

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 7 December 2025
Advent 2**

Welcome to this week's Prayers and Reflections. Our Advent journey continues. Today, we are thinking about the prophets who point the way to the Messiah's coming. The last of these is John, God's voice in the wilderness calling his people back to him. How will God call you to walk with him in the coming days?

Enjoy the peace and possibilities of Advent!

Every blessing,

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As you prepare to listen to God's voice in the wilderness, open your heart to his promised king.

Hail to the Lord's anointed,
Great David's greater son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
his reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
to set the captives free;
to take away transgression,
and rule in equity.

James Montgomery (1771-1854)

based on Psalm 72

Prayers and Reflections
for use at home on Advent 2
Re-Growth

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.

He comes with succour speedy
to those who suffer wrong;
to help the poor and needy,
and bid the weak be strong;
to give them songs for sighing,
their darkness turn to light,
whose souls, condemned and dying,
were precious in his sight.

James Montgomery (1771-1854)



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

Our verse reminds us that Jesus came to be good news to those who were struggling in life. He came to be their light in the darkness. He will be both a source of strength and hope for those who feel lowly in life and a prophetic voice who challenges the powerful and rich. He came to turn our world right-side up! Where do you see yourself in this verse?

Ponder this alongside our Lord's own mission statement. His words come from the prophet Isaiah.

Unrolling the scroll, Jesus found the place where it is written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.’

Luke 4:17b-19

Advent is a time for recognising how our Lord is transforming our lives and how he wants to transform our world too. His vision speaks into today's news and our daily lives. How do his words fill you with hope? How are they nurturing new growth in you? Offer your praise with this next verse.



He shall come down like showers
upon the fruitful earth,
and love, joy, hope, like flowers,
spring in his path to birth:
before him on the mountains
shall peace the herald go;
and righteousness in fountains
from hill to valley flow.

James Montgomery (1771-1854)

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,
purify our hearts and minds,
that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again
as judge and saviour
we may be ready to receive him,
who is our Lord and our God. **Amen.**

Our prayer is an invitation to open our hearts and souls, our very selves, and our daily lives to our Lord's refining gaze. Advent is a time for sitting in stillness with his Spirit and allowing him to speak to our spirit in the silence of our room. It takes real and true courage to be as open as this with our Lord's refining Spirit. What he will reveal may come as a surprise or he may expose those parts of ourselves that we try to keep hidden. Our Lord's Spirit may challenge us to prune away our bad bits or he may encourage new growth to begin within us.

Whatever he will do will be done with love: love of God, love of others, love of ourselves. His desire is to build God's kingdom of love, joy, peace within us and where life takes us.

Prepare for this with the help of this next verse.



Kings shall fall down before him,
and gold and incense bring;
all nations shall adore him,
his praise all people sing;
to him shall prayer unceasing
and daily vows ascend;
his kingdom still increasing,
a kingdom without end.

James Montgomery (1771-1854)

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

John the Baptist prepares the way...

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

'A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
"Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him."'

John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt round his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptised by him in the River Jordan.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptising, he said to them: 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father." I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The axe has been laid to the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

'I baptise you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.'

Matthew 3:1-12



Re-growth...

When I read this familiar passage, one phrase stood out for me: the axe being turned on the trees that will get in the way of Jesus. The Pharisees and Sadducees will be challenged by our Lord's teaching. "How can this carpenter's son speak with more authority than we do?" "How can he do good works on God's rest day – the Sabbath?" are just two of the questions that they will ask themselves. Many of them will fail to see Jesus as the Messiah – God's long-promised one – the stump of King David's line who brings new growth.

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.
The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him -
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD.

Isaiah 11:1-3

Advent is a time for us to think about Jesus being a source of re-growth. Firstly, as one of David's line, he will invite God's people to come and see, come and follow him. He will build on John's wilderness voice, offering God's love and forgiveness to those who say "Yes!" to him. Secondly, Jesus grafts us onto his kingdom (this stump) and invites us to bear fruit in our daily lives. The fresh growth and re-growth that we will experience this Advent comes from him. Ponder this with our final verse.



O'er every for victorious,
he on his throne shall rest,
from age to age more glorious,
all-blessing and all-blest;
the tide of time shall never
his covenant remove;
his name shall stand for ever;
that name to us is love.

James Montgomery (1771-1854)

OUR PRAYERS

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

Lord Jesus, you are my way, and my truth, and my life,
and I want to open my life up to your Spirit's gaze. Help me,
Lord, this Advent to listen to your guiding voice. Come, grow me.
Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you came to call all peoples back to your Father's love,
to herald in your kingdom of love and forgiveness, justice and peace.
Your work is ongoing. Strengthen, Lord, all who are your agents of hope.
Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, life can sometimes feel like a dry and arid wilderness,
a barren struggle. Some days it can sap energy and drain strength,
and leave us worn out. Revive, Lord, all who are failing to thrive.
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.**