

# Holy Darkness: Service of Word and Prayer for Advent

## Darkness Holds God- December 22, 2021

### Greeting

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, the love of Christ that guards our hearts and minds, and the joy and consolation of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

### Opening Prayer

Stir up our hearts, O God, to prepare a pathway for your Christ.

By his coming speak peace to your people and turn our hearts toward you, that your saving grace and splendid glory may dwell in all the earth; through Jesus Christ, whose day draws near.

**Amen.**

### Silence

### Opening Song: *Come now, O God* ACS 902

- 1 Come now, O God, when our love is forsaken.  
Come, when our bedrock of faith has been shaken.  
Come, when our deepest of hopes are mistaken.  
Come, Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.
- 2 Come, when we squander the freedom you gave us.  
Come, break the systems of sin that enslave us.  
Come, though we wonder if you can still save us.  
Come, Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.
- 3 Come, put an end to our self-serving madness.  
Come, while the world is enshrouded in sadness.  
Come, turn the tears of our mourning to gladness.  
Come, Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.

Text: David Bjorlin, b. 1984

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### Scripture:

Luke 2:1-7 - The Birth of Jesus

Luke 2:8-20 - The Shepherds and the Angels

Matthew 1:18-25 - The Birth of Jesus the Messiah

Matthew 2:1-11 - The Visit of the Wise Men

Matthew 2:13-15 - The Escape to Egypt

**Reflection:** *Darkness Holds God*

***Night long-awaited / Noche anunciada* ACS 912**

1. Night long-awaited, God come s to earth;  
Blooming like roses, love given birth.  
Still in the starlight, silent and clear,  
Peace comes among us; Christmas is here

2. Sleep in a manger, safe and adored.  
All that is broken shall be restored.  
Light for our shadows, grace for our loss;  
Born for our dying; bearing our cross.

3. Now is God's promise born in the night;  
Wake to its fullness; live in its light.  
Christ comes among us; people, draw near!  
Come to the manger; Christmas is here.

Text: Felix Luna; tr. Adam M.L. Tice

Music: Ariel Ramirez; arr. Carlos Colon ©1965 Lawson-Gould, admin. Alfred Music

**Prayer**

In Christ Jesus we meet the God who knows our weakness and bears the wounds of the world.  
Therefore, let us be bold as we pray, trusting that God draws near to those in any kind of need.

**Concluding Prayer**

Into your wide embrace, O God, we place all our prayers, spoken and unspoken, trusting that you will receive them into your heart of mercy, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior.

**Amen.**

**Lord's Prayer**

**Song: *We are waiting for Jesus* ACS 905**

1 We are waiting for Jesus; Jesus brings peace.  
We are waiting for Jesus; Jesus brings peace.  
Sun of justice, shine upon us;  
we are trusting in your promise.  
We are waiting for Jesus; Jesus brings peace.

2 We are waiting for Jesus; Jesus brings peace.  
We are waiting for Jesus; Jesus brings peace.  
Loving Shepherd, walk beside us;  
stir our hearts, and gently guide us.  
We are waiting for Jesus; Jesus brings peace.

Text: John Helgen, b. 1957

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**Blessing**

Keep watch, dear Lord,  
with those who work, or watch, or weep this night,  
and give your angels charge over those who sleep.  
Tend the sick, Lord Christ;  
give rest to the weary, bless the dying,  
soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted,  
shield the joyous;  
and all for your love's sake.  
**Amen.**

Christ goes with you into this dark night.

**Thanks be to God.**