

# Advent Longing for the Light of Healing

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ENTER IN SILENT CONTEMPLATION

## GATHERING

*Liturgist 1:* These are days of heavy clouds stifling sunlight,  
the world burdened by gray gloom

*All:* **Open our eyes, Lord,  
to the coming of your light  
that lifts darkness from our lives.**

*Liturgist 2:* Chill seeps deep into bones.  
Hearts grow rigid with frost-hardness.  
Souls wrap up against the lonely cold.

*All:* **Open our souls, Lord,  
to the warmth of your coming.  
Melt the hardness  
that keeps us from you  
and from each other**

*Liturgist 1:* With branches bared, trees sway against steel skies.  
Stems crumple under weight of frost.  
Old leaves decay under slippery foot.  
Nature depleted by winter's descent  
lies dormant, resting, awaiting rebirth.

*All:* **Open our world, Lord,  
Frozen by injustice.  
Clothe it with your renewing love.**<sup>1</sup>

*Liturgist 2:* Gathering in this place where heaven and earth whisper  
greeting;  
In this house where the Monarch of Heaven comes to meet us;  
In the soft darkness of this place, we wait like exiles of old for  
redemption, kindling lights of hope with prayers for Christ's coming.<sup>2</sup>

**HYMN** "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" 12th cent. hymn, Veni Emmanuel, Arr. Chip  
Douis, Nancy Young

**O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.**

*Refrain:* **Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from a Celtic Prayer for Advent, accessed at  
<http://www.wellsprings.org.uk/liturgies/cpadvent.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from a Celtic Prayer for Advent, accessed at  
<http://www.wellsprings.org.uk/liturgies/cpadvent.htm>

**O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,  
Who orderest all things mightily;  
To us the path of knowledge show,  
And teach us in her ways to go.**

*Refrain*

**O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by Thine advent here;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadows put to flight.**

*Refrain*

**O come, Thou Key of David, come,  
And open wide our heavenly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
And close the path to misery.**

*Refrain*

**O come, Desire of nations, bind  
In one the hearts of hu-mankind;  
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,  
And be Thyself our King of Peace.**

*Refrain*

**CALL TO PRAYER** *Liturgist 2*

The proof that we are not forgotten in the pain of exile is this: Into the darkness of a winter's night, God comes. To a people pushed around by oppressive empire, God comes. To a sojourning family on the run, God comes. As Job said, "God reveals mysteries from the darkness, and brings the deep darkness into light."<sup>3</sup> Trusting in the God-who-comes-to-us, let our prayers rise like incense in the descending darkness, as we cry out to God for light and lightness of soul. Let us confess the longings of our lives by lighting candles with prayers for the world's healing.

*As candles are being lit all around the room, the choir will sing:*

#12 Taize: Wait for the Lord

#37 Taize Within our Darkest Night

#25 Taize: When the Night Becomes Dark

**SILENCE**

**PRAYER OF INTERCESSION AND CONFESSION** *Liturgist 1*

O Lord, we long for your coming into our world.

**We long for your justice.**

**We long for your peace.**

Creator, Redeemer, your people turn to you, for you alone have the power to heal. Mend the torn fabric of your church. *{lift prayers for the church aloud or in silence}*,

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<sup>3</sup> Job 12:22.

*Singing:* **Creator of the stars of night,  
Your people's everlasting light,  
O Christ, Redeemer of us all,  
We pray You, hear us when we call.**

Peacemaker, Painbearer, restore the shalom of the earth burdened by the pollution of our sin, and guide all nations in the way of your wholeness. *[specific requests for creation's healing and petitions for places of political oppression and unrest around the world may be mentioned aloud or in silence]*

**Creator of the stars of night,  
Your people's everlasting light,  
O Christ, Redeemer of us all,  
We pray You, hear us when we call.**

Weaver of Compassion, restore those whose bodies, spirits, minds, and lives are broken by sickness, circumstance, or grief . . . . *[people may be named aloud or in silence before God. Please lift up those who have requested our prayers on the prayer board]*

*Singing vs. 1 of Hymn 4 Creator of the Stars of Night*

**Creator of the stars of night,  
Your people's everlasting light,  
O Christ, Redeemer of us all,  
We pray You, hear us when we call.**

Healing God, we reach out to touch the hem of your grace, daring to pray for ourselves, for our own lives are broken, too. *{In the silence, lift what's broken in your life to God in a prayer for healing, restoration, and resurrection . . . }*

**Creator of the stars of night,  
Your people's everlasting light,  
O Christ, Redeemer of us all,  
We pray You, hear us when we call.  
Amen.**

Hear us, Redeemer Creator, for we ask all these things through and for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, broken that we that we might know life in all its wholeness.  
**Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE**

*Liturgist 2*

Isaiah 60:2-5

Darkness shall cover the earth,  
And thick darkness the peoples;  
But the Lord will arise upon you,  
And God's glory will be seen upon you.  
Peoples shall come to your light,  
And rulers to the brightness of your rising.  
Lift up your eyes round about and see;  
They all gather together, they come to you;

You who were in exile, abandoned  
Will be welcomed home.  
You will see, and be radiant,  
Your heart will thrill and rejoice!

**ASSURANCE**

Psalm 139:11-12, Isaiah 60:1

*Liturgist 1:* Hear the good news of the psalmist's proclamation:

*Liturgist 2:* If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me,  
And the light around me will be night,"

*Liturgist 1:* Even the darkness is not dark to God,  
And the night is as bright as the day.

*Liturgist 2:* The God who promised never to leave us or forsake us  
HAS come to us in Jesus Christ

*Liturgist 1:* who binds up the brokenhearted.

*Liturgist 2:* heals all our infirmities,

*Liturgist 1:* and relieves our burden of sin.

*Liturgist 2:* So arise, shine; for your light has come,

*Liturgist 1:* And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

**Thanks be to God!**

**PEACE**

*Liturgist 2:* Peace be with you.

**And also with you.**

**CHORAL RESPONSE**

"Joyous Light of Glory"

3rd century hymn, Roger

Petrich

**HEARING**

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION** *Liturgist 1*

Your love, O Lord, is a fire. Send your Holy Spirit to blow over the embers of your love set in the firebox of human words, song, and holy scripture so that your love may burn burn brightly in our hearts, fill our lives with the warmth of your life, and give light to all. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**PROCESSIONAL HYMN** "Let All Mortal Flesh" (*vs. 1*)

4th century Liturgy of St. James, trans Gerard Moultrie; Picardy, arr. Nancy Young

**Let all mortal flesh keep silence,  
and with fear and trembling stand;  
ponder nothing earthly-minded,  
for with blessing in his hand,  
Christ our God to earth descendeth,  
our full homage to demand.**

**SCRIPTURE READING**

Revelation 22:1-5

**SERMON**

**HYMN** "Let All Mortal Flesh" (*vs. 2*)

**King of kings, yet born of Mary,  
as of old on earth he stood,**

**Lord of lords, in human vesture,  
in the body and the blood;  
he will give to all the faithful  
his own self for heavenly food.**

## **COMMUNING**

*All who follow Christ are welcome at this, the Lord's Table, regardless of denominational affiliation. We will commune by intinction, dipping the bread into the cup. If you'd like prayer for healing, you're invited to stop by on the way to or from the table to pray with one of the elders of the church.*

### **INVITATION**

#### **GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

You speak chaos into order

With stars dancing praise.

Your hands shape humans from earth

and clothe us with mercy

when we run naked

from your commands.

From slavery's dark prison

you spring us with light.

Pillar of fire by night,

dense cloud by day,

remind us of Presence

even in wilderness.

When we make humanity sovereign

and find ourselves in exile,

you lead us out with the promise

of your Day coming

when all people will rejoice

and forever sing to the glory

of your holy name.

*(singing vs. 2 of "Let All Mortal Flesh" in lieu of Sanctus)*

**Rank on rank the host of heaven**

**spreads its vanguard on the way,**

**as the Light of light descendeth**

**from the realms of endless day,**

**that the powers of hell may vanish**

**as the darkness clears away.**

In the fullness of time

you came among us,

a little child leading  
in The Way, the Truth, the Life.  
In fulfillment of your promises,  
you laid the bread of life  
in a feeding trough  
in the city of bread.  
In Jesus, born of Mary,  
you filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich, chastised, empty away.  
As a slaughtered lamb  
you were splayed down upon a cross,  
then raised up upon your throne  
Of resurrection triumph over death.  
You lead all who follow you  
With faith's song throughout the ages:

**Christ has died**  
**Christ is risen.**  
**Christ will come again.**

Come, now, Holy Spirit  
Of the living Christ,  
Word of Word,  
Very God of very God.  
Shape us into your people  
that as we partake  
of these gifts of bread and wine ,  
we may become one with the body of Christ,  
broken and poured out  
for the salvation of all peoples.  
Accept this offering of thanksgiving  
that we give with not only our lips  
but with our lives  
that we might live always  
in Christ, through Christ, with Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit.  
All glory and honor are yours, almighty God,  
now and forevermore.  
**Amen.**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

### **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

*(singing vs. 4 of "Let All Mortal Flesh")*  
**At his feet the six-winged seraph,  
cherubim, with sleepless eye,  
veil their faces to the presence,  
as with ceaseless voice they cry:  
Alleluia, Alleluia,  
Alleluia, Lord Most High!**

## COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

*Those who wish to have prayer for healing of any condition are encouraged to pray with one of the elders near the font before or after coming to the table.*

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

You have torn open the heavens to come among us, O Lord, in Jesus the Christ. May we take the light you give into the all the world. All this we ask to the glory of your name we pray, even as we sing with the angelic proclamation of good news. **Amen.**

**HYMN**      31                    “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”  
Charles Wesley, Mendelssohn, Felix Mendelssohn,  
Arr. William Cummings

## **SENDING**

*Liturgist 1:* The night is far spent, the day is at hand,  
Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness  
and put on the armor of light. (Rom. 3:12)

*Liturgist 2:* You are the light of the world. (Matt. 5:14)

**God has called us to be light to the world,  
to fill our hearts with the light of Christ,  
That it may shine through all creation.**

*Presider:* As you go out into the world,  
may God’s light go with you,  
May it shine through you,  
until every dark corner of the world  
Is filled with the light of Christ,  
the Light of incarnation and of God’s presence.

**The light of life send upon us;  
The joy of peace send upon us;  
The gladness of goodwill send upon us.**

*Preacher:* May the glory of the Lord shine round about you,  
the light of Christ’s presence glow within you.  
And the fire of Holy Spirit lead you forth in comfort and joy.

**Amen.**

**POSTLUDE**                    “Joy to the World”                    Isaac Watts, Antioch, G.F.  
Handel, Arr. Lowell Mason