

Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding

'Christ is nigh,' it seems to say;
'Cast away the dreams of darkness,
O ye children of the day!'

Wakened by the solemn warning,
Let the earth-bound soul arise;
Christ, her sun, all ill dispelling,
Shines upon the morning skies.

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.

That, when next He comes with glory,
And the world is wrapped in fear,
With his mercy He may shield us,
And with words of love draw near.

Honour, glory, might and blessing
To the Father and the Son,
With the everlasting Spirit,
While eternal ages run.
Latin c 6th century. (tr E Caswall 1849)

Our Advent proclamation

A day is coming
And we will be with the Lord forever

A day is coming
Life a thief in the night

A day is coming
And we shall know fully

A day is coming
And we shall be without fault

A day is coming
And peace shall reign

Let us pray:

We thank you loving Father, that we are people of joy because Jesus is coming back. Thank you that in the new creation, we shall know fully. Fill our hearts with joy this Advent, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Exhortation, confession and absolution

Friends in Christ, we come together to meet with God, and to take our part in the building up of his Church. We will lift up our hearts in thanks and praise, hear from God's holy word, and pray for this world, and for ourselves. Today we will explore why Jesus taught in parables designed at least in part, to *keep* people from seeing and understanding! The Bible tells us to approach God confidently, through our Lord Jesus Christ. As we do so, we must confess our sins, seeking forgiveness through God's boundless goodness and mercy.

So let us draw near to God with sincerity and confidence, and pray together,

**God of all mercy,
we humbly admit that we need your help.
We have wandered from your way.
We have sinned in thought, word and deed,
and have failed to do what is right.
You alone can save us. Have mercy on us,
wipe out our sins and teach us to forgive others.
Bring forth in us the fruit of your Spirit
that we may live the new life to your glory.
This we ask in the name of Jesus our Saviour. Amen.**

Assurance of forgiveness

God desires that none should perish, but that all should turn to Christ, and live. In response to his call we acknowledge our sins. God pardons those who humbly repent, and truly believe the gospel. Therefore we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us Romans 5:11

We give thanks to you Lord, for you are good!
Your steadfast love never ceases.

Psalm 126

**When the LORD restored the fortunes of^[a] Zion,
we were like those who dreamed.^[b]**

²**Our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy.**

**Then it was said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."**

³**The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are filled with joy.**

⁴**Restore our fortunes,^[c] LORD,
like streams in the Negev.**

⁵**Those who sow with tears
will reap with songs of joy.**

⁶**Those who go out weeping,
carrying seed to sow,
will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with them.**

**Glory to God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
as in the beginning, so now, and for ever. Amen.**

The Bible readings:

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word which is able to make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Through your God-breathed word, please teach us, rebuke us, correct us and train us in righteousness, so that we will be thoroughly equipped for every good work; for Jesus' sake. **Amen.**

1 Peter 3:1-10 and John 1.6-8, 1.19-28

This is the word of the Lord:

Thanks be to God

A Day is Coming Where is this coming?

Affirmation of faith

We believe in one God, who made and loves all that is.

**We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was born, lived, died and rose again,
and is coming to call all to account.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, who calls, equips and sends out
God's people, and brings all things to their true end.**

This is our faith, the faith of the Church:

We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Time of prayer

Let us pray

**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
forever. Amen.**

Be exalted, Lord, above the heavens,
let your glory cover the earth.

Keep our nation under your care,
and guide us in justice and truth

Let your way be known on earth,
your saving power among all nations.

Send out your light and your truth,
that we may tell of your saving works.

Have mercy on the poor and oppressed.
Hear the cry of those in need.

Hear our prayers, O Lord,
for we put our trust in you.

The Collect for the first Sunday in Advent

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of
darkness and put on the armour of light, now in the time of this
mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came among us in great
humility; that on the last day, when he comes again in his glorious
majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life
immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

Collect for the third Sunday in Advent

Eternal God, you sent John the Baptist
to prepare the way for the coming of your Son:
grant us wisdom to see your purpose
and openness to hear your will,
that we too may prepare the way for Christ
who is coming in power and glory
to establish his rule of peace and justice;
through Jesus Christ our Judge and our Redeemer,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Collect of the morning

Eternal God and Father, by whose power we are created,
and by whose love we are redeemed:
Guide and strengthen us by your Spirit, that we may give
ourselves to your service, and live this day in love to one another
and to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Continuing in prayer, then concluding:

Closing prayer

Faithful God, you have promised to hear the prayers of all who ask
in Jesus' name. In your mercy, accept our prayers. Give us what
we have asked in faith, according to your will; through Jesus Christ
our Lord. **Amen.**

**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the
fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.**

Wake, O wake! with tidings thrilling

The watchmen all the air are filling,
Arise, Jerusalem, arise!
Midnight strikes! no more delaying,
The hour has come! we hear them saying,
Where are ye all, ye virgins wise?
The Bridegroom comes in sight,
Raise high your torches bright!
Alleluya! The wedding swells loud and strong:
Go forth and join the festal throng!

Sion hears the watchmen shouting,
Her heart leaps up with joy undoubting,
She stands and waits with eager eyes;
See her friend from Heaven descending,
Adorned with truth and grace unending!
Her light burns clear, her star doth rise.
Now come, Thou precious crown,
Lord Jesu, God's own Son!
Hosanna! Let us prepare to follow there,
Where in Thy supper we may share.

Every soul in Thee rejoices,
From men and from angelic voices
Be glory given to Thee alone!
Now the gates of pearl receive us,
Thy presence never more shall leave us,
We stand with angels round Thy throne.
Earth cannot give below
The bliss Thou dost bestow.
Alleluya! Grant us to raise to length of days,
The triumph-chorus of Thy praise.

Words: Philipp Nicolai 1599 Translated from German to English by Francis C. Burkitt 1906

The Benediction

Christ, the Sun of righteousness shine upon you and make you
ready to meet him when he comes in glory; and the blessing of
God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among
you and remain with you always. **Amen.**