

## PRAYERS FOR ADVENT 2010

### Day 1 28<sup>th</sup> November

Our Father in heaven, we come before You on the first day of Advent and we confess that we are surrounded and bombarded.

We are surrounded by Christmas decorations in shops and city centres. We are bombarded by the cry of a culture that seeks to diminish, dilute and delete the name of Christ from Christmas.

And we confess that we too have so often succumbed to such a relentless assault in this season. We have lost our focus, swept along by the tide of commercialism and festive fluff that drains our energy, depletes our bank accounts, but swells our waistlines and increases our stress levels.

Father forgive us.

Our Father in heaven, we thank You that You sent Your Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of Mary. We ask that *this year, this season*, You will pour out Your Spirit of wisdom and revelation that we might know the truth of 'God with us.'

We say "No!" to Xmas and "Yes!" to **Christmas!**

Let His name be exalted and lifted high!

Let the world know the reason for the season!

We ask for prudence in our pockets and passion in our prayers.

May we know and celebrate 'God with us.'

May 'God with us' be our heart cry and our lifestyle.

Mark us with this truth as never before.

In the name of Immanuel 'God with us'

Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Prayer by Andrew Montgomery*

### Matthew 1:18 -24

***"This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."***

***All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us."***

***When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife."***

## **Day 2 29<sup>th</sup> November**

Dear Lord Jesus, We praise you at this advent season for the reminder that yours is an Everlasting Kingdom : we give you praise that as the prophets foretold; the government would be upon your shoulders and you would be called the 'Prince of Peace '.

In the midst of world turbulence and ' the cares of this world ' may we at this season focus on you Emmanuel, God with us.

There was no room for you at the inn but may we make room in our hearts, families and lives for you and be your light in a dark place to bring justice and hope for those who are vulnerable, lonely, isolated and oppressed.

Thank you that the "people who walked in darkness", including ourselves, have seen your light. May your light shine in us and may your kingdom rule be established in our hearts afresh and throughout the nations of the earth.

We bow at your footstool in adoration King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Amen

*Prayer by Beverley Bryans*

### **Isaiah 16:4b + 5**

***"The oppressor will come to an end, and destruction will cease; the aggressor will vanish from the land. In love a throne will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it — one from the house of David — one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of righteousness."***

## **Day 3 30<sup>th</sup> November**

Dear Lord,

We all know how important preparation is for the great events of our lives. At this time of the year many of us are busy making material preparations for Christmas. It's important to express our love, gratitude and appreciation to those we love and who love us through the offering of gifts and through sharing special meals together, with all the time and preparation which inevitably goes into that.

Some in our community will be preparing to welcome, feed and cheer up those who are homeless or who would otherwise be alone at this time of family gatherings. Some are busy writing Christmas cards to prisoners and making up gift parcels for the families of prisoners.

Lord, you have made us body and spirit and it is your will that we celebrate and nourish the bodily, emotional and affective sides of our being. But, dear Lord, in your gracious providence you have given us this season of Advent to prepare our spirits, the spiritual side of our identity, for the greatest gift of all time, the gift of your own beloved Son, born in poverty and far from home.

Help us, Lord, to receive the gift of Advent with humility, to make time to prepare our hearts to welcome the gift of your Son. Make our hearts humble, gentle, patient and generous - like the Heart of your Son. Free us from indifference and cynicism. Empty our hearts of anxiety.

Make our hearts ready to be filled with joy and wonder when we celebrate once again the inexhaustible wonder of the birth of your beloved Son in time, for it is in his precious Name that we pray. Amen

*Prayer by Paul Symonds*

**Philippians 2:1-11**

*“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.*

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”*

**Day 4 1<sup>st</sup> December**

**We thank you Lord** that your light has come into the World.

A light that has been given at great cost.

Your light has the power to touch and change.

You bring hope to the hopeless and your strong love breaks into even the darkest place.

Your light is shining on all mankind, King and beggar alike and your eyes look with compassion on your creation.

Those who place their hope in you find that truly the darkness has no power to overcome and you make us overcomers.

Your blessing makes us rich and adds no sorrow.

We love you and are grateful for the Life you give.

Amen.

*Prayer by Ronnie Wilson*

**John 3:15 –18a**

*“...that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world...”*

## Day 5 2<sup>nd</sup> December

Awaiting  
Divine  
Visitor  
Entering  
Nativity  
Time

Advent Lord teach us the proper  
use of your gift of time as we prepare  
for Your arrival  
May our preparation reflect the simplicity  
the joy and the peace of the event  
O that our hearts would enkindle  
just a spark of the love of that love  
which took flesh  
and dwelt amongst us  
AMEN

*Prayer by Rosaleen McGuinness*

### 1 John 4:8b – 12

*“God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.”*

## Day 6 3<sup>rd</sup> December

**Thank you Father**, that at this time of year – ADVENT – we can, in a more specific and concentrated way, remember that you are Emmanuel – GOD WITH US! Yes Father, thank you that you are not only with us but are also “for us”. Thank you, that you demonstrated this in such a powerful way, through sending Jesus your son, giving “him up for us”. Lord, may we in this season have a fresh revelation of that, a new sense of wonderment and awe! What a statement: nothing, nothing, nothing, “will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord”, for us!

Thank you Jesus, that you not only came, died and rose again, but that you are now, “forever”, “interceding for us”. Thank you, that we can now have an intimate relation with You and your Father. And not only that, but that we can now have a purposeful, meaningful life even in the midst of trials, in the midst of the “all things”, knowing that you pray for us as you work out your purposes in and through us.

Thank you, that we can now live for you because you lived for us, and that we can love you because you first loved us! Thank you!!

*Prayer by Harry Smith*

**Romans 8:28 – 39**

*“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?*

*As it is written:” For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

**Day 7 4<sup>th</sup> December**

Lord, if only these words could become a reality in all that we do and say.

Forgive us that we so often fail.

Maybe it's because we try and draw from the shallow pool of our own love rather than allowing your limitless love to impact every part of our lives.

You have said you will make the Fathers love real in us through actually living in us through your Holy Spirit!

“I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them”

Lord, please come to us in increasing measure this advent with your healing love. Replace all unforgiveness and bitterness with your unconditional love so that your love would be seen in every part of our lives and through us to all who we meet. Amen.

***Prayer by Keith Lockhart***

**1Corinthians 13:4 - 8**

*“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”*

## **Day 8 5<sup>th</sup> December**

**Loving God**, you know the anxiety of poverty,  
the gnawing fear of the next bill,  
how to feed the children, care for the sick.  
You know the brokenness of dreams and ideals,  
and the cynicism that hardens hearts  
and crushes community.  
You know too the foolishness of faith in wealth  
and the mystery of great generosity in times of crisis.

This Advent season, we look to you, God,  
Father of Jesus, our humble and joyful Lord,  
who laughed and cried,  
lived abundantly and died terribly  
to be with us in every season of life and death.

We look to you, because you have been there;  
be our Counsellor, our wise guide through these dark days;  
fill us with the hope of those who know their Saviour is coming,  
fill us with the love of those who know themselves deeply loved  
fill us with the songs of those who know our struggles are not eternal.

Give us hope in you so that we may be generous and not hoard,  
fill us with confidence in your goodness  
and gratitude for your faithfulness,  
so that our children may live lives of hope.  
Shine in us as light in the darkness,  
a testimony to the end of war,  
and alternative to violence,  
and abundance instead of poverty and injustice.

May Your Kingdom come, and your will be done on earth...  
Amen

*Prayer by Cheryl Meban*

### **Isaiah 9:1 -7**

***“Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan —***

***The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder. For as in the day of Midian’s defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. Every warrior’s boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.”***

## **Day 9 6<sup>th</sup> December**

We give thanks Lord for the great hope your coming gives us, for there is no one or no thing that can withstand Your will to save us!

Yes, You Who are Lord of all, Creator of all, come to us in Your almighty power to save.

You come as light and wisdom, and all-embracing compassion.

You come in divine integrity and everlasting faithfulness.

And You come as a little child, gently and surely leading us to salvation, reconciliation and peace.

We gather, drawn by Your littleness, Your poverty and Your humility, through which You give to us all that You are.

What hope is ours in You Our God, Who come in such lowliness!

We come to You in praise and thanksgiving.

We come in adoration and worship.

We come in the poverty of our need, rejoicing in the sure hope that nothing can come between us and Your saving love, Christ Jesus Our Lord.

*Prayer by Joan O'Hare*

### **Isaiah 11:1 – 5 & 10**

***“A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him - the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD - and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist...***

***In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.”***

## **Day 10 7<sup>th</sup> December**

Holy Lord,

We worship and adore you for you alone are the hope of the nations and our hope.

We confess that we often look for salvation in other places: in our own hard work, in doing our best to be caring, honest and upright people, and sometimes in just being religious.

Thank you for your outrageous grace that forgives us renews and puts our feet back on the right road.

So today, Lord, in the light of your grace we look to tomorrow with renewed hope. Bring your peace to the nations, to this nation and speak it into our hearts. Extend your gracious rule over this land. Come, Lord Jesus. Free us from the waterless pit of our captivity to history. Help us drink the fresh water you will lead us to today. Refresh us by the Spirit of faith, hope and love...and please, begin with me. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

*Prayer by Peter Murray*

**Zechariah 9:9-12**

*Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion ! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit. Return to your fortress, O prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you."*

**Day 11 8<sup>th</sup> December**

Jesus we thank you that you are justice, we thank you that you became one of us and showed us how to live out that justice on the earth.

Jesus we know that your justice, your gospel, your love is the hope for our nation, and the nations beyond us. Spirit, we pray that you would establish your justice and rule here on earth; that your Kingdom would come and your will would be done here in our land and in our time. God we long for and anticipate the revelation of your Kingdom among us - for this is the hope that we cling to in our hearts.

Father we pray that your people and your church in this land would be examples of the your kind of justice - examples of the sacrificial love that you so beautifully displayed when you were with us. Help us as a body to catch hold of your voice, to hear the words that you are speaking to us in our time - help us to be servants in whom you delight, servants who you do uphold and who you do rejoice in.

Finally, Father we pray for a deeper understanding of your love for us; for an unshakeable, un-moveable knowledge that we are loved and beloved by the creator of the universe. May we learn to behold that love, letting it impact every aspect of our lives, and from that place of surety to begin to live out the life in all its fullness that you promised to us. Amen.

***Prayer by Ryan & Christina Mitchell***

**Isaiah 42:1 – 4**

*"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope."*



## **Day 12 9<sup>th</sup> December**

Heavenly Father

We thank you for sending Jesus into our world.

We rejoice that in him we see your light and love revealed.

In the Advent season we pray that by your Spirit your light would shine into our hearts casting out darkness and through us your light and love would shine into our dark world.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen

*Prayer by Henry Hull*

***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.***

***The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”***

## **Day 13 10<sup>th</sup> December**

Hallelujah! Hope has come!

Not wishful thinking but the promise fulfilled,

Jesus our hope, the Hope of the nations has come!

Thank you Jesus for invading history when you did,

The Son of the Most High,

The Humble King whose throne will never end!

Like Mary your mother; our lives have been touched

And we can never be the same again.

The Light of Hope has invaded the darkness of our despair...

And we have been transformed.

We are now carriers of this Hope!

And this too is our hope, our certain expectation,

We know this to be true because nothing is impossible with God!

That one day Jesus you will come again!

Not as humble infant in a lowly manger;

With shepherds and wise men bowing;

Sheep bleating and cattle lowing...

But as the glorious King of Kings...

When every knee will bow and every tongue cry out

“Jesus Christ IS Lord!” Amen

*Prayer by Margaret Clarke*

**Luke 1:26 – 38**

*"In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."*

*"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."*

*"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her."*

**Day 14 11<sup>th</sup> December**

Father God, thank you for this privileged time when we ponder the promises made to our ancestors in the faith, knowing their fulfilment has come. Holy Spirit, please lead us in these days when hopelessness is so prevalent all around us to seek again your word – the promises made so long ago - and to recognise that you are a faithful God, always true to your word.

May the fact of this faithfulness lead us to that joyful hope which Paul speaks about in this passage. May it also lead us to accept the daily challenge of accepting one another even as Christ has accepted us.

As each of us lives out of that joyful hope may it bring hope to our nation in its present difficulties, so that once again we will sing praises to your Name, most High Son and Lord.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in our faith so that in the power of the Holy Spirit we may be rich in hope. Amen

***Prayer by Anna-Mary Hannon***

**Romans 15:4 – 13**

*"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name."*

*Again, it says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to him, all you peoples." And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

## **Day 15 12<sup>th</sup> December**

Father God, we rest in your Presence as we reflect on how you have fulfilled the prophecies relating to Jesus birth and how you continue to bring all things to completion. You are perfect in justice and righteousness balanced with love, mercy and compassion. We praise you, Lord Jesus, that you are 'the good shepherd' and 'the Prince of Peace'. As we consider the pain and brokenness of this present world we are grateful that you were born in a stable in Bethlehem, that you had to be taken to Egypt to protect your life and that you grew up in a land under the oppression of a foreign power and so have entered fully into the pain and suffering of every generation. Above all, we are humbled that you chose to submit to crucifixion, taking upon yourself all the burden of man's rebellion and guilt, as foretold by Isaiah. We rejoice that you are Risen, Ascended and seated in the Majesty of God and that your greatness is indeed, reaching to the ends of the earth. Thank you that you are no longer the 'Babe in the Manger' but Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace and that our security is established in your Majestic Name. Keep us enfolded in your Love, Joy and Peace throughout this Advent Season and forever. Amen.

*Prayer by Kelvin & Evaline McCracken*

### **Micah 5:2 – 5a**

***"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor gives birth and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And he will be their peace."***

## **Day 16 13<sup>th</sup> December**

Today I look with joyful anticipation for Christmas, to celebrate again the gift of Jesus, to join with the angels singing praise and glory to the King of Kings, like the Shepherds did on a cold hillside long ago.

I praise you Lord that you are as real and active in the world today as you were when Jesus was a baby. And that your promises are as real for me as they were for the Shepherds, 'Do not be afraid, I bring you news of great joy'. Father please help me today to stand against fear and let your Good News and Joy shine in my heart instead. Help me to see the gifts you have given me, to remember the treasures you've put in my life and to turn this back into praise to you.

Glory to God in the highest! Amen

*Prayer by Claire Robinson*

### **Luke 2:8 – 20**

***"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."***

*This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."*

*Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."*

### **Day 17 14<sup>th</sup> December**

Father in heaven we give you thanks for Jesus Your Son. You sent Him to be the peace between You and us. As we prepare for His coming we remember how powerful even the smallest act of kindness can be when offered to another in Jesus' name. So we pray that we, Your people, find the courage and generosity to welcome the strangers in our midst, to befriend the outcast and the lost people of our world, to feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, clothe the naked and protect the vulnerable in our society all in the name of Jesus. God, our Father give us a measure of your compassion, love and mercy to share with all your people so that when we look upon Jesus on His birthday morning we may be able to say with truth that we have brought Him presents of a lasting kind by trying to do Your will. Amen

Prayer by Catherine MacDonald

### **Ephesians 2:14 – 20**

*"For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with*

*God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone."*

### **Day 18 15<sup>th</sup> December**

Dear Lord Jesus, the joy of your birth warms our hearts at Christmas, as we welcome the Light of the World among us. Our faith is in your light which the world's darkness could neither understand nor put out.

Yet Lord Jesus, even though you are light, you stepped willingly into darkness on our behalf. You chose to be despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, for it was your Father's will; the punishment that brought us peace was upon You, and by Your wounds we are healed.

And so, Lord Jesus, as one who has known suffering, You open Your arms to us all and tenderly whisper, "Come" – come, all who struggle; come, all who doubt and fear; come, all know only too well our own weaknesses. Draw us

into the mystery of your grace and, as we celebrate Your birth, may we know new birth in our own lives. May we sing with the hymn-writer:

Love shall be our token,  
Love be yours and love be mine.  
Love to God and all men,  
Love for plea and gift and sign.  
Amen

*Prayer by Mark Keown*

**Isaiah 53:1 – 6**

*“Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”*

**Day 19 16<sup>th</sup> December**

Prince of Peace,  
Into a world of tension, turmoil and strife you came announcing the good news of peace to all men. We invite you today to come into our hearts afresh and announce your peace. Your words of peace bring life and hope to the darkest parts of my heart, to the hidden and anxious thoughts You bring rest and security.

Lord, You are always active in our lives; fill us with anticipation knowing that Your Kingdom is continually advancing in our lives and the world around us. You never leave us, You never let go of us, and You never give up on us, when everything else is uncertain and shaking, we acknowledge and love that You are our sure and everlasting peace.

Mark our lives with Your presence that as we do life in the midst of our families, friends and communities, we bring peace to the world around us. To a hurting and broken world, may we shout peace louder than the noise of despair and pain.

Today may our declaration be that we belong to You; The First and the Last, Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End, You hold our world in Your hands; this is our peace.

Amen

*Prayer by Kathryn Warren*

**John 14:27 – 29**

*“The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be*

troubled and do not be afraid. "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe."

Over the next 7 days of advent we will be praying the O Antiphons. These have been part of the Liturgy of the Hours from before the 5<sup>th</sup> Century and are used from December 17<sup>th</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup>.

The Antiphons predominant theme is messianic; stressing the hope of the Saviour's coming and each one refers to prophecy of the coming Messiah. Each antiphon follows the same pattern and begins with an invocation of the expected Messiah using a title attributed to Jesus, followed by praise of Him under one of His particular titles. Each ends with a petition for God's people, relevant to the title by which he is addressed, and a cry for Him to "Come".

### **Day 20 17<sup>th</sup> December**

#### **O Sapientia :**

"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 and show your people the way to salvation."

#### **Isaiah 11:2 & 3**

**"The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD—and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears;"**

### **Day 21 18<sup>th</sup> December**

#### **O Adonai:**

"O sacred Lord of Israel, who showed Yourself to Moses in the burning bush, Who gave him the holy law on Sinai Mountain: Come; stretch out Your mighty hand to set us free."

#### **Isaiah 11: 4 & 5**

**"But with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist."**

### **Day 22 19<sup>th</sup> December**

#### **O Radix Jesse:**

"O Flower of Jesse's stem, You have been raised up as a sign for all peoples; kings stand silent in Your presence; the nations bow down in worship before You, Come, let nothing keep You from coming to our aid."

#### **Isaiah 11: 1 & 2**

**"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse, from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him – the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord .."**

**Isaiah 11: 10**

***“In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to Him, and His place of rest will be glorious.”***

**Day 23 20<sup>th</sup> December**

***O Clavis David***

***“O Key of David, O royal Power of Israel controlling at Your will the gates of Heaven: Come, break down the prison walls of death; for those that live in darkness and the shadow of death; and lead your captive people into freedom.”***

**Isaiah 22:22**

***“I will place on His shoulders the key to the house of David; what He opens no one can shut and what He shuts no one can open.”***

**Isaiah 9: 7**

***“Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over His kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.”***

**Day 24 21<sup>st</sup> December**

***The timing of this Antiphon is perfect – calling for the coming of Christ the Rising Sun or Radiant Dawn on the day of the mid-winter solstice - the day with the longest period of darkness.***

***O Oriens:***

***“O Radiant Dawn, splendour of eternal light, sun of justice: come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.”***

***The timing of this Antiphon is perfect – calling for the coming of Christ the Rising Sun or Radiant Dawn on the day of the mid-winter solstice - the day with the longest period of darkness.***

**Isaiah 9: 1**

***“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned”***

**Isaiah 60: 19 & 20**

***“The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.”***

**Day 25 22<sup>nd</sup> December**

***O Rex Gentium:***

***“O King of the of all the nations, the only joy of every human heart; O Keystone of the mighty arch of man, come and save the creature you fashioned from dust.”***

**Jeremiah 10: 6 & 7**

***“No one is like you, O Lord; You are great and your name is mighty in power. Who should not revere You, O King of the nations? This is your due. Among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is no-one like You.”***

**Isaiah 9: 6 & 7a**

***“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end...”***

**Isaiah 2: 4**

***“He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more.”***

**Day 26 23<sup>rd</sup> December**

O Emmanuel:

*“O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver, desire of the nations, Saviour of all people, come and set us free, Lord our God.”*

**Isaiah 7:14**

***“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call him Emmanuel.”***

*When these antiphons were written they were arranged with a definite purpose. If you start with the last title and take the first letter of each one – Emmanuel, Rex Gentium, Oriens, Clavis David, Radix Jesse, Adonai, Sapientia – the Latin words ERO CRAS is formed. When translated this means “Tomorrow, I will come.” So as we have cried out to our Lord using seven Messianic titles in our preparation for Advent they echo back to us “Tomorrow I will be there, tomorrow I will come”. I find that amazing!!*

**Day 27 24<sup>th</sup> December**

**You are our eternal salvation,**

The unfailing light of the world.

Light everlasting,

You are truly our redemption.

Grieving that the human race was perishing  
through the tempter's power,

without leaving the heights

You came to the depths in your loving kindness.

Readily taking our humanity by Your gracious will,

You saved all earthly creatures, long since lost,

Restoring joy to the world.

Redeem our souls and bodies, O Christ,  
and so possess us as Your shining dwellings.

By Your first coming, make us righteous;

At your second coming, set us free:

So that, when the world is filled with light

and you judge all things,

We may be clad in spotless robes

and follow in Your steps, O King,

Into the heavenly hall.

*10<sup>th</sup> Century Prayer Author Unknown*

**Psalm 89: 1 – 4 & 13 – 18**

***I will sing of the LORD'S great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that***



*you established your faithfulness in heaven itself. You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.' "*

*Your arm is endued with power; your hand is strong, your right hand exalted. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD. They rejoice in your name all day long; they exult in your righteousness. For you are their glory and strength, and by your favor you exalt our horn. Indeed, our shield belongs to the LORD..."*

#### **Day 28 25<sup>th</sup> December**

**Thank You so much Father for your incredible love that came down at Christmas.**

**Thank you that your gift to us in Jesus was from the richest to the poorest of us.**

**Thank you that in Jesus' coming, each day can have meaning and hope for us and we can experience the extravagance of your love.**

**Jesus came, wrapped in filthy clothes and placed in a cattle manger...**

**What a priceless gift!**

**What a priceless gift it is to know the Father's love every day.**

**Your love for us compelled You to send Jesus as your eternal gift of Love and Hope – that's amazing!**

**Thank You so much!**

**May we this Christmas experience the thrill of your loving embrace and the tenderness of your unfailing love!**

**Amen**

#### ***Prayer by Jessie Cupples***

##### **Luke 2:1 - 7**

***In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.***