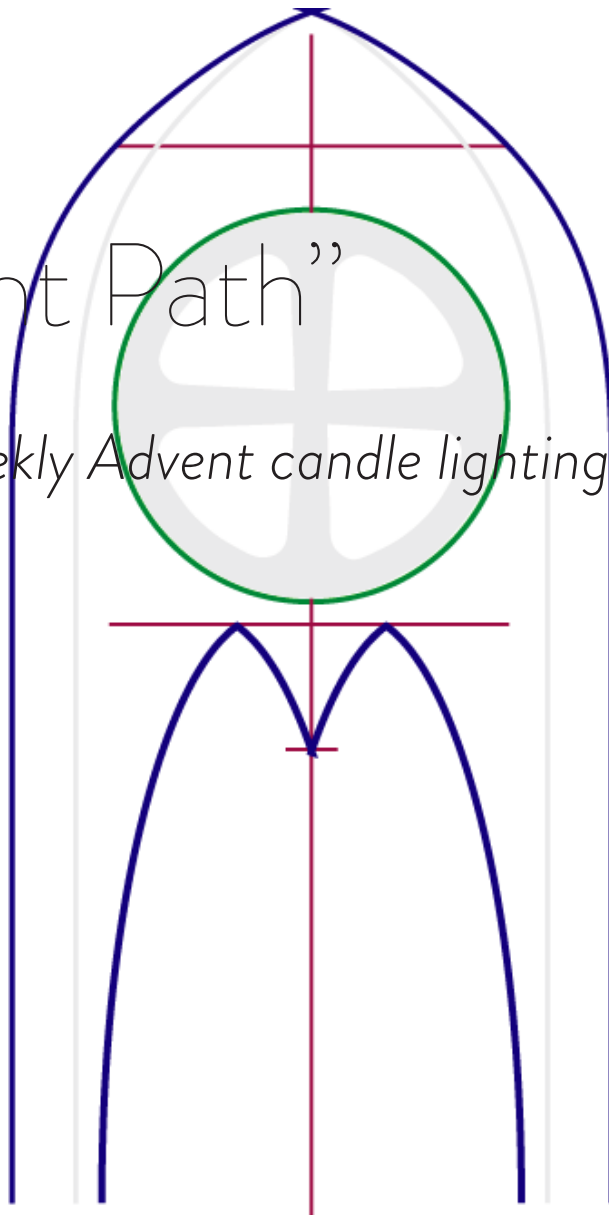


Advent Guide 2018

# “The Celtic Advent Path”

*A progressive approach to the weekly Advent candle lighting*



## Overview for each week

Gather Wreath and supplies

- Prayer for Christmas Preparation (1 minute)
- The Celtic Advent Carol (1-3 minutes) Play from website
- Advent Path (1 minute)
- Candle lighting
- Calls and Responses ( 1 minute)
- Game or Activity (5-20 minutes)
- Advent Reflection and Discussion (5-10 minutes)

Approximately 30 minutes

## What is Advent All About?

by Pastor Dan Wilburn

Advent is the four-week season leading up to Christmas. Advent is a time of waiting and watching as we prepare for the coming of the world's Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Advent is like preparing for a great party. When we prepare a party for our guests, we clean house and we prepare lots of fancy foods. At some parties we give party favors to our guests. While folks prepare for a party we often hear the words, "Now don't touch the Jello, or don't pick at the turkey!" In other words, we wait, we hold off.

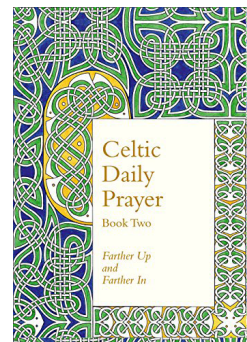
Advent can be a time of getting our own house in order. We "hold off" spending money on ourselves, and instead give gifts to those with less than us. We call it 'the spirit of Christmas,' right? Each year at Lakeland we have a **Giving Tree for The Hope Center**, our Kansas City inner city ministry.

We can "hold off" in other ways during the four weeks leading up to Christmas. We may hold off reading the newspaper or magazine, and instead we may wish to read some of the Old Testament, like the prophet Isaiah, and immerse ourselves in the background of the expectant hope for the Messiah (Anointed One, Savior). We may wish to read a book that draws us close to God. I recommend an easy read like Henri Nouwen's ***The Return of the Prodigal Son***. The goal is to finish your book by Christmas Eve.

Lakeland leans into Advent. We celebrate the coming of our Lord. We use Advent to linger over the meaning of the unfathomable God coming to be one of us. Not only did God come to be one of us, he came as one of the least of us, a baby, a peasant, and eventually he goes to the cross, wrongly accused, and dies for the world's sake, executed by the very people he came to redeem. But he rises to inaugurate a new age and a new kingdom. This age has begun. We live to see its fulfillment.

## A New Celtic Advent Tradition for 2018

This year we use a new Advent resource from the Celtic tradition in Northumbria, UK. The Celtic Christian tradition developed one thousand years ago in isolation. Britain is an island, and when the Christian faith arrived there the Celts put their own spin on Christianity. In recent years the Northumbria Community has revived the Celtic tradition. People tend to like the Celtic tradition because it doesn't seem to be "owned" by any single denomination or common Christian tradition. This Advent liturgy and prayers come from recent authors who studied and borrowed from the ancient Celtic Christian tradition.



# How to use this Advent Devotional

by Pastor Garrett Lahey

Advent is traditionally celebrated on four Sundays leading up to Christmas Eve and on Christmas Eve itself. It is a wonderful way to create holy anticipation of Christmas! Everything about the observance is meant to create feelings of expectation. Of course, you can make your own Advent traditions, but here are a few we recommend:

BEFORE YOU START, you need to prepare a few things:

1. The Celtic Advent tradition sings a special short carol, which adds one more verse each week. Make sure you can play it from Lakeland's website. Use your smart phone, iPad, tablet, computer...
2. Get your Advent Wreath ready. You can purchase your Advent Wreath kit from Lakeland (or make your own). We recommend purchasing all new candles each year so you don't burn down the house.

As you begin...

1. Set a mood. On Sunday night, turn down the lights, turn on some Christmas lights and play some soft Christmas music. Gather around in a family room and sit close together. Read the Sunday night instructions for exactly how to begin each Advent evening.
2. Read the appropriate week's Advent liturgy, prayers, and devotional. The Advent Guide will tell you what you need to do each week. There are lots of "call and response" words. So everyone needs to be able to see a guide.
3. On the first Sunday, you will only light one candle, the next week you will light two. By Christmas Eve all five candles will be lit! Each Advent evening's instruction will tell you when to light the candle, and what else to do.
4. Adjourn to a special treat. Our family likes sparkling fruit juice, German cookies, and lemon bars. You can have any treat you like. It is most fun if the treats are something you only have at Advent time!

Most importantly, RELAX! — especially if you have young children. They will fidget, play, talk, mess with the candles, fight over who gets to blow them out, etc. Rest assured this tradition has meaning.

My brother and I goofed off every year during Advent. My dad never scolded us. Today my brother and I celebrate it with our children as followers of Jesus Christ: The tradition won out. (And now when my children fight over blowing out the candles, Dad smiles a deeply satisfied smile).

Other ideas you might try:

- Light the candles EVERY night of Advent, not just Sunday, when you have dinner together (be ready to buy extra candles).
- Invite friends and extended family over for Advent. Our house can be quite full during this time of year.
- Hold two Advents; one for kids and one for adults after the kids go to bed.

# Advent Week 1

*This is the color of candle you will light*

**1st Advent: HOPE**  
**December 2nd**

***Begin with no candles lit.***

## A Prayer for Christmas Preparations

by Joel Mason

(**Bold = Everyone!**)

*Leader:*

Lord Jesus,  
Master of both the light and the darkness,  
send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

**We who have so much to do**

seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

**We who are anxious over many things**

look forward to your coming among us.

**We who are blessed in so many ways**

long for the complete joy of your Kingdom.

**We whose hearts are heavy** seek the joy of your presence.

**We are your people**, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say,

**'Come Lord Jesus!'**

**Amen.**

### PREP NOTES:

- Prepare snacks way ahead of time.
- Get your Advent wreath ready (matches?)
- Locate the little battery tea light candle.
- Read ahead here about the game or activity - you might need some supplies!

Northumbria Community, *Celtic Daily Prayer: Book Two* (London: William Collins, 2015), 985.

**Play this song from Lakeland's website.**

The Advent Carol

Sung to the tune of *The Holly and the Ivy*. One verse is added with each candle each week.

Week 1: Everyone sing the first verse of the Advent Carol.

**Within the deepest darkness**

**a glowing light is lit.**

**The darkness cannot put it out**

**or do away with it.**

## Advent Path: first week of Advent

This is the path that God marked,  
who said at the beginning, 'Let there be light.'

And there was light;  
and God saw that the light was good.

For people walking in darkness  
a great light dawns.

The true light, which lightens everyone,  
is coming into the world.

The light shines in the darkness,  
the light that the darkness cannot put out.

Today, the first week of Advent,  
we light one candle.

We mark out the Advent path with candle  
flames.

**Now light this week's candle.**

**1st Advent: HOPE**  
**December 2nd**

### Calls and Responses

When our path is menaced by shadows,  
circle me, Lord;  
keep light within,  
keep darkness without.

When our path is targeted by conflict,  
circle me, Lord;  
keep love near,  
keep hatred afar.

...

When our path is threatened by worry,  
circle me, Lord;  
keep peace within,  
keep fear without.

## Game or Activity

### Hide and seek the little light.

**Turn out all the lights in the house. Take turns and hide the little light. Don't play more than three times.**

**Come back here when you're done playing.**

## Advent Week 1 Reflection and Discussion

*(You don't have to ask and answer all the questions. Pick appropriate questions for children and/or adults.)*

Darkness can be scary or fun. Our imaginations run wild in the darkness. Have you ever been in the woods at night? What is the darkest place you have ever been?

Why do you think God separated the light from the darkness?

In your opinion, do we live in a dark world or a light world? Why?

Jesus is the light of the world. Where do we see Jesus' light in our world?

What is your Hope for this Christmas?

### Closing Prayer *(Everyone)*

Lord,

May we be your light in our world.

In the name of the Father, and Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever. Amen.

# Advent Week 2

*This is the color of candle you will light*

**2nd Advent: PEACE**  
**December 9th**

***Begin with last week's candle lit.***

## A Prayer for Christmas Preparations

by Joel Mason

**(Bold = Everyone!)**

*Leader:*

Lord Jesus,  
Master of both the light and the darkness,  
send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

**We who have so much to do**

seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

**We who are anxious over many things**

look forward to your coming among us.

**We who are blessed in so many ways**

long for the complete joy of your Kingdom.

**We whose hearts are heavy** seek the joy of your presence.

**We are your people**, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say,

**'Come Lord Jesus!'**

**Amen.**

Northumbria Community, *Celtic Daily Prayer: Book Two* (London: William Collins, 2015), 985.

Sung to the tune of The Holly and the Ivy. One verse is added with each candle each week.  
All sing verses 1 and 2 of the Advent Carol.

## The Advent Carol

1.  
Within the deepest darkness  
a glowing light is lit.  
The darkness cannot put it out  
or do away with it.

2.  
The prophets said Messiah  
would come to set us free,  
to rule the world with life and justice:  
the Prince of Peace is He.

### PREP NOTES:

- Prepare snacks way ahead of time.
- Get your Advent wreath ready (matches?)
- Locate a clean bed sheet and flashlight.
- Half sheets of paper for everyone and markers.

## Advent path: second week of Advent

This is the path that the prophets marked who heard the voice of the Lord, 'Whom shall I send?

and responded, 'Here I am, send me!'

They declared that the Lord required his people to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with him.

One prophet said that a young woman would conceive, give birth to a son, and name him 'Emmanuel,' God with us!

that One would come who would preach good news to the poor and bind up the broken-hearted,

and rejoiced, 'A child is born to us, a Son is given to us! He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace.'

Today the second week of Advent we light two candles.

We mark out the Advent path with candle flames.

**Now light this week's candle.**

**2nd Advent: PEACE**

**December 9th**

### Calls and Responses

When our path is menaced by shadows,  
circle me, Lord;  
keep light within,  
keep darkness without.

When our path is targeted by conflict,  
circle me, Lord;  
keep love near,  
keep hatred afar.

When our path is threatened by worry,  
circle me, Lord;  
keep peace within,  
keep fear without.

## Game or Activity

**Play charades under a bed sheet.**

**Get little slips of paper and pens. Write names of animals on them. Place them in a bowl and have the charader secretly pick a slip of paper. Then, the charader SILENTLY acts out the animal UNDER THE SHEET. (They can choose to use the flashlight under the sheet if they wish.)**

**Advent Week 2 Reflection and Discussion**

*(You don't have to ask and answer all the questions. Pick appropriate questions for children and/or adults.)*

God gives callings to people. Some are called to be moms or dads. Some are called to be teachers. Some are called to be inventors. Some are called to serve the helpless or under-resourced. Some are called to be strong friends.

Do you think you have a calling? Take a guess, then write your calling name on a half sheet of paper. Take turns holding up your calling name in front of yourself and explain it. Now others may want to write good encouraging words on each other's papers.

**Closing Prayer** *(Everyone)*

**Lord,**

**May we follow your calling.**

**In the name of the Father, and Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever. Amen.**



# Advent Week 3

***Begin with last week's candles lit.***

3rd Advent: JOY  
December 16th

## A Prayer for Christmas Preparations

by Joel Mason

(**Bold = Everyone!**)

*Leader:*

Lord Jesus,  
Master of both the light and the darkness,  
send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

**We who have so much to do**

seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

**We who are anxious over many things**

look forward to your coming among us.

**We who are blessed in so many ways**

long for the complete joy of your Kingdom.

**We whose hearts are heavy** seek the joy of your presence.

**We are your people**, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say,

**'Come Lord Jesus!'**

**Amen.**

### PREP NOTES:

- Prepare snacks way ahead of time.
- Get your Advent wreath ready (matches?)
- Little slips of paper, pens/pencils, a bowl.

Northumbria Community, *Celtic Daily Prayer: Book Two* (London: William Collins, 2015), 985.

Sung to the tune of The Holly and the Ivy. One verse is added with each candle each week.  
All sing verses 1, 2, and 3 of the Advent Carol.

## The Advent Carol

1.

Within the deepest darkness  
a glowing light is lit.

The darkness cannot put it out  
or do away with it.

2.

The prophets said Messiah  
would come to set us free,  
to rule the world with life and justice:  
the Prince of Peace is He.

3.

Wild desert John Baptizer,  
shouted, 'Prepare the way!  
Level out the hills! Fill the potholes in!  
Make way for God today!'

### **Advent path: third week of Advent**

This is the path that John marked,  
whose voice called in the desert,  
**'Prepare the way for the Lord',**

who cried, **'Repent for the Kingdom of God is  
near!'**

and baptized in the River Jordan many who  
confessed their sins,

and who pointed out Jesus,  
**'Behold, the Lamb of God!'**

Today, the third week of Advent,  
we light three candles.

We mark out the Advent path with candle  
flames.

*Now light this week's candle.*

**3rd Advent: JOY  
December 16th**

#### **Calls and Responses**

When our path is menaced by shadows,  
**circle me, Lord;  
keep light within,  
keep darkness without.**

When our path is targeted by conflict,  
**circle me, Lord;  
keep love near,  
keep hatred afar.**

When our path is threatened by worry,  
**circle me, Lord;  
keep peace within,  
keep fear without.**

## Game or Activity

### Play the Name Game.

Someone will have to be the **Official Reader** and not play during a round.

Everyone writes a name - any name - on a slip of paper and folds it twice and drops it in the bowl. It is very important to keep you, your made-up name, and your piece of paper anonymous. The **Official Reader** goes around and collects all the names from everyone. Everyone is required to play - except the **Official Reader** (the **Official Reader** can help non-writers).

After all slips of paper are collected from everyone by the **Official Reader**, then the **Official Reader** privately unfolds the slips of paper with the names on them.

Now the **Official Reader** clearly reads out loud all the names twice through only. Everyone should pay very close attention. No one can cheat and take notes. Everyone listens as closely as possible and tries to memorize all the names. The **Official Reader** cannot ask for clarifications or proper pronunciations. They just read all the names twice through only.

The Name Game begins with the youngest person asking another person in the group, "Are you [Patrick Mahomes]?" If 'yes,' then that person must get up and join the asker's team. Together they ask another person, "Are you [Bob Cratchet]?" If yes, then they continue to build their team. But if the answer is 'no' then the person they asked takes over and gets to ask someone what their name might be.

There are two winners. First there is the winning team, because in the end everyone is on their team! Game over. The second winner could be a person for whom no one guessed their name!

Advent Week 3 Reflection and Discussion  
(You don't have to ask and answer all the questions. Pick appropriate questions for children and/or adults.)

Traditions tell us who we are. Communities define our identity. But the most powerful identity creators are our parents (like it or not!)

John the Baptist's parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth, were very godly parents and shaped John into one of the most holy, honorable, and significant people in the history of the world.

Since traditions shape us, what is your favorite Christmas tradition?

What dream does/did your parent(s) have for you?

Do you know what your given name means? Why did your parents name you that name?

Closing Prayer (*Everyone*)

Lord,

You have called us by name.

In the name of the Father, and Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever. Amen.

# Advent Week 4

*Begin with last week's candles lit.*

4th Advent: LOVE  
December 23rd

## A Prayer for Christmas Preparations

by Joel Mason

**(Bold = Everyone!)**

*Leader:*

Lord Jesus,  
Master of both the light and the darkness,  
send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

**We who have so much to do**

seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

**We who are anxious over many things**

look forward to your coming among us.

**We who are blessed in so many ways**

long for the complete joy of your Kingdom.

**We whose hearts are heavy** seek the joy of your presence.

**We are your people**, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say,

**'Come Lord Jesus!'**

**Amen.**

Northumbria Community, *Celtic Daily Prayer: Book Two* (London: William Collins, 2015), 985.

Sung to tune of The Holly and the Ivy. One verse is added with each candle each week.  
All sing verses 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the Advent Carol.

## The Advent Carol

1.  
Within the deepest darkness  
a glowing light is lit.  
The darkness cannot put it out  
or do away with it.

2.  
The prophets said Messiah  
would come to set us free,

### PREP NOTES:

- Prepare snacks way ahead of time.
  - Get your Advent wreath ready (matches?)
- There is no new planned activity or game. Instead, there is a longer Reflection comparing Mary and Zechariah's trust in God. You can read it out loud if you so choose.

to rule the world with life and justice:  
the Prince of Peace is He.

3.

Wild desert John Baptizer,  
shouted, 'Prepare the way!  
Level out the hills! Fill the potholes in!  
Make way for God today!'

4.

The angel came to Mary  
who answered, 'Let it be,  
I am the servant of the Lord:  
now His mother I will be.'

### Advent path: fourth week of Advent

This is the path that Mary marked,  
to whom Gabriel said, '**You will give birth to a  
son, and will call him Jesus.**'

Mary replied, '**I am the Lord's servant, let it  
happen as you have said.**'

And she rejoiced in her calling,  
'My heart is overflowing with praise of my Lord,  
my soul is full of joy in God my Saviour.'

Today, the fourth week of Advent, **we light four  
candles.**

We mark out the Advent path with candle  
flames.

*Now light this week's candle.*

**4th Advent: LOVE  
December 23rd**

### Calls and Responses

When our path is menaced by shadows,  
**circle me, Lord;  
keep light within,  
keep darkness without.**

When our path is targeted by conflict,  
**circle me, Lord;  
keep love near,  
keep hatred afar.**

When our path is threatened by worry,  
**circle me, Lord;  
keep peace within,  
keep fear without.**

### Game or Activity

**Optional: Play one of the games from the past  
three weeks.**

### Advent Week 4 Reflection and Discussion

Discussion question: Why does Mary trust  
God, and Zechariah doesn't trust God? Read  
the following Reflection before answering.

## Advent Week 4 Reflection on Luke 1:5-38

Both Zechariah and Mary have questions for the angel Gabriel. It appears both have doubts. Zechariah: "How will I know that this is so?" Mary: "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" But Mary is honored, and Zechariah... well, not so much. Perhaps Mary experiences a "consoling" presence of God. God is with her. She has many unanswered questions, but she trusts God. She feels safe even though she knows in her head this is crazy talk: "I am a virgin!" But Zechariah really doesn't believe Gabriel. Zechariah has no settled peace or trust in God. He caves into fear. He doesn't believe God can actually do what God's going to do. Mary believes God in uncertainty. Zechariah doubts God with uncertainty. Since Zechariah cannot accept the most fundamental truth about God, that God is God and therefore entirely trustworthy, then the angel decides that it might be a good idea if Zechariah doesn't talk about his doubts – for about five months! Mary is a "treasurer." She "treasures and ponders all these things in her heart" (Lk 2:19). Here is the irony in story: Mary willingly enters into silence. Zechariah is forced into silence. To know the will of God all of us will enter into silence – one way or another.

My honest observation is that most of us are more like Zechariah. We doubt and question the voice of God. We live in emotional desolation, not emotional consolation. No wonder we need to practice solitude and especially silence. We could do with a good lip-sealing on a regular basis. Better for us to bake upon the words of God for our lives, rather than blab on and on, responding out of our absence from God's presence, rather than God's very real presence.

This isn't to say Mary isn't paying attention to her desolating feelings. Otherwise she would not have questioned Gabriel. But Mary holds both desolation and consolation together. Desolation is not evil, just as fear is not innately evil. Fear keeps us from entering a lion's cage for example. Fear's good opinion! Desolations inform us as well as consolations. Mary pays attention to her disturbing feelings of disquiet. She is aware of what is going on inside of her. She can pray a prayer of receptivity. "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word" (1:38). She is aware of her emotions, but she can receive the word of the Lord. Also, Mary chooses to be indifferent to her personal stake in the news. She takes a servant role. On the other hand, Zechariah is not aware of his desolating feeling's voice of truth. He just uncritically doubts. He doesn't believe. Why? **(This is the discussion question.)**

Within my studies of power and powerlessness, the pattern appears that those who are without power – like Mary – seem more accepting of God's intervention and authority. While those who have power – Zechariah, a male of the priestly Hebrew tribe of Levi – appear to hold onto their power to their own detriment. Powerlessness tills the soul's soil enough to receive the seed of the Word. This is validated by all of us when sooner or later we experience "powerlessness" in the form of illness, tragedy, loss, and ruin. Everyone gets religion when they are being shelled in a foxhole. These orisons, the prayer of desperation, come unbidden and come unglued from doubts. Powerless Mary eats and breathes this unbidden life. Privileged Zechariah lives by his wits and tradition. His soil is hard-packed. It is difficult for Gabriel to convince him. So Gabriel prescribes the time-tested treatment: silence. And it works! Zechariah sees the light when John is born and reclaims the words of the prophets of old:

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has looked favorably on his people and re-  
deemed them.  
He has raised up a mighty savior for us  
in the house of his servant David... Luke 1:68-69

Closing Prayer (*Everyone*)

Lord,

You have told us,

Perfect love casts out fear.

Fear not! For I am with you!

In the name of the Father, and Son, and  
the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever.  
Amen.

# Christmas Eve

*This is the color of candle you will light*



**CHRISTMAS EVE**  
**December 24th**

***ALL FIVE CANDLES LIT.***

We have marked out the Advent path with candle flames,  
and today we celebrate Jesus' birth by lighting all four of the Advent candles,  
**and the Christmas candle at the center.**

Sung to tune of The Holly and the Ivy. One verse is added with each candle each week.  
All sing verses 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the Advent Carol.

## The Advent Carol

1.

Within the deepest darkness  
a glowing light is lit.  
The darkness cannot put it out  
or do away with it.

2.

The prophets said Messiah  
would come to set us free,  
to rule the world with life and justice:  
the Prince of Peace is He.

3.

Wild desert John Baptizer,  
shouted, 'Prepare the way!  
Level out the hills! Fill the potholes in!  
Make way for God today!'

4.

The angel came to Mary  
who answered, 'Let it be,  
I am the servant of the Lord:  
now His mother I will be.'

5.

A baby in a stable  
brings joy to all the earth.  
He comes, our Emmanuel,  
and we celebrate his birth

The Reader reads the following out loud for everyone:

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

**‘Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’**

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. - Luke 2:8-16 New Revised Standard Version

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the  
power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**