

BMC  
DEVOTIONAL  
STUDY  
GUIDE

# ADVENT & CHRISTMAS



**LECTIONARY YEAR A**

27 Nov 2022 - 1 Jan 2023

# Advent, Christmas, and New Year

## **DAILY** Devotional Booklet

*This booklet contains the Sunday Sermon Readings and daily Memory verses with an accompanying prayer to assist you as we journey through this very special time of the year.*

1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent	27 November	The day and hour unknown
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent	4 December	John the Baptist prepares the way
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent	11 December	Jesus and John the Baptist
4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent	18 December	Joseph accepts Jesus as his son
Christmas Eve	24 December	The birth of Jesus
Sunday Christmas DAY	25 December	The word became flesh
1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas	1 January	The escape to Egypt

### What is Advent?

Advent is the beginning of the Christian Calendar; it marks a New Year's Day in the Church. During advent the church prepares itself for the celebration of Christ's nativity. The word advent is derived from the Latin *adventus* which means the 'Coming or arrival'.

Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas, and it ends on Christmas Eve (24 December). The focus of advent is on hope and anticipation. The emphasis is on Christ who comes as the child born in Bethlehem. This is a source of Joy and gladness for the believer in celebrating God's precious gift of a savior for the world.



Advent is a time to celebrate light in the midst of darkness, a time to reflect on the Lord's anticipated second coming as the judge at the end of time. The season of advent is characterized by a spirit of expectation, anticipation, preparation, and longing. It is also a time of rejoicing and a time for soul-reflection in deep appreciation and worship of Emmanuel, Jesus the Christ, the son of God who came to be with us and die for our sins.

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### Symbols of advent

The advent **wreath** is a widely recognized symbol of advent, it's made of a circle of evergreen branches laid flat to symbolize eternal life, the eternity of God. The four advent candles stand in the circle, and each represents the four Sundays and the fifth candle the Christ candle is lit on Christmas day. Three of the **candles** are purple because the color violet is a liturgical color that signifies a time of prayer, penance, and sacrifice. The one is pink (Rose-colored) and the Jesus candle is white.

### First Sunday of Advent – Hope –

The first candle is also called the **prophecy** candle in remembrance of the prophets who foretold the birth of Christ. We can hold on to hope because God is faithful and will keep the promises made to us, our hope comes from God.

### Second Sunday of Advent – Love –

The second candle is called the Bethlehem candle. God chose a special birthplace: Micah 5:2; Luke 2:1-7. Love is the greatest of all the virtues on the Advent wreath and encompasses Jesus' entire purpose for being

on earth. Jesus focused on preaching love throughout his ministry. Two of his greatest commands involve love: Love God, love your neighbor.

### Third Sunday of Advent – Joy –

God sent royal messengers with a message of good news. The joy candle (preferably rose colored, symbolizing joy); it is also called the Shepherds candle. It reminds us of the joy that the world experienced at the birth of Jesus. There is also joy because it's the midpoint of advent.

### Fourth Sunday of Advent – Peace –

The peace candle reminds us of the message of the Angels "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men".

**Christmas Eve and Christmas Day** – The white candle is placed in the middle of the wreath and lit on Christmas Eve. This candle is called the "Christ Candle" and represents the life of Christ. The color white signifies purity because Christ is our sinless, pure Savior. Jesus is the Light of the world and provides salvation.



#### SUNDAY 27 NOVEMBER READINGS

First Reading	<a href="#">Isaiah 2:1-5</a>
Psalm	<a href="#">Psalm 122</a>
Second Reading	<a href="#">Romans 13:11-14</a>
Gospel	<a href="#">Matthew 24:36-44</a> <b>THE DAY AND HOUR UNKNOWN</b>

### 27 November Sunday

*Matthew 24:43 "Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."*

**Prayer:** Dear Lord Jesus, our savior and redeemer. We pray that you teach us to stay alert and be on the watch. Teach us to live as those who are anticipating your coming. That in all things we may seek to do your will. In Jesus name we pray, **Amen.**

### 28 November Monday

*Romans 6:10-11 "The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus."*

**Prayer:** Heavenly God our parent, we thank you for the gift of Christ who came to set us free from the punishment of Sin by taking our place and dying on the cross. Thank You that I am a new creation in Christ and positioned in Him through time and into eternity. I pray that the life I now live may be lived by faith in the Son of God Who loves me and gave Himself for me - so that His life may be lived through me to Your praise and glory. In Jesus' name I pray, **Amen.**

### 29 November Tuesday

*Hebrews 11:39-40 "These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect."*

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank You for the great cloud of men and women who gained Your approval through their faith. It is lovely to realize that they continued to trust in the truth of Your Word when faced with unspeakable difficulties and dangers. Their faith did not waver, even though they died before receiving what was promised. we pray that we too may have the sort of faith that does not waver when problems arise and that we will be faithful to the point of death. How wonderful it will be to share eternity with the Old Testament saints, praising and glorifying You together. In Jesus' name, **Amen.**

### 30 November Wednesday

*Matthew 24:23-25 "At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you ahead of time."*

**Prayer:** Thank You, Father, that in Your grace You chose to reveal Your plan to redeem the lost race of sinful men, through the sacrificial offering of Your dear Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Thank You for revealing to us things that are to happen in the future, and what will be the signs of Your return to earth at the end of the Great Tribulation, when You come in power and great glory to rule and reign in righteousness. **Amen**

### 1 December Thursday

*Acts 1:12-17 "They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers."*

**Prayer:** Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the gift of prayer. That we can join together in prayer and connect to you and live in fellowship with you and one another. Strengthen us with the zeal for prayer, that in all things we may commend them to you in prayer. This we ask in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

### 2 December Friday

*Acts 13:16-25 "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. As John was completing his work, he said: 'Who do you suppose I am? I am not the one you are looking for. But there is one coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.'*

**Prayer:** Gracious God, we thank you for all the forerunners of faith. We praise you for the lives of many who taught us about Jesus. We anticipate in hope in this advent season for his coming into our lives afresh. In Jesus's name we pray, **Amen.**

### 3 December Saturday

*Isaiah 40:1-11 "You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!"*

**Prayer:** Heavenly God, our parent, we pray in the name of Jesus that we may hear the good news of your coming. We pray that we may be open to receive your presence in our lives. We pray that as we walk through this season of advent, we may hear the declaration of your abiding presence amongst humanity. In Jesus name we pray, **Amen.**



#### **SUNDAY 4 DECEMBER READINGS**

First Reading	<u>Isaiah 11:1-10</u>
Psalm	<u>Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19</u>
Second Reading	<u>Romans 15:4-13</u>
Gospel	<u>Matthew 3:1-12</u> <b>JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY</b>

### 4 December Sunday

*Matthew 3:10 "The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."*

**Prayer:** Dear Father, do your work of removing clearing those parts of life within me and within the world that are fruitless. **Amen**

### 5 December Monday

*Psalm 21:1-4 "The king rejoices in your strength, Lord. How great is his joy in the victories you give! You have granted him his heart's desire and have not withheld the request of his lips. You came to greet him with rich blessings and placed a crown of pure gold on his head. He asked you for life, and you gave it to him - length of days, for ever and ever."*

**Prayer:** Father, I rejoice in your strength and blessing to save me from my enemies and grant me a life that lasts as long as eternity. **Amen**

### 6 December Tuesday

*Isaiah 41:17-18 "The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst.*

*But I the LORD will answer them; 'I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs.'"*

**Prayer:** Father, by Your living water, bring to life the barren and parched deserts of my life. **Amen**

### 7 December Wednesday

*Matthew 12:35-37 "Good people bring out good things from their good treasure. But evil people bring out evil things from their evil treasure. I tell you that people will have to answer on Judgment Day for every useless word they speak. By your words you will be either judged innocent or condemned as guilty."*

**Prayer:** Father, make me aware of the life stored up in my inner being. By the power of Your Spirit, store good treasure in my inner world so that I may speak good things into the world outside. **Amen**

### 8 December Thursday

*2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*

**Prayer:** Father, your patience with me in my sin calls me to be patient with others as they come to repentance. Help me O Lord. **Amen**

### 9 December Friday

*Psalms 146:5 "Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God."*

**Prayer:** Father, in the challenges I am confronted with, may I seek You and place my hope in You and not in my own strength or in anyone else's remedy. **Amen**

### 10 December Saturday

*Luke 3:5b-6 "The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all people will see God's salvation"*

**Prayer:** Father, lay Your straight ways alongside those areas of my life that are crooked in order for me to witness Your salvation to the world. **Amen**



#### **SUNDAY 11 DECEMBER READINGS**

First Reading	<u>Isaiah 35:1-10</u>
Psalm	<u>Psalms 146:5-10</u>
Second Reading	<u>James 5:7-10</u>
Gospel	<u>Matthew 11:2-11</u> <b>JESUS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST</b>

### Sunday Memory Verse

*Matthew 11:5-6 "The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. <sup>6</sup> Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."*

**Prayer:** Father, keep me standing as You do your work in those parts of our living that are blind, lame, unclean, deaf, dead and poverty-stricken. **Amen**

### 12 December Monday

*Isaiah 29:18-19 "In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see. Once more the humble will rejoice in the Lord; the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel."*

**Prayer:** Father, make my joy complete while I listen to hear the words of the scroll and watch for that day in the midst of gloom and darkness. **Amen**

### 13 December Tuesday

*Psalms 42:8 "By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me - a prayer to the God of my life."*

**Prayer:** Father may your love song for me flow over me – by day and by night. **Amen**

### 14 December Wednesday

*Zechariah 8:7-8 "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west. I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God.'"*

**Prayer:** Father, gather those parts of my life that live outside of Your promised space so that I may be counted as one of your people and that I may declare You as my Lord. **Amen**

### 15 December Thursday

*Galatians 3:26-29 "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

**Prayer:** Father, cover me with Christ so that I may take my place amongst those who are heirs to Your promise. **Amen**

### 16 December Friday

*2 Samuel 7:21-22 "For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant. How great you are, Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you"*

**Prayer:** Father, help me know and declare the great things you have done like no other can do. **Amen**

### 17 December Saturday

*John 3:33-35 "Whoever has accepted Jesus' testimony has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands."*

**Prayer:** Father, help me live in the truth of Jesus being your full, perfect and sufficient gift to humankind. **Amen**



#### **SUNDAY 18 DECEMBER READINGS**

First Reading	<u>Isaiah 7:10-16</u>
Psalms	<u>Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19</u>
Second Reading	<u>Romans 1:1-7</u>
Gospel	<u>Matthew 1:18-25</u> <b>JOSEPH ACCEPTS JESUS AS HIS SON</b>

#### **Sunday Memory Verse:**

*Isaiah 7: 14 "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel".*

**Prayer:** God of creation and provision you gave the world a gift in Christ to save us from the misery of darkness and sinfulness. Enable us to receive Christ in our hearts. **Amen.**

### 19 December Monday

*Gen 17: 19 "Yes but your wife Sarah will bear you a Son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him"*

**Prayer:** God of love, peace, and faithfulness your commitment and promise sustains our hope. We are assured of your everlasting presence and providence throughout the dry and weary lands of our faith journey. **Amen**

### 20 December Tuesday

*1 Sam 2: 1 "My heart rejoices in the Lord; in the Lord my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in your deliverance"*

**Prayer:** Praise and honor be unto you our redeemer, and comforter. Through the birth of Christ, we are renewed in strength, our bodies refilled with new energy to sustain us in serving you Lord. **Amen**

### 21 December Wednesday

*Gen 37: 8 "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us? And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said".*

**Prayer:** Almighty God our parent, you bestow upon us the spirit of imagining the future and all its activities. Inspire our minds to dream of the greater things of your kingdom, to dream of a just world, of peace and righteousness. **Amen**

### 22 December Thursday

*Rev 22: 7 "Behold I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book"*

**Prayer:** God of love and grace, you loved the world so much that you sacrificed your only Son to be our saviour. We wait in anticipation for the arrival of our redeemer who will bring light in this dark world, a world of pain, suffering and injustice. Bless us with the ability to wait patiently for Christ who is coming soon. **Amen**

### 23 December Friday

*Luke 1:1 "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of the humble state of His servant."*

**Prayer:** Lord God, you are always aware of me and my needs. You care for each and every person on this earth! We glorify your Holy name and character. **Amen.**



#### **SATURDAY 24 DECEMBER READINGS**

First Reading	<u>Isaiah 9:2-7</u>
Psalm	<u>Psalm 96</u>
Second Reading	<u>Titus 2:11-14</u>
Gospel	<u>Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)</u> <b>THE BIRTH OF JESUS</b>

#### **Saturday Memory Verse:**

*Psalm 96:11 "Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it."*

**Prayer:** Your majesty, creator of the universe, you hold all things together. We raise our hands in praise as we rejoice with the heavens and all created universe, thankful for your love and grace. **Amen.**



#### **SUNDAY 25 DECEMBER READINGS**

First Reading`	<u>Isaiah 52:7-10</u>
Psalm	<u>Psalm 98</u>
Second Reading	<u>Hebrews 1:1-4, (5-12)</u>
Gospel	<u>John 1:1-14</u> <b>THE WORD BECAME FLESH</b>

**Sunday Memory Verse:**

*John 1:4 "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."*

**Prayer:** Light of the world (our redeemer, counselor, father, friend) that came down to earth today! May we show our love for you today, by loving the people around us. **Amen.**

**26 December Monday**

*Psalm 148: 5 "Let them praise the name of the Lord, for at his command they were created, and he established them for ever and ever, he issued a decree that will never pass away."*

**Prayer:** Our heavenly father, we are truly yours! Forever! Help us today to know without a doubt who we are in you! **Amen.**

**27 December Tuesday**

*Proverbs 8:35 "For those who find me find life and receive favour from the Lord."*

**Prayer:** Thank you Jesus that I was found! I see your grace in my everyday life and I thank you for it! **Amen.**

**28 December Wednesday**

*Matthew 18:2 "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."*

**Prayer:** Lord God, create in me the excitement and search for learning like a little child, but most of all let me live in a child-like trust towards you today and every day. **Amen.**

**29 December Thursday**

*Psalm 20:4 "May he give you the desires of your heart and make all your plans succeed."*

**Prayer:** Dear God, you know each and every secret wish I hold in my heart. Help me to communicate it better to you in prayer and to others that can help. **Amen.**

**30 December Friday**

*2 Corinthians 4:16 "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day."*

**Prayer:** How awesome my God, that no matter what happens on the outside, you sustain, renew and empower us from the inside to make it day after day! **Amen.**

**31 December Saturday**

*John 8:12 "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."*

**Prayer:** Thank you Jesus that we don't have to carry anything (tools or guidebooks), we come and go with your light guiding the way. All we need is you! We love you, Lord! **Amen.**



**SUNDAY 1 JANUARY READINGS**

First Reading	<a href="#">Isaiah 63:7-9</a>
Psalm	<a href="#">Psalm 148</a>
Second Reading	<a href="#">Hebrews 2:10-18</a>
Gospel	<a href="#">Matthew 2:13-23</a> <b>THE ESCAPE TO EGYPT</b>

**Sunday Memory Verse:**

*Hebrews 2:11 "Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So, Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters."*

**Prayer:** We start off this year as part of your Holy Family! Brothers and sisters of the highest! May we shine bright for you and spread your message of love wherever we go! May we be aware of your presence at all times. **Amen.**