

## The First Week of Advent

### Night Prayer, A New Zealand Prayer Book

*The candles are lit. You are invited to light your own candle.*

- Officiant      The angels of God guard us through the night,  
**People      and quieten the powers of darkness.**
- Officiant      The Spirit of God be our guide  
**People      to lead us to peace and to glory.**
- Officiant      It is but lost labour that we haste to rise up early, and  
so late take rest, and eat the bread of anxiety. For those  
beloved of God are given gifts even while they sleep.
- Officiant      Our help is in the name of the eternal God,  
**People      who is making the heavens and the earth.**
- Officiant      Dear God, thank you for all that is good, for our  
creation and for our humanity, for the stewardship you  
have given us of this planet earth, for the gifts of life  
and of one another, for your love which is unbounded  
and eternal. O thou, most holy and beloved, my  
Companion, my Guide upon the way, my bright  
evening star. We repent the wrongs we have done:
- Officiant      We have wounded your love.  
**People      O God, heal us.**
- Officiant      We stumble in the darkness.  
**People      Light of the world transfigure us.**
- Officiant      We forget that we are your home.  
**People      Spirit of God, dwell in us.**
- Officiant      Eternal Spirit, living God, in whom we live and move  
and have our being, all that we are, have been, and  
shall be is known to you, to the very secret of our hearts  
and all that rises to trouble us. Living flame burn into  
us, cleansing wind, blow through us, fountain of water,  
well up within us, that we may love and praise in deed  
and in truth.

Officiant      Eternal Spirit, flow through our being and open our lips,  
**People**        **that our mouths may proclaim your praise.**  
Officiant      Let us worship the God of love.  
**People**        **Alleluia, alleluia.**

PSALM

*Psalm 22:29-31*

To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;  
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,  
and I shall live for him.

Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the Lord,  
and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,  
saying that he has done it.

READING

*Luke 1:76-79*

“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

REFLECTION

*For the Interim Time, John O'Donohue*

When near the end of day, life has drained  
Out of light, and it is too soon  
For the mind of night to have darkened things,

No place looks like itself, loss of outline  
Makes everything look strangely in-between,  
Unsure of what has been, or what might come.

In this wan light, even trees seem groundless.  
In a while it will be night, but nothing  
Here seems TO believe the relief of dark.

You are in this time of the interim where everything seems withheld.  
The path you took to get here has washed out;  
The way forward is still concealed from you.

“The old is not new enough to have died away;  
The new is still too young to be born.”

You cannot lay claim to anything; in this place of dusk,  
Your eyes are blurred; and there is no mirror.

Everyone else has lost sight of your heart  
And you can see nowhere to put your trust;  
You know you have to make your own way through.

As far as you can, hold your confidence.  
Do not allow your confusion to squander  
This call which is loosening your roots in false ground,  
That you might come free  
From all you have outgrown.

What is being transfigured here is your mind,  
And it is difficult and slow to become new.  
The more faithfully you can endure here,  
The more refined your heart will become  
For your arrival in the new dawn.

## PRAYERS

Officiant        Into your hands, O God, I commend my spirit,  
**People            for you have redeemed me,  
                         O God of truth and love.**

Officiant        Keep me, O God, as the apple of an eye;  
**People            hide me under the shadow of your wings.**

**Preserve us, O God, while waking, and guard us while  
sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep  
may rest in your peace.**

**Praise be to God, I have lived to see this day. God’s promise  
is fulfilled, and my duty done. At last you have given me  
peace, for I have seen with my own eyes the salvation you  
have prepared for all nations – a light to the world in its  
darkness, and the glory of your people Israel. Glory be to  
God, sustaining, redeeming, sanctifying, as in the  
beginning, so now, and for ever. Amen.**

**Preserve us, O God, while waking, and guard us while sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep may rest in your peace.**

Officiant Lord, have mercy.

**People Christ, have mercy.**

Officiant Lord have mercy.

**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.**

**Be present, Spirit of God, within us, your dwelling place and home, that this house may be one where all darkness is penetrated by your light, all troubles calmed by your peace, all evil redeemed by your love, all pain transformed in your suffering, and all dying glorified in your risen life. Amen.**

Officiant

Lord, it is night. The night is for stillness. Let us be still in the presence of God. It is night after a long day. What has been done has been done; what has not been done has not been done; let it be.

The night is dark. Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you. The night is quiet. Let the quietness of your peace enfold us, all dear to us, and all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn. Let us look expectantly to a new day, new joys, new possibilities. In your name we pray. Amen.

Officiant God bless us and keep us, God's face shine on us and be gracious to us, and give us light and peace.

Officiant The divine Spirit dwells in us.

**People Thanks be to God.**

# The Second Week of Advent

## Advent Compline

*If it is possible, please light a candle for this meditation.*

Bell at the opening

### A PRAYER FOR THE EVENING

Lord it is night. The night is for stillness. Let us be still in the presence of God. It is night after a long day. What has been done has been done; what has not been done has not been done; let it be. The night is dark. Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you. The night is quiet. Let the quietness of your peace enfold us, all who are dear to us and all who have no peace. The night heralds the dawn. Let us look to a new day new joys, new possibilities. The Lord Almighty grant us a peaceful night and a perfect end. **Amen.**

Officiant      Our help is in the name of the lord;

**People      The make of heaven and earth**

Officiant      Let us confess our sins to God.

**All      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 of our offenses and grant that we may serve you in newness of life, to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

Officiant      May the Almighty God grant us forgiveness of all our sins, and the grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Officiant      O God, make speed to save us.  
**People      O Lord, make haste to help us.**  
**All          Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the**  
**Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is**  
**now, and will be forever. Amen.**

#### SCOTTISH BLESSING

May the blessing of light be on you - light without and light within.

May the blessed sunlight shine on you like a great peat fire,  
so that stranger and friend may come and warm himself at it.

And may light shine out of the two eyes of you,  
like a candle set in the window of a house,  
bidding the wanderer come in out of the storm.

And may the blessing of the rain be on you,  
may it beat upon your Spirit and wash it fair and clean,  
and leave there a shining pool where the blue of Heaven shines,  
and sometimes a star.

And may the blessing of the earth be on you,  
soft under your feet as you pass along the roads,  
soft under you as you lie out on it, tired at the end of day;  
and may it rest easy over you when, at last, you lie out under it.  
May it rest so lightly over you that your soul may be out from  
under it quickly; up and off and on its way to God.

And now may the Lord bless you, and bless you kindly. **Amen.**

#### REFLECTION

Think of a motorway or a highway being built.

The plans are made; the land is bought;  
the route is mapped out; the earth is excavated.

The site is alive with cranes and diggers

And noise and activity for month, then years.

Eventually a whole new road is opened.

Think now of a walk in the country.

You leave the road and start across the fields-

perhaps to climb a hill, or reach a river, or arrive at the beach.

In the rough grass you find a path  
where the grass has been trodden down  
and the ground is firm underfoot.  
You look ahead and see that the path is leading  
where you want to go.

The difference is that here, *the path is made by walking*.  
How long has that path been there?  
As long as people started to make their way  
to that hill or river or beach.  
As more and more people passed,  
and as more and more years went by,  
the path was made – by walking!  
So different from the motor way.

In what we do, we do not have a blueprint  
That works everything out before we have even started.  
In what we do, the path is made by walking. We learn as we go.  
We become aware of fellow travelers.  
We appreciated those who have started walking ahead of us,  
Making the path a little clearer.

ISALAH 40:3

A voice cries out: in the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

PRAYER

Lord, shine a light on our path, put hope in our hearts, bring fruit  
to our work.

DISMISSAL *Please read in unison*

**May we live in peace without weeping.**

**May our joy outline the lives we touch without ceasing.**

**And may our love fill the world,**

**angel wings tenderly beating.**

(Trad Irish)

Bell at the closing

## **Meditation on hymn # 66**

Come, Thou long expected Jesus  
Born to set Thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us,  
Let us find our rest in Thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,  
Hope of all the earth Thou art;  
Dear desire of every nation,  
Joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver,  
Born a child and yet a King,  
Born to reign in us forever,  
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.

By Thine own eternal Spirit  
Rule in all our hearts alone;  
By Thine all sufficient merit,  
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuRGTOX3\\_YU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuRGTOX3_YU)

*Service created and led by Nancy Foster, St. Mary's.*

# The Third Week of Advent

## Praying in Color

### OPENING PRAYER

Officiant      Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**People      Thanks be to God**

Officiant      Let us pray.

Almighty God, we give you thanks for surrounding us, as daylight fades, with the brightness of the vesper light; and we implore you of your great mercy that, as you enfold us with the radiance of this light, so you would shine into our hearts the brightness of your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### PRAYING IN COLOR

“Praying in color is an active, meditative, playful prayer practice. It is both process and product. The process involves a re-entry into the childlike world of coloring and improvising. The product is a colorful design or drawing that is a visual reminder of the time spent in prayer. No skill is required.”

*Sybil Macbeth, Praying in Color*

Draw a shape in the center of the page – any shape you like.

Write the word “Hope” in the middle of your page.

As you ponder the following questions, let your pencil or pen or crayon wander. Make more shapes on the page. Jot down words or phrases or people that come into your mind. Draw some connecting lines between the thoughts and shapes on your page.

What do you think of when you hear the word hope?

Where do you find hope in the world around you?

What are you hoping for right now?



## CLOSING PRAYER

Officiant Lord, hear our prayer;

**People And let our cry come to you.**

Officiant Let us pray.

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## SONG OF SIMEON

**Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.**

**Lord, you now have set your servant free  
to go in peace as you have promised;  
For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior,  
whom you have prepared for all the world to see:  
A Light to enlighten the nations,  
and the glory of your people Israel.**

**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.**

**Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.**

## BLESSING

*For the Senses by John O'Donohue*

May the touch of your skin  
Register the beauty  
Of the otherness  
That surrounds you.

May your listening be attuned  
To the deeper silence  
Where sound is honed  
To bring distance home.

May the fragrance  
Of a breathing meadow  
Refresh your heart  
And remind you you are  
A child of the earth.

And when you partake  
Of food and drink,  
May your taste quicken  
To the gift and sweetness  
That flows from the earth.

May your inner eye  
See through the surfaces  
And glean the real presence  
Of everything that meets you.

May your soul beautify  
The desire of your eyes  
That you might glimpse  
The infinity that hides  
In the simple sights  
That seem worn  
To your usual eyes.