

# St Mary Magdalene, Lincoln



## About this Service

Advent is a season of preparation. It's a time for getting ready. Most of us will spend a lot of time in Advent getting ready for Christmas, with presents to buy, cards to write, and houses to decorate.

In our church life, we will also be getting ready for Christmas. During Advent, our prayers and reflections focus on those who have helped over many centuries to prepare the way for Jesus:

- the *Patriarchs*, those ancient figures who were called to live in the light of faith;
- the *Prophets*, who proclaimed God's justice as well as God's mercy;
- *John the Baptist*, who announced that the Kingdom of God was coming near;
- and the *Blessed Virgin Mary*, who said 'yes' when God asked her to bear his only Son.

Tonight, right at the beginning of Advent, we reflect on these forerunners of Christ as, with hymns, readings, carols and prayers, we construct the Advent Ring, with a candle standing for each.

## Introduction

*A bell is rung to signal the start of the service. The church is now in silence and near darkness. Candles are lit as the choir sings.*

### **Greeting and Bidding Prayer**

*The officiant says*

It is time for us to wake out of sleep, for deliverance is nearer to us now than it was when first we believed. It is far on in the night; day is near. Let us therefore cast off the deeds of darkness and put on our armour as soldiers of the light.

The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

**All and also with you.**

My sisters and brothers, we enter today the solemn season of Advent in which the Church bids us prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ; a coming that we recall in the Child of Bethlehem; a coming that we experience in the gift of his Spirit, in the bread of the Eucharist, in the joy of human lives that are shared; a coming we wait for when God gathers up all things in Christ. Let us in this holy season reflect on the coming of Christ who brings light to the world. Let us leave behind the darkness of sin, walk in the light that shines on our path, and renew within ourselves the hope of glory to which he beckons us. And as we turn towards the light, let us have on our hearts all those who see no light, for whom all is darkness and despair. Let us pray that they too may be illumined by Christ who is our light.

*The whole congregation prays silently, after which the officiant draws the prayers together in the Collect of Advent Sunday*

### **Collect**

Almighty God,  
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness  
and to put on the armour of light,  
now in the time of this mortal life,  
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;  
that on the last day,  
when he shall come again in his glorious majesty

to judge the living and the dead,  
we may rise to the life immortal;  
through him who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**All** Amen.

### ***Lord's Prayer***

Awaiting his coming in glory,  
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All** **Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name;  
your kingdom come;  
your will be done;  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

### ***Hymn 32 – O Come, O Come, Emmanuel***

*During the singing of the hymn, the first candle is placed in the Advent Ring, which stands in the centre of the nave.*

### **First Advent Candle – The Patriarchs**

*The first candle is placed in the Advent Ring. A minister says*

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, God of our ancestors:  
to you be praise and glory for ever.  
You called the patriarchs to live by the light of faith  
and to journey in the hope of your promised fulfilment.  
May we be obedient to your call  
and be ready and watchful to receive your Christ,

a lamp to our feet and a light to our path;  
for you are our light and our salvation.

**All Blessed be God for ever.**

**Reading**

*We listen to a reading from Hebrews 11: 1–3; 8–16*

**Response**

People of God: awake!  
The day is coming soon  
when you shall see God face to face.  
Remember the ways and the works of God.  
God calls you out of darkness  
to walk in the light of his coming.  
You are God's children.

**All Lord, make us one as we walk with Christ  
today and for ever.  
Amen.**

**Hymn 27 – Hark the glad sound**

*During the singing of the hymn, the church lights are turned on.*

## **Second Advent Candle – The Prophets**

*The second candle is placed in the Advent Ring. A minister says*

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, just and true:  
to you be praise and glory for ever.  
Of old you spoke by the mouth of your prophets,  
but in our days you speak through your Son,  
whom you have appointed the heir of all things.  
Grant us, your people, to walk in his light,  
that we may be found ready and watching  
when he comes again in glory and judgement;  
for you are our light and our salvation.

**All Blessed be God for ever.**

**Anthem – Choir**

**Reading**

*We listen to a reading from Isaiah 40: 1 – 11*

## **Response**

People of God: be glad!  
Your God delights in you,  
giving you joy for sadness  
and turning the dark to light.  
Be strong in hope therefore;  
for your God comes to save.  
You are God's children.

**All** Lord, make us one in the love of Christ  
today and for ever.  
Amen.

*Hymn 58 – Long ago prophets knew*

## **Third Advent Candle – John the Baptist**

*The third candle is placed in the Advent Ring. A minister [Hugh?] says*

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, just and true:  
to you be praise and glory for ever.  
Your prophet John the Baptist was witness to the truth  
as a burning and shining light.  
May we your servants rejoice in his light,  
and so be led to witness to him  
who is the Lord of our coming kingdom,  
Jesus our Saviour and King of the ages.

**All** Blessed be God for ever.

## **Reading**

*We listen to a reading from Matthew 3: 1 – 6 [St Nick's Reader?]*

## **Response**

People of God: return!  
You are called to be God's own.  
From the mountains announce the good news.  
God comes in justice and peace,  
to all who follow his ways.  
You are God's children.

**All** Lord, make us one in the peace of Christ  
today and for ever.  
Amen.

**Hymn 34 – On Jordan’s Bank**

**Fourth Advent Candle – The Blessed Virgin Mary**

*The fourth candle is placed in the Advent Ring. A minister [Julia] says*

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, merciful and gentle:  
to you be praise and glory for ever.  
Your light has shone in our darkened world  
through the child-bearing of blessed Mary;  
grant that we who have seen your glory  
may daily be renewed in your image  
and prepared like her for the coming of your Son,  
who is the Lord and Saviour of all.

**All** Blessed be God for ever.

**Anthem – Choir**

**Reading**

*We listen to a reading from Luke 1:26 – 35, 3811 [St Mary’s Reader?]*

**Response**

People of God: prepare!  
God, above all, maker of all,  
is one with us in Christ.  
Maranatha!

**All** Come, Lord Jesus!

God, the mighty God,  
bends down in love to earth.  
Maranatha!

**All** Come, Lord Jesus!

God with us, God beside us,  
comes soon to the world he has made.  
Maranatha!

**All** Come, Lord Jesus!

We are God's children,  
we seek the coming Christ.  
Maranatha!

**All** **Come, Lord Jesus!**

*Hymn 238 – For Mary, Mother of our Lord*

## **The Christ Child's Candle**

*The fifth candle is placed in the Advent Ring. A minister says*

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, King of peace:  
to you be praise and glory for ever.  
The new light of your incarnate Word  
gives gladness in our sorrow,  
and a presence in our isolation.  
Fill our lives with your light,  
until they overflow with gladness and praise.

**All** **Blessed be God for ever.**

**Reading**

*We listen to a reading from Mark 1:1–15*

**Response**

People of God: shout and sing!  
Tell the good news of peace on earth.  
Lord, bring us today into Christ's peace.  
All God's people shout:

**All** **Amen!**

Angels dance  
and the bright star shines.  
All creation bows to the Lord of all.  
Lord, bring us today into Christ's light.  
All God's people shout:

**All** **Amen!**

One with us,  
yet born to save,  
he will show us the way to God.  
Lord, bring us today into Christ's love.  
All God's people shout:

**All Amen!**

People of God: shout and sing:

**All Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Amen.**

***Anthem – Choir***

## **The Lighting of the First Advent Candle**

*The first candle is lit. The following prayers are said.*

God of Abraham and Sarah,  
and all the Patriarchs of old,  
you are our Father too.  
Your love is revealed to us in Jesus Christ,  
Son of God and Son of David.  
Help us in preparing to celebrate his birth  
to make our hearts ready for your Holy Spirit  
to make his home among us.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ,  
the light that is coming into the world.

**All Amen**

**All Lord Jesus, light of the world,  
born in David's city of Bethlehem,  
born like him to be a king:  
be born in our hearts at Christmas,  
be King of our lives today.  
Amen**

## **Conclusion**

***Hymn 31 – Lo, He comes with clouds descending***

***Blessing***

May God the Father, judge all-merciful,  
make us worthy of a place in his kingdom.

**All Amen.**

May God the Son, coming among us in power,  
reveal in our midst the promise of his glory.

**All Amen.**

May God the Holy Spirit make us steadfast in faith,  
joyful in hope and constant in love.

*All* **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

*All* **Amen.**

***Dismissal***

As we await our coming Saviour,  
go in the light and peace of Christ.

*All* **Thanks be to God.**  
**Amen.**