

# Advent Readings

*Advent* is the Latin word for *arrival* or *coming* and is the period of four weeks before Christmas that we set aside to celebrate Jesus coming into our world. It is also a time in which we eagerly await Jesus' second advent – when he will come again as a Mighty King to make all things new, to redeem this broken world from its hurt, trouble, and tragedy.

For thousands of years people have sung hymns, cantatas, and waiata to remember God's grand story and to answer with the only possible human response – worship. This advent let us think more deliberately about our music and join the great cloud of witnesses in singing through God's story – our story.

Each week begins on the designated Sunday of Advent. The Bible passages relate to the recommended song\* and help guide us through the season. We invite you to read the Scripture daily and sing or listen to the song as often as you can as a way of remembering and participating in Advent and Christmas this year.

*\*Choose a version of the song that best fits your tradition. If you prefer another song with a similar theme, sing it instead!*

## AFTER CHRISTMAS: EPIPHANY & ENCOUNTER

### We Three Kings

Luke 2:25-38 | Isaiah 60

Matthew 2 | Colossians 1:15-20

God is with us in the person of Jesus – fully human and fully divine. This remarkable mystery was revealed to an old man, a faithful prophetess, surprised parents, and foreign travellers. We too are invited to look to and follow “the firstborn of all creation” and “the salvation of the Lord.” God offers ongoing relationship through Jesus – in which we can expect moments of surprising epiphany and divine encounter in our ordinary, everyday lives.

*Jesus, we look to you. Surprise us with your joy. Guide us into your presence by the Holy Spirit. Behold our eyes have seen, and we want to see, the salvation of the Lord!*



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## FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

### O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Exodus 3:7-15 | Exodus 15:1-21

Isaiah 7:10-14 | Zechariah 2 | Revelation 22:12-21

We join the cries of the children of Israel throughout Scripture as we call out for our deliverer — Emmanuel — to come and dwell among us. These songs rise up from exile, out of our desperation, in the loneliness of darkness and from the midst of this world's suffering. We sing and pray because we know Jesus hears, comes, and delivers us. He has come. And he will come again!

*Come, quickly, Lord Jesus and be present with us.*

## SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

### Wait for You (Worship Central), Wait for the Lord (Taizé)

Psalm 27 | Isaiah 11

Matthew 25:1-13 | Luke 1:39-45

The Psalmist urges us to expect to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living by watching and waiting. This is not a passive, helpless waiting but rather a prophetic act of paying attention and staying alert, attentive and ready to welcome his presence like the virgins with their oil-filled lanterns excitedly awaiting their beloved bridegroom.

*Lord, help us to wait and watch for your presence with wide-awake hope and expectant longing.*

## THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

### Lord Have Mercy, E te Ariki, Kyrie Eleison

Deuteronomy 30 | Jeremiah 2:1-17

Psalm 51 | Ezekiel 36:24-28 | Acts 3:19-21

The living God offers us abundant life by choosing obedience to his way. And yet how often do we — like the children of Israel — forget this offer and choose our own way instead? God in his loving kindness offers inner transformation (new hearts!) if we return to him, confess and ask.

*Lord, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole hearts. We have not always chosen your offer of life. We turn and return to you again. Lord, have mercy. Give us new hearts and minds so we may truly love you with our whole selves.*

## FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

### Angels We Have Heard on High

Malachi 3:13-4:6 | Isaiah 40:1-5 | Luke 1:67-79

Matthew 11:2-10 | Luke 2:8-14

Wilderness prophet John the Baptist prepared the way and heralded a message of repentance. The light of the world and mighty saviour, long foretold, was coming to rescue his people. Angels sang out the glorious birth announcement — the good news of great joy to shepherds that the Messiah was born.

*Lord, help us to notice and hear your messengers who bring good news and sing out our response with all of creation: "glory to God in the highest."*

## CHRISTMAS DAY

### Joy to the World, Te Harinui

Luke 1:46-55 | Matthew 1:18-25

Isaiah 9:2-7 | Luke 2:15-20

The light of the world has broken into the darkness of this world and nothing can snuff him out! Heaven and nature sing! The angels call out holy, holy, holy. The earth bursts with the glory of God as God himself takes on the limits of human flesh and comes as a baby to dwell among his creation in a great act of love.

*Jesus, we thank you for coming to us as a baby — dependent, vulnerable, and human. We gather with the saints across time and throughout the world to kneel and adore at the feet of our newborn King!*

