

Clarence Church Daily Reading and Prayer Guide for Advent 2023

“Here with Us”

***Our Mission:** to lead others to connect with Jesus,
his people and his purposes*

***Our Vision:** to be a caring community where people of all ages
love taking their next steps of faith*

You are welcome to our website and Facebook page – there is up-date-info on worship and livestream, small groups, events, Bible reading plans and more

www.clarencechurch.com www.facebook.com/clarencechurch

You have a standing invitation to join us in any of our environments and activities – you will be welcome! Current worship is at 10:30am – Advent Series: “Here with Us”

Cantata on December 17th at 10:30 followed by a luncheon – all are invited

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More than a daily reading guide, this can be a helpful way of growing in our closeness to God throughout the day during Advent and Christmas. This is also very **flexible**. You may want to follow the guide all at once each day, repeat some of it throughout the day, or break it up into various parts throughout the day. The goal is develop a joyful closeness to God in our lives throughout the day. So, adapt this guide in a way that works for you. Advent is a time of waiting, anticipation and feeling our need for God's saving grace in Jesus Christ. Don't move too quickly past it.

Please seriously consider the time of **silence** - this may be the most difficult part for you, but it could be really significant. In fact, you may want to extend some of the portions of this guide to include a moment or two of silence at various points, especially following the various scripture readings.

Many of the sections have seven different suggested Scriptures, one for each day of the week. For example, in the "Confession" section, there are seven scriptures, each revealing some aspect of what it is to confess our sins before God who loves us and offers us pardoning grace.

I considered including the verses of each text, but I really want to encourage you to be in your **Bible**. Yes, it means turning some pages, but this practice of becoming more and more familiar with Scripture itself will be a blessing to you.

You may even want to read a bit before and after the passages listed for more context.

For couples or families or small groups, consider using this guide for family readings and prayer during Advent, and even light an Advent candle as part of it. Help your kids to get involved in the readings and prayers.

These times of reading and prayer are times when God meets with you in a special way with grace - you don't have to depend on someone else's devotional thoughts and stories. If you regularly use a devotional like *The Upper Room*, or *Our Daily Bread*, consider their use as a supplement to being in the Scripture passages that are here in this guide.

At the end, I've included the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds as well as the text of part of the hymns *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* and *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*. These can be part of a meaningful reflection, prayer and worship. The second hymn is an incredible, deeply theological and joy-filled celebration of the Incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. On Sundays, consider this guide as part of your preparation for worship.

Pastor Matt Farrell

Opening Scriptural Invitation to Worship

Ephesians 1:3, 7-10, 13-14 (or 1:3-14)

Psalms 24:1-6

Psalms 57:7-11

Psalms 113:1-3

Revelation 4:11

Psalms 63:1-2

Psalms 66:1-4

Quiet Breathing

Take 5-7 deep slow breaths - you may want to do this with eyes closed

Confession

Psalms 32:1-5

Joel 2:12-13

Psalms 51:1-3

Psalms 51:10-12

Psalms 130:1-6

Romans 3:22-26

1 John 1:5-9

Silent Personal Confession

Speak your own confessions to the Lord and name the ways you have sinned in thought, word and deed. As you do this, we are soaked in the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

"Even while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Scriptural Assurance of Pardon

Isaiah 53:4-6

Psalms 103:8-12 (13-18)

Isaiah 55:6-9

Titus 3:4-7

Psalms 37:39-40

1 Peter 1:3-5

Ephesians 1:3-10

Personal Expressions of Thanksgiving to God

Express your own thanksgivings to God for all the many ways you have been blessed.

You might even want to journal these thoughts.

End your time of thanksgiving with...

*"Glory be to the Father; and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit!
As it was in the beginning, it is now and ever shall be; world
without end! Amen."*

Preparing Your Heart for The Word of God

Psalms 34:8

Matthew 11:28-30

Psalms 25:4-5

Isaiah 40:6-8

1 John 1:1-3

Psalms 85:8-10

Psalms 86:11-13

Advent Scripture Readings

As you read the passages below each day, what might God be speaking into your life? What does Scripture reveal about God, his saving work, about human sin, about hope and joy? What might God be calling you to do, think, stop, be?

First Week of Advent

Dec 3 – Announcement to Mary - Luke 1:26-38

Dec 4 – Blessed Are You - Luke 1:39-45

Dec 5 – Isaiah 11:1-5

Dec 6 – Matthew 24:30-35

Dec 7 – A Great Light Has Dawned Isaiah 9:1-2

Dec 8 – For unto Us a Child Is Born - Isaiah 9:6

Dec 9 – Isaiah 9:6-7

Second Week of Advent

Dec 10 – Angel Appears to Joseph - Matthew 1:18-25

Dec 11 – The Spirit Will Rest upon Him - Isaiah 11:1-3

Dec 12 – Messiah's Righteousness/Justice - Isaiah 11:3-5

Dec 13 – The Peace of the Messiah - Isaiah 11:6-10

Dec 14 – In the Fullness of Time - Galatians 4:4-5

Dec 15 – Lamentations 3:21-24

Dec 16 – Luke 1:46-56

Third Week of Advent

Dec 17 – Isaiah 40:1-11

Dec 18 – Isaiah 55:8-12

Dec 19 – Isaiah 35:1-10

Dec 20 – Colossians 1:15-20

Dec 21 – Romans 8:31-39

Dec 22 – Philippians 2:1-4

Dec 23 – Philippians 2:5-11

Fourth Week of Advent

Dec 24 – Luke 2:1-7

Christmas Day December 25 – Glory to God!

Morning - Birth in Bethlehem - Luke 2:1-14

Evening - Luke 2:15-20

Dec 26 – We Have Seen His Glory - John 1:1-14

Dec 27 – The Blessing of Simeon - Luke 2:25-35

Dec 28 – The Blessing of Anna - Luke 2:36-38

Dec 29 – Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh - Matthew 2:1-12

Dec 30 – The Flight into Egypt - Matthew 2:13-23

Dec 31 – John 3:16-17, and 1 John 4:9-19

Lord's Prayer (pick any of the 3 versions below)

Contemporary Version

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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

The Message Translation

Our Father in heaven, reveal who you are. Set the world right; do what's best— as above, so below. Keep us alive with three square meals. Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil. You're in charge! You can do anything you want! You're ablaze in beauty! Amen.

God's Word Translation

Our Father in heaven, let your name be kept holy. Let your kingdom come. Let your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Give us our daily bread today. Forgive us as we forgive others. Don't allow us to be tempted. Instead, rescue us from the evil one, Amen.

Personal Prayers for the Needs on Your Heart

Pray for the needs of your life, your family and friends, church, community and extending out to nation and world. There is much to pray for and your prayers are significant!

2 Minutes of Silence

This may take some practice - as it becomes part of your spiritual practice, you may want to add to this time of silence.

Scriptures of Thanksgiving to God

Luke 1:46-53

1 Peter 1:3-9

Ephesians 1:3-10

Luke 1:68-79

Luke 1:29-32

Psalms 103:1-4

Revelation 5:12

Words of Blessing from God

Romans 15:13

Psalms 67:1-3

Ephesians 3:20-21

2 Corinthians 13:14

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Hebrews 13:20-21

Psalms 62:1-2

Evening Prayer

If it is evening, you can close the day by praying one or more of the following four prayers:

Be our light in the darkness, O Lord, and in your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; in the name of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Be present, merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the trials of this life may rest in your eternal faithfulness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; may your Holy Spirit watch over us and preserve us in peace and bless us all our days. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord give us peaceful sleep and watch over us and all those we love. Refresh our weary bodies and minds and strengthen us to serve you in the day to come. Amen.

These four prayers are adapted from The Book of Common Prayer, 1979.

The last few pages contain the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds. Consider reading and meditating on them sometime during the day.

Nicene Creed:

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the
Virgin Mary, and was made human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the
Scriptures; he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of Life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic* Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

(* universal)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
And order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show
And cause us in her ways to go. **Refrain**

O come, O come, great Lord of might,
Who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times once gave the law
In cloud and majesty and awe. **Refrain**

O come, thou Root of Jesse's tree,
An ensign of thy people be;
Before thee rulers silent fall;
All peoples of thy mercy call. **Refrain**

O come, thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home.
The captives from their prison free,
And conquer death's deep misery. **Refrain**

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thy justice here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. **Refrain**

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing (especially suitable on Christmas Day)

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King:
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"

2 Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail th'incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel. **Refrain**

3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth. **Refrain**

You are loved

You are created in God's image and likeness

God has an amazing plan for your life

God sent his Son, Jesus into the world to save everyone who believes in him

Whatever has happened in your life, whatever you've done or left undone, whatever others may think of you, whatever struggles or hurts you carry around, God is filled with love and wants to fill your heart and life with mercy, kindness, truth, hope and new life.

If you have questions about what it is to be saved by God's grace through faith in Christ and be filled with his Holy Spirit, please reach out to someone.

Pastor Matt is always available, as are many others who will pray for you and support you in all your next steps of faith.