

Advent Lessons & Carols Hymns & Readings List

Opening Hymn – O Come, O Come Emmanuel v.1 – Lynda Bird

Lesson 1 – Jeremiah 7.10-17 – *The New Covenant* – Carol Chorostecki
Hymn – In the Bleak Midwinter v.1 – Jael Wong-Fehringer

Lesson 2 – Isaiah 7.10-17 – *A young woman shall conceive* – Mary Cosman
Hymn – There was a Child in Galilee – Lynda Bird

Lesson 3 – Isaiah 40.1-11 – *Comfort, O Comfort My People* – Lynda Bird
Hymn – Comfort, Comfort Ye My People – Jael Wong-Fehringer

Lesson 4 – Micah 5.2-4 – *From you shall come* – Bev Delyea
Hymn – Little Drummer Boy – Lynda Bird

Lesson 5 – John 1.1-14 – *The Story of John* – John Shannon
Hymn – 'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime v.1 – Jael Wong-Fehringer

Lesson 6 – Luke 1.5-25 – *Childless Couple Conceives* – Bill Silversides
Hymn – It Came Upon the Midnight Clear v.1 – Lynda Bird

Lesson 7 – Luke 1.26-38 – *Mary* – Mary Elson
Hymn – People Look East v.1 – Jael Wong-Fehringer

Lesson 8 – Luke 1.39-56 – *Blessed among Women* – Beth Ferris
Hymn – The virgin Mary had a Baby Boy – Lynda Bird

Lesson 9 – Luke 1.57-80 – *Birth of John the Baptist* – George Ferris
Hymn – Angels, We Have Hear on High – Jael Wong-Fehringer

Advent Litany – Norma Bayer

Closing Hymn – O Come, O Come, Emmanuel v.7 – Jael Wong-Fehringer

Lesson 1 – Jeremiah 7.10-17 – *The New Covenant* – Carol Chorostecki

“Do you think you can turn this Temple, set apart for my worship, into something like that? Well, think again. I’ve got eyes in my head. I can see what’s going on.” God’s Decree!

‘Take a trip down to the place that was once in Shiloh, where I met my people in the early days. Take a look at those ruins, what I did to it because of the evil ways of my people Israel.

‘So now, because of the way you have lived and failed to listen, even though time and again I took you aside and talked seriously with you, and because you refused to change when I called you to repent, I’m going to do to this Temple, set aside for my worship, this place you think is going to keep you safe no matter what, this place I gave as a gift to your ancestors and you, the same as I did to Shiloh. And as for you, I’m going to get rid of you, the same as I got rid of those old relatives of yours around Shiloh, your fellow Israelites in that former kingdom to the north.’

“And you, Jeremiah, don’t waste your time praying for this people. Don’t offer to make petitions or intercessions. Don’t bother me with them. I’m not listening. Can’t you see what they’re doing in all the villages of Judah and in the Jerusalem streets? Why, they’ve got the children gathering wood while the fathers build fires and the mothers make bread to be offered to ‘the Queen of Heaven’! And as if that weren’t bad enough, they go around pouring out libations to any other gods they come across, just to hurt me.

Lesson 2 – Isaiah 7.10-17 – *A young woman shall conceive* – Mary Cosman

God spoke again to Ahaz. This time he said, "Ask for a sign from your God. Ask anything. Be extravagant. Ask for the moon!"

But Ahaz said, "I'd never do that. I'd never make demands like that on God!"

So Isaiah told him, "Then listen to this, government of David! It's bad enough that you make people tired with your pious, timid hypocrisies, but now you're making God tired. So the Master is going to give you a sign anyway. Watch for this: A young girl who is presently untouched will get pregnant. She'll bear a son and name him Immanuel (God-With-Us).

By the time the child is twelve years old, able to make moral decisions, the threat of war will be over. Relax, those two kings that have you so worried will be out of the picture. But also be warned: God will bring on you and your people and your government a judgment worse than anything since the time the kingdom split, when Ephraim left Judah.

Prepare for God's Arrival

"Comfort, oh comfort my people," says your God.

"Speak softly and tenderly to Jerusalem, but also make it very clear
That she has served her sentence, that her sin is taken care of—forgiven!
She's been punished enough and more than enough, and now it's over and
done with."

Thunder in the desert!

"Prepare for God's arrival!

Make the road straight and smooth, a highway fit for our God.

Fill in the valleys, level off the hills,

Smooth out the ruts, clear out the rocks.

Then God's bright glory will shine and everyone will see it.

Yes. Just as God has said."

A voice says, "Shout!"

I said, "What shall I shout?"

"These people are nothing but grass, their love fragile as wildflowers.

The grass withers, the wildflowers fade, if God so much as puffs on them.

Aren't these people just so much grass?

True, the grass withers and the wildflowers fade, but our God's Word stands
firm and forever."

Climb a high mountain, Zion.

You're the preacher of good news.

Raise your voice. Make it good and loud, Jerusalem.

You're the preacher of good news.

Speak loud and clear. Don't be timid!

Tell the cities of Judah,

"Look! Your God!"

Look at him! God, the Master, comes in power, ready to go into action.

He is going to pay back his enemies and reward those who have loved him.

Like a shepherd, he will care for his flock, gathering the lambs in his arms,

Hugging them as he carries them, leading the nursing ewes to good
pasture.

Lesson 4 – Micah 5.2-4 – *From you shall come* – Bev Delyea

But you, Bethlehem, David's country,
the runt of the litter—

From you will come the leader
who will shepherd-rule Israel.

He'll be no upstart, no pretender.

His family tree is ancient and distinguished.

Meanwhile, Israel will be in foster homes until the birth pangs are over and
the child is born,

And the scattered brothers come back home to the family of Israel.

He will stand tall in his shepherd-rule by God's strength, centered in the
majesty of God-Revealed.

And the people will have a good and safe home, for the whole world will
hold him in respect—

Peacemaker of the world!

Lesson 5 – John 1.1-14 – *The Story of John* – John Shannon

The Life-Light

The Word was first, the Word present to God,
God present to the Word.

The Word was God, in readiness for God from day one.

Everything was created through him;
nothing—not one thing!—came into being without him.

What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by.

The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out.

There once was a man, his name John, sent by God to point out the way to
the Life-Light. He came to show everyone where to look, who to believe in.

John was not himself the Light; he was there to show the way to the Light.

The Life-Light was the real thing:

Every person entering Life he brings into Light.

He was in the world, the world was there through him, and yet the world
didn't even notice.

He came to his own people, but they didn't want him.

But whoever did want him, who believed he was who he claimed and would
do what he said,

He made to be their true selves, their child-of-God selves.

These are the God-begotten, not blood-begotten, not flesh-begotten,
not sex-begotten.

The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood.

We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory,

like Father, like Son,

Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.

A Childless Couple Conceives

During the rule of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest assigned service in the regiment of Abijah. His name was Zachariah. His wife was descended from the daughters of Aaron. Her name was Elizabeth. Together they lived honourably before God, careful in keeping to the ways of the commandments and enjoying a clear conscience before God. But they were childless because Elizabeth could never conceive, and now they were quite old.

It so happened that as Zachariah was carrying out his priestly duties before God, working the shift assigned to his regiment, it came his one turn in life to enter the sanctuary of God and burn incense. The congregation was gathered and praying outside the Temple at the hour of the incense offering. Unannounced, an angel of God appeared just to the right of the altar of incense. Zachariah was paralyzed in fear.

But the angel reassured him, "Don't fear, Zachariah. Your prayer has been heard. Elizabeth, your wife, will bear a son by you. You are to name him John. You're going to leap like a gazelle for joy, and not only you—many will delight in his birth. He'll achieve great stature with God.

"He'll drink neither wine nor beer. He'll be filled with the Holy Spirit from the moment he leaves his mother's womb. He will turn many sons and daughters of Israel back to their God. He will herald God's arrival in the style and strength of Elijah, soften the hearts of parents to children, and kindle devout understanding among hardened skeptics—he'll get the people ready for God."

Zachariah said to the angel, "Do you expect me to believe this? I'm an old man and my wife is an old woman."

But the angel said, "I am Gabriel, the sentinel of God, sent especially to bring you this glad news. But because you won't believe me, you'll be unable to say a word until the day of your son's birth. Every word I've spoken to you will come true on time—God's time."

Meanwhile, the congregation waiting for Zachariah was getting restless, wondering what was keeping him so long in the sanctuary. When he came out and couldn't speak, they knew he had seen a vision. He continued speechless and had to use sign language with the people.

When the course of his priestly assignment was completed, he went back home. It wasn't long before his wife, Elizabeth, conceived. She went off by herself for five months, relishing her pregnancy. "So, this is how God acts to remedy my unfortunate condition!" she said.

A Young Woman Conceives

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth to a virgin engaged to be married to a man descended from David. His name was Joseph, and the virgin's name, Mary. Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her:

Good morning! You're beautiful with God's beauty,
Beautiful inside and out! God be with you.

She was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. But the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus.

He will be great, be called 'Son of the Highest.'

The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David;

He will rule Jacob's house forever—no end, ever, to his kingdom."

Mary said to the angel, "But how? I've never slept with a man."

The angel answered,

The Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the Highest hover
over you; therefore, the child you bring to birth will be called Holy,
Son of God.

"And did you know that your cousin Elizabeth conceived a son, old as she is? Everyone called her barren, and here she is six months pregnant!

Nothing, you see, is impossible with God."

And Mary said,

Yes, I see it all now:

I'm the Lord's maid, ready to serve.

Let it be with me – just as you say.

Then the angel left her.

Blessed Among Women

Mary didn't waste a minute. She got up and traveled to a town in Judah in the hill country, straight to Zachariah's house, and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb leaped. She was filled with the Holy Spirit, and sang out exuberantly,
You're so blessed among women,
 and the babe in your womb, also blessed!
And why am I so blessed that
 the mother of my Lord visits me?
The moment the sound of your
 greeting entered my ears,
The babe in my womb
 skipped like a lamb for sheer joy.
Blessed woman, who believed what God said,
 believed every word would come true!
And Mary said,
I'm bursting with God-news;
 I'm dancing the song of my Savior God.
God took one good look at me, and look what happened—
 I'm the most fortunate woman on earth!
What God has done for me will never be forgotten,
 the God whose very name is holy, set apart from all others.
His mercy flows in wave after wave
 on those who are in awe before him.
He bared his arm and showed his strength,
 scattered the bluffing braggarts.
He knocked tyrants off their high horses,
 pulled victims out of the mud.
The starving poor sat down to a banquet;
 the callous rich were left out in the cold.
He embraced his chosen child, Israel;
 he remembered and piled on the mercies, piled them high.
It's exactly what he promised,
 beginning with Abraham and right up to now.
Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months and then went back to her own home.

Lesson 9 – Luke 1.57-80 – *Birth of John the Baptist* – George Ferris

When Elizabeth was full-term in her pregnancy, she bore a son.

Her neighbours and relatives, seeing that God had overwhelmed her with mercy, celebrated with her.

On the eighth day, they came to circumcise the child and were calling him Zachariah after his father. But his mother intervened: "No. He is to be called John."

"But," they said, "no one in your family is named that." They used sign language to ask Zachariah what he wanted him named.

Asking for a tablet, Zachariah wrote, "His name is to be John." That took everyone by surprise. Surprise followed surprise—Zachariah's mouth was now open, his tongue loose, and he was talking, praising God!

A deep, reverential fear settled over the neighborhood, and in all that Judean hill country people talked about nothing else. Everyone who heard about it took it to heart, wondering, "What will become of this child? Clearly, God has his hand in this."

Then Zachariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; he came and set his people free.

He set the power of salvation in the center of our lives, and in the very house of David his servant,

Just as he promised long ago through the preaching of his holy prophets: Deliverance from our enemies and every hateful hand;

Mercy to our fathers, as he remembers to do what he said he'd do,

What he swore to our father Abraham—a clean rescue from the enemy camp,

So we can worship him without a care in the world, made holy before him as long as we live.

And you, my child, "Prophet of the Highest," will go ahead of the Master to prepare his ways,

Present the offer of salvation to his people, the forgiveness of their sins.

Through the heartfelt mercies of our God, God's Sunrise will break in upon us,

Shining on those in the darkness, those sitting in the shadow of death,

Then showing us the way, one foot at a time, down the path of peace.

The child grew up, healthy and spirited. He lived out in the desert until the day he made his prophetic debut in Israel.

Advent Litany

(In joyful expectation let us pray to our Saviour and Redeemer, saying,
"Lord Jesus, come soon!")

O Wisdom, from the mouth of the Most High, you reign over all things to the ends of the earth: come and teach us how to live.
Lord Jesus, come soon!

O Lord, and head of the house of Israel, you appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and you gave the law on Sinai: come with outstretched arm and ransom us.
Lord Jesus, come soon!

O Branch of Jesse, standing as a sign among the nations, all kings will keep silence before you and all peoples will summon you to their aid: come, set us free and delay no more.
Lord Jesus, come soon!

O Key of David and sceptre of the house of Israel, you open and none can shut; you shut and none can open: come and free the captives from prison.
Lord Jesus, come soon!

O Morning Star, splendour of the light eternal and bright Sun of righteousness: come and enlighten all who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death.
Lord Jesus, come soon!

O King of the nations, you alone can fulfil their desires:
Cornerstone, you make opposing nations one:
come and save the creature you fashioned from clay.
Lord Jesus, come soon!

O Emmanuel, hope of the nations and their Saviour: come and save us,
Lord our God. Lord Jesus, come soon!