



1st Sunday of Advent (Year B)

November 29, 2026

Today we begin again. Advent opens a new liturgical year and invites us to walk once more through the mystery of Christ—his coming among us, his life and teaching, his death and resurrection, and his continuing presence in the world. In Year B, Mark will be our primary Gospel companion, presenting Jesus with urgency and directness: the Kingdom of God is near; wake up, pay attention, and follow.

Advent begins that journey not by asking us to know where the year will lead, but simply to ***stay awake***—to open our hearts, notice the Holy One already drawing near, and become ready for whatever love may ask of us. This First Sunday of Advent provides us with a lovely and gracious roadmap to follow as we prepare again to receive Jesus, to open our hearts to the Holy One with awe, reverence, and gratitude. We wait, but our waiting is not passive. It is active as we do some light housekeeping in our hearts, making way for Jesus to shine through us.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7

Isaiah gives voice to one of the deepest prayers of the human heart: *Come, O God!* The people feel distant from God and painfully aware of how far they have wandered. Yet underneath their sorrow is confidence: God is still their Father, still their Redeemer. “We are the clay and you the potter.” Advent begins with this longing—not merely for Christmas to arrive, but for God to reshape us and our world.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Paul reminds the Corinthians that while they wait for Christ, they are already filled with grace. They are “not lacking in any spiritual gift.” Christian waiting, then, is not passive. God is already at work within us, calling us into fellowship with Christ and giving us what we need to live faithfully. We wait because we trust: *God is faithful.*

GOSPEL: Mark 13:33-37

“Be watchful! Be alert!” Jesus compares our lives to servants entrusted with a household while the master is away. Each servant has been given “his own work.” We do not know when the master will return, but we do know what we are called to do while we wait. Advent invites us to open our eyes, open our hearts, and recognize the Holy One already approaching us—in prayer, in one another, and especially in those who need our love.

Talking Points on Today's Texts

1. Advent begins with a cry: Come!

My friends, once again we arrive at Advent. Around us, the Christmas season is already in full swing. The lights are going up. The music is playing. Shopping has begun. Calendars are filling. But the Church begins somewhere else. It begins with a cry from the human heart: “Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down!”

What a prayer! Isaiah does not politely ask God to stop by when convenient. He cries out from a wounded world: *Come down! Come among us! We need you!* Perhaps that is where Advent must begin—not with Christmas trees or presents or even our beloved traditions, but with desire.

What do we really long for? Peace in our world? Healing in our families? Forgiveness? A little hope? Someone to love us? Someone for us to love? Perhaps underneath all these desires is an even deeper longing: the human heart searching for the Holy One. Advent gives us permission to acknowledge that longing. Come, Lord Jesus. Come into this beautiful and wounded world. Come into my life. Come into my heart.

2. But the God we await is already here.

And here we encounter the wonderful paradox of Advent. We wait for someone who has already come. We prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus two thousand years ago. We wait in hope for the fulfillment of God's reign. But meanwhile, Christ is already present. Paul tells the Corinthians something remarkable today. As they wait, he says, they are “not lacking in any spiritual gift.” Grace has already been given.

The Holy One for whom we long is not standing somewhere far beyond the universe waiting for December 25. God is here. The Holy Mystery dwells within creation and within us. Christ is present

- ❖ When two people forgive each other,
- ❖ When someone sits beside a lonely neighbor,
- ❖ When food is placed before someone who is hungry,
- ❖ When a frightened child is comforted,
- ❖ When someone refuses hatred and chooses love.

Advent teaches us to recognize the God who comes *while we are waiting for God to come*. Perhaps that is why Jesus tells us today: Watch.

3. Watchfulness is really attentiveness.

Jesus repeats the message again and again in this short Gospel: Be watchful. Be alert. Watch. This can sound ominous, as though Jesus were warning us that God might suddenly appear and catch us doing something wrong. But perhaps there is another way to hear it. Jesus is teaching us attention.

Pay attention to your life. Pay attention to the people around you. Pay attention to the quiet movements within your own heart.

Our greatest spiritual danger may not be that we deliberately reject God. It may simply be that we become so distracted that we fail to notice God.

- ❖ We hurry.
- ❖ We check the phone.
- ❖ We answer the email.
- ❖ We watch the news.
- ❖ We worry about tomorrow.
- ❖ We replay yesterday.

And meanwhile, the Holy One passes quietly through today. Prayer interrupts that pattern. Prayer is an opening. *We become quiet enough to notice what is already here.* We open the heart to Christ and discover that Christ has been waiting for us all along. Advent might be less about *waiting for God* than about becoming attentive enough to notice *God waiting for us.*

4. “Each with his or her own work.”

There is a small phrase in today's Gospel that we might easily overlook. The master leaves home and places the servants in charge, “each with his own work.” There is vocation hidden in those words. We are not merely waiting around for Christ to return. We have been entrusted with the household. This world is God's beloved household. And each of us has work to do. Not necessarily spectacular work. Usually it is very ordinary.

- ❖ Someone needs patience from us.
- ❖ Someone needs forgiveness.
- ❖ Someone needs companionship.
- ❖ Someone needs us to speak when others remain silent.
- ❖ Someone is hungry.
- ❖ Someone is frightened.
- ❖ Someone is being pushed to the edge of society.
- ❖ Someone needs to know that they matter.

Prayer opens the heart—but an open heart eventually hears a call. The answer to prayer is so often vocation: a growing awareness of the person or situation to whom God is sending us. Perhaps one Advent question is therefore not simply, “When will Christ come?” but “To whom is Christ sending me?”

5. We are clay in the hands of God.

Isaiah ends today's reading with one of Scripture's most tender images: We are the clay. God is the potter. And “we are all the work” of God's hands. Clay does not shape itself. It yields. That may be one of the great spiritual invitations of Advent: *allow yourself to be shaped.* Perhaps there is something

in us that has become hard. An old resentment. A prejudice we have never examined. A relationship we have allowed to wither. An indifference to suffering because there is simply too much suffering to absorb.

Or perhaps we are simply tired. Advent does not demand that we remake ourselves. Instead, it invites us to place ourselves once again into the hands of the Potter. Here I am. Shape me.

- ❖ Soften what has become hard.
- ❖ Open what I have closed.
- ❖ Make my life into something through which your love can enter the world.

That is conversion—not becoming someone else, but allowing grace to draw forth the person God created us to become.

6. Simple Advent practices:

Perhaps this Advent we can choose one small way to stay awake.

- ❖ Light a candle before dawn or in the evening and let its glow remind you that God’s Presence already fills the room. Sit in silence with this flickering light to hear how you are being invited into the work of healing and justice.
- ❖ Begin the day with silence, even for a few minutes, before looking at your phone or the news. Really, just pause quietly before turning to your screen. Allow the silence to fill your heart as you open it to the presence of Holy Mystery, already dwelling within you.
- ❖ Or reach out to someone who is waiting for a word of love. How long has it been since you told a friend, spouse, child, or neighbor that you love them?
- ❖ Reach out to the poor this week, offering your money, your time, your very self to them, for in doing that, you reach out to Jesus and, in these small awakenings, Christ comes again.



7. Conclude with a brief personal story—a witness to your own faith—in these or similar words. End with the Question of the Week.

These readings today challenge me to slow down and spend more time in quiet prayer. In order to be watchful and attentive, to see Jesus in the faces of those around me, including those I might otherwise look past, the eyes of my heart must be wide open! I keep myself too busy sometimes, trying to get everything done on time...

Here are this week’s questions for faith sharing. **Who is waiting for me to notice them? Who do I fail to notice? How do I see Jesus on the faces of those around me? How can I be more “watchful?”**