

# The



# Antiphons

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A liturgy for individuals and families to be used on the evenings of  
December 17 – 23.

Written by Rebecca Taylor.

## Introduction

In the Anglican tradition, our common life is rooted in rhythms of the biblical narrative and the Liturgies of Word and Sacrament. The liturgical calendar, with all its seasons, invites us into God's story of salvation, both as witnesses and participants. In the season of Advent, we remember Christ's first coming, foretold by the prophets, through the birth of the Christ child. We also await with hope his second coming when he will bring the world back into order and his Kingdom will be fully realized, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Between these two *physical* Advents, we have multiple *spiritual* Advents in our lives, when, through the Holy Spirit, he comes to us now. He comes to us in the reading of Scripture, in the Eucharist and other Sacraments, and through prayer.

Liturgy *can* be a tool to form our theological beliefs, but it is first and foremost a space where we encounter the Living God as we worship him in the present, between the two Advents.

In that light, I have written a liturgy for your daily use during the last week of Advent, using ancient prayers called the O Antiphons. The O Antiphons invite us to remember his first coming, while we await in hope his second, and also serve as invocations for his presence in our lives today using seven unique attributes of Christ.

The liturgy below can be used individually, or with a group of family and friends, and is intended to be used in the evening as it combines aspects of Evening Prayer from various Anglican prayer books. You will read the antiphon for the day both before and after The Magnificat. You have the option to read a traditional English translation, a translation from *Celtic Daily Prayer*, or, for the liturgically ambitious, the Latin.

You will need this booklet, a candle or Advent wreath, and a Bible. The passages listed for each day are taken from the Daily Office (Year 1) in the *1979 Book of Common Prayer*. Included in the liturgy, I have written a reflection for each antiphon. The lessons from the Daily Office will not necessarily correspond with the antiphon and reflection, but they are included for those of you that incorporate them into your daily spiritual practice.

It is my prayer that this liturgy will be a blessing to you as you enter the last week of Advent awaiting the coming of Emmanuel, God with us.

Grace and peace,  
Rebecca Taylor

## Vespers

Before they entered the Promised Land, the Lord gave Moses specific rituals concerning worship. The Jews were to make a morning and an evening sacrifice. This practice continued for centuries, and when David moved the capital to Jerusalem and made his son Solomon king, he gave the Levites a specific instruction: “And they shall stand every morning, thanking and praising the Lord, and likewise at evening” (1 Chronicles 23:30). The practice of morning and evening prayer and sacrifice continued after Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem.

When the Temple was destroyed and the Jews were in Babylonian captivity, their worship began to change significantly. According to Jewish law, sacrifices could only be made in the Temple. Since the Temple had been destroyed, and they were no longer in Jerusalem, the Jewish people began to shift the focus of their worship to the teaching of the Torah and prayer in synagogues, or gathering places, for dispersed Jews. Even in captivity, the Jewish people gathered together in the morning and evening to pray. When the Temple was rebuilt, aspects of captivity worship continued, specifically the use of prayer at certain times of the day, and the recitation or singing of Psalms. These remain fundamental aspects of Jewish worship today.

In the first and second centuries, early Christians continued the ancient Jewish tradition of praying when daylight ended and candles were lit. Over the next few centuries, an official liturgy for these times of communal prayer began to form, including an evening service that became known as Vespers. It was particularly common in monastic communities, but also in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. Vespers remains a core service of the Liturgy of Hours in those traditions.

When Thomas Cranmer compiled the Book of Common Prayer, he combined a few of these services to create Evening Prayer. As with Morning Prayer, the service of

Evening Prayer can be used both corporately when believers are gathered together, or individually.

### What is an Antiphon?

Since early Christians based aspects of their worship on Jewish tradition, recitation was an important component. Just as Jews did, Christians began to recite holy texts and Psalms in their corporate worship which is reflected in Anglican worship both in the Daily Office and Holy Eucharist.

Used during both Morning and Evening Prayer, an antiphon is a verse said or sung with the liturgical purpose of “bookending” another important recitation, usually a Psalm, canticle, or another passage.

### The O Antiphons

The O Antiphons are seven antiphons used in Vespers and Evening Prayer, usually put to music, during the last seven days of Advent. Each one calls forth a specific biblical title of Christ taken from the prophet Isaiah, and an invocation that He come and make that title true in our life. The O Antiphons were first mentioned in writing in 515 AD and were in regular liturgical use in Advent by the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Traditionally, they were sung before and after the recitation of the Magnificat which is said during Evening Prayer.

When the seven antiphons are put together, the beginning letters of each title of Christ form an acrostic. When read backwards, the acrostic spells *ero cras* which is translated, “Tomorrow, I am coming.” The O Antiphons begin on December 17 and conclude on December 23. The coming of Christ is celebrated at sundown on December 24 during the Vigil of Christmas.

The O Antiphons became familiar to each of us, although not by name, most famously in the hymn *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*. When reading the hymn in the 1982 Hymnal, you will find the corresponding calendar dates by each verse.

As you spend the next seven evening using this liturgy, you will find that the O Antiphons were written in a specific order which traces the history of God’s covenant with Israel, from Creation to the Incarnation.

- O Wisdom – Begins in eternity, before human time begins
- O Lord – Moses (1400 BC)
- O Root of Jesse – Preparation of Davidic Line (1100 BC)
- O Key of David – Davidic line, King Hezekiah (1000-715 BC)
- O Oriens – Isaiah (740-680 BC)
- O King of Nations – Second Temple Period (530 BC – 50 AD)
- O God with Us – Mary, Birth of Jesus (1-6 AD)

# O Wisdom, Come

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December 17

Leader: Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

Response: **His mercy endures forever.**

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one lights a lamp to put it under a bucket, but on a lamp-stand where it gives light for everyone in the house. And you, like the lamp, must shed light among your fellow men, so that they may see the good you do, and give glory to your Father in heaven." *Matthew 5:14-16*

*A single candle or your Advent wreath candles may be lit. While lighting, or just after, the following hymn may be said:*

**O Gracious Light** *Phos hilaron*

O gracious Light,  
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven  
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,  
and our eyes behold the vesper light,  
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,  
O Son of God, O Giver of life,  
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

**The Psalm:** Psalm 33

**The Lessons:** Isaiah 9:18-10:4; 2 Peter 2:10b-16; Matthew 3:1-12

## Antiphon: O Sapientia

Based on Isaiah 11:2-3 and Isaiah 28:29

### Latin:

*O Sapientia, quae ex ore Altissimi prodiisti, attingens a fine usque ad finem,  
fortiter suaviterque disponens omnia: veni ad docendum nos viam prudentiae.*

### English:

O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High,  
reaching from one end to the other,  
mightily and sweetly ordering all things:  
Come and teach us the way of prudence.

### Celtic:

O Wisdom,  
You come forth from the mouth of the Most High.  
You fill the universe and hold all things together  
in a strong yet gentle manner.  
O come to teach us the way of truth.

### The Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55) *Magnificat*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has come to the help of his servant Israel,  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
The promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

### **Antiphon: O Sapientia**

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#### **English:**

O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High,  
reaching from one end to the other,  
mightily and sweetly ordering all things:  
Come and teach us the way of prudence.

#### **Celtic:**

O Wisdom,  
You come forth from the mouth of the Most High.  
You fill the universe and hold all things together  
in a strong yet gentle manner.  
O come to teach us the way of truth.

#### **Reflection**

“I’ll just ask Alexa” my six-year-old says to me when I don’t know the answer to a question he’s asked me about dinosaurs. “She’ll know.” All three of our sons are

part of the “Alpha Generation,” the generation born of Millennials. Some members of their generation haven’t even been born yet (their birth years are 2010-2025), but they are the first generation to have been born after Siri and Alexa – digital holders of knowledge, trivia, and the occasional joke – and marketers have realized the key to an increase in sales is by targeting this half-born generation. Whereas Siri used to live only in the phones of their parents, she and Alexa now live on counters, on computers, and even in thermostats. Yes, thermostats. The answer to any question you can imagine now lives in the very walls of your home. I grew up having to actually *use my fingers* to type questions into Google, and all they have to do is *yell* at the thermostat. (This is starting to sound like a digital version of *I used to walk to school uphill both ways in the snow.*)

Try though we did, we haven’t been able to protect our sons from marketing tactics, and they take some sort of comfort that *when all else fails* (read: when Momma doesn’t know), Alexa does. In that light, it seems fitting that this Alexa generation is called Alpha – from their very beginning, knowledge has been digitized and instantly accessible. As followers of Christ, we know that attaining information (knowledge) is not the same as wisdom that can only come from God.

Today’s antiphon reminds us that from the foundations of the world, built into the very walls of Creation, wisdom was there. Proverbs says that wisdom was fathered by God at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts, before the beginning of the earth. When he created the heavens, wisdom was there. When He marked the foundations of the earth, wisdom was beside him (Proverbs 8:22-31).

When Adam and Eve ate of the fruit in the Garden in an attempt to attain God’s wisdom, sin was born and it set a veil over our eyes, resulting in confusion, lack of order, and hidden wisdom. Wisdom cries aloud in the street, she raises her voice asking us “How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?” (Proverbs 1:20-22)

But Jesus came, the embodiment of God’s wisdom. He came to “sweetly order all things.” Jesus lifted the veil of God’s wisdom. No longer was wisdom available only to some (Ecclesiastes 2:26) but is offered through Jesus to all freely (James 1:5). The world offers us instant knowledge, but Christ offers us God’s wisdom, insight, and counsel. And so again, we ask him to come to sweetly order all things under his wisdom.

## Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son,  
our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of  
the Holy Spirit

and born of the Virgin Mary.

He 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,  
and is seated at the right hand of  
the Father.

He will come again 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.

## The Lord's Prayer

Our father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in  
heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And  
forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass  
against us.

And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the  
power, and the glory, for ever and  
ever. Amen.

Leader: Lord, hear our prayer:

Response: **And let our cry come to you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

## The Collect

Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray: and in your great mercy defend us from all  
perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son our Savior Jesus  
Christ. Amen.

# O Lord of Israel, Come

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December 18

Leader: Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

Response: **His mercy endures forever.**

It is not ourselves that we proclaim; we proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants, for Jesus' sake. For the same God who said, "Out of darkness let light shine," has caused his light to shine within us, to give the light of revelation – the revelation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

*2 Corinthians 4:5-6*

*A single candle or your Advent wreath candles may be lit. While lighting, or just after, the following hymn may be said:*

**O Gracious Light** *Phos hilaron*

O gracious Light,  
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven  
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,  
and our eyes behold the vesper light,  
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,  
O Son of God, O Giver of life,  
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

**The Psalm:** Psalm 51

**The Lessons:** Isaiah 10:5-19; 2 Peter 2:17-22; Matthew 11:2-15

## Antiphon: O Adonai

Based on Isaiah 33:22 and Isaiah 63:11-12

### Latin:

*O Adonai, et Dux domus Israel, qui Moysi in igne flammae rubi apparuisti, et ei in Sina legem dedisti: veni ad redimendum nos in brachio extento.*

### English:

O Adonai, and leader of the House of Israel,  
who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush  
and gave him the law on Sinai:  
Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm.

### Celtic:

O Adonai and leader of Israel,  
You appeared to Moses in a burning bush  
and you gave him the law on Sinai  
O come and save us with Your mighty power.

### The Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55) *Magnificat*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things,

and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has come to the help of his servant Israel,  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
The promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

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#### **Celtic:**

O Adonai and leader of Israel,  
You appeared to Moses in a burning bush  
and you gave him the law on Sinai  
O come and save us with Your mighty power.

#### **Reflection**

Since the O Antiphons trace the history of salvation, it seems odd to jump from before creation (wisdom) all the way to Moses. What about the Garden? What about the fall? Noah? Abraham? We seem to have skipped over a lot of significant pieces of history.

God gave his three promises to Abraham: 1) Land (Genesis 15:18-21); 2) Descendants (Genesis 15:3-6); 3) Blessing – not just to Abraham and his family, but to all nations (Genesis 12:3). As we jump to Moses, we see the beginning of the spread of God’s covenant, not just through Abraham’s family, but through the formation of a nation.

The Israelites had been enslaved by the Egyptians, and the angel of the Lord (the angel of *Adonai*) appears in the burning bush. In this fiery bush, the Lord tells Moses that he would be with them as Moses leads the people to the land promised to Abraham. Then came the plagues, and eventually the Passover and death of the first-born sons. On this side of history, we, of course, understand that this was a foretelling of the Sacrifice of God’s son, Jesus, on the cross, and the “passing over” of eternal death for his followers. But we’re not there yet. We’re still watching this nation be formed. So there are the Israelites, Egyptians barreling down on them, facing the Red Sea. Death awaits them. But Moses, on instruction from Adonai, stretches out his arm and the Red Sea parts. Deliverance. This is what we call a biblical breather – you can breathe for just a second – all looks safe and sound...but of course, there’s more.

Nothing bonds people together the way a collective experience does. It’s why we see strangers hugging when they’ve survived a natural disaster, or couples become closer after the birth of a child, or friends who develop a deeper love for each other after a shared meal. I’m not sure anything could bond a group together quite like escaping slavery, surviving plagues, and watching a sea literally part into towering walls on your left and right. But of course, there’s more.

This newly bonded group of people (who probably wanted to pop open some champagne and celebrate *survival*) are given something else to bond them together: a common law. The Lord gave Israel the Ten Commandments after reminding them of their shared experiences and his protection (Exodus 20:1-21) which further cements them under his lordship. But of course, there’s more.

The Lord also gave them new ways to worship – new traditions, new shared experiences. He gave beauty in worship (Exodus 25:1-9), the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:10-22), the Table for Bread (Exodus 25:23-30), the Tabernacle (Exodus 26:1-27), and more. For 40 years they wandered together in wilderness – they had not yet lived into the fullness of the covenant, but they were given symbols of

God's covenant, as were Noah (the rainbow) and Abraham (circumcision). But of course, there's more.

The Passover Meal would become to the Jews an ongoing sign of the Covenant, reminding them of his lordship. And when Christ came, he became the fulfillment of the law, and celebrated the Passover meal with his disciples on the night before he stretched out his arms, as Moses did at the Red Sea, to deliver all nations on the Cross from the bonds of our slavery – sin and death. Each week during the Eucharist we say the words, "We remember his death, we proclaim his resurrection, we await his coming in glory." Under his lordship, we remember.

## Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son,  
our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of  
the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He 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,  
and is seated at the right hand of  
the Father.

He will come again 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.

## The Lord's Prayer

Our father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in  
heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread. And  
forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the  
power, and the glory, for ever and  
ever. Amen.

Leader: Lord, hear our prayer:

Response: **And let our cry come to you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

### **The Collect**

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

# O Root of Jesse, Come

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December 19

Leader: Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

Response: **His mercy endures forever.**

If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me, and the light around me turn to night," darkness is not dark to you, O Lord; the night is as bright as the day; darkness and light to you are both alike. *Psalm 139:10-11*

*A single candle or your Advent wreath candles may be lit. While lighting, or just after, the following hymn may be said:*

**O Gracious Light** *Phos hilaron*

O gracious Light,  
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven  
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,  
and our eyes behold the vesper light,  
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,  
O Son of God, O Giver of life,  
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

**The Psalm:** Psalm 138, 139:1-23

**The Lessons:** Isaiah 10:20-27; Jude 17-25; Luke 3:1-9

## Antiphon: O Radix Jesse

Based on Isaiah 11:1, 10 and Isaiah 52:15

### Latin:

*O Radix Jesse, qui stas in signum populorum, super quem continebunt reges os suum, quem Gentes deprecabuntur: veni ad liberandum nos, jam noli tardare.*

### English:

O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign among the peoples;  
before you kings will shut their mouths,  
to you the nations will make their prayer:  
Come and deliver us, and delay no longer.

### Celtic:

O Stock of Jesse,  
You stand as a signal for the nations.  
Kings fall silent before You whom the peoples acclaim.  
O come to deliver us, and do not delay.

## The Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55)      *Magnificat*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things,

and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has come to the help of his servant Israel,  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
The promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

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Based on Isaiah 11:1, 10 and Isaiah 52:15

#### **Latin:**

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#### **English:**

O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign among the peoples;  
before you kings will shut their mouths,  
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#### **Celtic:**

O Stock of Jesse,  
You stand as a signal for the nations.  
Kings fall silent before You whom the peoples acclaim.  
O come to deliver us, and do not delay.

#### **Reflection**

When my paternal grandfather introduced his love, my grandmother, to his parents, his Swedish mother had a major criticism: "But Carl, she's not Swedish. And she has red hair." Fast forward a few decades, and I'm on the phone with my

Southern momma telling her about *my* new love. I had a confession that worried us both. *But Momma...he's...a...Yankee.*

She assured me the rumors weren't as bad as I'd heard, and that if I loved him, his unfortunate geographical lineage shouldn't stand in our way. She almost changed her mind when he told her one day that he found the North to be more culturally rich than the South. He survived our verbal ~~attack~~ correction, and through divine intervention, has had a change of heart and now prides himself in being a Southerner by marriage.

The Root of Jesse is highlighted in today's antiphon because it brings us to the next era of salvation history: King David, the shepherd-king. After God formed Israel as a nation, they wanted to be like all the other nations and have a king. Samuel anointed Saul who was then replaced by David. David ruled for 40 years and established Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish nation, and he brought the Ark to Jerusalem, determined to build a house for the LORD. Nathan, a prophet, told David that *through* him a house would be built, and it was after David died that his son, the new King, built the Temple in Jerusalem.

So, what does all of this have to do with Jesse? Jesse's grandmother, Ruth, is one of the few women mentioned in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus. Ruth, a Moabite (Gentile), is firmly established in Jesus' genealogy which is rare for two reasons: 1) She's a woman and only men were mentioned in Jewish genealogies; and 2) She was a Gentile. The goal of Jewish genealogies was to prove the purity of the Jewish line. But her grandson, Jesse, became the father of David. And through David's line, Jesus was born. David was a king for the Israelites, the Jewish nation. His earthly line, the Davidic line of kings, ended when the Babylonians conquered Israel. But through his line, Jesus, came to be King for Jews and Gentiles – a King for all nations. Though David's earthly line of kingship ceased, the heavenly King, who will never cease to reign, came from his branch. From the root of Jesse, Jesus came to be King of Kings enthroned forever.

## Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son,

our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of  
the Holy Spirit

and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He 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,  
and is seated at the right hand of  
the Father.

He will come again 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.

### The Lord's Prayer

Our father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in  
heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread. And  
forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the  
power, and the glory, for ever and  
ever. Amen.

Leader: Lord, hear our prayer:

Response: **And let our cry come to you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

### Together:

Calm me, O Lord, as you stilled the storm.  
Still me, O Lord, keep me from harm.  
Let all the tumult within. Me cease.  
Enfold me, Lord, in your peace.

### The Collect

Look down, O Lord, from your heavenly throne, and illumine this night with your  
celestial brightness; that by night as by day your people may glorify your holy  
Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

# O Key of David, Come

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December 20

Leader: Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

Response: **His mercy endures forever.**

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one lights a lamp to put it under a bucket, but on a lamp-stand where it gives light for everyone in the house. And you, like the lamp, must shed light among your fellow men, so that they may see the good you do, and give glory to your Father in heaven." *Matthew 5:14-16*

*A single candle or your Advent wreath candles may be lit. While lighting, or just after, the following hymn may be said:*

**O Gracious Light** *Phos hilaron*

O gracious Light,  
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven  
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,  
and our eyes behold the vesper light,  
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,  
O Son of God, O Giver of life,  
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

**The Psalm:** Psalm 8, 84

**The Lessons:** Isaiah 42:1-12; Ephesians 6:10-20; John 3:16-21

## Antiphon: O Clavis David

Based on Isaiah 22:22

### Latin:

*O Clavis David, et sceptrum domus Israel; qui aperis, et nemo claudit; claudis, et nemo aperit: veni, et educ vinctum de domo carceris, sedentem in tenebris, et umbra mortis.*

### English:

O Key of David and sceptre of the House of Israel;  
you open and no one can shut;  
you shut and no one can open:  
Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house,  
those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

### Celtic:

O Key of David and scepter of Israel,  
what You open, no one can close again;  
what you close, no one can open.  
O come to lead the captive from prison;  
free those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

### The Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55) *Magnificat*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has come to the help of his servant Israel,  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
The promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

**Antiphon: O Clavis David**  
Based on Isaiah 22:22

**Latin:**

*O Clavis David, et sceptrum domus Israel; qui aperis, et nemo claudit; claudis, et nemo aperit: veni, et educ vinctum de domo carceris, sedentem in tenebris, et umbra mortis.*

**English:**

O Key of David and sceptre of the House of Israel;  
you open and no one can shut;  
you shut and no one can open:  
Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house,  
those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

**Celtic:**

O Key of David and scepter of Israel,  
what You open, no one can close again;  
what you close, no one can open.  
O come to lead the captive from prison;  
free those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

## Reflection

When Porter and I were dating, I dreaded dinners with his family for one reason: Bible trivia. After we finished eating, his dad would quiz all of his brothers (and me – insert eyeroll) trivia questions like “Who was the only left-handed judge in the Bible?” (The answer, in case you’re curious is Ehud.)

Well, I have two more names for you: Shebna and Eliakim. I doubt they made it to your children’s Bible or Sunday school coloring pages. The passage that served as the inspiration for today’s antiphon, Isaiah 22, explains that during the reign of one of David’s descendants, King Hezekiah, a man named Shebna was the governor of the “household” (palace). Because Shebna was corrupt, the Lord said he would call his servant Eliakim to take his place. On Eliakim’s shoulder the Lord would place the key of the house of David and “He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open” (Isaiah 22:22). The prophet continues to reveal that Eliakim will be “fastened like a peg securely in place on a throne of honor to his father’s house” (Isaiah 22:23).

Eliakim was an historical figure, but scholars believe that since the words “in that day” appear, it’s also a symbol of Christ (born in the line of David), who will hold the keys to the Kingdom of God, and through whom honor would be given to the Father. Eliakim was an earthly symbol of the authority Jesus would hold in the establishment of God’s Kingdom.

In Matthew, Jesus established Peter as the rock of the church, and the same language is used: “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19). Through the ministry of the Church, the keys to the Kingdom of God would become available to all. In this antiphon, we recognize the role of the Church in Christ’s work on earth – we are to be instruments of freeing those in captivity to sin.

David is a profound spiritual example to us in this regard. He struggled his entire life with the temptations of this world, but consistently turned to God as his refuge, healer, and redeemer. We too are able to turn to God because we know that through Christ he has offered us refuge, healing, and redemption. Our calling is to help in God’s work establishing his kingdom on earth.

## Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son,  
our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of  
the Holy Spirit

and born of the Virgin Mary.

He 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,  
and is seated at the right hand of  
the Father.

He will come again 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.

## The Lord's Prayer

Our father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in  
heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And  
forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass  
against us.

And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the  
power, and the glory, for ever and  
ever. Amen.

Leader: Lord, hear our prayer:

Response: **And let our cry come to you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

## The Collect

Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

# O Glorious Dayspring, Come

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December 21

Leader: Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

Response: **His mercy endures forever.**

It is not ourselves that we proclaim; we proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants, for Jesus' sake. For the same God who said, "Out of darkness let light shine," has caused his light to shine within us, to give the light of revelation – the revelation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

*2 Corinthians 4:5-6*

*A single candle or your Advent wreath candles may be lit. While lighting, or just after, the following hymn may be said:*

**O Gracious Light**    *Phos hilaron*

O gracious Light,  
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven  
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,  
and our eyes behold the vesper light,  
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,  
O Son of God, O Giver of life,  
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

**The Psalm:** Psalm 112, 115

**The Lessons:** Isaiah 11:1-9; Revelation 20:1-20; John 5:30-47

## Antiphon: O Oriens

Based on Isaiah 9:1; Isaiah 58:8; Isaiah 60:18-20

### Latin:

*O Oriens, splendor lucis aeternae, et sol justitiae: veni, et illumina sedentes in tenebris, et umbra mortis.*

### English:

O Morning Star,  
splendour of light eternal and sun of righteousness:  
Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

### Celtic:

O Rising Sun,  
You are the splendor of eternal light  
and the sun of justice.  
O come and enlighten those who sit in darkness  
and in the shadow of death.

### The Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55)      *Magnificat*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things,

and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has come to the help of his servant Israel,  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
The promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

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#### **Celtic:**

O Rising Sun,  
You are the splendor of eternal light  
and the sun of justice.  
O come and enlighten those who sit in darkness  
and in the shadow of death.

#### **Reflection**

David and his son Solomon were Kings over a unified 12-tribed Israel. During the reign of Solomon's son, Rehoboam, the unified Kingdom was split into a Northern Kingdom and Southern Kingdom. In order to maintain the covenant, the Davidic line continued to rule the Southern Kingdom, Judah, (which consisted of the tribes

of Judah and Benjamin) until 586 B.C. when it fell to Babylon. The northern kingdom consisted of the 10 unfaithful tribes, or the 10 Lost Tribes, but they retained the name Israel. After the division of the two kingdoms, those in the north, Israel, strayed from worship in the Temple. Their kingdom was marked by spiritual darkness and idol worship (golden calves, anyone?) as we read in 1 Kings 12:25-33. The northern kingdom, as a result of their unfaithfulness, fell to Assyria in 722. Their dispersion resulted in a much more racially and culturally diverse kingdom than Judah.

This Antiphon brings us into Isaiah's day. Isaiah was alive during the fall of Assyria, so his prophecy was startling. In Isaiah 9:1-2, Isaiah prophesies that into the land of darkness (the northern kingdom) would come a great light. "In the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee...The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone" (Isaiah 1b-2). Isaiah is saying "It's bad, and it's dark, but redemption is coming."

Matthew records the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Matthew 5:12-17. Where did Jesus start his ministry? Galilee. The land of darkness, the land of sinfulness, the land of "impure" Jews. And from where did he gather the first of his 12 disciples? The same land of darkness. And why 12 disciples? Because straight from the darkness, the 12 tribes will be redeemed. The restoration of the unified kingdom is pronounced by Jesus, not only for Israel, but also for a new kingdom: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And from there, he went through all of Galilee, and his fame spread throughout Syria, and Jerusalem, and Judea, and beyond the Jordan (Matthew 4:23-25).

The "splendor of eternal light" sprang forth in the darkness, and even in the midst of our darkness, the kingdom of heaven still shines forth.

## Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son,  
our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of

the Holy Spirit

and born of the Virgin Mary.

He 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,  
and is seated at the right hand of  
the Father.  
He will come again 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.

### The Lord's Prayer

Our father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in  
heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread. And  
forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil. For thine is  
the kingdom, and the power, and the  
glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Leader: Lord, hear our prayer:

Response: **And let our cry come to you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

### The Collect

Lord Jesus Christ, by your death you took away the sting of death: Grant to us your servants so to follow in faith where you have led the way, that we may at length fall asleep peacefully in you and wake up in your likeness; for your tender mercies' sake. Amen.

# O King of Nations, Come

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December 22

Leader: Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

Response: **His mercy endures forever.**

If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me, and the light around me turn to night," darkness is not dark to you, O Lord; the night is as bright as the day; darkness and light to you are both alike. *Psalm 139:10-11*

*A single candle or your Advent wreath candles may be lit. While lighting, or just after, the following hymn may be said:*

**O Gracious Light** *Phos hilaron*

O gracious Light,  
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven  
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,  
and our eyes behold the vesper light,  
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,  
O Son of God, O Giver of life,  
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

**The Psalm:** Psalm 116, 117

**The Lessons:** Isaiah 11:10-16; Revelation 20:11-21:8; Luke 1:5-25

## Antiphon: O Rex Gentium

Based on Isaiah 28:16

### Latin:

*O Rex Gentium, et desideratus earum, lapisque angularis, qui facis utraque unum:  
veni, et salva hominem, quem de limo formasti.*

### English:

O King of the nations, and their desire,  
the cornerstone making both one:  
Come and save the human race,  
which you fashioned from clay.

### Celtic:

O King whom all the peoples desire,  
You are the cornerstone which makes all one.  
O come and save us whom You made from clay.

### The Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55)      *Magnificat*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has come to the help of his servant Israel,

for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
The promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

### **Antiphon: O Rex Gentium**

Based on Isaiah 28:16

#### **Latin:**

*O Rex Gentium, et desideratus earum, lapisque angularis, qui facis utraque unum:  
veni, et salva hominem, quem de limo formasti.*

#### **English:**

O King of the nations, and their desire,  
the cornerstone making both one:  
Come and save the human race,  
which you fashioned from clay.

#### **Celtic:**

O King whom all the peoples desire,  
You are the cornerstone which makes all one.  
O come and save us whom You made from clay.

#### **Reflection**

Though the line of David continued for several generations, eventually Judah also turned their hearts from God, and as a result, the Babylonians conquered them, just as the prophet Jeremiah foretold. The Temple was destroyed in 586 BC, and the Jewish people became a nation in exile.

We have now entered the Second Temple Period. When Babylon fell to Cyrus the Great, the Persian emperor, he allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and a

second temple was built in 515 BC. The Jews were partially restored to their land; they were able to live there, but it was not theirs. They were stuck in the resulting tension of living in two worlds. Their Kingdom hadn't been restored, but they were "home."

During this period, the last of the Old Testament prophets were prophesying (Malachi refers to sacrifices being made at the Temple), but following these final prophecies, there were 400 years with no biblically recorded words from God. This must have been a time of great loneliness. They were living under constant changes in rulers (Persians, Greeks, Syrians, Romans), and their God, though not inactive, was silent.

But, as the prophet Isaiah foretold, God had laid a foundation in Zion, "a stone, a tested stone, a cornerstone, of a sure foundation." Imagine what these words would have meant to a people who had lost their land, their Temple, then seen it rebuilt, but under foreign reign. Hard to believe? But in the stillness and silence, just as in the beginning of time when Wisdom was God's only companion, His hand was at work. Soon we will hear the words from John the Baptist, crying in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord." Just as we were formed from dust, God was preparing to birth something from the silence – the cornerstone, making all one, not in an earthly temple, but the Kingdom of God.

## Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son,  
our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of  
the Holy Spirit

and born of the Virgin Mary.

He 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,  
and is seated at the right hand of  
the Father.

He will come again 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.

## The Lord's Prayer

Our father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in  
heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread. And  
forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the  
power, and the glory, for ever and  
ever. Amen.

Leader: Lord, hear our prayer:

Response: **And let our cry come to you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

## The Collect

O God, the source of eternal light: Shed forth your unending day upon us who  
watch for you, that our lips may praise you, our lives may bless you, and our  
worship in the morrow give you glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

# O Emmanuel, Come

---

December 23

Leader: Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

Response: **His mercy endures forever.**

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one lights a lamp to put it under a bucket, but on a lamp-stand where it gives light for everyone in the house. And you, like the lamp, must shed light among your fellow men, so that they may see the good you do, and give glory to your Father in heaven." *Matthew 5:14-16*

*A single candle or your Advent wreath candles may be lit. While lighting, or just after, the following hymn may be said:*

**O Gracious Light** *Phos hilaron*

O gracious Light,  
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven  
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,  
and our eyes behold the vesper light,  
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,  
O Son of God, O Giver of life,  
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

**The Psalm:** Psalm 111, 113

**The Lessons:** Isaiah 28:9-22; Revelation 21:9-21; Luke 1:26-38

## Antiphon: O Emmanuel

Based on Isaiah 7:14

### Latin:

*O Emmanuel, Rex et legifer noster, expectatio Gentium, et Salvator earum: veni ad salvandum nos, Domine, Deus noster.*

### English:

O Emmanuel, our king and our lawgiver,  
the hope of the nations and their Saviour:  
Come and save us, O Lord our God.

### Celtic:

O Immanuel,  
You are our King and judge,  
the One whom the peoples await, and their Savior.  
O come and save us, Lord, our God.

### The Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55)      *Magnificat*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has come to the help of his servant Israel,

for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
The promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

### **Antiphon: O Emmanuel**

Based on Isaiah 7:14

#### **Latin:**

*O Emmanuel, Rex et legifer noster, expectatio Gentium, et Salvator earum: veni ad salvandum nos, Domine, Deus noster.*

#### **English:**

O Emmanuel, our king and our lawgiver,  
the hope of the nations and their Saviour:  
Come and save us, O Lord our God.

#### **Celtic:**

O Immanuel,  
You are our King and judge,  
the One whom the peoples await, and their Savior.  
O come and save us, Lord, our God.

#### **Reflection**

And so, we come to the most well-known antiphon, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. It's almost easy to overlook the significance of this verse, as it's so familiar to us. Isaiah prophesied that the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, "and his name shall be Emmanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). The power of this, of course, is best understood after traveling through Jewish history. God revealed himself to his people in covenants, burning bushes, the Law, signs and wonders, and the prophets. For generations, the Jewish people were faithful, then unfaithful; they had earthly power, then

were overtaken; they had a Temple, it was destroyed. But through all the generations, there was the promise of Messiah.

The medieval church actually wrote an 8<sup>th</sup> antiphon, which has been traditionally celebrated by the Church of England, pushing all of the other antiphons back a day, so rather than beginning on December 17<sup>th</sup>, they began on December 16<sup>th</sup>. This antiphon is called O Virgo Virginum (O Virgin of Virgins).

*O Virgin of virgins, how shall this be?  
For neither before thee was any like thee, nor shall there be after.  
Daughters of Jerusalem, why marvel ye at me?  
The thing which ye behold is a divine mystery.*

Mary grasped something that kings and prophets and all the people of Israel did not. She understood “Emmanuel, God with us” better than anyone in history. In her prayer of praise, the Magnificat, she retraces the same story we have this week: God spoke his faithfulness to the prophets, he has remembered his promises. Then, her willing consent: “Let it be to me according to your word.”

Mary accepted the invitation of the first Advent and serves as an example to the Church as we say yes to God’s invitation to join him in the building of the Kingdom of God: receivers of his wisdom, proclaimers of his lordship, witnesses of life springing forth from death, ministers to the world through the Church, bringers of light to the darkness, all while resting on the sure foundation, the cornerstone...let it be to us according to his word, for he is Emmanuel, God with us.

## Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son,  
our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of  
the Holy Spirit

and born of the Virgin Mary.

He 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,

and is seated at the right hand of  
the Father.

He will come again 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.

### The Lord's Prayer

Our father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in  
heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread. And  
forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the  
power, and the glory, for ever and  
ever. Amen.

Leader: Lord, hear our prayer:

Response: **And let our cry come to you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

### Together:

Be the peace of the Spirit mine this night.  
Be the peace of the Son mine this night.  
Be the peace of the Father mine this night.  
The peace of all peace be mine this night,  
in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

### The Collect

Lord God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ triumphed over the powers of death  
and prepared for us our place in the new Jerusalem: Grant that we, who have this  
day given thanks for his resurrection, may praise you in that City of which he is the  
light, and where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.