

CHRISTMAS EVE

LITANY OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

One: O God who finds room when there is no vacancy, and swaddles us in the promise of prophets, we rejoice in how you dwell among us,

All: and are born in us this day.

One: We gather on our journey towards the star, only to find that the light is within and between us,

All: for God is born in us this day.

One: We give ourselves over to the manger of this moment, and allow ourselves to be nourished and nuzzled and held in our wholeness,

All: for God is born in us this day.

One: When the night's exhaustion overwhelms us, and the wise ones come with their gifts,

All: our God is born in us this day.

One: We come with stories to offer and burdens to set down—not knowing how life will turn out or what angel will come to us next,

All: yet God is born in us this day.

One: So, let us adore our God who comes to us and through us,

All: who is born in us each day. Amen.

(light middle Christmas Eve candle)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: As we align ourselves with the arrival of this moment beneath the star,

All: let us take stock of our lives in all four directions:

One: Perhaps we've given undue chill to strangers or dimmed the rising light in self or others.

All: Maybe we've unleashed our fiery fury or refused to let go that which needed to set free.

One: May we gather the reconciling energies of the earth to regroup ourselves in Christ,

All: and feel centered in God's forgiveness. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Because we are not bystanders in this journey, but rather fellow pilgrims actively on the way, we are bound to fumble and make mistakes. Though each year we expect and wait for your arrival, O God, your grace is still surprising. You are like a safe harbor on a treacherous road. So in this sanctuary, may we find the rest and rejuvenation we need to heal from harm that we've caused and the harm we've endured. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

This season is a time full of prophesy: the foretelling of Christ long ago and the pouring out of the Spirit today. Though we cannot foresee the future, we can, with faith live in a way that is loving to our future generations and the shared ancestor that is our planet. May what we offer here today be for the good of all that is yet to come and the immediate needs of this moment. Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

O God Emmanuel, in our hearts we hold hope as we cry out for peace. In our imaginations, joy sparks and comes alive through love. Carrying these gifts from Advent with us, we navigate the terrain of Christmastime: the waters of birth and danger, the lands of exile and unexpected community, a place that holds the whole cycle of life in a story we find ourselves in, even today. So let us worship embodied and storied, with gut-knowing and mystery accompanied, as we set our sights on Christ. Amen.

These worship resources were written by the Rev. Elyse Berry, who serves as the Associate for Advocacy and Leadership Development for the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries (CHHSM) of the United Church of Christ.