

EPIPHANY

Arise, shine!

Isaiah 60:1-6 | Psalm 72 |
Ephesians 3:1-12 |
Matthew 2:1-12

The LORD the God of Israel alone does wondrous things. May his glory fill the whole earth. The boundless riches of Christ and abounding grace of the Father are revealed by the Spirit so the church might be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

Holy One of Israel, we thank you that you hide and conceal and display and reveal your mystery in your time. Blessed be your glorious name. Forever and ever. Amen.

Advent is the Latin word for arrival or coming and is the period of four weeks before Christmas when we gratefully remember Jesus coming into our world. We also anticipate Christ's return as the Mighty King and Righteous Judge – when he will make all things new, redeem this broken world from its hurt, trouble, and tragedy, and bring the fullness of his kingdom!

While we can stop and remind ourselves of this reality on a daily basis, the season leading up to Christmas gives us a short and focused opportunity to relive some of the drama and reorient ourselves to find our place in God's story.

This year we encourage you all to lean into that creative space with your friends, whānau, or church community. For Advent 2023, we encourage you to find a way to bring part of the story alive in your context!

Note: Each week begins on the designated Sunday of Advent. Advent 2023 marks the beginning of "Year B" in the Lectionary Calendar and Church Year.

Read these Scripture passages daily or weekly, and consider how and where you will make room for the coming King.



Scan the QR code for playlists and links to resources or visit www.laidlaw.ac.nz/advent-readings.

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Advent

READINGS



FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Waiting for God to come

Isaiah 64:1-9 | Psalm 80:1-7,
17-19 | 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 |
Mark 13:24-37

Come down, LORD, and do awesome deeds that we do not expect – like you have done in the past! You work for those who wait for you. Here we are. Waiting. Watching. Trying to remain alert, not knowing when you will return. Strengthen us to the end – until you come again. Hear us. Stir up your might and save us. O Shepherd King and LORD God of hosts, restore us!

Mighty King, strengthen us with alertness – that we will be awake for your return, ready to welcome you and your awesome deeds. Especially when and where we least expect to find you.

SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

Repentance and salvation

Isaiah 40:1-11 | Psalm 85:1-2,
8-13 | 2 Peter 3:8-15a |
Mark 1:1-8

The LORD will comfort his people and speak peace to them. His salvation is near. With the LORD, a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like a day. The LORD is not slow but patient. His glory will dwell in the land. Steadfast love, faithfulness, and righteousness will go before him. Through repentance, we prepare the way for his return, his rule, his righteousness.

Heavenly Father, we confess and repent of our sins. Baptise us again with your Holy Spirit. We turn and return to you – longing with expectancy for the new heavens and a new earth where righteousness is at home.

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

The incoming kingdom

Isaiah 61:1-11 | Luke 1:46-55 |
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 |
John 1:6-8, 19-28

Anointed by the spirit of God, Jesus: brings good news to the poor, binds the broken-hearted, proclaims liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, comforts the mourning and brings oil of gladness. Saviour God shows mercy and strength from generation to generation, takes down the powerful from their thrones, fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty-handed. What a promise of new creation!

Thank you, Jesus, for the beauty and goodness of your coming kingdom! We rejoice at what we have already tasted and seen. We long for you to make all things new by your Holy Spirit's power!

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

God's holy surprise

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 |
Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 | Romans
16:25-27 | Luke 1:26-38

The LORD's house, kingdom, throne, and steadfast love are established forevermore. All glory is given forever to the only wise God through Jesus Christ. This Jesus Christ came as a baby – conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, grown in the womb of the favoured one.

Son of the Most High, you have shown us that nothing is impossible with God. Help us to pray Mary's words in response to your divine activity and direction: "let it be with me according to your word."

CHRISTMAS WEEK

The King is born

Isaiah 62:6-12 | Psalm 97 |
Titus 3:4-7 | Luke 2:1-20

The King is born! Let the earth rejoice! Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours. His lightnings light up the world. What good news. What great joy. The promised Saviour, the long-expected Messiah, the Lord has been born.

Heavenly Father, you mercifully sent your Son Jesus to save us by Holy Spirit renewal. We glorify and praise you – alongside a multitude of heavenly hosts – for your amazing gift.