

THE ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS
DEVOTIONAL CALENDAR
27 November – 25 December 2022



LICHFIELD
CATHEDRAL
RE▶SOURCE
Recovering together

How to use it

- Try and set aside 5-15 minutes every day.
- Buy or use a special candle to light each day as you read and pray through the suggestions on the calendar.
- Try and 'eat simply' – one day each week try going without so many calories or too much rich food, just have enough.
- Try to donate to a charity working with the homeless or the people of Bethlehem.
- Try to pray through what you see and notice going on around you in people, the media and nature.

Who is it for?

- For everyone who uses the Cathedral website/social media.
- For all the Cathedral community.
- For people you want to send it to and invite to share in the daily devotional exercise.

What's the last week about?

The last week of Advent is special: at Evensong (evening prayer) a special antiphon is sung or said before and after the canticle of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Magnificat. Each begins with an 'O' and relates to some facet of Christ's nature and ancestry.

December 17	○ Sapientia	Wisdom
December 18	○ Adonai	Lord of Israel
December 19	○ Radix Jesse	Root of Jesse (Jesse was the father of King David)
December 20	○ Clavis David	Key of David
December 21	○ Oriens	Morning Star rising in the East
December 22	○ Rex Gentium	King of all nations
December 23	○ Immanuel	Immanuel – 'God is with us'

As the week draws us to Christmas so the note of longing love intensifies.

Why make an effort this Advent?

- Because we live in difficult and unusual times.
- This is a simple prayer and bible-reading exercise to help us use the Advent Season as a time of preparation for the coming of Christ.
- It is designed to take us on a journey, looking back to John the Baptist and Mary the Mother of Jesus; looking out into the world today, into our own hearts and experience; outwards again to Jesus Christ as he encounters us in life today and in his promise to be with us always.
- Advent is the Church's mindful antidote to some of the diversion and consumerism of a modern Christmas. It prepares us to encounter Christ again in his joy and humility.

ADVENT 1

Sunday 27 November

Read St Matthew 24: 36-44

Ask for grace to keep Advent well – alertness to what’s going on around us, ready to see signs of God’s kingdom in people, events, in the readiness to cooperate with his will.

Monday 28 November

Read St Matthew 8: 5-11

Pray for the gift of faith – a trust in God’s good purposes for ourselves and the world.

Tuesday 29 November,

**Day of Intercession and Thanksgiving
for the missionary work of the Church**

Read St Luke 10:21-24

Give thanks for all who have brought the good news of Jesus Christ to us, our nation and the whole world. Pray for our own Church and our Cathedral community to witness joyfully and boldly.

Wednesday 30 November,

St Andrew the Apostle

Read St Matthew 4: 18-22

Reflect on what made Jesus’s disciples drop everything to follow him. Ask for grace that we may hear and see freshly and vividly what each of us is called to and how we are to follow Christ.

Thursday 1 December

Read St Matthew 7: 21, 24-27

In a confusing world with many competing ideas, ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and direction in all the big decisions each of us has to make, to rebuild where necessary, to centre our lives on true foundations.

Friday 2 December

Read St Matthew 9: 27-31

As we make personal and family preparations for Christmas, listen to what you hope for, and what you long for. Bring that need and desire to Christ. Ask for his grace and light.

Saturday 3 December

Read St Matthew 9: 35-10: 1, 6-8

Reflect on how Jesus gives his disciples a share in his work (ministry). Think about the opportunities we have to take up that work. What would it look like? What would my role be? How can we help one another take on a share in Jesus’s work?

ADVENT 2

Sunday 4 December

Read St Matthew 3: 1-12

Reflect on the role of John the Baptist. Pray to be stirred again this Advent and awakened to the full extent of God's love and purpose for us and the world.

Monday 5 December

Read Isaiah 35

As we listen to Isaiah proclaiming the return of his people from exile, remember all who have been forced out of their homes or countries and long to return.

Tuesday 6 December, St Nicholas

Read St Mark 10: 13-16

Pray for the world's children, especially those living in poverty, or with disease or disability or who encounter abuse or manipulation.

**Wednesday 7 December,
St Ambrose, Bishop of Mila**

Read St Luke 22: 24-30

Reflect on this passage. Christ questions our status-seeking and desire for power and control. Pray to embrace his example of humility.

Thursday 8 December,

**Conception of the Blessed Virgin
Mary**

Read St Luke 1: 26-38

Consider the role Mary played in bearing Jesus. What do we learn from her example? What area of your life can you open up to God – offering space for God's will to be done?

Friday 9 December

Read St Matthew 11: 16-19

Reflect on how easy it is to miss the point and the deep treasure in what has become familiar to us, how we're easily manipulated by public opinion. Pray for true insight.

Saturday 10 December

Read St Matthew 17: 10-13

Reflect on how the Christian faith was born amidst hesitancy and confusion, of how things half-understood at the time were re-framed. Pray for grace to work through the questions and find true wisdom.

ADVENT 3

Sunday 11 December

Read St Matthew 11: 2-11

Reflect on the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist. Think about how the Church is the herald of Jesus's message, how it points to him, helps to bring the world to him. Ask for the grace and blessing to help people find Jesus Christ, the true light, and that all the Cathedral community may play a part in mission.

Monday 12 December

Read St Matthew 22: 23-27

Remember Jesus arguing against the conventions and assumptions of his time. Think of his courage in facing opposition for the sake of the truth he was teaching and living. Pray for the witness of all Christian people, especially when faith is mocked or questioned aggressively.

Tuesday 13 December, St Lucy

Read St Luke 11: 33-36

Lucy was put to death for her faith in 304. Her name in Latin means "light". She is therefore associated with Jesus, the light of the world, the light that banishes the darkness and lets the eyes of all see the Truth of Christ incarnate. Pray for the people of Scandinavia who have special customs to celebrate St Lucy (young women dress in white and wear headdresses with candles). As we prepare for Christmas, pray that all who encounter the church may glimpse Christ's light.

Wednesday 14 December,

St John of the Cross

Read St John 14: 18-23

St John of the Cross was a Spanish Carmelite Priest and one gifted with a profound spirit of prayer and a mystical insight into how the soul is encountered by God. Pray today for the gift of prayer, a consciousness of God's presence – how our lives become enfolded in God's life, and changed, cleansed, and directed as a result.

Thursday 15 December

Read Isaiah 60: 1-3

Think of this passage as a summons – like the people of Israel, God gathers his people for a purpose – that we may look for and point to his light, about to be revealed for all to see. As we prepare for Christmas spend some time praying for all in darkness, that the light of hope may dawn, and all may come to the light.

Friday 16 December,

Read Isaiah 52: 7-10

Advent is a season for alertness and preparation – spend some time today asking yourself what news you need to hear from God? How will I recognise the messenger? What horizon do I scan to see the bearers of good news? And what does the "salvation of our God" look like and feel like?

Saturday 17 December, O Sapientia

Read St Matthew 1: 1-17

As we read the family tree of Jesus, full of odd characters, people with glaring faults and imperfections, offer to God your own family history; give thanks for the gift of life; where there has been hurt, loss or disappointment, ask for healing and thankfulness - that out of the tangle and trouble of life God works his purpose.

ADVENT 4

Sunday 18 December, O Adonai

Read St Matthew 1: 18-end

Joseph, like Joseph in the Book of Genesis is a dreamer, and his dreams carry messages from God. He is troubled by Mary's pregnancy and in his sleep, he sees God's unfolding plan. Hold before God all the hints, intuitions and hunches that are part of life. Ask for true discernment that we may be led closer to God and take a part in doing his will.

Monday 19 December,

O Radix Jesse

Read St Luke 1: 5-25

Here is another dream and vision, with a messenger and the fulfilment of a promise. Think of the name given by the Angel to the promised child. Note the insights given into the child's future. Pray for our future and what fore-runners we need to help us prepare for it. Ask to be ready to hear reminders and new truth about how we are with one another and with God.

Tuesday 20 December,

O Clavis David

Read St Luke 1: 26-38

Mary says a great and courageous "yes" to God. She is the pattern and prototype of every Christian. Pray for our readiness to be at God's disposal – to be used in his service. Think about what may be frightening or exciting to be so used by God.

Wednesday 21 December,

O Oriens

Read St Luke 1: 39-45

As we read the story of Mary visiting her cousin Elizabeth in the hill country of Judea, just outside Jerusalem, pray for all women expecting children. Remember those who have found it hard to conceive and the sadnesses and disappointments they have experienced; pray for single mothers, and those, at whatever stage of pregnancy, who are full of wonder, hope, anxiety, or concern. Pray that the world will be a good home for all new-borns.

Thursday 22 December,

O Rex Gentium

Read St Luke 1: 46-56

Think of the three elements in Mary's Song of Joy (the Magnificat): promise, fulfilment, praise. She is the hinge person linking the old covenant with the new; she opens the door to a new future. She sings the praise of a God of justice and mercy and sees the world being completely transformed. What part have we to play in that transformation?

Friday 23 December,

O Immanuel

Read St Luke 1: 57-66

Reflect on this story: God is shaping a new future and John the Baptist will be the fore-runner and herald of a new age. Pray for the new-born – for all the delight, joy and promise they bring. Pray for parents wondering about the kind of world their children will grow up in and inherit.

Saturday 24 December,

Christmas Eve

Read St Luke 2: 1-14

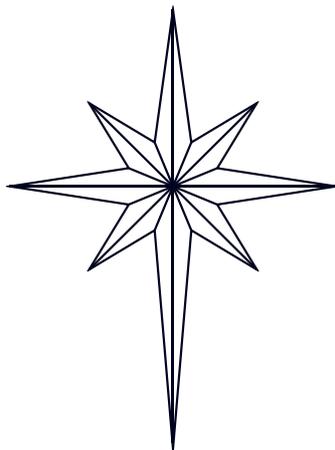
As we begin the celebrations, pray for the people with whom we will share Christmas: give thanks for the story of Jesus's birth, the tenderness and humility of it all, casting its light on all human pomposity and ideas of power. Pray for everyone you love, cherish them before God.

Sunday 25 December,

Christmas Day

Read St John 1: 1-14

On this most splendid day, give thanks that God in Jesus has come to us, to be among us, to make his home among us, to abolish the distance between us. Nothing is alien to his mercy, no one is ruled out of his love. "God is with us – Emmanuel".



ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

SERVICES & EVENTS

- 26 November - 2 January Christmas Tree Festival Open during visitor opening hours
(with closure during services)
- 26 & 27 November Advent Carol Service: From Darkness to Light 18:00
- 4 December Christmas Light Service 17:00
- 13 December Candlelight Vigil from 18:30
- 16-20 December Sing Choirs of Angels: A Light Spectacular by Illuminos from 17:30
Tickets: www.lichfield-cathedral.org/angels
- 17 December Carols around the Tree 14:00, 15:00 & 16:00
- 21 December Christmas by Candlelight 19:30
Tickets: www.lichfield-cathedral.org/advent
- 23&24 December Festival of Lessons and Carols 18:00
- 24 December Crib & Christingle Service 15:00
Festival of Lessons & Carols 18:00
Midnight Mass: First Eucharist of Christmas 22:00
- 25 December Choral Eucharist for Christmas Day 10:30
Evening Prayer with Carols at the Crib 15:30

**For full details of events and services please visit our website :
www.lichfield-cathedral.org/advent**