

# Prayers of the People

Fourth Week of Advent, 2014  
The Advocate Episcopal Church



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## Fourth Sunday of Advent December 21

O come, thou Dayspring from on high, and  
cheer us by thy drawing nigh;  
dispense the gloomy clouds of night, and  
death's dark shadow put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come  
to thee, O Israel.

To speak in a flat voice  
Is all that I can do.  
I have gone every place  
Asking for you.  
Wondering where to turn  
And how the search would end  
And the last streetlight spin  
Above me blind.

Then I returned rebuffed

### Daily Scripture

II Samuel 7:1-11, 16  
Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26  
Romans 16: 25-27  
Luke 1: 26-38

And saw under the sun  
 The race not to the swift  
 Nor the battle won.  
 Liston dives in the tank,  
 Lord, in Lewiston, Maine,  
 And Ernie Doty's drunk  
 In hell again.

And Jenny, oh my Jenny  
 Whom I love, rhyme be damned,  
 Has broken her spare beauty  
 In a whorehouse old.  
 She left her new baby  
 In a bus-station can,  
 And sprightly danced away  
 Through Jacksontown.

Which is a place I know,  
 One where I got picked up  
 A few shrunk years ago  
 By a good cop.  
 Believe it, Lord, or not.  
 Don't ask me who he was.  
 I speak of flat defeat  
 In a flat voice.

I have gone forward with  
 Some, a few lonely some.  
 They have fallen to death.  
 I die with them.  
 Lord, I have loved Thy cursed,  
 The beauty of Thy house:  
 Come down. Come down. Why dost  
 Thou hide thy face?"

*Speak, by James Wright*

### The Collect of the Day

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

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**Monday of the Fourth Week of Advent**  
**Feast of St. Thomas**  
**December 22**

O come, Desire of nations, bind in one  
 the hearts of all mankind;  
 bid thou our sad divisions cease, and be  
 thyself our King of Peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come  
 to thee, O Israel.

Daily Scripture

Habakkuk 2:1-4

Psalm 126

Hebrews 10:35-11-1

John 20:24-29

We do not know... how can we know the way?  
 Courageous master of the awkward question,  
 You spoke the words the others dared not say  
 And cut through their evasion and abstraction.  
 Oh doubting Thomas, father of my faith,  
 You put your finger on the nub of things  
 We cannot love some disembodied wraith,  
 But flesh and blood must be our king of kings.  
 Your teaching is to touch, embrace, anoint,  
 Feel after Him and find Him in the flesh.  
 Because He loved your awkward counter-point  
 The Word has heard and granted you your wish.  
 Oh place my hands with yours, help me divine  
 The wounded God whose wounds are healing mine.

*Malcolm Guite*

The Collect of the Day

Everliving God, who strengthened your apostle Thomas with firm and certain faith in your Son's resurrection: Grant us so perfectly and without doubt to believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord and our God, that our faith may never be found wanting in your sight; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

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**Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Advent  
December 23**

O come, o come, Emmanuel, and ransom  
captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here until the  
Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come  
to thee, O Israel.

Daily Scripture

Isaiah 11:10-16

Revelation 20:11-21:8

Luke 1:5-25

I lay hidden in the temples of their Gods, I was darkly present in the  
sayings of their wise men.

I was on the towers with their star-gazers, I was with the solitary women  
on whom the spirit descended.

I was the desire of all times, I was the light of all times, I am the fullness  
of all times.

I am their great union, I am their eternal oneness. I am the way of all  
their ways, on me the millennia are drawn to God.

*Gertrude von le Font*

It is both terrible and comforting to dwell in the inconceivable nearness  
to God, and so to be loved by God Himself that the first and last gift is  
infinity and inconceivability itself. But we have no choice. God is with  
us.

*Karl Rahner*

The Collect of the Day

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your  
Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for  
himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one  
God, now and for ever. Amen.

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**Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Advent  
Christmas Eve  
December 24**

No one can celebrate a genuine Christmas without being truly poor. The self-sufficient, the proud, those who, because they have everything, look down on others, those who have no need even of God—for them there will be no Christmas. Only the poor, the hungry, those who need someone to come on their behalf, will have that someone. That someone is God. Emmanuel. God-with-us. Without poverty of spirit there can be no abundance of God.

*Archbishop Oscar Romero*

<u>Daily Scripture</u>
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Isaiah 28:9-22 Revelation 21:9-21 Luke 1:26-38
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The Collect of the Day

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

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Since the coming of Christ goes on forever –  
he is always he who is to come in the world and in the church –  
there is always an Advent going on.

*Jean Danielou*

Maranatha  
Come, O Lord.

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## Christmas Day December 25

O gracious Light,  
Lord Jesus Christ,  
in you the Father's Glory shone.  
Immortal, Holy, Blest is he,  
and blest are you, his only Son.

Now sunset comes,  
but light shines forth,  
the lamps are lit to pierce the night.  
Praise Father, Son, and Spirit; God  
who dwells in the eternal light.

Worthy are you of endless praise,  
O Son of God, Life-giving Lord;  
wherefore you are  
through all the earth,  
and in the highest heaven adored.

*Phos Hilaron*

Today is called the Birthday of the Lord, when the Wisdom of God showed himself as an infant, and the Word of God spoke the voice of flesh without words. However, that hidden divinity was made known to the Magi with a heavenly witness, and was announced to the shepherds with an angelic voice.

And so, as is our yearly custom, we celebrate this day – the day on which the prophecy was fulfilled which says:

“Truth sprang forth from the earth, and righteousness looked down from heaven” (Ps. 85:11).

The Truth which is in the lap of the Father sprang forth from the earth to be in the lap of a mother also.

The Truth in which the universe is contained sprang forth from the earth to be carried in the hands of a woman.

The Truth by which the happiness of Angels is unfailingly nourished sprang forth from the earth to be nursed by breasts of flesh.

<u>Daily Scripture</u>
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Isaiah 9:2-7
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Psalm 96
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Titus 2:11-14
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Luke 2:1-14(15-20)
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The Truth for whom heaven is not enough sprang forth from the earth to be placed in a manger.

For whose good came such sublimity in such humility? Certainly He came for no good of His own, but for our great good – if we believe.

Wake up!

God became man for you!

*From a sermon by Saint Augustine, Fifth Century*

In this snowfall season the birth  
Of god's furious and tender Son  
Gives us our holy days by fire. Earth  
Cradles once more the hope that Eve  
And her winter children will receive  
The sunlit garden; because fear  
Has no room in our Saviour's castle.

All love shepherds us. The pageant kings  
Weep for us. In argent rings  
Heaven's wild gabriels wrestle  
For our very souls. What stables here  
Is time for us to give our sin  
The shape of kneeling, to perch seven  
Times seventy singing robins

Of forgiveness on our tongues,  
Blessing our enemies, that the bones  
Which we have broken may rejoice.  
No one is lost, not one, who yields  
Himself to Christmas. The red ribbons  
Of his grief adorn us. The voice  
Of his mercy is heard in our fields.

*An Adoration, by Arnold Kenseth*

Christ is born. He is born to us. And, he is born today. For Christmas is not merely a day like every other day. It is a day made holy and special by a sacred mystery. It is not merely another day in the weary round of time. Today, eternity enters into time, and time, sanctified, is caught up into eternity. Today, Christ, the eternal Word of the Father, who was in the beginning with the Father, in whom all things were made, by whom all things consist, enters into the world which he created in order to

reclaim souls who had forgotten their identity. Therefore, the church exults, as the angels come down to announce not merely an old thing which happened long ago, but a new thing which happens today. For today, God the Father makes all things new, in his divine Son, our redeemer, according to his words: *ecce nova facio Omnia* [behold I make all things new].

Therefore, the church on earth joins with the church in heaven to sing one same son, the new song, the *canticum novum* [new song] which the prophet commanded all to sing after the world should have been redeemed by the Christ, whose ancestor he knew, by revelation, that he should be. When David cried out: “Sing to the Lord a new song” he was the first precentor to intone the songs the church would sing on this day in her liturgy, as she announces to the whole world salvation and joy. For as St. Leo says: “Today there has shone upon us a day of new redemption, a day restoring that which was long lost, a day of bliss unending.”

*Thomas Merton*

Jesus, Son of the living God, splendor of the Father, eternal light, king of glory, sun of justice, born of the Virgin Mary:

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus, wonderful counselor, strong Lord, eternal God, prince of peace:

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus, most powerful, patient, obedient, gentle and humble of heart, loving all who are pure in heart:

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus, God of peace, spring of life, pattern of holiness, friend of all, our God and our refuge:

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus, brother of the poor, treasure of the faithful, good shepherd, true light, inexhaustible wisdom, boundless love, our way and our life:

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus, joy of the angels, king of the patriarchs, master of the apostles, teacher of the evangelists, strength of the martyrs, light of every witness to truth, crown of all the saints:

Glory to you, O Lord.

*Praise God: Common Prayer of Taize*

Because of his boundless love, Jesus became what we are that he might make us to be what he is.

*Saint Irenaeus, Third Century*

from spiralling ecstatically this  
 proud nowhere of earth's most prodigious night  
 blossoms a newborn babe: around him, eyes  
 —gifted with every keener appetite  
 than mere unmiracle can quite appease—  
 humbly in their imagined bodies kneel  
 (over time space doom dream while floats the whole  
 perhapsless mystery of paradise)  
 mind without soul may blast some universe  
 to might have been, and stop ten thousand stars  
 but not one heartbeat of this child; nor shall  
 even prevail a million questionings  
 against the silence of his mother's smile  
 —whose only secret all creation sings

*e.e. cummings*

### The Collect of the Day

Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born this day of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

Today there has shone upon us a day of new redemption,  
 a day restoring that which was long lost, a day of bliss unending.

*Saint Leo, Fifth Century*