ADVENT

**First Sunday**

Almighty God, Father of all mercies and God of all comfort, who, since the world began, didst give through thy holy prophets the promise of mercy and deliverance, we thank and praise thee for the coming of thy Son Jesus Christ, the Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel.

We beseech thee, O God, that as thy faithful people in every age have earnestly and heartily believed thy Word, so we may also unwaveringly believe and be found worthy to obtain thy heavenly promises. And as thy servants in the Israel of the Old Covenant looked with fervent longing for the coming of the Messiah, the Deliverer, grant that we may eagerly and joyfully welcome him, Jesus our Lord, into our hearts by faith, and thus be delivered by his might from the power of sin, death, and the devil.

To this end, dear God, lead us by thy Spirit to an understanding of our great sinfulness and our need of repentance. Teach us to repent. Help us to hate evil and to love the good. Strengthen us against the temptations of all our adversaries. Incline our hearts to seek righteousness and holiness, that thus we may serve and glorify thee.

Send out thy light to all corners of the earth, that men everywhere may know thy love in the gift of thy Son Jesus Christ, and join the multitude of thy people who say, Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest. Grant peace and tranquility to the nations of the earth. Especially do we ask thy favor upon our own land and all who dwell here. Guide all who are in authority over us, that in all things they may do thy will and acknowledge

thee the only true God.

Bless all who are gathered here in thy house this day and sanctify them by thy Word. To those among us who are afflicted in any way, to those who are in sorrow, to those who are enduring trials, to those who may be in any necessity of body or spirit, grant such strength, comfort, and understanding that they, loving thee above all else, may in patience and constancy know the joy of thy abiding presence.

All these things we ask in the Name of him who came for our deliverance, died for our salvation, rose again for our justification, and ever lives to intercede for us before the Majesty on High, even Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

From Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)ADVENT

**Second Sunday**

O Lord God, the Father of all light and wisdom, who art righteous in all thy ways and true in all thy judgments, we give thanks unto thee for thy Word, for thy statutes and testimonies, for thy laws and commandments, for thy sacred ordinances and thy sure word of prophecy, and most especially for the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. For thy whole counsel we praise thee. We confess with thanksgiving that thy truth is pure, enlightening the eyes; perfect, converting the soul; sure, making wise the simple; right, rejoicing the heart; true, guiding the lost; good, strengthening the weak; and light, leading us to Christ. We ask thy blessing on all who preach, teach, read, and study thy Word, that all men may hear the joyful sound of the Gospel.

O God, fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. Help us that we may serve and love thee with pure hearts, worship thee with clean hands, obey thee with willing minds, trust thee with perfect confidence, fear thee and none other, and love thee above all the world. Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to the end that we, trusting in thy Word and promise which have been confirmed unto us by the gift of thy Son Jesus Christ, may here and in the world to come glorify and praise thee evermore.

To this end guard and preserve us that the devil, the world, and our own flesh may not deceive us, nor lead us into error, unbelief, and sin. Teach us to watch and pray always that, abiding faithful even unto death, we may be accounted worthy to escape those things that shall come to pass on the earth and to stand before the Son of man, Jesus our Lord, who shall come to be our Judge. Keep us steadfast in faith and love, that we may in no wise fail to obtain that inheritance which he has promised to all who love and serve him.

We pray for thy church, O God, that all schisms, scandals, and heresies may be put out of the way, and that it may serve thee in truth, purity, and single-minded devotion.

Give peace and stability to the nations of the earth. Put down all evil rulers, and raise up those who will serve after thy good pleasure. We pray thy blessing upon our homes and families; may Jesus Christ rule in the hearts of parents and children. Give strength and healing, after thy good counsel, to the sick; give comfort to those who sorrow; give guidance to our youth; give joy and hope to the aged; give courage to the perplexed; and lead all of us to look now and always unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who in his Second Advent will receive us and all who believe in him unto himself and unto thee, O Father, and the Holy Spirit. In his holy Name

we pray these things. Amen.

From Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

ADVENT

**Third Sunday**

O God, thou Shepherd of Israel, who didst lead Joseph like a flock through all the long years of promise, nourishing and sustaining thy people in the hope of deliverance by the word of thy prophets, and who in the fullness of time didst raise up a Horn of Salvation in the house of David, even thy Son Jesus Christ, grant unto us such a vivid faith in thy promises that we may rejoice and give thanks evermore.

Now, O Father, in this most sacred hour we, thy children, bring thee our prayers and supplications with thanksgiving. According to the necessities of each, send such deliverance as will renew us in body and soul. Forgive our sins and blot out all our iniquities. If any be blind in heart and spirit, open his eyes; if any walk uncertainly, guide him in the pathways of righteousness; if any be impure in thought, word, or deed, cleanse him by thy Spirit; if any be deaf to thy Spirit, open his ears to thy truth, that hearing he may believe and be saved; and if he be dead to the things that pertain to his salvation, quicken him by thy mighty power. Let thy Holy Spirit descend upon us, we pray, that we may not fail in that day when our Lord will come again to bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the heart.

We pray for thy church everywhere throughout the world. Grant thy blessing to all thy servants who proclaim thy Word to the multitudes. Give aid and strength to all missionaries and through them accompany thy Word with power, that all men may know thee to be the only true God and Savior of men. Rule over the hearts of all men, guide the decisions of those in authority, and sit in the secret councils of nations, to the end that peace and justice may prevail. Help all men to know and believe the doctrine of him whom thou didst send, and grant that they may learn that only those things are good, true, and enduring which are in obedience to thy Son Jesus Christ.

Bless all who are gathered before thee this day in the fellowship of the Spirit, especially those here in this thy house. Be with those of our number who are sick or under any affliction of body, mind, or spirit. Comfort them that they may, through their trials, learn of thy gracious power and readiness to help in every time of need. Endow us all with grace, that we may daily show forth the light of thy Name, and the divine excellencies of the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All these things, and whatever else thou seest we need, we beseech of thee in his Name. Amen.

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ADVENT

**Fourth Sunday**

O heavenly Father, who hast made all things in heaven and earth to serve thy will and to witness to thy glory and goodness, we give thee our humble and joyful thanks for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for the salvation thou hast provided for all men in him.

With contrite hearts we turn to thee, O God. We acknowledge our transgressions and confess that we have failed to do the good which we ought to have done, and that we have done the evil which we ought not to have done. Forgive us, and stir us to a quickened sense of our iniquity and sin; awaken us to our need of daily repentance and renewal, and by thy grace deliver us out of all that besets us and causes us to fall. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit. Sanctify the words of our lips by the indwelling of Christ our Lord. Perfect in purity and holiness the works of our hands by obedience to thy Word. Hear, O God. Come, heal and renew us. Grant us the remission of all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ and his merits, so that forgiven we may have that peace which passes all understanding.

And now, in the assurance that thou art nigh to all who call upon thee in truth, we pray for all men everywhere. Let thy Spirit prevail in every home and school, in every shop and store, and in every kind of labor or industry. Show forth thy honor and glory to the nations of the earth; overthrow all who would hinder the progress of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Succor all who are persecuted for his Name's sake, and prosper all who love thy truth. Be with the homeless, the fatherless, the comfortless, and help them in their affliction to trust in thee, sending them such deliverance as shall turn their hearts and bring them to a confession of that Name which is above every name, Jesus Christ.

For the wounded in spirit, the sick in mind, the distressed in heart, we pray that thou wouldst make thy face to shine upon them. For all strangers, all travelers, and all who are away from home in any service or calling, we pray and beseech thee to accompany them with thy light and love. For captives and prisoners, for the desolate and forsaken, and for all in peril of life or soul, we implore thy aid and comfort. For the sick and the aged, for those in labor and those in any anguish, for the dying and those who mourn their passing, be thou most gracious; lift up thy countenance upon them and give them the perfect peace of thy holy child Jesus.

In thanks for the gift that no words or tongue can describe, the gift of Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray, O heavenly Father, that this gift may be ours in faith. Grant that our hearts may be a fit dwelling place for thy Son and that we may know the joy of his presence, the blessing of following in his steps, and the glory of that crown which he has promised to all who are his in steadfastness of faith and life.

In his Name. Amen.

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