Advent Readings and Carols Service

# Processional Hymn/Opening Song LH 17 Come, thou long-expected Jesus OR [Come Thou Long Expected Jesus - Meredith Andrews](https://youtu.be/NOxJFN-9_vs)

# Opening Prayer

Stir up your power, O Lord, and come,
that by your protection
we may be rescued
from the threatening dangers of our sins,
and saved by your mighty deliverance;
for you live and reign
with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.
**Amen.**

# First Reading: Genesis 3:1-15 Adam and Eve disobey God

Now the snake was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, “You must not eat from any tree in the garden”?’

The woman said to the snake, ‘We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, “You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.”’

‘You will not certainly die,’ the snake said to the woman. ‘For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realised that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’

He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.’

And he said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?’

The man said, ‘The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.’

Then the Lord God said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’

The woman said, ‘The snake deceived me, and I ate.’

So the Lord God said to the snake, ‘Because you have done this,

‘Cursed are you above all livestock
    and all wild animals!
You will crawl on your belly
    and you will eat dust
    all the days of your life.
And I will put enmity
    between you and the woman,
    and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
    and you will strike his heel.’

# Hymn/Song LH 14 Let the earth now praise the Lord OR [Hymn Of The Saviour - Emu Music](https://youtu.be/0GtxAzoD1W0)

# Second Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11 God will comfort his people

Comfort, comfort my people,
    says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
    and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
    that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the Lord’s hand
    double for all her sins.

A voice of one calling:
‘In the wilderness prepare
    the way for the Lord;
make straight in the desert
    a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be raised up,
    every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
    the rugged places a plain.
And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
    and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.’

A voice says, ‘Cry out.’
    And I said, ‘What shall I cry?’

‘All people are like grass,
    and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.
The grass withers and the flowers fall,
    because the breath of the Lord blows on them.
    Surely the people are grass.
The grass withers and the flowers fall,
    but the word of our God endures for ever.’

You who bring good news to Zion,
    go up on a high mountain.
You who bring good news to Jerusalem,
    lift up your voice with a shout,
lift it up, do not be afraid;
    say to the towns of Judah,
    ‘Here is your God!’
See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power,
    and he rules with a mighty arm.
See, his reward is with him,
    and his recompense accompanies him.
He tends his flock like a shepherd:
    he gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them close to his heart;
    he gently leads those that have young.

# LHS 12 Comfort, comfort ye my people OR LH 732 [Comfort, comfort, all my people](https://youtu.be/Wv0Hcxja4vM)

# Third Reading: Isaiah 7:10-14 The Lord promises to send a son, Immanuel

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, ‘Ask the Lord your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.’

But Ahaz said, ‘I will not ask; I will not put the Lord to the test.’

Then Isaiah said, ‘Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

# Hymn/Song LHS 2 O come, O come, Immanuel (TIS 265) OR [O Come O Come Emmanuel - Lincoln Brewster](https://youtu.be/AGuICJcnNJ4)

# Fourth Reading: Isaiah 11:1-9 The Branch of Jesse will establish a peaceful kingdom

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 of might,
    the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord –
and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
    or decide by what he hears with his ears;
but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
    with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
    with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.
Righteousness will be his belt
    and faithfulness the sash round his waist.

The wolf will live with the lamb,
    the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
    and a little child will lead them.
The cow will feed with the bear,
    their young will lie down together,
    and the lion will eat straw like the ox.
The infant will play near the cobra’s den,
    and the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest.
They will neither harm nor destroy
    on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord
    as the waters cover the sea.

# Hymn/Song LHS 622 Behold, a rose is growing OR [How Great Is Our God – Tomlin, Reeves & Cash](https://youtu.be/wDgmJFw6F64)

# Fifth Reading: Zechariah 9:9-12 The King comes, humble and riding on a donkey

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!
    Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!
See, your king comes to you,
    righteous and victorious,
lowly and riding on a donkey,
    on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
I will take away the chariots from Ephraim
    and the war-horses from Jerusalem,
    and the battle-bow will be broken.
He will proclaim peace to the nations.
    His rule will extend from sea to sea
    and from the River to the ends of the earth.
As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
    I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit.
Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope;
    even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.

# Hymn/Song LH 733 Daughter of Zion, O Rejoice! OR [King of Glory – Passion ft Kristian Standfill](https://youtu.be/WiRXP9peUe4)

# Sixth Reading: Luke 1:5-25 An angel announces the birth of John the Baptist

In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord’s commands and decrees blamelessly. But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

Once when Zechariah’s division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshippers were praying outside.

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: ‘Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous – to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.’

Zechariah asked the angel, ‘How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well on in years.’

The angel said to him, ‘I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time.’

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realised he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

When his time of service was completed, he returned home. After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. ‘The Lord has done this for me,’ she said. ‘In these days he has shown his favour and taken away my disgrace among the people.’

# Hymn/Song LHS 13 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry (TIS 270) OR [Show Us Christ - Sovereign Grace](https://youtu.be/uLIi5SAVMRw)

# Seventh Reading: Luke 1:26-38 The angel Gabriel tells Mary that she will have a son, Jesus

In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, ‘Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.’

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants for ever; his kingdom will never end.’

‘How will this be,’ Mary asked the angel, ‘since I am a virgin?’

The angel answered, ‘The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail.’

‘I am the Lord’s servant,’ Mary answered. ‘May your word to me be fulfilled.’ Then the angel left her.

# Hymn/Song LH 21 Of the Father's love begotten OR LHS 903 Tell out, my soul (TIS 161) OR [My Soul Magnifies the Lord Highpoint Collective](https://youtu.be/yC8dYByCSEc)

# [optional:

# Brief Message (based on one of the readings)

# Confession and Absolution

Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and of each other.

**We confess to you, almighty God,**

**before the whole company of heaven,**

**and to each other,**

**that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed,**

**by our own fault.**

**Have mercy on us, for Jesus’ sake,**

**forgive us all our sins,**

**and bring us to eternal life. Amen.**

*-Silent confession-*

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon and forgiveness of all our sins.

**Amen.** ]

# Offering

# Advent Litany

Lord, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, have mercy.

Jesus, name called Wonderful,

Jesus, our great Comforter,

Jesus, true and mighty God,

Jesus, everlasting Father,

Jesus, Prince of peace,

**we praise you and we bless your holy name.**

Jesus, Son of David,

Jesus, Branch of Jesse,

Jesus, Rose of Sharon,

Jesus, Lily of the valley,

Jesus, bright and Morning Star,

**deliver us from our sins.**

Jesus, Sceptre of Israel,

Jesus, Light of the Gentiles,

Jesus, desire of all nations,

Jesus, Sun of righteousness,

Jesus, Lawgiver, Priest, Judge, and King,

**help us and bless us.**

Jesus, hear us,

**and prepare us for your coming.**

Gather your ancient people, the Jews, to yourself;

bring all Gentiles to your light and truth;

convert all leaders and rulers of nations
to fall down before you and to seek your glory.

**Listen to our prayer, Lord, and hear our cry for help.**

Help your messengers to prepare the way before you;

let all the nations fear you;

give your servants righteousness and knowledge;

preserve all who put their trust in you;

and give peace to all your people.

**Listen to our prayer, Lord, and hear our cry for help.**

Prepare us for your coming,

**and save us from our sins.**

Lord, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, have mercy.

**Amen.**

# Lord's Prayer

# Blessing

May Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, shine on you and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;and the blessing of almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you always.

**Amen.**

# Recessional Hymn/Closing Song LHS 16 Hail to the Lord's anointed OR [Even So Come (Chris Tomlin)](https://youtu.be/4s0Zb189Sco)