Celebrate

First Sunday of Advent
November 29, 2026

Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading — Isaiah 64:1-9

This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
2 as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
3 When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down; the mountains quaked at your presence.
4 From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.
5 You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.
6 We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
7 There is no one who calls on your name
or attempts to take hold of you,
for you have hidden your face from us
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.

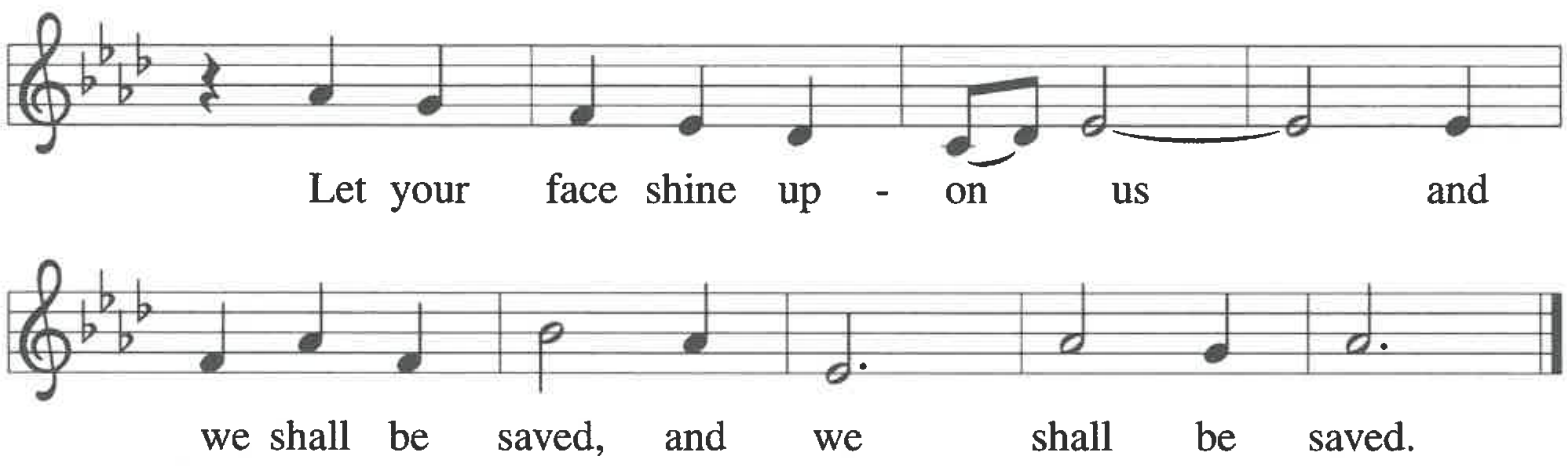
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8Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.

9Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,
and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

Psalm

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; refrain, Ps. 80:7



Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph | like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- | on the cherubim.
2In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, | and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and | come to help us.
3Restore | us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.
4O LORD | God of hosts,
how long will your anger fume when your | people pray? R
5You have fed them with the | bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of | tears to drink.
6You have made us the derision | of our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh | us to scorn.
7Restore us, O | God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.
17Let your hand be upon the one at | your right hand,
the one you have made so strong | for yourself. R
18And so will we never turn a- | way from you;
give us life, that we may call up- | on your name.
19Restore us, O LORD | God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved. R

Second Reading — 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[4]I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, [5]for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—[6]just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—[7]so that you are not lacking in any gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. [8]He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9]God is faithful, by whom you were called into the partnership of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gospel — Mark 13:24-37

Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

[Jesus said:] "In those days, after that suffering,
the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light,
[25]and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.
[26]"Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. [27]Then he will send out the angels and gather the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

[28]"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. [29]So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. [30]Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. [31]Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

[32]"But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. [33]Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come. [34]It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. [35]Therefore, keep awake, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or at dawn, [36]or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. [37]And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

In hope and expectation, we bring to God our prayers for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Strengthen your church in this season of anticipation. Nourish all people who gather around word and water, bread and cup. Reassure any whose faith feels dry that you are always near. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Come and restore the earth. Give rest to weary lands and renewed life to species at risk. Make us wise stewards of the places we call home. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Bring peace among all nations and communities. Embolden leaders to seek creative and sustainable resolutions to war and conflict. Show us new possibilities in places where peace has been elusive (*especially*). God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Sustain all who are heavy with weariness, grief, illness, or worry (*especially*). Comfort families who are estranged from one another and any who are separated from loved ones. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Inspire liturgists, preachers, musicians, and all who lead our worship and prayer. May we be prepared as we await Christ's coming this Advent season. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You embrace all the saints from the far reaches of the earth. We remember with care all who have died and now abide in their eternal home. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

We entrust these and the prayers of our hearts to you, most holy God, in the name of Christ Jesus our Savior.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (Andrew, Apostle) John 1:35-42. **Tuesday** Psalm 79. **Wednesday** Micah 5:1-5a. **Thursday** (commemoration of Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia, 1552) Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13. **Friday** (commemoration of John of Damascus, theologian and hymnwriter, c. 749) Jeremiah 1:4-10. **Saturday** Ezekiel 36:24-28. **Second Sunday of Advent** (commemoration of Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, c. 342) Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8.

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