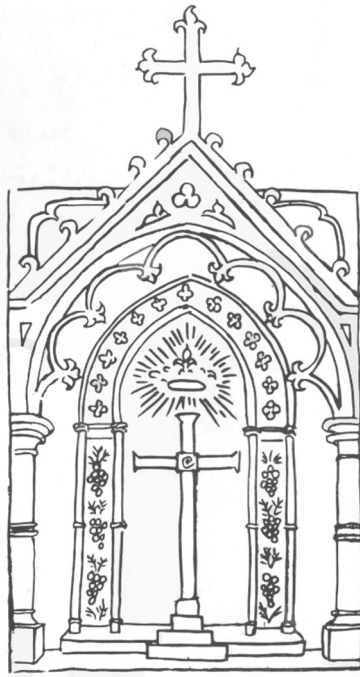


THE CELEBRATION AND BLESSING OF A MARRIAGE



The Episcopal Church of the Advent

141 Advent Street
Spartanburg, South Carolina 29302
(864) 585-2268
(864) 585-2202 FAX
www.churchofadvent.org

A Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God. The occasion of a church wedding is one of great joy and seriousness of purpose. It is the sacramental beginning of a marriage intended to reflect God's love in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. In order for the service to reflect the joy, hope, and faith of a new life together, it is important that there be careful planning.

The Advent Parish is a family gathered together in Christ. We wish to make every effort to assist you in preparing for your new life together in its growth and nurture.

CONTENTS

1. Requirements of the Episcopal Church of the Advent	page 3
2. Contact Information	page 4
3. Couple's Wedding Worksheet (<i>For your use</i>)	page 5
4. Expenses and Customary Fees	page 6
5. Description of Services	pages 7 & 8
6. Church Policies and Practices Governing Weddings	pages 9 & 10
7. Instructions for Ushers	page 11
8. Suggested Reading List for Matrimony	page 12
9. Wedding Ceremony Form	page 13
10. Wedding Music Selection Form	page 14
11. Processional Form	page 15
12. Photography Worksheet	page 16
13. Holy Scripture Lessons	page 17 - 20

Wedding Registration Form	Front pocket of folder
---------------------------	---------------------------

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage from <i>The Book of Common Prayer</i>	Front pocket of folder
---	---------------------------

Requirements of the Episcopal Church of the Advent

In the Episcopal Church it is required that one, at least, of the parties must be a Baptized Christian; that the ceremony be attested by at least two witnesses; and that the marriage conforms to the laws of the State and the canons of this Church.

It is a requirement of The Episcopal Church of the Advent that only members and immediate family members may be married in the church. All weddings must be approved by the Rector prior to being scheduled. The Rector is the final authority on any questions concerning the wedding ceremony and related events held on church property.

The canons of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Upper South Carolina require the priest to enter into counseling with the couple. The intent of the premarital instruction is to deepen the relationship between the couple and the Church, to examine various aspects of the couple's own relationship, and to assist the couple in preparing for a lifelong Christian marriage. Notice of the wedding needs to be made a minimum of three months prior to the date of the ceremony to ensure that the required counseling is completed.

Wedding ceremonies must begin no later than 7:00 p.m. and are not scheduled during the season of Lent or between the second Sunday of Advent and December 26.

The clergy, staff and volunteers of the Advent are sincerely looking forward to working with you on this joyous occasion.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Rev. J. Edward Morris (Ned)

Rector

864-504-3696 nmorris@churchofadvent.org

The Rev. Paula Griffin

Associate Rector for Pastoral Care

864-504-3686 pgriffin@churchofadvent.org

Carol Abney

Executive Assistant to the Rector

864-504-3696 cabney@churchofadvent.org

Dr. Brennan Szafron

Organist and Choir Master

864-504-3694 bszafron@churchofadvent.org

Debbie Bowdish

Wedding Coordinator

H: 864-579-2037 dsr49@bellsouth.net

M: 864-706-2828

Martha Blackman

Altar Guild Flower Chairperson

864-583-4385 MarthaBlackman@aol.com

COUPLE'S WEDDING WORKSHEET

Wedding Date and Time Requested: _____

Rehearsal Date and Time Requested: _____

Officiating Clergy: _____

*Wedding dates and times will be confirmed **after** the Wedding Registration Form and Reservation Fee are received.*

Submit the **Wedding Registration Form** (*see front pocket*) and **Reservation Fee** to **Carol Abney** as soon as possible.

Contact each of the following people as soon as possible to arrange your initial wedding consultation:

- **Carol Abney**, Executive Assistant to the Rector
864-504-3696 cabney@churchofadvent.org
- **Debbie Bowdish**, Wedding Coordinator
864-579-2037 dsr49@bellsouth.net
- **Martha Blackman**, Altar Guild Flower Chairperson
864-583-4385 MarthaBlackman@aol.com
- **Dr. Brennan Szafron**, Church Organist
864-504-3694 bszafron@churchofadvent.org

Pre-marital Counseling Scheduled?

Date and time of initial meeting: _____

Submit the **Wedding Ceremony Form** (page 11) to Clergy six weeks prior to wedding date.

Florist hired for responsibilities other than altar and font:

Organist confirmed. Name: _____

Wedding Music Selection Form (page 12) completed and submitted to the organist.

Carillonneur requested (if applicable).

Copy and mail the Instructions for Ushers/Groomsmen.

Submit wedding program to Clergy **before** printing to ensure it is liturgically correct.

Submit your SC Marriage License (THREE embossed originals) to Clergy two weeks **PRIOR** to wedding date.

Pay fees to the organist by the rehearsal date.

All fees paid to The Episcopal Church of the Advent 30 days prior to the date of the wedding.

EXPENSES AND CUSTOMARY FEES

There is never a charge for the Sacraments of the Church. The Parish is here to serve its members and community. However, if your wedding requires the use of the Church and associated services, you are expected to honor the following fees:

❖ For contributing members:

Reservation Fee (Church).....\$350 *Payable to: The Episcopal Church of the Advent*

This fee reserves and confirms your wedding date. It includes expenses for the Altar Guild supplies, building usage, and sexton fee. It is not applied to the expense for flowers.

Reservation Fee (Olney Chapel).....\$150 *Payable to: The Episcopal Church of the Advent*

Chapel weddings are conducted at the Rector's discretion for small, private weddings. If it is necessary for the Altar Guild to set up for Holy Eucharist or arrange flowers, there will be an additional fee; however flowers in the chapel should be limited. (*Seating maximum – 45*)

Organist.....\$250 *Payable to: Dr. Brennan Szafron*

Additional rehearsals may be arranged. Please contact Dr. Szafron to make these arrangements.

❖ Non-contributing Members:

Reservation fee.....\$750 *Payable to: The Episcopal Church of the Advent*

Organist.....\$350 *Payable to: Dr. Brennan Szafron*

Flowers.....Expenses are the bride's responsibility

See information on page 7 regarding flowers, pew torches, and hurricanes globes. Expenses occurred are based on the preferences of the bride in consultation with the Altar Guild Flower Chairperson.

OPTIONAL FEES:

• **Honorarium for the Officiating Clergy** *Payable to: The Officiating Clergy*
It is customary to give an honorarium to your Officiating Clergy. This is usually paid by the groom directly to the Clergy at the rehearsal.

• **Carillonneur.....\$40** *Payable to: The Carillonneur*
A Carillonneur plays the bells in the Cleveland Bell Tower after the ceremony.

• **Crucifer/Acolytes.....Donation** *Payable to: The Episcopal Church of the Advent*
Note: Acolyte Fund on the check

• **Rolls Royce Rental.....\$250** *Payable to: The Advent Foundation*
○ **Driver.....Mileage depending** *Payable to: Robert Gist*
You must reach out to Robert Gist (home: 864-582-3773, cell: 864-978-8225) to arrange rental before submitting payment.

A reservation fee of \$350.00/\$750.00 is due when you submit your application form. It is necessary to secure your wedding date on the Advent church schedule. If you should cancel your wedding date 90 or more days in advance, a full refund will be granted. No refund of reservation fee will be issued when wedding dates are cancelled less than 90 days in advance.

Description of Services Provided by the Church of the Advent

The Advent Altar Guild is in charge of assisting you in planning for altar flowers, candles, and the directing of your wedding. Please contact the Flower Chairperson and the Wedding Coordinator as soon as possible.

FLOWERS

At the Episcopal Church of the Advent, the Altar Guild Flower Committee arranges all altar flowers. The parishioners serving on the committee are experienced and professional. If you desire, they will also arrange flowers at the Baptismal Font, or your florist may arrange the flowers on the Baptismal Font. Following the ceremony, the altar flowers will remain on the altar.

The Altar Guild Flower Committee can order the flowers for the altar at wholesale cost or you may purchase flowers from a florist. If the committee orders the flowers, an invoice will be sent to the bride as soon as it is received.

Your florist may decorate the windows and outside railings of the church with flowers, greenery, and/or ribbon. You may also place arrangements at the ends of the pews on the center aisle. The Flower Committee Chairperson can answer any questions you may have regarding additional decorative materials. Candles may not be used in the church other than those listed below. Please arrange for all decorations except the flowers on the altar and at the font to be removed immediately after the ceremony.

There is a flower cooler in the Flower Guild room in Pendleton Hall. This may be used to store flowers, bouquets, boutonnieres, and corsages for your wedding. Bouquets, boutonnieres, and corsages will remain in Pendleton Hall for distribution.

The Episcopal Church of the Advent is beautiful and ornate; therefore, modest and refined arrangements are encouraged. Only fresh flowers and greenery may be used. Flower designs and decorations must be approved by your officiating Priest and Flower Committee Chairperson *before* confirming arrangements with your florist.

CANDLES

The Altar Guild Flower Committee Chairperson will also help you select the altar candles appropriate for your wedding. The church will provide all candles excluding tapers for the windows.

Hurricanes, 13 - 15" tapered candles and candle holders are available from the church. If you choose to use these candles, the cost of the tapers will be included on the altar flowers invoice that you will receive shortly after the wedding. Please arrange for all decorations except the flowers on the altar and at the font to be removed immediately after the ceremony.

Pew torches are available for use at the end of pews for a fee of \$100. There are 16 oil filled torches. The Advent sextons will remove and install these.

Please note: "Unity Candles" are not a part of the Episcopal celebration and blessing of a marriage.

WEDDING COORDINATOR

During the initial meeting with the Altar Guild Wedding Coordinator, many questions concerning decisions appropriate to your wedding will be answered. It is important to contact her as soon as possible. The Episcopal Church of the Advent allows only members of the Altar Guild Wedding Committee to direct wedding ceremonies and rehearsals. This committee is knowledgeable and experienced.

ACOLYTES/CRUCIFER

The use of acolytes and/or a crucifer is appropriate for the wedding processional. Should you decide to use them, they can be provided by the parish. You may use a family member. The acolyte and/or crucifer need to be of an appropriate age to carry candles or the cross. Consult your wedding coordinator if you have any questions. A crucifer is usually all that is needed. The cross leads the procession signifying following Christ into the marriage.

MUSIC

The Episcopal Church of the Advent Organist is responsible for all wedding music performed in the Church. If you wish to have any additional musical accompaniment, please consult the organist. Please contact the organist to discuss his repertoire and all music selections well in advance of your wedding date. The Advent has a “closed bench” policy; however, the organist may approve guest organists.

A wedding is a solemn, sacramental rite and the music selections should be chosen accordingly. The Church of the Advent follows the recommendations of the Joint Commission on Church Music which state that wedding music should above all “be an act of worship of God.” The Organist has prepared an extensive selection of music that is both appropriate and acceptable by Church guidelines. Should you wish to use a selection not on this list, you must have it approved by the organist and the officiating Priest.

As with all sacraments performed in our Church, the Priest is the final authority on all decisions.

Please complete the Wedding Music Selection form with the church organist.

CARILLON

If you wish to have the bells pealed at the conclusion of your service, discuss this during your meeting with the organist.

CHURCH POLICIES AND PRACTICES GOVERNING WEDDINGS

Alcohol

There will be no consumption of alcoholic beverages in the church buildings or on the grounds. The Church does not allow rehearsals or weddings to take place when any member of the wedding party is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Birdseed

Throwing birdseed, flower petals, rice or confetti on the church grounds is strictly prohibited. Bubbles are allowed on sidewalks or grassy areas only but never inside any church structure or on church steps. Flower Girls may toss petals (silk preferred) down the center aisle of the Church.

Cancellations

Cancellations must be made in writing as soon as possible. If you are rescheduling your wedding date, the original deposit fee will apply. No deposit fee/other fees will be refunded for weddings cancelled less than 90 days in advance of the scheduled date.

Guest Book

Please plan to have your guest book at the reception and not at the Church.

South Carolina Marriage License

Submit your SC Marriage License (THREE original embossed copies with envelope) to Carol Abney two weeks prior to the date of your wedding.

If either the bride or groom, or both, are divorced, two additional documents must be submitted to the officiating clergy no later than 90 days before the ceremony in order to gain the Bishop's permission for a remarriage:

- *A certified copy of each final divorce decree of each divorce (with a raised seal).*
- *Application for Marital Judgment Form: May be obtained from Clergy or the Rector's Executive Assistant.*

Photography

Photographs may be made before and after the service. *No photographs may be made during the service by guests. Guests may be reminded of this policy as they are ushered to their seats.*

BEFORE: Photographs made prior to the ceremony should conclude 45 minutes before the ceremony for the groomsmen and 30 minutes for the bridesmaids. If photographs are made inside the church, they must conclude 50 minutes prior to the ceremony.

Photographs may be taken of the wedding party in route to the narthex until the procession forms. A photograph of the bride and her father may be made before the doors to the narthex open. In consideration of your guests, please limit photographer to 15 minutes after the service. Preparing a list of photos you want and giving it to the photographer ahead of time will help expedite his work. For your convenience, a suggested photo list follows.

DURING: Pictures may be taken by the photographer during the ceremony from the Choir Loft using only the available light. The photographer may use a flash to photograph the bride and groom reaching the rear of the church. The Rector may address any questions regarding the photography policies at the rehearsal.

AFTER: Posed pictures may be taken after the ceremony in the church for a maximum of 20 minutes. Your promptness will be appreciated by your guests and the church volunteers. The Photography Worksheet (Appendix E) should be submitted to the wedding coordinator one week before the wedding. It is helpful to have a relative or friend willing to locate people you wish to be photographed. The wedding coordinator is responsible for mailing policies and times to the photographer.

Seating Capacity

The Church of the Advent seats 425 people. Seven people can sit comfortably on each pew. The Chapel seats 45. A few additional chairs may be added if needed. Please plan accordingly.

Smoking

By city ordinance, smoking is never permitted inside any of the church buildings, on exterior steps, or at entrances.

Ushers/Groomsmen

One groomsman or usher will be needed per 50 guests. A copy of instructions for the ushers/groomsmen is included in this booklet on page 9.

Videography

Videotaping must be approved by the Rector of the Advent, who will assign a place for the equipment and instruct the photographer on Church policies. The wedding coordinator is responsible for mailing policies and times to the photographer.

Wedding Ceremony

The Episcopal Church has two options for the form of the Wedding Service. You may choose *The 1979 Book of Common Prayer* Form or you may write your own service. Please consult with your Officiating Priest before making your choice. A copy of the Wedding Service from *The 1979 Book of Common Prayer* is included in this folder. Please see the back pocket.

Wedding Rehearsal

It is most helpful if it is scheduled on the evening before the wedding. The rehearsal time must be arranged conveniently among the wedding party, the Organist and the Priest. The Priest and Church staff will take care of all mechanics concerning the service. Your Wedding Coordinator will also help.

We prefer that you not have an outside wedding consultant. The rehearsal usually takes approximately one hour. We recommend that the bride take part in the entire rehearsal so that she may be as poised and knowledgeable as she can be about the wedding service.

Wedding Processional

Your officiating priest will indicate how he/she prefers the wedding party to process and where each wedding participant will be positioned during the service. Please discuss your preferences with your Priest before the rehearsal to avoid confusion. A Processional Form is included in your Wedding Guide. *Please do not hesitate to call your officiating Priest or your Wedding Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns.*

Wedding Program

Wedding programs may be very simple or very elaborate. Please ask your Officiating Priest to proof read it *before it is printed* to make sure it is liturgically correct.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USHERS/GROOMSMEN

1. Your work as an usher/groomsman is very important. What you do helps set the tone for the entire wedding ceremony.
2. At least three weeks before the wedding, try on your wedding attire to be certain it is complete and fits properly.
3. Be at the Church at least one hour and fifteen minutes before the service. You may put on your boutonnieres in the Narthex.
4. Greet guests politely. Please try to avoid extended conversations with guests as this will slow down the process of seating guests. Remember, your task is to seat guests promptly and keep the Narthex (entry) of the Church as clear as possible.
5. Be able to give directions to the restrooms.
6. Escort only the adult women of a family, offering the women your right arm.
7. The general pattern is to seat persons from the center aisle only. However if there is a request, friends of the groom are seated on the RIGHT, and the friends of the bride on the LEFT. It is best to keep the sides balanced with approximately the same number of people on each side.
8. No pictures are to be taken during the service. Please remind guests carrying cameras of the photography policy.
9. No birdseed, rice or confetti is to be thrown anywhere on the church property.
10. Ushers will be chosen to seat the bride's mother, the groom's mother and grandmothers (if in attendance), at the rehearsal. They will also escort them from their seats after the ceremony.
11. If you decide to do so, two ushers are responsible of releasing one pew of persons at a time into the center aisle, beginning at the front. This provides a much more orderly dismissal of the congregation.
12. If you are to have photographs made after the ceremony, promptly report to the front of the church as soon as guests have exited.

Suggested Reading List

A Joyful Meeting – Drs. Mike and Joyce Grace

Building A Christian Marriage – William Holme

Fighting For Your Marriage – Markman, Stanley and Blumberg

Getting Ready For Marriage - David and Vera Mace

How To Have A Happy Marriage - David and Vera Mace

The Intimate Enemy – Bach and Wyden

The Intimate Marriage - Howard and Charlotte Clinebell

Intended For Pleasure – Ed and Gaye Wheat

Love And Anger In Marriage – David Mace

Marriage – Keep A Good Thing Growing – John Drakeford

Redeeming Marriage – Edward S. Gleason

To Understand Each Other – Paul Tournier

Wedding Ceremony Form

Return six weeks prior to the confirmed wedding date.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ADVENT

141 Advent Street | Spartanburg, South Carolina 29302 | Fax: 585-2202

Attn: Carol Abney

Bride's Full Name: _____ Phone _____

Groom's Full Name: _____ Phone _____

Local Contact Person: _____ Phone _____

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____

Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____

___ Service in Church ___ Service in Chapel ___ Other: (explain) _____

Officiating Clergy: _____ Preacher: _____

If you wish to have a celebration of the Holy Eucharist at your wedding, please discuss this with the officiating priest.

Florist: _____

Number of Bridesmaids: _____ Number of Groomsman: _____

Readings:

Lector: _____

Intercessor: _____

Bridal Party to dress in Satterlee Hall: ___ Yes ___ No

Crucifer: ___ No ___ Yes (Name and phone) _____

Acolyte: ___ No ___ Yes (Name and phone) _____

[TO BE COMPLETED BY CHURCH OF THE ADVENT STAFF MEMBERS]

Open Church building at _____ for wedding rehearsal on _____

Open Church building at _____ for wedding on _____

Open Satterlee / Pendleton at _____ for wedding on _____

Reserve _____ (number of) pews for family

Director: _____ Phone: _____

Reservation Fee Received: ___ Yes ___ No

Reception Location: _____

Copies to: Priest Wedding Coordinator Flower Chairman Sexton

Wedding Music Selection Form

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____

Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____

Bride's Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

The Organist will provide you with a tape of the listed selections. If you choose any of these, please mark –A-for wedding party; –B-for bride; and –C-for leaving the Church. These are not the only possibilities for wedding music. If you have other music in mind, please discuss the music with the Organist during your consultation with him.

1. *The Prince of Denmark's March – Clarke (Processional)
2. *Trumpet Tune – Purcell (Processional or Recessional)
3. *Allegro (Water Music) – Handel (Processional or Recessional)
4. Trumpet Tune – Stanley (Processional or Recessional)
5. Prelude to the "Te Deum" – Marc-Antoine Charpentier (Processional)
6. *Now Thank We All Our God – J.S. Bach (Processional or Recessional)
7. Grand March from "Aida" – G. Verdi (Processional)
8. Toccata (Fifth Symphony) – Widor (Recessional)
9. Arrival of the Queen of Sheba – Handel (Recessional)
(Sinfonia from "Solomon")
10. "La Marche" – Handel (Processional)

*Trumpet may be used with these pieces.

Would you like to have a Carillonneur peel the bells at the end of the ceremony?
___Yes ___No

Processional Form

(To be completed by Wedding Coordinator at rehearsal)

Order of wedding party

Positioning for service

Recessional order

Any special notes:

Photography Worksheet

You might find it helpful to plan ahead with your photographer any special photos you want made in addition to his wedding portfolio.

Your photographer is not allowed to take flash photos during the service with one exception: a flash photo may be made as you are leaving the Church at the end of the ceremony. In addition, the camera should be as quiet as possible to avoid disturbing the ceremony.

Photos before service: (Make a list of the individuals you want in each photo)

Photos during service: (Make sure you discuss this with your Officiating Priest)

Photos after service: (Make a list of the individuals you want in each photo)

Photos at reception: (Also list specific family and guests you want in photographs. It will be helpful to ask a good friend to point out these people to the photographer.)

AT THE CELEBRATION AND BLESSING OF A MARRIAGE

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

One or more of the following passages from Holy Scripture is read. If there is to be a Communion, a passage from the Gospel always concludes the Readings. Between the Readings, a Psalm, hymn, or anthem may be sung or said. Appropriate: Psalms are 67, 127, and 128. Lectionary Texts © 1998, 2000 by Church Publishing Incorporated. All rights reserved. Readings taken from The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible © 1989 by The Division of Christian Education of The National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., used by permission.

Old Testament Lessons

Genesis 1:26-28

God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

Genesis 2:4-9, 15-25

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up— for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.” Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.” Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7

My beloved speaks and says to me: “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If one offered for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly scorned.”

Tobit 8:5b-8 (New English Bible)

Tobias said to Sarah, “Sister, get up, and let us pray and implore our Lord that he grant us mercy and safety.” So she got up, and they began to pray and implore that they might be kept safe. Tobias began by saying, “Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all generations forever. Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you forever. You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the human race has sprung. You said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make a helper for him like himself.’ I now am taking this kinswoman of mine, not because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together.” And they both said, “Amen, Amen.”

New Testament Lessons

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Ephesians 3:14-19

I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33

Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind— yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1 John 4:7-16

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

Psalms

Psalms 67

1 May God be merciful to us and bless us, *
show us the light of his countenance and come to us.
2 Let your ways be known upon earth, *
your saving health among all nations.
3 Let the peoples praise you, O God; *
let all the peoples praise you.
4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, *
for you judge the peoples with equity and guide all the nations upon earth.
5 Let the peoples praise you, O God; *
let all the peoples praise you.
6 The earth has brought forth her increase; *
may God, our own God, give us his blessing.
7 May God give us *his blessing*, *
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe of him.

Psalms 127

1 Unless the Lord builds the house, *
their labor is in vain who build it.
2 Unless the Lord watches over the city, *
in vain the watchman keeps his vigil.
3 It is in vain that you rise so early and go to bed so late; *
vain, too, to eat the bread of toil, for he gives to his beloved sleep.
4 Children are a heritage from the Lord, *
and the fruit of the womb is a gift.
5 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior *
are the children of one's youth.
6 Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them! *
he shall *not be* put to shame when he contends with his enemies in the gate.

Psalm 128

1 Happy are they all who fear the Lord, *
and who follow in his ways!
2 You shall eat the fruit of your labor; *
happiness and prosperity shall be yours.
3 Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house, *
your children like olive shoots round about your table.
4 The man who fears the Lord *
shall thus indeed be blessed.
5 The Lord bless you from Zion, *
and may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.
6 May you live to see your children's children; *
may peace be upon Israel.

The Gospel Lessons

Matthew 5:1-10

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Matthew 7:21, 24-29

Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock.

Mark 10:6-9, 13-16

But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

John 15:9-12

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.