope.

Glory to God: Source of all being, eternal Word and Holy Spirit.

**My soul waits for you, O Lord;
in your word is my hope.**

Evening Prayer continues with [the Second Reading or] the Canticle or an Affirmation of Faith.

The Canticle

'The Song of Mary' or one of the seasonal canticles, 'God's Plan of Salvation' or 'A Song of the Lamb', may be said or sung.

The Song of Mary (Luke 1.46-55)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, *
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for you, Lord, have looked with favour *
on your lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed: *
you, the Almighty, have done great things for me,
and holy is your name.
You have mercy on those who fear you, *
from generation to generation.
You have shown strength with your arm *
and scattered the proud in their conceit,
casting down the mighty from their thrones *
and lifting up the lowly.
You have filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
You have come to the aid of your servant Israel, *
to remember the promise of mercy,
the promise made to our forebears, *
to Abraham and his children for ever. ⁱⁱ

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now and will be for ever. Amen.

or

Glory to God, Source of all being, eternal Word and Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now and will be for ever. Amen.

Evening Prayer continues with an Affirmation of Faith or the Litany.

God's Plan of Salvation (Ephesians 1.3-7)

Blessed are you, the God and Father *
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us in Christ *
with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.
You chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world *
to be holy and blameless before you in love.
You destined us for adoption *
as your children through Jesus Christ,
according to the good pleasure of your will, *
to the praise of your glorious grace

that you freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.
In Christ we have redemption through his blood, *
the forgiveness of our trespasses
according to the riches of your grace. ⁱⁱⁱ

Evening Prayer continues with an Affirmation of Faith or the Litany.

A Song of the Lamb (Revelation 19.1b, 2a, 5b, 6b, 7, 9b)

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, *
whose judgements are true and just.
Praise to our God, all you servants of the Lord, *
all who fear God, both small and great.
The Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns: *
let us rejoice and exult and give God the glory.
For the marriage of the Lamb has come *
and the bride has made herself ready.
Blessed are those who are invited *
to the wedding banquet of the Lamb. ^{iv}

Evening Prayer continues with an Affirmation of Faith or the Litany.

Affirmation of Faith

Either The Apostles' Creed or the 'Hear, O Israel' may be said or sung.

The Apostles' Creed

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 again to judge the living and the dead.**

**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. ^v

Evening Prayer continues with the Litany.

Hear, O Israel

Hear, O Israel,
the Lord our God, the Lord is one.
Love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
with all your soul,
with all your mind,
and with all your strength.

This is the first and the great commandment.
The second is like it:
Love your neighbour as yourself.

There is no commandment greater than these.

The following may be said or sung after 'Hear, O Israel'.

Lord, have mercy upon us,
and write both these commandments in our hearts,
we beseech you.

Evening Prayer continues with the Litany.

THE PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

The Litany

The Litany is said or sung.

Watchful at all times, let us pray to our Maker and Redeemer, saying, "God of our ancestors, look with favour on your servants."

Maker of the universe, bring in your reign of justice and mercy. God of our ancestors, **look with favour on your servants.**

Establish your righteousness among the nations. God of our ancestors, **look with favour on your servants.**

May we seek you in the scriptures and know you in the breaking of the bread. God of our

ancestors, **look with favour on your servants.**

Bind up the broken-hearted, restore the sick and raise up all who have fallen. God of our ancestors, **look with favour on your servants.**

May the light of your coming dawn on all who live in darkness and in the shadow of death. God of our ancestors, **look with favour on your servants.**

May we join all the saints in shining forth as lights to the world. God of our ancestors, **look with favour on your servants.**^{vi}

Additional intercessions, petitions and thanksgivings may be offered in silence or aloud. After a period of silence either the Collect of the Day or one of the following Collects may be said or sung.

Week of Advent 1

God of justice and peace, from the heavens you rain down mercy and kindness, that all on earth may stand in awe and wonder before your marvellous deeds. Raise our heads in expectation, that we may yearn for the coming day of the Lord and stand without blame before your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**^{vii}

Week of Advent 2

God of timeless grace, you fill us with joyful expectation. Make us ready for the message that prepares the way, that with uprightness of heart and holy joy we may eagerly await the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ, who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**^{viii}

Week of Advent 3

God of hope, you call us home from the exile of selfish oppression to the freedom of justice, the balm of healing and the joy of sharing. Make us strong to join you in your holy work, as friends of strangers and victims, companions of those whom others shun, and as the happiness of those whose hearts are broken. We make our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**^{ix}

Week of Advent 4

O God of Elizabeth and Mary, you visited your servants with news of the world's redemption in the coming of the Saviour. Make our hearts leap with joy, and fill our mouths with songs of praise, that we may announce glad tidings of peace, and welcome the Christ in our midst. **Amen.**^x

Evening Prayer continues with the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

Gathering our prayers and praises into one,

let us pray as our Saviour taught us,
**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Evening Prayer continues with the Dismissal.

THE SENDING FORTH OF THE COMMUNITY

The Dismissal

Let us bless the Lord who is coming in righteousness.
Thanks be to God.

Evening Prayer may conclude with the following Sentence.

May the Sun of Righteousness shine upon us and scatter the darkness from before our path.
Amen.^{xi}

Note

All liturgical texts are taken from *The Book of Alternative Services* unless otherwise noted and may have been emended for more inclusive language.

ⁱ *Praise God in Song* (1979) as published in *The Book of Alternative Services* (1985), 63.

ⁱⁱ *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (2006), 315.

ⁱⁱⁱ New Revised Standard Version, alt.

^{iv} *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* (2000), 630 emended for inclusive language by the Rev'd Richard Geoffrey Leggett.

^v *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (2006), 105.

^{vi} *Celebrating Common Prayer* (1992), 255.

^{vii} *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers* (2002), 28.

^{viii} *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers* (2002), 30.

^{ix} *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers* (2002), 32.

^x *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers* (2002), 34.

^{xi} Adapted from *The Book of Occasional Services* (2003), 22.