



## **ADVENT & CHRISTMAS READINGS FOR WORSHIP**

*For Advent, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year, Epiphany*  
(With Bonus Family Prayers)

### INTRODUCTION

The following responsive readings are designed for corporate use on Sunday mornings, except for the ones marked "family prayers" (these can be used corporately but are designed for home use).

The readings are provided in this format for ease of integration with projection software. Please include copyright information with each reading in your system. However, if projecting and including the copyright information, please feel free to make it small enough (or put it out of the way so it doesn't distract).

You can also feel free to design and print the readings in a beautiful way for handing out in bulletins, mailings, etc.

Included below are 11 complete readings and one family reading guide, with their designated uses. You can mix and match as needed to work with Advent candles or other service requirements.

These readings are all for use in worship for your congregation. You can use them live or in your online services, on slides, presentation software, etc. Note: Please resist the urge to post the text versions of the readings on the public internet (i.e. websites, social media pages, etc.) for copyright reasons. Thanks for understanding.

You can also print or email a PDF of the Family Prayers and Reading Guide to families in your congregation if desired. I would simply ask you create a PDF of those prayers if emailing, so they can print them easily, and so that the copyright information is attached.

Note that in the readings the word "Celebrant" is used for the Leader, and "Community" is used for those responding. You may choose to change those words to "Leader" and "Congregation" if desired, or something like it.

Blessings to you this Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany season! It's the "Cycle of Light" in the Christian Year calendar, and it's a beautiful time to celebrate our Savior's coming.

Rejoicing with you,

Dan Wilt  
Author, Advent & Christmas Readings for Worship

## INCLUDED IN THIS RESOURCE:

### SECTION I | ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

Advent Week 1: Come Lord Jesus  
Advent Week 2: A Savior Will Come  
Advent Week 3: A Peacemaker Will Come  
Advent Week 4: A King Will Come  
Christmas Eve/Day: Incarnation  
Christmas Eve/Day (alt): Lord Immanuel, God With Us

### SECTION II | CHRISTMAS FAMILY PRAYERS

Christmas Eve Family Prayer: O Hear the Angel Voices  
Christmas Morning Family Prayer (Around the Tree): Christmas Morning is Here!  
A Christmas Scripture Reading Guide for Families

### SECTION III | THE NEW YEAR

New Year's Eve/Day: A Fresh Vision Before Us  
New Year's Family Table Prayer: With You, We Walk

### SECTION IV | EPIPHANY

Epiphany: Light All Around

## SECTION I | ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

### ADVENT WEEK 1

TITLE: Come Lord Jesus

SUBTITLE: An Advent Reading

Celebrant: Anticipation grows within us.

Community: The day of Your incarnation is near.

Celebrant: There is no wound in the world that will not be healed.

Community: The day of Your incarnation is near.

Celebrant: There is no darkness nor shadow that will be untouched by light.

Community: The day of Your incarnation is near.

Celebrant: There is no evil on earth that will not be uncovered; no authority that will not kneel.

Community: The day of Your incarnation is near.

Celebrant: In this first week of Advent, we sing with the prophets.

Community: That One will come who will right the world.

Celebrant: In this first week of Advent, we shout with the children.

Community: Hosanna, the Lord delivers us from fear.

Celebrant: In this first week of Advent, we pray with believers around the world.

Community: Come Lord Jesus, come.

ALL: Lord, we prepare the ground of our hearts for this Advent season. Once again, we reclaim Your work within us and in Your world, to make all things new. The story of Advent reminds us that when You come there is transformation and healing. You transformed lives then, You transform our lives now, and You will transform all things on the Day of Your return. We look forward to this great Day when all creation will be made new.

We prepare our hearts in this Advent season by praying, listening, singing, and responding to Your coming. With the ancients who awaited You, we say "Living Lord, come among us."

Amen.

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## ADVENT WEEK 2

TITLE: A Savior Will Come

SUBTITLE: An Advent Reading

Celebrant: Anticipation grows within us.

Community: The day of Your incarnation is near.

Celebrant: There is no heart in the world that is too far away for You to reach.

Community: The day of Your incarnation is near.

Celebrant: There is no situation nor challenge that is outside the realm of Your concern and care.

Community: The day of Your incarnation is near.

Celebrant: There is no power of this age, nor of the age to come, that can hold us in bondage.

Community: The day of Your incarnation is near.

Celebrant: In this second week of Advent, we sing with the prophets.

Community: That One will come who will wipe away every tear from our eyes.

Celebrant: In this second week of Advent, we shout with the children.

Community: Jesus, Lord, save and rescue us from the sting of death and the grip of sin.

Celebrant: In this second week of Advent, we pray with believers around the world.

Community: Saving Lord, intervene in this good world and restore all things to Your original purpose.

ALL: Lord, we recognize that You are the God who draws near to Your creation. You are not far, not distant, not oblivious to our needs. Come, save us from our enemies within and without, rescue us from the idolatries of our age, and renew our voice to sing once again of Your saving power in our world.

We prepare our hearts in this Advent season by praying, listening, singing, and responding to Your saving acts of love in history. With the ancients who awaited You, we say "Living Lord, come save us."

Amen.

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## ADVENT WEEK 3

TITLE: A Peacemaker Will Come

SUBTITLE: An Advent Reading

Celebrant: Anticipation grows within us.

Community: The day of Your incarnation is near!

Celebrant: There is no war nor division in the world that is beyond Your capacity to heal.

Community: The day of Your incarnation is near!

Celebrant: There is no hatred in the cosmos that cannot be transformed by Your forgiving love.

Community: The day of Your incarnation is near!

Celebrant: There is no social ill, relational breach, nor systemic evil that will not dissolve at Your touch.

Community: The day of Your incarnation is near!

Celebrant: In this third week of Advent, we sing with the prophets.

Community: That One will come who will bring the shalom peace of God to all human conditions!

Celebrant: In this third week of Advent, we shout with the children.

Community: Prince of Peace, quiet a world screaming in pain, and hungry for your Presence!

Celebrant: In this third week of Advent, we pray with believers around the world.

Community: Master of hearts, bring harmony to the discord between us and those unlike us!

ALL: Prince of Peace, we recognize that You are the God who alone can bring restoration to a fallen planet. Your capacity to restore broken relationships, communities, nations, and ancient rivalries is boundless. Come, restore peace to our hearts today, and intervene among our restless human family. Lord, make us instruments of this same transforming peace wherever we go.

We prepare our hearts in this Advent season by praying, listening, singing, and responding to Your restoring forgiveness. With the ancients who awaited You, we say "Prince of Peace, plant the seeds of Your coming restoration in our hearts. After Your likeness, make us your Peacemakers."

Amen.

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## ADVENT WEEK 4

TITLE: A King Will Come

SUBTITLE: An Advent Reading

Celebrant: Anticipation grows within us.

Community: The day of Your incarnation is very near.

Celebrant: There is no power nor ruler who does not owe their allegiance to You.

Community: The day of Your incarnation is very near.

Celebrant: There is no universe that is without purpose, no world that cannot name its True Leader.

Community: The day of Your incarnation is very near.

Celebrant: Every man, woman and child is made to dance within Your Law of Love.

Community: The day of Your incarnation is very near.

Celebrant: In this fourth week of Advent, we sing with the prophets.

Community: That One will come who trump the powers of every age – and show us the way to be truly human.

Celebrant: In this fourth week of Advent, we shout with the children.

Community: King of the Universe, dwell in our midst and teach us the ways of Your Everlasting Kingdom.

Celebrant: In this fourth week of Advent, we pray with believers around the world.

Community: Ruler of Heaven and Earth, sovereignly act to restore loving leadership among those who bear Your image.

ALL: King of the Ages, we are broken in our understanding of loving leadership, and have lost the capacity to understand the ways of a benevolent Sovereign. Show us Your face, teach us your ways, elevate the law of Love among us, and help us to receive Your Guidance on our ashamed planet.

We prepare our hearts in this Advent season by praying, listening, singing, and responding to Your Rightful Kingship in our lives and in Your world. With the ancients who awaited You, we say “King of Kings and Lord of Lords, come quickly to us, right Your world, and spark the dawn of New Creation.”

Amen.

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## CHRISTMAS EVE/DAY

TITLE: Incarnation

SUBTITLE: A Christmas Day Reading

Celebrant: The fire of heaven has taken on flesh.

Community: Living God, You are the Wonderful Counselor.

Celebrant: The voice of stars and suns is now audible to our ears.

Community: Living God, You are the Mighty God.

Celebrant: The love that binds all the cosmos has revealed Himself.

Community: Living God, You are the Everlasting Father.

Celebrant: The Son of God has walked the sojourn of earth.

Community: Living God, You are the Prince of Peace.

Celebrant: Now we live, to share Your flame of hope.

Community: Living God, let the flame of transforming hope light our days.

Celebrant: Now we live, to hear Your voice of truth.

Community: Living God, let the voice of enduring truth guide our lives.

Celebrant: Now we live, to give Your love that heals.

Community: Living God, let the love that heals the world move our hands.

Celebrant: Now we worship You, Jesus, Son of God.

Community: Living God, let our worship rise from lives surrendered to Your will.

ALL: Emmanuel, God with us, today you reign supreme over all things. All things began in You, and all things find completion in You. The dawn of Your new creation has come, the days of Your redemption are upon us, and the hope of life forever calls us forward. With you, by Your Spirit, we will live the life of love.

We celebrate that for all time to come, for all generations and in all places in this universe, You are the resurrection. You are the life. All who believe in You, will never die.

Amen.

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Scriptures referenced: Isaiah 9:6, Colossians 1:15-20, John 11:25

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CHRISTMAS EVE/DAY (ALTERNATE, UNISON)

TITLE: Lord Immanuel, God With Us

SUBTITLE: A Christmas Day Reading

Lord Immanuel, God with us,

We come to you with grateful hearts for this meal that we are about to eat.  
It is a reminder of the Feast of Love that awaits us when Your Kingdom comes  
In all its fullness at the completion of time.

We worship you today, Jesus, for being the Word of God, in our midst.  
"In the beginning," the Apostle John said,  
"Was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."  
Through you all things were made, things visible and invisible,  
Nothing was made without You, and in You all things live and move and have their being.

You give meaning to our lives, Lord Immanuel, God with us.  
You give purpose to each minute,  
And for this we are truly grateful.

By becoming flesh, by dwelling among us, by living Your life in our midst,  
We have seen You, touched You, and learned from You what it means to be human.

Lord Immanuel, God with us,  
To Your great glory and honor we raise our glass to  
Toast Your coming among us,  
To celebrate this feast before us,  
And to look forward to the Great Feast that is to come – when you return to  
Heal and restore; to bring justice and true shalom peace on the earth.

For Your Love, for Your Life, for Your Spirit in our midst, we give thanks.  
For this meal, we are very, very grateful.

In Jesus' All-Powerful Name, we come.

Amen.

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## SECTION II: CHRISTMAS FAMILY PRAYERS

TITLE: O Hear the Angel Voices

SUBTITLE: A Christmas Eve Reading for Families

Celebrant: Tonight, we give thanks for the day that is tomorrow!

Family (and friends): Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains!

Celebrant: On this Christmas eve, we offer worship from our hearts, and thanks from our lips.

Family (and friends): And the mountains in reply, echo back their joyous strains.

Celebrant: Tonight Lord, as we consider again the most important event in all human history, your advent among us as Jesus our Lord and Christ, we are filled with songs of praise.

Family (and friends): Gloria in Excelsis Deo; glory to God in the Highest.

Celebrant: We are filled with appreciation that we are never alone, because You came to us, You pursued us, You found each one of us. Now, you live within us by Your Spirit.

Family (and friends): Gloria in Excelsis Deo; glory to God in the Highest.

Celebrant: Let's join hands (all join hands). Lord Jesus, on this Christmas Eve, our joy is made complete by knowing that you look into each one of our lives, imperfect as they are, and You bring transformation by your Spirit within. May we become people who "shine like stars in the heavens," declaring Your goodness and Your faithfulness in the world you so love.

On this Christmas Eve, we join in the song of the angels that glorious night, and say,

ALL: Fall on your knees

O hear the angel voices

O night divine, O night when Christ was born.

His power and glory we evermore proclaim (from the song, "O Holy Night")

Amen.

(optional: sing first verse of O Come, All Ye Faithful)

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TITLE: Christmas Morning Is Here!

SUBTITLE: A Family Prayer for Christmas Morning (Around The Tree)

Celebrant: Christmas morning is here!

Family (and friends): Joy to the World! The Lord has come!

Celebrant: We've been waiting all year, and here it is!

Family (and friends): Joy to the World! The Lord has come!

Celebrant: Let's pray. Lord, the lights on this tree, and the shining decorations, remind us that Your love for us is higher than the stars beyond us, and more radiant than all that glitters in this beautiful world.

Family (and friends): Joy to the World! The Lord has come!

Celebrant: The gifts under this tree, and the love that went into picking each one, remind us of the greatest gift we have ever received at Christmas - Your presence with us, Jesus our Immanuel.

Family (and friends): Joy to the World! The Lord has come!

Celebrant: The family (and friends) gathered around this tree, and the stories we share together, remind us that You have been faithful to us for generations – and You will be faithful for generations to come.

Family (and friends): Joy to the World! The Lord has come!

Celebrant: Let's join hands (all join hands). Lord Jesus, because of Christmas, we can be made new by Your Spirit who lives in us. You are the reason we give these gifts, and You are the reason we live our lives. May this Christmas Day remind us of all You have given; we give you on the day of Your earthly birth, the best gift we can give - our lives.

In Jesus name, our Immanuel, we say,

ALL: Joy to the World! The Lord has come!

(If desired, insert singing of the first verse of Joy To The World.)

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## TITLE: A Christmas Reading Guide for Families

If desired, the following passages work well for reading through the Christmas story as a family. Consider having different family members read an entire section, or portions of a section. In our home, we use a Nativity set and act out the scenes.

### The Christmas Story

Luke 1:26-38

(The Angel visits Mary, Mary's response, the Magnificat - Mary's song of worship)

Matthew 1:18-25 or Luke 2:1-7

(Matthew: The engagement, Joseph's dream; Luke: Census and short birth narrative)

Luke 2:8-20

(The Shepherds see the Angelic Host)

Matthew 2:1-12

(The Wise Men come from the East)

John 1:1-15

(In the beginning was the Word...; consider memorizing this passage as a family one year)

### SECTION III: THE NEW YEAR

TITLE: A Fresh Vision Before Us

SUBTITLE: A New Year Prayer

Living God, Restoring Son, and Transforming Spirit,  
The fresh vision of a New Year spreads out before us.

The times we measure by are made by us, trusted by us and invested with meaning, by us.  
A year is one of the simple ways we plan our moments, our days, our lifetimes and our history.

We ask that there would be a gift from You in this turning of the times  
That we call the New Year.

In this New Year, we ask you for a fresh vision of Who You know Yourself to be,  
To unfold before us.

In this New Year, we ask for a fresh vision of who we are, formed and adored by You,  
To expand in our minds eye.

In this New Year, we ask for a fresh vision of the families of which we are a part,  
To explode onto our imagination.

In this New Year, we ask for a fresh vision of our children, and  
Those to whom we give both care and leadership,  
To renew our energies to selflessly serve once again.

In this New Year, we ask for a fresh vision of the people around us,  
To welcome us out of isolation into the nurturing of just and loving communities.

In this New Year, we ask for a fresh vision of this good world, and this good creation,  
To inspire us to embrace all that You have so lovingly given.

Living Lord Jesus, we offer ourselves to You, and ask that a  
Fresh vision of You, ourselves, our families, our communities, and creation  
Would be painted on the canvas of our minds.

As we turn our attention to a New Year with the turn of the calendar page,  
Renew in us a fresh vision of Your highest and best plans for Your people.

In Jesus Name,

Amen.

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TITLE: With You, We Walk

SUBTITLE: A Family Table Prayer for New Year's Eve or Morning

Another year has turned its page, O Lord.  
We feel promises about to be fulfilled, hopes that may be realized,  
And sorrows unknown – that may become ours to bear.

All of this, we carry into a New Year.  
We declare at the doorway into this year, that our trust is not in any man or woman to fulfill us,  
Nor is our trust in circumstance, or a belief that the days ahead will be easy.  
We do not expect, in this New Year, for our every prayer to be answered in a way we would like.  
You are in control, and we release our lives to you.

We put our trust in this:  
That You who have been with us through this past year, Immanuel,  
Will be with us in this New Year.

It is in You, Immanuel, we trust.  
If you go ahead of us, we will go; if you go behind us, we will go.  
If you will lead us in a cloud by day, and if you will light the night and its shadows with Your fire,  
we will faithfully follow.

This is our prayer: In all things that happen this year we ask  
That we would be aware of Your presence, O Lord.  
In this walk that will always be by faith and not by sight, let us perceive Your nearness.

We will stumble and fall, and we will also succeed and triumph. We will laugh, and we will also weep.  
But in those moments in which we cannot sense You near,  
Let us see with the eyes of faith the marks of Your presence all around us, beneath us,  
Carrying us boldly into Your future.

With You we walk, with confidence and trust, into this New Year.

Amen.

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## SECTION IV: EPIPHANY

TITLE: Light All Around

SUBTITLE: An Epiphany Reading

It is in Your Revealing, Your Epiphany,  
That we find Light to see this world,  
A Manifestation of all that is Good,  
All that is Right, All that is Lovely, All that is True, is laid before us.  
Each, and its opposite, seen by this same Light.

Epiphany - light blazing all around us,  
Light, Revealing,  
Light, Defining,  
Light, Enlightening,  
Light, Inspiring,  
Light, Warming  
Light, Transfiguring.

Light, all around us,  
Showered from Your heart onto this dim world,  
Sparks falling from a shimmering Star,  
A descending Dove,  
A vivid Voice.

A Star, shining in an warm eastern sky  
Welcoming we who were pushed to the fringe, we from worlds unfamiliar,  
Into the center of Your plan.

A Dove, descending on a Restorer in a river  
Announcing the days of humankind were turning  
Turning toward a New Creation to come.

A Voice, vivid and speaking into this wild world,  
Singing of the arrival of this melodic Rule, this harmonic Purpose, this unison Love,  
Sung by the Voice that gives volume to all others.

Light, all around us, blazing; the gift of a Star, a Dove, a Voice.  
Spirit of Light, announce this Epiphany among us now -  
Jesus, Manifest Yourself - Jesus, Show Yourself - Jesus let Your Light shine all around us.

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