

Advent: The Church of England

The Advent Wreath and Prayers for the Lighting of the Candles

The Advent Wreath has four red or blue candles in a ring around a white or gold candle. Alternatively, there may be three purple candles, reflecting the liturgical colour for Advent, with a pink candle for the Third Sunday, when rose-pink vestments are traditionally worn. The first candle is lit on Advent Sunday; additional ones are lit, one on each Sunday, and the white or gold one on Christmas Day.

There are several traditions about the meaning or theme of each candle. One tradition is:

Advent Sunday 1:	The Patriarchs
Advent Sunday 2:	The Prophets
Advent Sunday 3:	John the Baptist
Advent Sunday 4:	The Virgin Mary
Christmas Day:	The Christ

Each of the four Sundays then reminds us of those who prepared for the coming of Christ. 'The Patriarchs' can naturally focus on Abraham, our father in faith, and David, the ancestor in whose city Jesus was born. 'The Prophets' gives an opportunity to reflect on the way the birth of the Messiah was 'foretold'. John, who proclaimed the Saviour, and Mary, who bore him in her womb, complete the picture.

The prayers below reflect these four themes. They can be said at the lighting of the candles on the Sundays of Advent, with the final prayer for Christmas Day.

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Advent Sunday 1

The Patriarchs

*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.*

Advent Sunday 2

The Prophets

*Lord Jesus, light of the world,
the prophets said you would bring peace
and save your people in trouble.
Give peace in our hearts at Christmas
and show all the world God's love.
Amen.*

Advent Sunday 3

John the Baptist

*Lord Jesus, light of the world,
John told the people to prepare,
for you were very near.
As Christmas grows closer day by day,
help us to be ready to welcome you now.
Amen.*

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Advent Sunday 4

The Virgin Mary

*Lord Jesus, light of the world,
blessed is Gabriel, who brought good news;
blessed is Mary, your mother and ours.
Bless your Church preparing for Christmas;
and bless us your children, who long for your coming.
Amen.*

Christmas Day

The Christ

*Lord Jesus, Light of light,
you have come among us.
Help us who live by your light
to shine as lights in your world.
Glory to God in the highest.
Amen.*

