

Advent 2025
A Weekly Reflection
and
Readings of the Day



'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light'
(Isaiah 9:2)



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

Advent 2025

A Weekly Reflection and Readings of the Day

It's here again! That all too often busy, frantic, joyful, difficult, celebratory and, at times, stressful run-up to Christmas.

The weeks' of Advent are ones which can be associated with the words "planning" and "preparation" in many ways: planning and preparing gifts and Christmas cards or messages, planning and preparing for additional social events and opportunities, planning and preparing to spend time with family, friends and loved ones...and many more things which require a certain level of planning and preparation.

However, in the midst of the hustle and bustle, excitement and anxieties of pre-Christmas activity, we remember and celebrate that Advent is also a time when we prepare for the coming of the Lord. We reflect and hold onto the messages of hope, peace, joy and love which God promised to us in the birth of Christ Jesus.

In amongst the busyness of the days and weeks ahead, one way to do this is to plan and set aside a little time of quiet and calm daily, or as often as you can, to prepare for the coming of the Lord by reading, praying with and reflecting on the daily readings of Advent.

For Advent 2025 members of our diocesan writing team offer this resource to help plan this precious time of preparation. In it you will find a reflection for each week of Advent focusing on the themes of hope, peace, joy and love and an easy-to-follow reference to the readings for each day. If you don't have time to read all the readings daily, that's okay, perhaps just focus on the Gospel of the day. As you read, reflect on how God is speaking to you on the weekly themes; celebrate and give thanks for His Word in prayer; and hold in your hearts, minds and actions the messages of hope, peace, joy and love in your daily journey through Advent.

Introduction by Emma Wynne
Formation & Mission Development Officer



Advent Week One

A Reflection on the Theme of Hope

Many years ago, our daughter rushed out of nursery to proudly proclaim she could count to 100. Equally as excited I asked her to start right at the beginning on our walk home. She triumphantly shouted 1, 2 miss a few, 99, 100.

I recalled this charming memory as I jumped between the passages of Isaiah and the Gospel of Matthew this week. Although many significant events occurred in between these periods, Isaiah's prophecies of a new creation would have offered profound hope for the future of humankind. In subsequent centuries where worldwide turmoil and disillusionment are frequently experienced it is easy to forget that the prophecies of Isaiah were also written at a time of immense suffering and turbulence. His vision of hope must have brought immense comfort to the people in those times every bit as much as it does today.

Had I been standing next to Isaiah I would have relished the opportunity to talk more about my understanding of his Messianic Prophecy. At the time I may have mused more on the imagery of a wolf dwelling with a lamb and a leopard laying down with a young goat, however, I would not have been able to imagine how a little child could possibly lead them. Perhaps even now it is only as I reflect on the nativity scene and benefitting from the fruits of generations of Scriptural deliberation that I too can contemplate on how Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy. My final reassurance would have come with Isaiah's encouragement to trust in the Lord God as from the gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. This would have given me a sense of hope for the future.

How much easier I would have found it many centuries later to be sitting by the side of Jesus near the Sea of Galilee and observe the crowds of people bringing the lame and blind to be healed. I too would have glorified the God of Israel as I began to reflect upon the fulfillment of ancient prophecies. I may not have understood the real significance of Jesus feeding a hungry crowd, but I certainly would have noticed the looks of hope, wonder and excitement as something incredible began to stir in the hearts of so many.

We remain part of that hope today as we continue to respond to a plentiful harvest. As missionary disciples of Christ we have all been given the same opportunity to bring hope, joy and a sense of God's unconditional love to those waiting to respond to God's call.

As I wait in joyful anticipation for the birth of the baby Jesus, I will continue to reflect on the vast hope God gave us through the prophecies of Isaiah and how he continues to provide that same level of hope to his people through so many channels in the contemporary world of today.

Reflection written by Trisha Tindall
St Mary's Parish, Forest Hall



Readings of the Day

Advent Week One 30 November-6 December

Sunday

Reading 1: Isaiah 2:1-5

Responsorial Psalm: 122(121):1-2. 3-4 a.8-9. R cf. 1

Reading 2: Romans 13:11-14a

Gospel: Matthew 24:37-44

Monday

Reading 1

Isaiah 4:2-6

Responsorial Psalm

122(121):1-2. 3-4 a. 8-9.

R cf. 1

Gospel

Matthew 8:5-11

Tuesday

Reading 1

Isaiah 11:1-10

Responsorial Psalm

72 (71):1-2. 7-8. 12-13. 17.

R cf.7

Gospel

Luke 10:21-24

Wednesday

Reading 1

Isaiah 25:6-10a

Responsorial Psalm

23(22):1-3a. 3b-4. 5. 6.

R 1

Gospel

Matthew 15:29-37

Thursday

Reading 1

Isaiah 26:1-6

Responsorial Psalm

118(117):1, 8-9. 19-21. 25-27a.

R 26a

Gospel

Matthew 7:21, 24-27

Friday

Reading 1

Isaiah 29:17-24

Responsorial Psalm

27(26):1. 4. 13-14.

R 1a

Gospel

Matthew 9:27-31

Saturday

Reading 1

Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26

Responsorial Psalm

146(145):2a-c. 2d-4.5-6.

R 5a

Gospel

Matthew 9:35-10:1,

5a, 6-8

Hope



Advent Week Two

A Reflection on the Theme of Peace

“Peace be with you.” When we repeat Jesus’ words to one another at every Mass, what do we mean? What do we understand by ‘peace’? In our intercessions we often pray for peace in the world. Do we just mean an end to fighting? Is our Sign of Peace simply a gesture of friendship or greeting? Peace, in the mind of the Church, is much more than an absence of, or refraining from, hostility, or a good-natured acceptance of others.

In Sunday’s first reading Isaiah describes the Messiah like this: “On him the spirit of the Lord rests, a spirit of wisdom and insight, counsel, power, knowledge and respect for God; of integrity, and faithfulness.” It is only through fully accepting that same spirit into our own selves, by uniting our will with God’s, that we can achieve the peace of Christ within ourselves and with our neighbour – and, most importantly, with God. Without it we shall never find rest.

On Monday’s Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians reminds us that God ‘chose us in Christ to live through love in his presence ... for his own kind purposes’. To deny that is to provoke the hostility to our very own nature that destroys the peace for which and into which we were created.

During this first part of Advent, we focus on John the Baptist’s call to Repentance. The word means ‘turning back’ – turning our back on sin and turning back to union of heart and mind with God.

“Go in the peace of Christ” we are told at the end of Mass. The peace that we are to carry away with us into the everyday world is not just about quietness, tolerance and contentment. The peace of Christ, his gift to us, is union in love with our Creator, which leads us to live in peace with ourselves, and gives us the courage and powers to share that peace, a peace that the world cannot give, with all the world, which is God’s ‘own kind purpose’.

Shalom aleichem! ... Aleichem shalom!

**Reflection written by Joe James
Parish of Our Lady, Star of the Sea,
Backworth, West Monkseaton and Whitley Bay**



Readings of the Day

Advent Week Two

7-13 December

Sunday

Reading 1: Isaiah 11:1-10

Responsorial Psalm: 72(71):1-2. 7-8. 12-13. 17. R cf. 7

Reading 2: Romans 15:4-9

Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

Monday

Reading 1

Genesis 3:9-15, 20

Responsorial Psalm

98(97): 1. 2-3b. 3c-4. R 1a

Reading 2

Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12

Gospel

Luke 1:26-38

Tuesday

Reading 1

Isaiah 40:1-11

Responsorial Psalm

96(95):1-2. 3, 10ac 11-12a.
12b-13. R cf. Isaiah 40:9-10

Gospel

Matthew 18:12-14

Wednesday

Reading 1

Isaiah 40:25-31

Responsorial Psalm

103(102):1-2. 3-4. 8, 10.
R 1a

Gospel

Matthew 11:28-30

Thursday

Reading 1

Isaiah 41:13-20

Responsorial Psalm

145(144):1, 9. 10-11. 12-13b.
R 8

Gospel

Matthew 11:11-15

Friday

Reading 1

Isaiah 48:17-19

Responsorial Psalm

1:1-2. 3. 4, 6.
R Psalm 40(39):5a

Gospel

Matthew 11:16-19

Saturday

Reading 1

Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11

Responsorial Psalm

80(79):2ac, 3b, 15-16.
18-19 R 5a

Gospel

Matthew 17:9a,
10-13

Monday 8 December: Immaculate
Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Peace



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

Advent Week Three

A Reflection on the Theme of Joy

In these days of political unrest, scepticism and deep anxiety, it seems naïve to talk about joy. Yet the simple gesture of lighting the third (pink) candle on the Advent Wreath and the cry of “Gaudete” (Rejoice) on the third Sunday, lifts our hearts. The Lord is near!

The Advent readings this week, guide us to rejoice, pray and give thanks – pretty good advice and all related. If we recognise all our blessings, we will see that joy is already in our lives and give thanks for it in prayer. However, we can’t set out to find and possess joy which we might equate with happiness. Rather it is the result of something else – an unexpected surprise, a reconciliation, a promise fulfilled – and then joy comes to us. It is a gift.

During Advent, the Liturgy is rich in promise and anticipation, increasing each week as we “wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour”. This week, we hear three Advent voices – Isaiah, John the Baptist and Our Lady – to encourage us and increase our hope.

Isaiah, in beautiful poetry, speaks of the wilderness blossoming and the sick being healed; signs of the joy of hope fulfilled at what the Lord does for us. We struggle and are tempted to give up but despite our inconsistency, God keeps faith forever so, *“strengthen your feeble hands and steady your trembling knees and say to the faint-hearted Courage! Do not be afraid”*.

We have received the Good News and are constantly called forth, like John the Baptist, from the desert of our desolation and wobbles of faith and even from the prison of despair to rejoice and “bloom where we’re planted”, confident in the Lord’s promise.

But it is especially in Mary’s discipleship and trust, when she uttered her “Let it be done” that unleashed the power of the Holy Spirit to a new birth in the coming of the Saviour, that fulfilled hope and brought joy.

Lord God, increase my joy by increasing my faith and trust in your unfailing love.

**Reflection written by Sr Michael
Convent of Mercy, Sunderland**



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

Readings of the Day

Advent Week Three

14 - 20 December

Sunday

Reading 1: Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10

Responsorial Psalm: 146(145):6c-7. 8-9a. 9b-10. R Matthew 5:3

Reading 2: James 5:7-10

Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

Monday

Reading 1

Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a

Responsorial Psalm

25(24):4-5b. 6-7. 8-9.

R 6a

Gospel

Matthew 21:23-27

Tuesday

Reading 1

Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13

Responsorial Psalm

34(33):2-3. 6-7. 17-18. 19, 23.

R cf. 7a

Gospel

Matthew 21:28-32

Wednesday

Reading 1

Genesis 49:2, 8-10

Responsorial Psalm

72(71):1-2.3-4b. 7-8. 17.

R cf. 7

Gospel

Matthew 1:1-17

Thursday

Reading 1

Jeremiah 23:5-8

Responsorial Psalm

72(71):1-2. 12-13. 18-19.

R cf. 7

Gospel

Matthew 1:18-24

Friday

Reading 1

Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a

Responsorial Psalm

71(70):3-4a. 5-6b. 16-17.

R cf. 8a

Gospel

Luke 1:5-25

Saturday

Reading 1

Isaiah 7:10-14

Responsorial Psalm

24(23):1-2. 3-4b. 5-6.

R cf. 6

Gospel

Luke 1:26-38



Advent Week Four

A Reflection on the Theme of Love

Love is the most powerful emotion in the universe. It is the answer to all the questions you may have about every relationship in your life, and it is found through faith in a little child.

When we speak of love, we are speaking in human terms but, when we hear the story of the Birth of Christ, human terms are not enough; we must put on the cloak of heaven and listen and reflect as the birth of the Son of God is revealed.

Can you imagine the feelings of a young girl who has been brought up by her parents, faithful servants of God, who have cherished her and loved her, and to whom an apparition has appeared, an Angel, asking her a very special question? How does she respond? Does she understand the importance of her answer? All earth and heaven stand still in hope for the word of the virgin, and she answers "Yes."

When we hear the stories of Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, Elizabeth, John and Jesus, we wonder at the way they accept the tasks they have been chosen to fulfill. There is a very true saying, "If you wish to love then be prepared to grieve". Love can sometimes bring problems: Mary is pregnant by the Holy Spirit; who will believe her? Joseph has his dreams of marriage shattered by Mary's condition; how will he act? Elizabeth and Zechariah find parenthood in their old age; how will they cope? The two boys are babies now, but they will go into a future filled with sacrifice, rejection and death; how will they survive?

There are two great songs of hope and love in our readings, the Canticles of the Magnificat and the Benedictus. They contain words of promise for the future of mankind. They speak of our God: Holy is His name; His mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear Him; He will bring light; and guide our feet into the way of peace for He is the God of Love.

Amen.

**Reflection written by David Frank
Holy Family Parish, Hartlepool**



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

Readings of the Day

Advent Week Four

21 - 24 December

Sunday

Reading 1: Isaiah 7:10-14

Responsorial Psalm: 24(23):1-2. 3-4b. 5-6. R cf. 6

Reading 2: Romans 1:1-7

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-24

Monday

Reading 1

1 Samuel 1:24-28

Responsorial Psalm

1 Samuel 2:1. 4-5. 6-7. 8a-d.

R 1a

Gospel

Luke 1:46-56

Tuesday

Reading 1

Malachi 3:1-4; 4:5-6

Responsorial Psalm

25(24):4-5b. 8-9. 10, 14.

R 1b

Gospel

Luke 1:57-66

Wednesday

Reading 1

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

Responsorial Psalm

89(88):2-3. 4-5. 27, 29.

R 37a

Gospel

Luke 1:67-79



Continued...

Love



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

Christmas Day

A Reflection from Bishop Stephen

Back in October, Pope Leo wrote his first Apostolic Exhortation. It is often the case that the first papal writings speak of the themes close, if not closest, to the new Pope's heart. In *Dilexi Te*, Pope Leo chose to write about the call and instruction to love the poor. He explains this is not separate to our faith in the Lord, it is an integral part of Christian living. It is essential.

I have heard it said Christmas Day is the feast day of the poor. That does not belittle the difficulties, loneliness and upset many people face on this day. But it does draw our attention to the heart of God and His love for the poor. Jesus is born into material poverty. Away from home, born in a cave or stable fit for livestock, not people. Soon he will be fleeing for His life, with His family, to escape the merciless violence of Herod. Jesus identifies Himself with all humanity in His incarnation, he becomes one of us. At his birth at Christmas, he identifies Himself with the poorest among us. It is their day above all others. Jesus is one of them.

Pope Leo reflects Pope Francis' insights:

...how Jesus identified Himself with the lowest ranks of society and how with his love poured out to the end, he confirms the dignity of every human being, especially when they are weak, scorned or suffering. (Dilexi Te 2.)

Although this quote does not deal with Christmas directly it summarises the meaning of this Holy Day. Alongside the meaning comes a call to action:

As we contemplate Christ's love, we too are inspired to be more attentive to the sufferings and needs of others and confirmed in our efforts to share in His work of liberation as instruments for the spread of His love (Dilexi Te 2).

Jesus is born for us, to liberate us, to free us from all that holds us back from our heavenly home. This babe in

Continued...



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

2025

arms is the Kingdom of God present among us, and he will teach us how to minister in His name. Above all, through His Cross and Resurrection, He will save you and me from sin and death. He commands us to share His love with all, but especially the poor, with whom he identifies Himself.

So, dear friends, rejoice today and throughout this Christmas Season. I pray we will be able to be with loved ones at this time. I pray we will rejoice in our food and drink, our gifts and treats. I pray also that we will be mindful of those who struggle at home and abroad. Poor in food and drink, poor in material things, poor in loneliness, poor in being troubled or anxious. May we all reach out and recognise this Holy Day and this Holy Season is the feast for the poor. Why? Because Jesus identifies Himself with them.

May the Lord bless us all and may I wish you all a joyful Christmas.

Readings of the Day

Vigil Mass

First reading: Isaiah 62:1-5

Psalm: 89(88):4-5. 16-17. 27, 29. R 2a

Second reading: Acts 13:16-17, 22-25

Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25 or Matthew 1:18-25

Midnight Mass

First reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

Psalm: 96(95): 1-2a. 2b-3. 11-12a. 12b-13b. 13cd. R Luke 2:11

Second reading: Titus 2:11-14

Gospel: Luke 2:1-14

Mass at Dawn

First reading: Isaiah 62:11-12

Psalm: 97(96):1, 6. 11-12

Second reading: Titus 3:4-7

Gospel: Luke 2:15-20

Mass During the Day

First reading: Isaiah 52:7-10

Psalm: 98(97):1. 2-3b. 3c-4. 5-6. R 3cd

Second reading: Hebrews 1:1-6

Gospel: John 1:1-18 or John 1:1-5, 9-14

*'The Word
became flesh
and dwelt
among us.'*

John 1:14

Reflection written by:

**The Right Reverend Stephen Wright,
Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle**



DIOCESE OF

Hexham & Newcastle 2025

Blue Christmas Resources

Christmas can be a difficult time for many people for all sorts of reasons – bereavement, unemployment, being far away from family – and so on. A Blue Christmas liturgy offers a way of acknowledging that – and, hopefully, finding the hope that will help them to get through Christmas.

On the diocesan website there are three liturgies that can be used by an individual or within a group.

Cloth for the Cradle – takes the idea of having strips of cloth on which then form part of a “blanket” into which the Christ-child image can be laid – in amongst the sorrows of life that he came into the world to be part of.

Kindling Lights of Hope – reminds us that God created light and walks with us through the dark times in our lives.

Palm of God's Hand – focusing on the reading from Isaiah 49 where God speaks of his tenderness for his people – whose names are written on the palm of his hand.



Would you be
interested
in joining the
diocesan Reflection
Writing Team?

We are blessed in the Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle to have many talented writers who regularly contribute to our Advent and Lenten Reflection booklets as well as other themed publications.

We are actively looking for new writers to join the team.

If this is something that captures your interest or you'd like further information please email:

formation.mission@diocesehn.org.uk

You will need to provide the name of your parish priest and church for reference purposes.



DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**

With sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to these wonderful reflections throughout the Season of Advent.

Contact Us:

Department for Formation & Mission
St Cuthbert's House
West Road
Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE15 7PY

E: formation.mission@diocesehn.org.uk

T: 07375 934713

W: <https://diocesehn.org.uk/>