

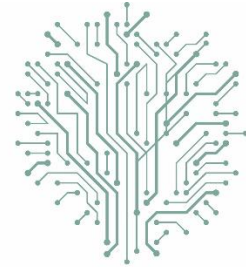
# Closing Responses & Blessing

God of the eternal,  
Strengthen us as we go from this place,  
To be a people of faith as you call us to be with  
expectation and hope.

Open our hearts and minds,  
To the wonder of waiting, pausing, searching and  
looking for your light and life within our lives and world.

Bless us and the people we meet along the way.

Father,  
Son  
and Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**



SALTBUSH  
UNITING THE SCATTERED COMMUNITY

## Simple worship for the scattered Christian community

First Week of Advent  
Matthew 24: 36-44

### Welcome

An opportunity to welcome people to the gathering

### Lighting of Advent Candle

You are invited to arrange 5 candles for Advent and  
Christmas Day. This week we light the first candle.

We light this candle on the first week of Advent as  
people waiting. We remember all who wait for hope,  
for peace and for a light, as only Christ can give.

Light the first candle.

## Responses & Gathering Prayer

In the waiting, in the silence...  
In the season, in this time,  
In our hearts, and in community,

**Lord come, shine upon us.**

In your creation, upon our land,  
In our dry river beds,  
In our waiting, in our weariness,

**Lord come, shine upon us.**

In our faith and in our doubt,  
In our laughter and in our tears,  
In those beside us and around,  
In our own lives,

**Lord come, shine upon us.**

In our waiting times of life,  
In our waiting times of faith,  
In our waiting times of Christian community,

**Lord come, shine upon us, we pray.**

**Amen.**

## Music for Reflection

Suggested song: [Shine on us](#)

<https://johncoleman.bandcamp.com/track/shine-on-us>

John Coleman ©Pilgrims Together

## Passing the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

You are invited to turn to those around you and offer them a word of greeting and peace.

## The Word around the Bush

### Matthew 24: 36-44

36 "But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 37 For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, 39 and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. 41 Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. 42 Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. 43 But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

## The Message

From your Scattered Community Minister or another leader within your gathering.

## Questions for conversation

- I wonder what you have heard and thought from the Word today?
- I wonder what you heard in the Word for our church?

- What one action can you or your church take in response to the Word today?

## Silence in Two Ways

Spend some time in silence sitting still (suggested 5 minutes). Close your eyes lightly. Sit relaxed but alert.

- You may like to say the prayer phrase "Mar-an-ath-a" (which means come Lord). Say this as four syllables. Do not try to think or imagine anything. If thoughts or distractions come simply return to saying the word.

- Or you may like "sitting with God" — a silent time in which we focus all our mind, heart and soul on the presence of God without trying to create it. Simply be still and open to God.

## Prayers for Others

Eternal God, In this season of Advent, we bring our prayers for others.

Where there is hope, you are there.  
Where there is compassion and the desire for wholeness, you are there.  
Where there is the struggle for peace, you are there.  
Where the hungry are fed, and the poor empowered, you are there.  
Where there is delight in the trees of the land, or the depths of the seas, you are there.  
Wherever love is announced, you are there.

In you is such longing for your creation, and for humanity, and we thank you for that presence of you, in Spirit, in people, renewing, calling, and saving.

In that knowledge, and in our simple faith, we bring our prayers for your creation and for the people of this world.

- O Christ we open ourselves in prayer for:  
[\[Silence for personal prayer or invite others to open prayer in between each\]](#)

Your creation ...  
*Silence*

For others we have heard about throughout our world..  
*Silence*

For other people we know and are close to ...  
*Silence*

For our church and our wider community ...  
*Silence*

For ourselves ...  
*Silence*