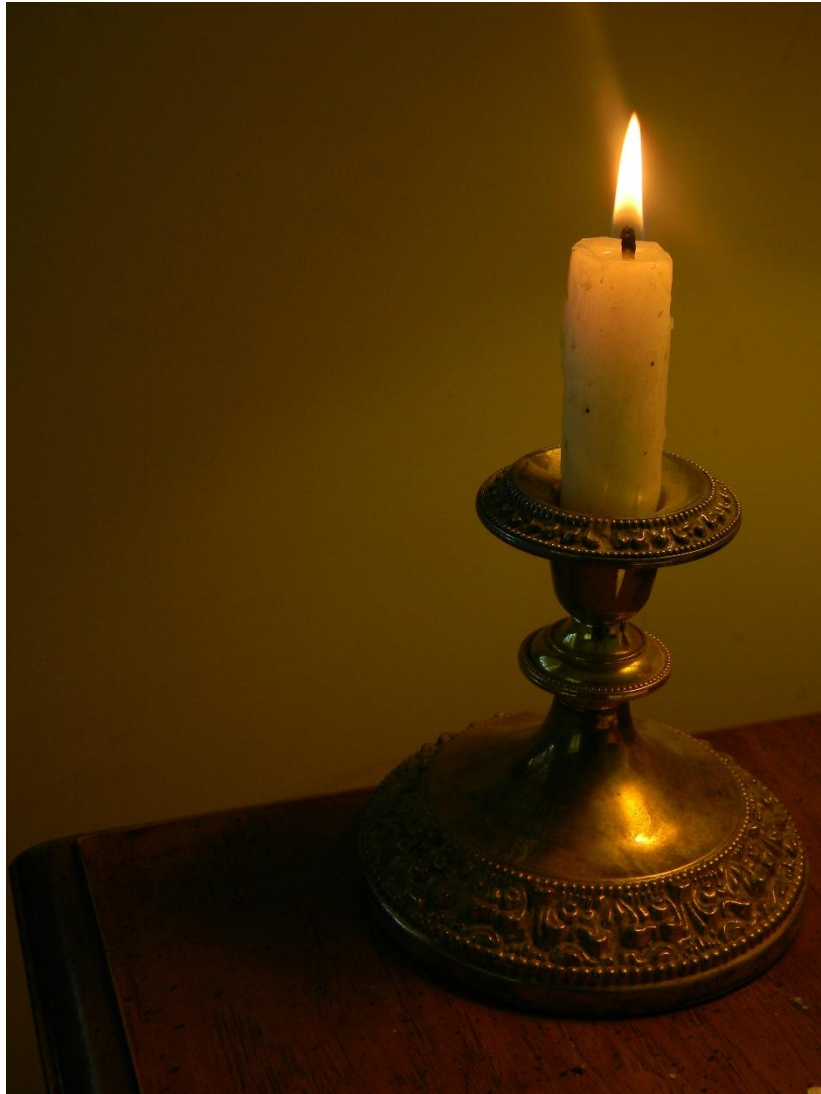


Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 30 November 2025
Advent 1**

Welcome to this week's Prayers and Reflections. Advent is here! Today, we begin our journey to the stable in Bethlehem. We set off in hope, watching and waiting and working for Christ's kingdom of justice and love as we wait on his return. It is hard to stay 'match ready' 365 days of the year, which is why we have Advent as a season of preparation.

May our Lord's Spirit guide you through each of the coming days. May he deepen your joy and love, faith and hope in the coming days.

Enjoy the peace and promise of Advent!

Every blessing,

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As you prepare to set out into Advent, invite our Lord into your heart.

Hark! a thrilling voice is calling:
'Christ is nigh!' it seems to say;
'Cast away the dreams of darkness,
O ye children of the day!'

*Latin, 6th century
trans. Edward Caswall (1814-1878)*

Prayers and Reflections

for use at home on Advent 1

Watching

PREPARING OURSELVES

Take a moment to be still in God's presence and feel his love. If you are indoors, you may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's love - here, in your room. You may also wish to have a bowl of water ready for the time of letting go. When you are ready, say this opening prayer.

O God, you search me and you know me.
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.
You know the journeys that I take
and the places where I rest.
You know all that is on my heart,
every one of my worries.
Help me to let go of them,
for a while, as I spend time in your presence.
Amen.

LETTING GO

If you come to this time of prayer and reflection with any regrets, with things that you wish you had not said, done or been, offer them to God in the silence of your heart. And then, when you are ready, reflect on your life with the second verse from this week's hymn.

Startled as the solemn warning,
let the earth-bound soul arise;
Christ, her sun, all sloth dispelling,
shines upon the morning skies.

*Latin, 6th century
trans. Edward Caswall (1814-1878)*



If you wish, dip your finger into a bowl of water and make the sign of the cross on your palm.

Our second verse acts like a morning alarm clock. It is inviting us to wake, rise and turn our face towards Christ the King – our glorious sun. It is time to start our Advent pilgrimage. Some of us are morning people. We wake with a ping – ready to go. Some of us like our beds. Ours is a gradual, slow awakening. Once awake, we are ready for all that lies before us. Which are you of a morning? Which are you as Advent begins?

Take a moment to think about what you need to be ready to pilgrim fruitfully and faithfully through Advent. How will you make the time to be alert to God's still voice and his guiding of your daily reflections? Prayerfully prepare for this.

If you wish, say this prayer of setting out with God into Advent.

A Prayer of Setting Out

God the Almighty,
from before the dawn of time
you were preparing the way of your people
to return to their eternal home.
Call me, I pray, from the depths
of my bewildered uncertainty,
open my ears to the strains of your voice,
and draw me from the toil of my earthbound cries
to the delights and purpose
you have prepared for me
in my beloved Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Stephen Cherry (2015)

Barefoot Ways

PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER

(The Collect)

Today, this prayer is being said across our villages and the worldwide Church. Add your voice to the earthly circle of prayer to our Faithful One.

Almighty God,
as your kingdom dawns,
turn us from the darkness of sin
to the light of holiness,
that we may be ready to meet you
in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Turning away from the darkness in our daily lives, or the dullness of our inner (spiritual) lives, and turning to the light that we see in Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, is the aim of this and every Advent season. Today's prayer for Advent 1 is an invitation to God's Spirit to come stir up our hearts and souls, come and Advent clean our daily lives.

I pray that you will find this Advent to be spiritually refreshing, a space where God draws you deeper and closer into relationship with him.

And, I pray that it will be a season where you feel more keenly the two wonders of Advent - first, of God's own Son coming to earth at Christmas to walk with us, and second, of his kingship that is to come on his return, a reign that has already begun in our hearts.

Our third verse invites us to turn towards Christ our King with open hearts and seek his forgiveness for our past inattentiveness. We will be alert to his call on our lives. We will watch for him.



Lo, the Lamb, so long expected,
comes with pardon down from heaven;
let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
one and all to be forgiven.

*Latin, 6th century
trans. Edward Caswall (1814-1878)*

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

Keep watch!

Jesus said, 'But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

'Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

Matthew 24:36-44

... Keeping watch!

Watching or waiting is the theme that launches us into each Advent season. Watching is about being alert to our surroundings. What signs are we seeing of God at work in the world and in our lives? For this can shape what we do for Christ our King and it can prepare us for his return, which may or may not be in our lifetime.

Sometimes, it is easy to hear what God is saying to us. He may give us a very clear nudge, vision or idea. He may stir our heart to take part in a campaign or volunteer with a charity. A passage in our bible may speak directly to an opportunity or challenge in our own life.

Sometimes, it is hard to see where God is. Sometimes, we are too busy, too fixed on our own plans to spot what he is saying to us.

Advent offers the space to look at our own lives, the paths we are taking, and listen afresh to his promptings and stirrings. It can refresh, revive, redirect our spiritual lives and our living out of our faith in our daily lives. First, we need to let go and let God speak to us. We need to be ready to accept the path he is setting before us.

You may wish to pause and say this prayer of letting go, of offering yourself fully and freely to God's guiding.

My Father,
I abandon myself to you.
Do with me as you will.
Whatever you may do with me
I thank you. I am prepared for anything.
I accept everything,
provided your will is fulfilled in me
and in all your creatures.
I ask for nothing more, my God.
I place my soul in your hands.
I give it to you, my God,
with all the love in my heart,
because I love you.
And for me it is a necessity of love,
this gift of myself, this placing of myself in your hands
without reserve in boundless confidence,
because you are my Father.

Amen.

Charles de Foucauld (1858-1916)

May you have a fruitful Advent pilgrimage. You are in safe hands.



So when next he comes in glory,
wrapping all the earth in fear,
may he then, as our defender,
on the clouds of heaven appear.

*Latin, 6th century
trans. Edward Caswall (1814-1878)*

OUR PRAYERS

Feel free to use one or more of these prayers and to add your own.

Lord Jesus, you are inviting me to watch with you in the lead up to Christmas. Open my heart, Lord, to your messages to me. I am ready, I accept your call on my life. Come and direct my path, I pray...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, the world is waiting on your return. Peoples and nations are crying out for justice and peace, and an end to their suffering. Waiting is so very hard for them. Speak, Lord, into the hearts of those waiting...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, the build up to Christmas will be tough for some families, some of my friends. The cost of daily living, the loneliness of loss, the worries of ill-health make it hard to celebrate. Give hope, I pray...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Offer your own heartfelt prayers and yearnings, praise and thanksgivings.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be 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.**

PRAYER OF BLESSING

A closing prayer of blessing for this week.

O God, you search me and you know me,
all my thoughts and feelings are open to your gaze,
you see the paths I will take before I take them. Guide my daily living.
Bless me and keep my loved ones safe, I pray. **Amen.**