

# Advent Christmas

## Day of Prayer and Fasting (December 8)

**“O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.” Daniel 9:19**

Advent is a time for coming to Jesus, to remember that God first came to us in human history through the incarnation of the only Son from the Father, to anticipate the day when Christ will come again. Advent— literally meaning “coming”—is a dwelling place in time to turn our heart’s attention to the God who dwelt among us in human flesh and who will dwell with us in a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:3). We come now on the cusp of Christmas to dwell in the love of God the Father, and the grace of Jesus the Son, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, praying with the prophets before the incarnation and the cross, “O come, O come, Emmanuel” and with the Church on the other side of the empty tomb, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!”

During the Season of Advent we are going to set aside Wednesdays as a day of prayer and fasting (for those who are able), in order to help us praise God for who He is, to confess our sins before Him, to express our gratitude for all He has and is giving us, and to help us cry out to Him in our time of need. There are many ways you can spend time in prayer. One simple and specific way you can pray to God is to use the well-known acronym A.C.T.S. as a way of moving through different seasons of prayer. It goes like this:

- **Adoration**—praising God for who He is.
- **Confession**—confessing our sins to God.
- **Thanksgiving**—thanking God for specific things He has provided.
- **Supplication**—asking God for specific things.

Remember, prayer is nothing more than communicating with God. It’s not complicated. It’s a means of grace that He has given His people for all time.

Why do we fast? We fast in order to experience and express our humble dependence upon God. Fasting is a spiritual discipline practiced by God’s people for thousands of years that helps us repent, lament, grieve, and seek His face for guidance. We often fast in seasons of profound pain (internal or external), confusion, and severe providences. Fasting is simply denying oneself of a normal and ordinary provision or pleasure, like food, for a season in order to intensify one’s dependence and desire for the Lord.

Though the idea is simple, fasting can be very hard. If fasting is new for you, start small with missing one meal and then progress as the Holy Spirit leads you. Fasting from food is not the only way we can fast. For some, fasting from food is not a good idea for their personal health. If you are unable to fast from food, considering fasting from something else like T.V., social media, music, or some other aspect of your daily life. When you sense and feel the reminder of hunger or whatever withdrawal you may experience, set your focus on the Lord and delight in His faithful presence and provision. Ask God to overwhelm you with His grace as you seek His face through prayer and fasting. He will give you everything you need to bring Him glory and to know His joy.

Our Advent & Christmas Daily Prayer Guide will run from November 28 – January 5. Pick up a guide in the Grand Hall or download at [pcpc.org](http://pcpc.org) and join us wherever you find yourself over Advent and Christmas as we read and pray together.

### **Call to Prayer**

*The Call to Prayer is God's invitation for you to pray to Him as a beloved child speaking to a perfectly good and loving Father.*

**Psalm 97:12** Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous,  
and give thanks to His holy name!

### **Prayers of Adoration and Thanksgiving**

*Take some time to praise God and celebrate the wonderful loving-goodness of God as revealed in His Word and in your own life.*

### **Scripture Readings**

*Praying through the Bible turns our attention to God through His living Word. Use the following passages to guide your prayer.*

**Psalm 42:1-7**  
**Isaiah 40:1-11**

### **Prayers of Confession**

*The Prayer of Confession is a time to tell God your failures, being as specific as possible, to live according to His loving-goodness and to receive the underserved healing-kindness of God that we need for renewal.*

### **Prayers of Supplication**

*The Prayer of Supplication is a place to ask God to accomplish His redemptive purposes in the specific circumstances and relationships that are on your heart and mind, even as we pray for the Church and the needs we see in the world beyond our personal involvement. During Advent we will center our prayers of supplication on four requests from Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9: O Lord, Come. O Lord, Hear. O Lord, Forgive. O Lord, Delay not.*

### **Week 2: "O Lord, Hear"**

Pray for people by name who:

Are suffering and in sorrow  
Are wayward children, bring them to Yourself, oh Lord  
Are lonely and isolated, remind them of Your presence and bring them a trusted friend  
Have hopes deferred and sick hearts, show them Your hope that does not disappoint  
Are carrying grief and loss in their souls, show them your nearness to their broken hearts  
Are suffering with a chronic illness, touch them with your healing power and grace to endure

### **Weekly Collect**

*The Weekly Collect is a way of joining the Church in the local congregation and around the world by praying the same prayer on the same day. The Weekly Collect reminds us that we are united in Christ as we gather together—"collect"—our prayers and present them before our one God: the Father, Jesus Christ His Son, and the Holy Spirit.*

Merciful God, who sent Your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.