

UPPC
Advent Devotional
2026

Dear UPPC Family,

My hope is that this Advent Devotional will meet you and your family in a special way this season. Each week, I've connected Evening Prayer with the Advent Season series on Sunday mornings, which will hopefully bring some continuity and connection to this often busy and fragmented time.

The liturgy is simple and is meant to be used and modified as is fitting for life around your table. If you have young children, adapt it however you'd like. If you are on your own, make it a personal devotional between you and God, but know that we are all participating in the same readings each week, which will, hopefully, become a bridge between our hearts.

In each of the weeks, there is Candle Lighting, a Call to Worship, a Leader, a Reader, a Prayer, a Collect (a simple prayer we pray together) and a Benediction. This might be a new way to pray for you and your family. For my family, we've found this simple structure works for us. Our quick, impromptu culture longs for sacred time and space in our homes, but we don't quite know how to get there. These Evening Prayers are meant to be a guide through the awkward, and a way to enter sacred moments.

At our house, we share in Evening Prayer right before we eat dinner. We find ways to include everyone, and I've found that even teenagers who have no connection to church, find this wholesome and life-giving. There are no rules about who reads which part – sometimes the youngest is the leader and sometimes the new kid wants to read the Call to Worship. Let it be fun.

Advent is meant to be a time to gather with friends and family as we prepare our hearts to receive Christ in all his humanity and glory. Consider making one night each week a special evening around your table. Perhaps, invite a different family over to share in the meal together, or consider taking extra care to prepare the dinners you know your children love.

Give this a try, knowing that when we engage in such things, we meet some of our deepest spiritual needs – to be connected to God, and to one another.

Grace and Peace to you and your family this season,

Pastor Tina

You will need 5 candles... one for each week of Advent and one for the Christ Candle we light on Christmas. Each week, light the previous candles as you add a new one, letting the light grow as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth.







Evening Prayer for Advent
Week One

The King We've Been Waiting For
Sacred time: Expectant

Lighting of the Candle for Week One:
The youngest person at the table lights the first candle, the Candle of Availability.

All: ***May Jesus be the Light by which we see.***

Call to Worship:
Leader: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob.
All: ***That he may teach us his ways, and we may walk in his paths.***

A Reading of the Word: Luke 1:26-38

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to
Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named
Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to
her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

30 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with
God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32
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, 33 and he will reign over Jacob’s
descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

34 “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

35 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[a] the
Son of God. 36 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. 37 For no
word from God will ever fail.”

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

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God for His Word.

Prayer:
Leader: For what do the people pray?
(Take turns naming your prayer for this week. Each person lift up a prayer to God.)

Please end this time with the words:
Lord in your mercy:
All: Hear our Prayer.



Song for Reflection:
Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art,
Dear Desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Come to earth to taste our sadness,
He whose glories knew no end;
By His life He brings us gladness,
Our Redeemer, Shepherd, Friend.
Leaving riches without number,
Born within a cattle stall;
This the everlasting wonder,
Christ was born the Lord of all.

Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all-sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

The Collect:
All: God of grace, ever faithful to your promises, the earth rejoices in hope of the Savior's coming and looks forward with longing to his return at the end of time. Prepare our hearts to receive him when he comes, for he is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction:
Leader: May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Practice for the Week:
Create a daily quiet moment each day to respond to God with, "Come Lord, Jesus. We're waiting for you."

Evening Prayer for Advent
Week Two

The King Who Comes Near
Holy Expectancy, Patient Trust

Lighting of the Candle for Week Two:
The youngest person at the table lights the first candle, and the next in age lights the Candle of Patient Trust.

All: ***May Jesus be the Light by which we see.***

Call to Worship:
Leader: Behold, the Lord God comes with strength, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him.

All: He will feed his flock like a shepherd, and he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them close, and gently lead those that are young.

A Reading of the Word: Matthew 1:18-25

18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about[a]: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. 19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet[b] did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,[c] because he will save his people from their sins.”

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”[d] (which means “God with us”).

24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God for His Word.

Prayer:
Leader: For what do the people pray?

(Take turns naming your prayer for this week. Each person lift up a prayer to God.)

Please end this time with the words:
Lord in your mercy:
All: Hear our Prayer.



A Poem for Reflection:
I am home from the soaring
in which I lost myself.
I was song, and the refrain which is God
is still roaring in my ears.

Now I am still
and plain:
no more words.

To the others I was like a wind:
I made them shake.
I'd gone very far, as far as the angels,
and high, where light thins into nothing.

But deep in the darkness is God ...
~ Rainer Maria Rilke

The Collect:
All: God of all wisdom, our hearts yearn for the warmth of your love, and our minds search for the light of your Word. Increase our longing for Christ our Savior, and strengthen us to grow in love, that at the dawn of his coming we may rejoice in his presence and welcome the light of his truth. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Benediction:
Leader: May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Practice for the Week:
Create some margin in your schedule this week, an hour or an evening without screens, create an intentional family moment.

Evening Prayer for Advent
Week Three
The Unexpected King

Lighting of the Candle for Week Three:
The youngest person at the table lights the first candle, and the next in age lights the Candle of Patient Trust, and the next oldest lights the Candle of the Unexpected.

All: ***May Jesus be the Light by which we see.***

Call to Worship:
Leader: Be still and know that I am God. I am exalted among all the nations. I am exalted in the earth!
All: The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge.

A Reading of the Word: Luke 2:8-20

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over
their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the
Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them,
“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the
people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the
Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in
cloths and lying in a manger.”

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel,
praising God and saying,

14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God for His Word.

Prayer:
Leader: For what do the people pray?

(Take turns naming your prayer for this week. Each person lift up a prayer to God.)

Please end this time with the words:
Lord in your mercy:
All: Hear our Prayer.

A Thought for Reflection:

“Grandfather says this: in life there is sadness as well as joy, losing as well as winning, falling as well as standing. I do not say this to make you despair, but to teach you that life is a journey sometimes walked in light and sometimes walked in shadow.”

~ Joseph Marshall

The Collect:
All: Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. Amen.

Benediction:
Leader: May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Practice for the Week:
Notice the joy-filled moments—Practice a few minutes of daily awareness at a meal together, sharing what brought each person joy in their day.



Evening Prayer for Advent
Week Four
The King Who Changed the Map

Lighting of the Candle for Week Four:
The youngest person at the table lights the first candle, and the next in age lights the Candle of Patient Trust, the next oldest lights the Candle of the Unexpected, and finally, light the Candle of Belonging.

All: ***May Jesus be the Light by which we see.***

Call to Worship:
Leader: Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
All: ***The nations shall walk by His light, and kings in the brightness of His rising.***

A Reading of the Word: Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod,
Magi[a] from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, “Where is the one who has
been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to
worship him.”

3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4
When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the
law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 “In Bethlehem in
Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

“‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.’[b]”

7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the
star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search
carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go
and worship him.”

9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had
seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the
child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the
house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and
worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of
gold, frankincense and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to go
back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God for His Word.

Prayer:
Leader: For what do the people pray?

(Take turns naming your prayer for this week. Each person lift up a prayer to God.)

Please end this time with the words:
Lord in your mercy:
All: Hear our Prayer.

A Word for Reflection:



“What do we call visible light? We call it color.
But the electromagnetic spectrum runs to zero in
one direction and infinity in the other, so really, children,
mathematically speaking, all of light is invisible.”

~Anthony Doerr, in All the Light We Cannot See

The Collect:
All: Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. Amen.

Benediction:
Leader: May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Practice for the Week:
Choose to greet a stranger in the supermarket, or while you’re doing your Christmas shopping. See that person as someone for whom Jesus broke down all sorts of barriers and came to rescue. Bless that person in the name of Jesus, and pray that God might open your eyes to His radical, boundary breaking love.



Morning Prayer for Christmas Day

The King is Here: Christ Candle

Lighting of the Christ Candle on Christmas Morning
The youngest person at the table lights the first candle, and the next in age lights the Candle of Patient Trust, the next oldest lights the Candle of the Unexpected, next light the Candle of Belonging and finally, Light the Candle in the middle, the Christ Candle.

All: May Jesus be the light by which we see.

Call to Worship:
Leader: Good and Gracious God, at the dawn of this Christmas Day, we turn to you.

All: At the rising of the sun, our eyes look to the morning light, we sing your praises, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

A Reading of the Word: Luke 2:1-21

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."
When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God.

Prayer:
Leader: For what do the people pray?
(Take turns naming your prayer for this week. Each person lift up a prayer to God.)

Please end this time with the words:
Lord in your mercy:
All: Hear our Prayer.

A Poem for Reflection: BC/AD

This was the moment when Before
Turned into After, and the future's
Univented timekeepers presented arms.

This was the moment when nothing
Happened. Only dull peace
Sprawled boringly over the earth.

This was the moment when even
energetic Romans
Could find nothing better to do
Than counting heads in remote
provinces.

And this was the moment
When a few farm workers and three
Members of an obscure Persian sect

Walked haphazard by starlight
straight into heaven.

~ U.A Fanthorpe

The Collect:
All: Lord Jesus, unconquered light, your power has dawned upoon the world with transforming love. Grant that we, who greet you on this joyful morning, may be found faithful at the day's end, and in that final day be gathered with all your children, to that city whose light is the radiance of your face, for you reign in splendor now and forever. Amen.

Benediction:
Leader: Let us arise and shine, for our light has come! The glory of the Lord has risen upon us. Amen.

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