

Prayers of intercession – 1st December 2024 – Advent Sunday

Heavenly Father, as Advent begins and we turn our minds to preparations for Christmas, we pray especially today for those whose lives have been turned upside down by recent weather events; for those who have lost loved ones in storms and floods; for those who have lost their homes or have been temporarily displaced; and for those whose livelihoods have been destroyed or seriously disrupted.

As we face the challenges of climate change, we pray for all those in charge of our councils and our country, who have difficult decisions to make on the way forward; and we thank you for the hope held out by COP29 – the hope of nations working together to tackle the causes of climate breakdown.

Lord, as we turn our minds towards Bethlehem at the beginning of Advent, we thank you for the ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon, and for the hope it brings of greater peace in the region. As we prepare to welcome the Prince of Peace, we hold in our hearts the hope for hostilities to cease the world over.

Father, for Christians, the new year begins today, with thoughts of a journey to Bethlehem, and hope in the form of a new baby, Jesus, who would change the world; but we have ahead of us four hectic, challenging weeks. December is a difficult time for many people, but especially for those who are lonely, with no family or friends to gather round the table, and those who are struggling to pay for presents to put under the tree. Many reflect on the past at this time, and become sad because of loved ones lost to them, or situations in life which haven't worked out. May your Church in each community, and we as Christians, be aware of the needs of those around us, and respond with love, holding out hope through friendship and a helping hand. Bless the special efforts made by individual congregations at this time, to be a beacon of hope and Christian love in their communities.

As we anticipate the joys of Christmas at this, the beginning of Advent, we pray for those who will find this year especially difficult, because of recent bereavement. May they know the hope held out in the promises of your Son, that they shall see their loved ones again. We ask also for a blessing of hope for those who suffer in body or in mind, or both; hope of healing and strength.

Lord, we live in times of change and great uncertainty, when faith is challenged and the Church is often found lacking; but in this season when even those who have strayed far from you, or those who have never learned of you, hear about the infant Jesus, may there be a response to the invitation held out by your Church worldwide – an invitation to celebrate the coming of light at the darkest time of the year, and to find hope for the way ahead.

Lord of a creation now scarred and struggling,
Let there always be hope.

Lord of a fallen world where faith falters,
Let there always be hope.

Lord of light in times of darkness,
Let there always be hope.

Lord of life, overcoming death and destruction,
Let there always be hope.

Our hope is in you.

Amen

Prayers taken from Roots Resources website