

Christmas Eve Service Liturgy and prayers

Gathering liturgy: (*Cloth for the Cradle*)

Leader: Light looked down
and saw darkness.

ALL: 'I WILL GO THERE', SAID LIGHT.

Leader: Peace looked down
and saw war.

ALL: 'I WILL GO THERE', SAID PEACE.

Leader: Love looked down
and saw hatred.

ALL: 'I WILL GO THERE', SAID LOVE.

Leader: So he,
the Lord of Light, the Prince of Peace, the King of Love,
came down and crept in beside us.

Prayers ("Winter" book, adapted)

Loving God, our wait of Advent is nearly over.
and in the darkness this night we wait for Christmas:

Some of us are happy, some of us are sad,
some of us are believers, some of us are unsure.
In the darkness we wait for Christmas:

We wait and we wonder, we hope for love.
we wait for Jesus to bring light to our world.
In the darkness we wait for Christmas
and God waits with us.

In the darkness we wait for Christmas:
We listen for good news and search for the light
Be with us and guide us we pray.
Amen

Intercessions

We pray for all
who watch and wait this night:

those who watch for death, those who wait for birth.

We pray especially for those who watch and wait alone
in fear or with longing, especially those having to shield, those in isolation
and those worried about their health.

We pray for all who are far from home, especially those forced to flee
their home because of injustice and oppression, those rendered homeless
by poverty or violence.

May the piercing cry of a child in the darkness
be a symbol of hope for a world weary with suffering.

May the soft footfall of shepherds replace the ominous march of soldiers'
boots.

And, however unlikely it might seem, may peace gain a foothold tonight
as God's people rediscover hope in hidden places and hear angel song
above the noise of war and political posturing.

May we hold our collective breath and find light creeping in to nudge the
darkness of the world away, as love pushes at the boundaries making
change a possibility.

And so may the stable become a sign of stability.

May the star become the sign of potential.

And may the cradle be the sign of promise for all the world. Amen

(Liz Crumlish, Spill the Beans)

A Christmas wish

This Christmas, I wish for you, light,
to crumple up the darkness.

This Christmas I wish for you, love,
to pull us closer to one another.

This Christmas I wish for you, peace,
of which the angels sang.

This Christmas I wish for you, starlight,
to lead you wherever you go..

This Christmas I wish for you,
God's promise to keep hope alive for you.

This Christmas I wish for you,
God, newly born and in the flesh.

This Christmas I wish for you,
Jesus Christ, born this night, light of the world.

(Roddy Hamilton, *Spill the Beans*, adapted)