

Together We Pray

SUNDAY 3 December 2023, Advent 1

Readings: Isa 64:1-9; 1 Cor 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37

Let us pray for the church and for the world, giving thanks for God's goodness.

God of hope, **hear our prayer**

Heavenly Father, you shake our world in its darkness with the promise of light. We like our ordinary lives. But today we start a new journey, past the deserts of old emotions and spent actions. We enter a new territory, a season of expectation and starlight. It is Advent. And the road is changing, something is stirring. A couple begin their journey to Bethlehem, and a mother gives birth to her child in a city far from home. We pray for all parents, children, and families of every kind. Help us witness to your love in our lives this holy season.

God of hope, **hear our prayer**

Today, we light a candle for hope. And we pray for the world: for an end to war in Ukraine, Israel and Palestine; for the hope of peace in villages torn apart, where relatives are grieving. In the midst of this brokenness, we pray for the wounded and lost, forgotten and hurt. May Christ be present to comfort to all who suffer. May help reach them in their need.

God of hope, **hear our prayer**

If we look up, we see the ceilings of many churches look like upside-down boats, like the fishing boats that held Jesus' disciples. Our faith ebbs and flows; we sit in the stillness, waiting for the wind to catch our sails, for the Spirit to move us on. Spirit of God, shake us from our spiritual doldrums. Make us thirst for you! We pray for all who work on the land and seas, and for those whose task is gathering people together. We pray for our bishop, +Justin, and all preparing for Advent services: clergy, readers, speakers, musicians, choirs. Let us prepare our hearts for the coming of the Christ-child, gift and saviour to the world.

God of hope, **hear our prayer**

We give thanks for children and their wonder. May we wonder, too, at the ancient stories of God's love come down to save humankind. We pray for a world at peace. With faith, may we see the way to a common destination, shared in bread and wine. We recite the story of God's Son, born thousands of years ago in a faraway city, with its winding streets and fractured patchwork of religions. And so... We pray for all in need of a saviour. We pray for ourselves, and all who carry this sacred story in their hearts. **Amen.**

Sources: NZPB; NRSV Bible; Anne Lamott; Episcopal BCP; Janet Morley, All Desires Known; NEB Starr.