



Advent Liturgy

For pastoral area or individual parishes

The church is prepared with a manger in the sanctuary, placed before the altar, a candle stand beside it and the area is strewn with straw.....Around the church in six different places [e.g. two at the end of the church, left and right, at the middle of the church, left and right, and at the top of the church, left and right], there is a person holding a large candle, ready to move into the centre of the body of the church....

Candle holders are *in situ* already around the church – the readers process in silence to their places at the lectern and other microphones – after a moment of silence, there is a welcome by a parishioner – All remain seated in darkness – few moments of silence

A low hum sets the scene

Reader 1: In the beginning,
God allowed chaos,
troubled dreams,
and uncertainty,
and fear in the darkness.

Then, when the chaos was most threatening
and hope was bleakest,
God said, “Let there be light”

ALL: **And there was light.**

[Candle moves from top left of church towards sanctuary]

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 9:2-3a

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
Upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone.
You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing.*

Leader: So, remember the times of chaos,
the feelings of uncertainty,
and give thanks for the light. *Pause*
[Candle moves from end right towards sanctuary]

Hymn: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* [Canaimís, 132]

Narrator: In the course of time, **All Sit**
God allowed for a journey
from ourselves to other people,
from restriction to freedom,
from a forgotten place to a promised land.

And when the journey was hardest,
and the way ahead unclear,
and the temptation to turn back most alluring,
God said, "Let there be light."

ALL: **And there was light.**
[Candle moves from left middle of church towards sanctuary]

Scripture Reading: Joshua 1:5, 9

*No one can withstand you while you live.
I will be with you as I was with Moses: I will not leave you nor forsake you.
I command you: be firm and steadfast!
Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD,
your God, is with you wherever you go.*

Leader: So, remember your journey to this place
and how far you have travelled,
and give thanks for the light. *Pause*
[Candle moves from top right towards sanctuary]

Hymn: O Comfort My People [*Canaimís, 132*]

All Stand

Narrator: Later yet,
God allowed for the special:
for friendship to grow,
for gifts to be discovered,
for faith to become real.
On the mountain top
and in quiet places,
God blessed us, saying, “Let there be light”

ALL: And there was light
[Candle moves from end left towards sanctuary]

Scripture Reading: John 3:16

Reader 1:

*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him might not perish
but might have eternal life.*

[Large candle in front of altar, behind manger is lit]

Leader: So, remember how and when
and where you’ve been blessed
and give thanks for the light. *Pause*
[Candle moves from middle right of church towards sanctuary]

Hymn: Let us go rejoicing [*Canaimís, 109*]

All Stand

Narrator: And then,
when the light was brightest,
and life was good,
despite our better judgement,
but in solidarity with all humankind,
we chased shadows,
and chose darkness. *Pause*

(All candles except the manger candle and all the lights are extinguished)

Leader: So, remember how and when and where
And perhaps *why* you have wandered from the light

Chant: **Prepare the way of the Lord, prepare the way of the Lord,
and all people shall see the salvation of our God**
(Hum through 3 or 4 times.....)

Scripture Reading: John 3:19-21

And this is the judgment, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil.

For everyone who does wrong, hates the light and avoids it, for fear his actions should be exposed; but the one who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen that what he does is done in God.

Narrator: Because God loves us,
there will always be light again.

Not first in chaos,
not first on the journey,
not first for the special place,
but on the ground
God will come, and in a hidden place,
offering a baby's hand,
to greet us.

Hymn: Christ be our light [*Canaimís, 111*] **All Stand**
*[Light bearers come to the sanctuary to light their candles
and stand around the sanctuary behind altar – lights are relit!]*

Chant: Prepare the way of the Lord, prepare the way of the Lord,
and all people shall see the salvation of our God
[Hum once through, then litany begins... Canaimís, 152]

Litany:

Narrator A: Among the poor

Narrator B: Among the proud

Narrator A: Among the persecuted,

Narrator B: Among the privileged,

Narrator A: Christ is coming!

Chant

Narrator B: In the private house,

Narrator A: In the market place,

Narrator B: At the wedding feast,

Narrator A: In the judgement hall,

Narrator B: Christ is coming

Chant

Narrator A: With a gentle touch,

Narrator B: With an angry word,

Narrator A: With a clear conscience,

Narrator B: With burning love,

Narrator A: Christ is coming

Chant

Narrator B: That the kingdom might come

Narrator A: That the world might believe

Narrator B: That the powerful might stumble

Narrator A: That the humble might be raised,

Narrator B: Christ is coming

Chant

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ,
who chose, at Bethlehem, to meet us,
make us ready to love...
to be all that makes us
your witnesses,

make of our hands, a humble cradle,
as once you came to a humble manger

be born again,
not in a manger,
but in us this Christmas....

Make of our pastoral area/parish, your Bethlehem
where God is personal
and all things and all people are made new. *AMEN*

Final Blessing:

Presider: You believe that the Son of God once came to us;
you look for him to come again.
May his coming bring you the light of his holiness
and free you with his blessing.

All: **Amen**

Presider: May God make you steadfast in faith,
joyful in hope, and untiring in love
all the days of your life.

All: **Amen**

Presider: You rejoice that our redeemer came to live with us.
When he comes again in glory,
may he reward you with endless life.

All: **Amen**

Presider: May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen**

Hymn: **O Come, O Come Emmanuel** [*Canaimís, 132*]

*Parts of this are adapted from
Cloth for the Cradle Iona Community Wild Goose Worship Group 2000*