



## *First Sunday of Advent Prayers and Litanies*

### **Gathering Words, First Sunday of Advent**

1.

Joseph has a dream, and God makes way for the light of the world. Joseph and Mary give their trust, and God restores a broken people. A child is born, and the world will never be the same. Together let us watch and wait. Jesus is coming!

2.

Joseph: I have had a dream!

**People: What is your dream, Joseph?**

Joseph: I have heard the Lord speak.

**People: Give us a word from the Lord.**

Joseph: Mary will be my wife, and the child she carries shall be called Jesus.

**People: There is much to fear in your decision.**

Joseph: This is the work of the Holy Spirit. I will not be afraid.

**People: Mary will bear a son who will save us from our sins.**

3.

Now Advent has begun,  
a season in its own right,  
not just a countdown to Christmas.  
Without Advent,

there would be no Christmas.  
So hear the prophet's instructions:  
"Prepare the way of the Lord.  
In the wilderness make a highway for God."  
What wilderness?  
Many are drowning in spiritual clutter.  
We need help.  
We need a Season to cut through it all  
like a laser knife,  
and point us to the One who is coming.  
Come, Lord Jesus!

## **Calls to Worship, First Sunday of Advent**

### **1.**

Leader: Keep awake!

**People: You know not when God comes.**

Leader: There will be signs:

**People: A flood to cover the earth,**

Leader: the Red Sea parting,  
the walls of Jericho tumbling,

**People: a giant slain by a boy,**

Leader: a barren womb birthing a son,

**People: a man sleeping in a den of lions,**

Leader: another surviving the belly of a fish,

**People: a virgin conceiving in her womb!**

Leader: Keep awake!

**People: God is coming!**

Leader: Behold the signs!

**2.**

Leader: The Spirit of the Lord is upon us:

**People: to bind up the broken-hearted,**

Leader: to proclaim liberty to the captives,

**People: to release the prisoners,**

Leader: to comfort all who mourn,

**People: to repair the ruined cities.**

Leader: Prepare the way of the Lord.

**People: Build for God a highway in the wilderness.**

**3.**

A voice cries out in the wilderness:

“Prepare the way of the Lord!”

Make God’s paths straight.

Every valley will be filled,

and every mountain will be leveled.

The crooked will be made straight.

The rough and rocky ways will be smoothed.

All will see the salvation of God.

See the light from on high.

The dawn is breaking.

The Lord is coming! The Lord is coming!

**4.**

Leader: I was glad when they said unto me, “Let us go into the house of the Lord!”

**People: We are standing in God’s presence, alert and ready to receive God’s word.**

Leader: The night is passing. The day of salvation is near.

**People: We seek to live as people of the light.**

**All: Come, Lord Jesus!**

5.

Leader: A light shining in the darkness . . .

**People: What could it be?**

Leader: The sound of angels' wings . . .

**People: What could it mean?**

Leader: A baby born in a stable . . .

**People: Who could it be?**

Leader: Come to Bethlehem and see.

6.

Leader: I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!"  
Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem—built  
as a city that is bound firmly together.

**People: To it the tribes go up the tribes of the LORD, as was decreed for Israel,  
to give thanks to the name of the LORD. For there the thrones for  
judgment were set up, the thrones of the house of David.**

Leader: Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you.  
Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers."

**People: For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, "Peace be within  
you." For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your  
good.**

7.

Leader: Something is wrong;

**People: something has gone awry.**

Leader: We are unclean,

**People: crooked and misshapen.**

Leader: Our hearts are in knots,

**People: our thoughts a tangled mass.**

Leader: God is hidden from us,

**People: like a figure enveloped in fog.**

Leader: Like sun shrouded in cloud,

**People: we make our way to the Potter's wheel,**

Leader: lie down on the circular plate,

**People: and wait for the artist's gentle hands.**

Leader: As the wheel turns, the delicate push and pull

**People: smoothes out the cracks in our lives.**

Leader: The wheel spins;

**People: Our souls are soothed.**

Leader: We are reformed into new creatures—

**People: hands reaching, eyes raising—**

Leader: To look in the eyes of God.

**People: Loving Potter, we are the clay; you are the artist.**

**Come this morning and sculpt our hearts,**

**mend our frayed lives, heal our wounds,**

**and sand our rough edges.**

**In this hour, restore our strength**

**and make us whole.**

## Opening Prayers, First Sunday of Advent

### 1.

Your season comes, Lord.

Come once again,

and feed your flock like a shepherd.

Come once again,

and gather up the children, the oppressed,

the sick, the lonely, the humble,

and the rejected of the earth.

Turn our hearts to the least of your children.

For if we lose them,

we become lost.

Reconcile us to you

and to those we have hurt.

At this Advent,

join us together with neighbors, with strangers,

and especially with our own household.

Bring us to your light

in our time of darkness,

through your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**2.**

O Holy God,  
maker of every thought and thing,  
open our hearts this day,  
that we may know your presence  
in this time and place.  
Restore us now,  
so we may see the special gift and calling  
that you have for each of us.  
Masterful potter of life,  
mold us into the vessels  
you would have us be.  
Help us be ready for your promised return,  
when you will be among us and within us  
with new, creative, healing energy. Amen.

**3.**

Give to us all, dear God,  
a sense of your presence and peace.  
In the dark night of the world's anguish,  
we pray to you out of our need.  
Hear us as we come, intensely alone,  
yet holding hands in the darkness,  
making one another's cares our own.  
Strengthen the poets, the prophets, the peacemakers,  
the dreamers, and the dancers of life.  
Surprise us today by a new star  
that lights up the sky,  
giving us hope  
and banishing our despair.  
In the name of the One who is coming. Amen.

**4.**

God of the journey, God of Advent,  
we come this morning looking for signs,  
signs of love, light, mercy, and forgiveness.  
Come to us in this hour.  
Be the candle that burns for us in the darkness.  
Come into the night of our lives  
and be the sunlight that blooms for us! Amen.

**5.**

God of eternity, God of now,  
make your signs visible to us.  
Come into our world as you once did long ago.  
Our world is in darkness,  
tear open the sky,  
flood the earth with your light!  
Show us the life everlasting.  
Show us the life now! Amen.

## **Prayers of Confession, First Sunday of Advent**

**1.**

Patient, everlasting source of life,  
we know that you are present  
with those who gladly do what's right;  
we know that you remember  
those who remember you;  
we know that your judgment is just.

We hunger for the assurance of your love,  
but in our hearts we feel unclean.  
We fear that the acts we think so righteous  
are more like filthy bits of cloth,  
unfit to dress a wound or to clothe the naked.  
Do not be angry beyond measure,  
O holy and loving champion of the forgotten.  
Do not remember our sins forever,  
but embrace us with your love,  
for we are all your people,  
even though we so often forget.

**2.**

O Lord God, as we begin to prepare our hearts to receive the One whom you are sending, forgive us for all the times we have missed seeing you in our midst, for all the times we have doubted your presence, and for all the times we have failed to help others find their way. Forgive us, in the name of Jesus, the One who is coming. Amen.

**3.**

Holy and loving God,  
we have dwelt in darkness  
and preferred it to the light;  
we have been proud of our accomplishments  
and despaired over our shortcomings.  
Smooth down the mountains of our pride,  
and lift up the valleys of our doubts.  
Open a path in the wilderness of our lives



that we might find our way to you again.

Refine us and prepare us once again

for life in your kingdom.

Hear our prayer, O Lord. Amen.

**4.**

O Lord God, as we begin to prepare our hearts to receive the One whom you are sending, forgive us for all the times we have missed seeing you in our midst, for all the times we have doubted your presence, and for all the times we have failed to help others find their way. Forgive us, in the name of Jesus, the One who is coming. Amen.

**5.**

Lord of all times, we come into your presence asking your forgiveness. We have failed to live as people of the present. We have wasted our moments, wanting the future now, seeing our dreams as the answer to today's problems. Rather than seeing your blessing in each day, we have looked backward to glory days that seem glorious only in their passing. Open our eyes to our mission at hand. Open our ears to your message to us today, that we might share in bringing the good news of your salvation to the world. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

## **Assurances of Pardon, First Sunday of Advent**

**1.**

The desert shall rejoice and blossom.

Waters shall break forth in the wilderness.

The burning sand shall become a pool.

The God who can transform the dry lands  
can also transform the desert of our lives.  
Abundant forgiveness is ours  
from the God who turns sorrow and sighing  
into joy and gladness.

**2.**

The Lord is merciful and forgiving,  
a great and compassionate savior.  
God rescues us from darkness  
and frees us from fear.  
Like a refiner's fire, the Lord makes us shine  
with the brilliance of the purest gold and silver.  
The one who began this work in us  
seeks to bring it to completion.  
May the day of Christ find us flawless  
and without blame.

**3.**

Through the grace of God, granted us in Jesus Christ,  
we have been enriched in every way:  
in speech and knowledge of every kind.  
Through the grace of God in Christ,  
we find grace and peace.

**4.**

Christ has paid the price for your sin because he sought your presence in the house of God. When we confess our sin, we no longer have to fear the throne of judgment. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

## **Benedictions, First Sunday of Advent**

**1.**

Leader: As we go out to meet a hungry world,  
know that God will give us what we need.

**People: We go forth to make ready as we wait.**

Leader: The Holy One, whose love turns fear aside,  
will show us what to do.

**People: Keep watch! The risen Christ is on the way!  
Amen.**

**2.**

The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has not overcome it.

Go in grace, to walk in the light.

**3.**

The blessings of God await those who watch and wait for the signs of Christ's coming. Go forward into this day watching for the signs. Go forward into this day and become signs or the whole world that Christ is coming.

**4.**

Go—be a servant people in the world.

Every day, in every way,

show and tell the love of Christ,

the light of the world.

**5.**

Pay attention until the day dawns,

and the morning star rises in your hearts

like a lamp shining in the darkness.