

2007 Xmas
20 Xmas Readings
pack.
2 Xmas Eve Readings

STAPLES

Will you come and see the light?

Tune: KELVINGROVE
Scottish Traditional

Brian Wren
Arranged by Valerie Ruddle
with optional instrumental
or vocalised descant

Will you come and see the light from the stable door?
It is shining newly bright, though it shone before.
It will be your guiding star, it will show you who you are.
Will you hide or decide to meet the light?

Will you step into the light that can free the slave?
It will stand for what is right, it will heal and save.
By the pyramids of greed there's a longing to be freed.
Will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

Will you tell about the light in the prison cell?
Though it's shackled out of sight, it is shining well.
When the truth is cut and bruised, and the innocent abused,
will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

Will you join the hope alight in a young girl's eyes
of the mighty put to flight by a baby's cries?
When the lowest and the least are the foremost at the feast,
will you hide or decide to meet the light?

Will you travel by the light of the babe new born?
In the candle lit at night there's a gleam of dawn,
and the darkness all about is too dim to put it out:
will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

JESUS CHRIST IS WAITING

*Words - Iona Abbey
(Tune - Love is come again like)*

Jesus Christ is waiting, waiting in the streets;
No one is his neighbour, all alone he eats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am lonely too.
Make me, friend or stranger, fit to wait on you.

Jesus Christ is raging, raging in the streets
Where injustice spirals and real hope retreats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am angry too.
In the Kingdom's causes, let me rage with you.

Jesus Christ is healing, healing in the streets;
Curing those who suffer, touching those he greets.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I have pity too,
Let my care be active, healing just like you.

Jesus Christ is dancing, dancing in the streets,
Where each sign of hatred, His strong love defeats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I feel triumph too
On suspicion's graveyard, let me dance with you.

Jesus Christ is calling, calling in the streets
"Come and walk faith's tightrope,
I will guide your feet"
Listen, Lord Jesus, let my fears be few.
Walk one step before me, I will follow you.

ADVENT 97 St John's Spirituality Group

LITURGY OF WAITING AND PROMISE FULFILLED

1. Lighting of the Candle

2. Prayers

L O God, the source of all insight,
whose coming was revealed to the nations
not among men of power
but on a woman's lap;
give us grace to seek you
where you may be found,
that the wisdom of this world may be humbled
and discover your unexpected joy.

Janet Morley

(all say the parts in bold printing)

The desert will sing and rejoice
and the wilderness blossom with flowers;
all will see the Lord's splendour,
see the Lord's greatness and power.
Tell everyone who is anxious:
Be strong and don't be afraid.
The blind will be able to see;
the deaf will be able to hear;
the lame will leap and dance;
those who can't speak will shout.
They will hammer their swords into ploughs
and their spears into pruning-knives;
the nations will live in peace;
they will train for war no more.
This is the promise of God;
God's promise will be fulfilled.

The desert will sing

3. Carol for Advent - Song from Iona (Innkeepers)

1. From a worn and weary nation –
VENI IMMANUEL!
Where and when will come salvation?
VENI IMMANUEL!
In the place you least expect,
in the face of real neglect,
one appointed, unanointed,
God has chosen to perfect.
VENI IMMANUEL! VENI IMMANUEL! VENI IMMANUEL!

2. To an unsuspecting mother –
AVE MARIA!
Why choose her and not some other?
AVE MARIA!
So that earth might be restored,
flesh no longer be ignored,
faith infected, love directed,
God through woman be adored.
AVE MARIA! AVE MARIA! AVE MARIA!

3. In the song of God's elected –
MAGNIFICAT!
Can the future be detected?
MAGNIFICAT!
God the proud will overthrow,
worldly wealth will lose its glow;
hunger halted, poor exalted,
heaven appear through what we know.
MAGNIFICAT! MAGNIFICAT! MAGNIFICAT!

4. Magnificat of Waiting (read paragraph in turn round the circle)

5 Discussion in 2s and 3s

- what do you dread about Christmas?
- What do you like about Christmas

6. John Betjeman's Christmas song (tape)

7. (General discussion) how might we celebrate Christmas, and the waiting time of Advent, more meaningfully?

8. Laying down of burdens and making the tree flourish

(small stones and cut out paper leaves are passed round. You are asked to write a sign of hope about Advent/Christmas on your leaf. We then lay down our negative feelings in the shape of the stone into the basket, and thread our leaves onto the branch in the middle, representing the tree (and life. As we do this we can make an intercession or do so silently)

All We need your forgiveness, merciful God,
 For not allowing our complacency to be shattered,
 for taking refuge too often in the familiar and the certain;
 For not believing in the victory of vulnerability,
 For not daring to accept your gifts nor claim your promises.
 Grant us true repentance.
 Set us free to hear your word to us.
 Set us free to serve you.

L Today we share bread and wine together
 as a sign that we are one humanity,
 as a pledge that we will work for justice,
 as a foretaste of that which can be
 despite what is and what has been.
 May the Holy Spirit that guides us all
 be present in this feast,
 taking this bread and wine,
 the concerns we have expressed,
 the lives that we lead,
 and transforming them all
 for the unity of humankind
 and the service of love.

Blessed be the eternal Sustainer.
 Working with soil and elements and human toil.
 Bringing forth bread from the earth.

We pass the bread round and, before eating it, say together

All: **When the bodies of others are broken, we are broken.**

L: Blessed be the Eternal Sustainer.
 Working with soil and elements and human toil.
 Making the fruit of the vine.

Before passing the wine to each other, we say together

All **We are all one kin, one blood.**
 When the blood of others spills, our blood is spilled.

We pass the wine

All **O God, you fulfil our desire**
 beyond what we can bear;
 as Mary gave her appalled assent
 to your ultimate promise
 so may we open ourselves also
 to contain your life within us,
 through Jesus , Amen.

Final Song Will You come and see the light?

JESSE TREE LITURGY

This liturgy is based on the framework of the Jesse Tree service created by the Benedictines of Turvey. It uses the great Advent "O" Antiphons prayed during Advent. These are ancient titles of the Messiah and are represented by the symbols placed on the Christmas tree – O Wisdom, O Adonai, O Root of Jesse, O Key David, O King and O Emmanuel. NT Scripture readings are mainly from the Inclusive New Testament (PFE).

Lighting of the main candle

Reading from 1 Jn : In the beginning was the Word; the Word was in God's presence, and the Word was God..Through the Word all things came into being, and apart from the Word nothing has come into being. In the Word was life and that life was humanity's light – a light that shines in the darkness, A light that the darkness has never overtaken... and the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, full of grace and truth.

Leader O Wisdom, you fill the universe and hold all things together, Come teach us the way of truth

Sung response Come O Lord and set us free! Bring your people peace.

All Lord-Jesus, Wisdom of God, We pray for all spiritual and religious leaders, that they may share in your wisdom, strength and compassion, that they may point the way to justice, peace and truth

Leader Maranatha [come, Lord] *All* Come, Lord, do not delay

Song O Come O come Emmanuel or Advent Song (June Boyce Tillman)

Light candle and place the Wisdom symbol on the tree

2nd reading from Mark 12 When Jesus was asked which was the foremost commandment, his reply was "This is the foremost.. You must love the Most High God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: you must love your neighbour as yourself".

Leader O Adonai, you appeared to Moses in a burning bush and gave him the Law on Mount Sinai. O come and save us with your mighty power

Response Come O Lord, and set us free! Bring your people peace

Light candle and place O Adonai [Hebrew for God] symbol on the tree

All We pray for all who create and enforce the law. Help them to act justly and avoid all abuse of authority.

Leader Maranatha *All* Come Lord, do not delay

3rd reading from Isaiah 11. A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

Leader O root of Jesse, you stand as a signal for the nations. O come to deliver us from the darkness.

Response Come, O Lord, and set us free! Bring your people peace

All Lord Jesus, we pray that your spirit of peace and love may prevail everywhere. We specially pray for change of hearts in all areas of conflict.

Leader Maranatha *All* Come Lord, do not delay

Lighting of a candle and placing the root of Jesse symbol on the tree

Recording/sung The Tree of Life my soul hath seen

4th reading from Luke 4 In the synagogue at Nazareth Jesus took the scroll of Isaiah and read "the spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free". On sitting down he said to them "today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing"

Leader O Key of David and sceptre of Israel, what you open no one can close again. What you close no one can open. Come and lead the captives from prison, free those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

Response Come, O Lord and set us free! Bring your people peace!

All Jesus our liberator, we pray for all who are imprisoned, particularly prisoners of conscience, and we pray for the oppressors. We ask your help too for those who are imprisoned by addiction, or physical and mental illness.

Leader Maranatha *All* Come, Lord, do not delay

A candle is lit and the key of David symbol is placed on the tree

5th reading Isaiah 9 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of darkness have seen a great light..on them a light has shined..for a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests on his shoulders ; and he has been named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Leader Come, Jesus, Rising Sun and enlighten our hearts and minds with your radiance.

Sung Response Come O Lord and set us free! Bring your people to peace!

All Fill us with joy that we may spread it to others. Dispel the shadows of fear and darkness on our journey through life and help us to be a light to the world.

Leader Maranatha Come, Lord, do not delay

Song Drop down dew from heaven above

A candle is lit and the symbol of the rising sun is placed on the tree

6th Reading from Revelations 11 The seventh angel blew the trumpet and loud voices in heaven began calling "The kingdom of God has become the kingdom of our God and of God's Messiah, who will reign for ever and ever".

Leader O King, whom all the peoples desire, you are the cornerstone which makes us all one. O Come and save humankind.

Sung Response Come O Lord and set us free! Bring your people peace

All Your rule O Lord is one of justice and integrity. Bless all who lead that they may embody in their lives the meaning of your kingdom on earth

Leader: Maranatha *All* Come, Lord, do not delay

A candle is lit and the symbol of kingship is placed on the tree

7th reading From Matthew 1. The evangelist tells of how Joseph was troubled at Mary becoming pregnant before they had lived together, and had decided to put her aside quietly. At this point the angel of God appeared to Joseph and said "Joseph, heir to the House of David, do not be afraid to wed Mary; it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She is to have a son and you are to name him Jesus - 'salvation' - because he will save the people from their sins" all this happened to fulfil what God said though the prophet "the virgin will be with child and give birth, and the child will be named Emmanuel, " which means "God is with us".

Leader O Emmanuel, you are the One whom the peoples await and their saviour.
Come into our hearts today.

Response Come O Lord and set us free! Bring your people peace

All Lord Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray for all your people throughout the world. Help those who are searching for meaning in their lives and find belief difficult, Inspire us to seek the common good and one in spirit and in truth. Forgive us for our lack of unity and love.

Leader Maranatha *All* Maranatha

The last candle is lit and the symbol of Emmanuel is placed on the tree

All sing the line "Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel shall come to thee O Israel

The blessing of the crib follows:

All Bless, Lord, this crib which has been prepared to honour Jesus, our Saviour, our brother and redeemer. Through taking on our humanity, he has brought us new life.

(the figure of the christ child is placed in the crib)

Reader Let all creation rejoice at this good news

All Blessed be God from whom all goodness comes

Reader For Christ came that we might learn your ways

All Glory to God in the highest, the bringer of peace and reconciliation

Reader As Christmas has no meaning without Easter, let us rejoice in our redemption by singing

Alleluia Amen (3 times)

All greet each other with the Peace

Final Carol In Dulci Jubilo

In dulci jubilo
Now sing with hearts aglow
Our delight and pleasure
Lies in presepio
Like sunshine is our treasure
Matris in gremio
Alpha es et O

O patris caritas
O nati lenitas
Deeply were we stained
Per nostra crimina
But thou for us has gained
Coelorum gaudia
O that we were there

Ubi sunt gaudia
In any place but there
There are angels singing
Nova cantica
And there the bells are ringing
In regis curia
O that we were there

Songs for Jesse Tree Liturgy

6. ADVENT

1. Come, our Emanuel,
The God who sets us free,
Help us to live abundantly,
Find our true destiny.
2. Come, regal, roaring lion,
Create our world again;
Move in our vulnerable hearts;
Be gentle with our pain.
3. Come, wounded, healing hands,
And soothe our flesh with balm;
Enfold the universe with strength,
Holding its storms with calm.
4. Come, ancient David's key,
Shut doors that need to close;
Unlock the hidden springs of love
So that our mercy flows.
5. Come, Israel's Adonai,
With burning bushy fuel,
Sweep all the bitterness away
And etch in us your rule.
6. Come, branch of Jesse's tree
Make sure our wood is green.
Lone woman, bear your child with strength,
For us God's go-between.
7. Come, Wisdom's child, in play
Our loveliness enhance
Transform our earthbound, aging steps
Into a youthful dance.

Text: Iune Boyce-Tillman

THE TREE OF LIFE MY SOUL HATH SEEN,
Laden with fruit, and always green:
The trees of nature fruitless be
Compared with Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel:
By faith I know, but ne'er can tell
The glory which I now can see
In Jesus Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought
And pleasure dearly have I bought:
I missed of all; but now I see
'Tis found in Christ the apple tree.

I'm weary with my former toil,
Here I will sit and rest awhile:
Under the shadow I will be
Of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,
It keeps my dying faith alive:
Which makes my soul in haste to be
With Jesus Christ the apple tree.

DROP DOWN DEW, FROM HEAVEN ABOVE
bring us joy and gladness,
Child of peace and God of love
Banish all our sadness.

*Maranatha, maranatha
Maranatha, come Lord Jesus, come!*

Come, O Wisdom, God's own Word,
make us live your way;
Come, Emmanuel our Lord,
in our midst to stay!

Come, O Key of David, come!
Open wide our heart!
Come, O Rising Sun and shed
light in every part!

Root of Jesse's royal tree,
King and God adored,
Come and set your people free,
Adonai, our Lord.

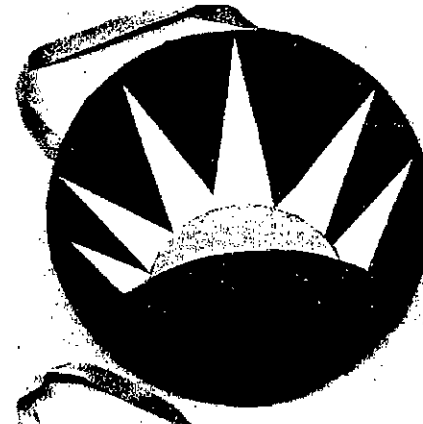
JESSE TREE SYMBOLS – GREAT ADVENT ANTIPHONS



O Sapientia
O Wisdom



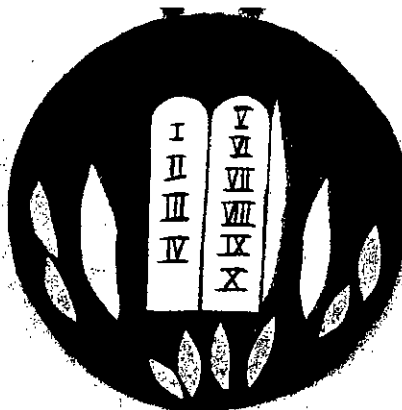
O Radix
O Root of Jesse



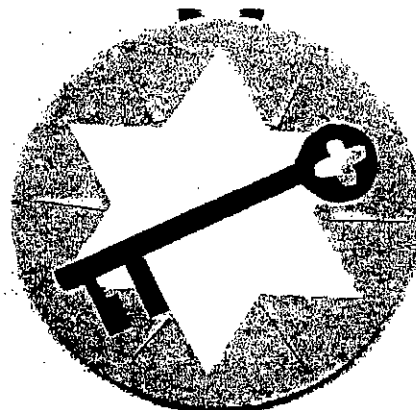
O Oriens
O Rising Sun



O Emmanuel
O Emmanuel



O Adonai
O Adonai



O Clavis
O Key of David



O Rex
O King

The design of these symbols is based on those seen at a Jesse Tree Service led by the Benedictine Sisters of Turvey Abbey.

Those illustrated here are made out of cardboard, coloured gummed paper and paint.

The ribbons have been added so that the symbols may be used as Christmas tree decorations.

From Maryam of Nazareth
Ann Johnson

MAGNIFICAT OF WAITING

FOR THE FULLNESS OF TIME

Luke 1:56

My soul reflects quietly on your fullness,
and my spirit grows stronger in the hope of your promise,
God my redeemer, because you have filled me with the
knowing that you are alive within me.
Yes, day by day through the course of time
my awareness of the call to blessed fulfillment increases
for you have done great things in me.
Holy is this time,
and patience is your gift
to all who nurture the seed of your love.
You have changed my life;
I was so confident in my unknowing.
You have deflected my fervent thrust toward iron-clad goals,
and spread before me your vision of fragile simplicity.
My longing to be a healing and reconciling person to your people
is affirmed within the daily comings and goings of my life;
my illusions of my own wholeness are mercifully revealed.

You are here now in this seeming emptiness of waiting;
remembering your intent,
according to the promise made in the beginning of time;
remembering your intent to reach through the work of my life
that your fullness may be known now, in our time.

The people who walked

Advent meditation 2

In this prophecy (Isaiah 9: 2-7), Isaiah offers hope to his nation that God will raise up a deliverer from among them. This is no soft option, for God's deliverance is born out of love and anger, as the second section of the reading shows.

For this reading, there needs to be a confident Leader who takes the major role, and who may change position for the two monologues. If the reader can memorize the text, so much the better. Then they will be able to express with movement or gesticulation the importance of the words.

There should also be three choruses of voices who stand at different places around the circumference of the worship area. If these people can also sing the simple chord sequence under the second monologue, good and well. If they cannot, a fourth group should be identified for the sole purpose of providing the unaccompanied backing vocals.

This reading requires meticulous preparation, especially to ensure that the staggered entries such as at 'Wonderful Counsellor' synchronize well. Many sections should be spoken rhythmically, in a steady, almost rapping style. In these cases, the syllables to be stressed are shown with an acute (·) above them.

Personnel:

- Leader**
- Group A** (a chorus)
- Group B** (a chorus)
- Group C** (a chorus)
- Group D** (optional, to provide backing vocals)

Leader: Shshshshsh . . .

Groups ALL: SHSHSHSHSH . . .

Leader: Shshshshsh . . .

Groups ALL: SHSHSHSHSH . . .

Leader: (Very quietly) The people

Group A: The people

Group B: The people

Group C: The people

Leader: The péople who wálked

Group A: The péople who wálked

Group B: The péople who wálked

Group C: The péople who wálked

Leader: (Loudly) The péople who wálked in dárkness

Group A: (Less loud) Dárkness

Group B: (Less loud) Dárkness

Group C: (Less loud) Dárkness

ALL: (Whispering repeatedly)
Dárkness,
Dárkness,
Dárkness (And so on, over leader)

Leader: The péople who wálked in dárkness . . .
have séen . . .
a gréat . . .
light

ALL: (Changing from a whisper and gradually getting louder)
Light,
Light,
Light,
Light. (And so on, until leader speaks again)

Leader: (Confidently) Light hás dáwned on théem,
dwéllers in a lánd as dárk as déath.
(Gradually quickening in pace)
Yóu have increásed their jóy.

Group A: *(Gently, but assuredly)* Wow! *(spoken as woe)*

Leader: You have given them gládnness

Group B: Wow!

Leader: They rejóice as if it were hárvest.

Group C: Wow!

Leader: They célebrate, júst like a pártý.

ALL: *(Loudly)* WOW!

Leader: For you have shátttered the yóke that búrdened them.

ALL: YES!

Leader: You lífted the wéight from their shóuldérs.

ALL: YES!

Leader: You've remóved the táskmaster's stíck.

ALL: YES!

Leader: And áll the bóots of trámping sóldíers
and áll the gárments fóuled with blóod ...
thése will becóme a búrning máss;
thése will becóme fuél for the fire.
(Pause)

Leader: For a bóy has been bórn for us,

ALL: BÓY BÓRN FOR US.

Leader: A són has been given to us,

ALL: SÓN GÍVEN TO US

Leader: *(Slower)* And hé shall béar the sýmbol of
authóritý on his shóulder;
and hé shall be cálléd ...

Group A: And hé shall be cálléd ...

Leader: Wónderful Cóunsellor

Group B: Wónderful Cóunsellor

Group C: Wónderful Cóunsellor

Leader: Míghty Gód

Group B: Míghty Gód

Group C: Míghty Gód

Leader: Etérnal Fáther

Group B: Etérnal Fáther

Group C: Etérnal Fáther
(Silence)

Leader: *(Slowly)* The Prince of Peace.
(Leader now moves position quietly)
(Silence)

Group A: Shshshshsh ...

Group B: Shshshshsh ...

Group C: Shshshshsh ...

Group A: *(Whispering)* The péople

Group B: The péople

Group C: The péople

Group A: who wálkéd

Group B: who wálkéd

Group C: who wálkéd

Group A: in dárkness

Group B: . . . dárkness

Group C: dárkness

ALL: HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT!

Leader: *(In a different mode and place)*
Sháme on yóu who make únjust láws!
Sháme on yóu who opprés my péople!
Sháme on yóu who prévent the póor
from cláiming their ríghts,
from recéiving jústice!

Sháme on yóu who thiéve from wídows!
Sháme on yóu who stéal from órphans!
Sháme on yóu who táke
from the penniless ál they háve!

• Whát will you dó when you're called to accóunt?
• Whére will you híde when disáster méets you?
• Whó will táke you ín?
• Whó will híde your weálth?

Whát will you sáy when your Gód appeárs?

Hów can an áxe claim to máster its user?
Hów can a sáw take contról of the cárpenter?
Hów can a stíck beat the pérsón who hólds it?
Hów can óne with féet of cláy
defy Gód who is etérnal?

(Leader now moves to another position)

Group A: Shshshshsh . . .

Group B: Shshshshsh . . .

Group C: Shshshshsh . . .

Group A: *(Whispering)* The people

Group B: The people

Group C: The people

Group A: who walked

Group B: who walked

Group C: who walked

Group A: in darkness

Group B: . . . darkness

Group C: darkness

ALL: HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT!

Leader: *(Gently and intimately, natural speech rhythm, no rap)* A new branch will spring from a stump,
a new king from the family of David.

ALL: *(Sing continuously and quietly)*



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Leader: *(voice over)* The spirit of the Lord shall rest on
him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding,
a spirit of counsel and power,
a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what he sees;
he shall not decide by what he hears;
he shall judge the poor with justice,
and defend the humble with fairness;
his mouth shall be a rod
to strike down the hard hearted
and with a word he shall silence the wicked.

Round his waist he shall wear the belt of justice;
integrity will be the cloth
wrapped round his body.

Then the wolf will lie down with the sheep,
the leopard shall lie down beside the young goat,
the calf and the lion shall grow up together . . .

(Singing stops)

and a little child

Group A: . . . and a little child

Group B: . . . and a little child

Group C: . . . and a little child

Leader: And a little child shall lead them.

Group A: Shshshshsh . . .

Group B: Shshshshsh . . .

Group C: Shshshshsh . . .

Group A: *(Whispering)* The people

Group B: The people

Group C: The people

Group A: who walked

Group B: who walked

Group C: who walked

Group A: in darkness

Group B: . . . darkness

Group C: darkness

ALL: HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT

DOING DECEMBER DIFFERENTLY: Afternoon slot

Aim of this session: to give time and space for reflecting on your own feelings/attitudes around Christmas and to explore/express in a creative medium. Out of this we will create a shared liturgy, but I would prefer the focus to be on the exploration rather than on the production of something for the liturgy!

Options: to do a piece of creative writing, or to do some creative art-work or to use role-play/mime/dance to explore the kinds of themes we have been looking at or any others that have been sparked off for you. You might want to work on your own or with one or two other people.

Some starting points for writing and/or art-work:

- Work with your loves and hates of Christmas. Make a list of each, turn this into a litany or a colourful collage of words and images.
- Choose one particular Christmas, one that you think of as a particularly happy or difficult/painful time. Write in the first person about that experience. Or find colours and images that represent that particular experience.
- Think of the individuals or groups in your parish/community who are most marginalised. Write or draw something that explores what Christmas might be like for them, either putting yourself in their shoes, or addressing them as yourself/on behalf of your community. Or write a litany for all those marginalized by Christmas.
- Write a letter to your parents or children or some other family members describing the kind of Christmas you'd really like to be able to have. Invite them to share it with you, or tell them why you would choose to do it without them. Or draw an image of an inclusive family Christmas.
- Imagine Christa born as a girl – either in our time or some other. Write or paint a piece exploring this.
- Imagine the magi as a group of wise women visiting the Christchild to pay homage. What gifts do they/we bring? Write or draw a piece exploring this.
- Choose a popular carol and write your own words for it, reflecting your own experience and feelings around Christmas.
- Write a manifesto for yourself stating the things you will do this year to make Christmas more authentic - or just more bearable! Begin each line, 'This Christmas, I will....' Or draw an image that will remind you of the values you want to keep at the centre of Christmas.

These are just suggestions, please use the time as you choose!

Nicola Slee
November 2005

? as final Henry ask Sue McC

A Christmas Blessing,....

May you arise this day

*In the name of Silence
Womb of the Word,
In the name of Stillness
Home of Belonging,
In the name of the Solitude
Of your Soul & the Earth.*

May you arise this day

*Blessed by all things
wings of breath,
delight of eyes,
wonder of whisper,
intimacy of touch,
eternity of soul,
urgency of thought,
miracle of health,
embrace of God*

May you live this day

*Compassionate of heart,
Gentle in word
Gracious in awareness
Courageous in thought
Generous in love.*

Happy Christmas, Suz x

Christmas Eve Liturgy 05

Light the Candle

Name ourselves, using the Galilee stone

Song: Come our Emanuel (JBT)

1. Come, our Emanuel,
The God who sets us free,
Help us to live abundantly,
Find our true destiny.
2. Come, regal, roaring lion,
Create our world again;
Move in our vulnerable hearts;
Be gentle with our pain.
3. Come, wounded, healing hands,
And soothe our flesh with balm;
Enfold the universe with strength,
Holding its storms with calm.
4. Come, ancient David's key,
Shut doors that need to close;
Unlock the hidden springs of love
So that our mercy flows.
5. Come, Israel's Adonai,
With burning bushy fuel,
Sweep all the bitterness away
And etch in us your rule.
6. Come, branch of Jesse's tree
Make sure our wood is green.
Lone woman, bear your child with strength,
For us God's go-between.
7. Come, Wisdom's child, in play
Our loveliness enhance
Transform our earthbound, aging steps
Into a youthful dance.

Reader A Shout for joy, you heavens, for the Lord has been at work
Shout aloud, you earth below!
Shout for joy, you mountains,
And you, forests and all your trees!
For the Lord has redeemed Jacob
And displayed his glory in Israel

Reader B On this holy night we pray to you, O Creator, to bless this tree that we have
decorated in honour of the coming of your anointed one to bring us out of the darkness
into the joy and light of the new Creation

(the lights on the tree are turned on)

All: Let the wilderness and the dry lands be glad
let the wasteland rejoice and bloom
let it bring forth flowers like the lily
let it rejoice and sing for joy.

The glory of Lebanon is given to it
the beauty of Carmel and Sharon
all shall see the glory of the Lord
the splendour of our God,

Take courage, do not be afraid any more
Look, your God is coming to save you.
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
the ears of the deaf shall be unsealed,
then the lame shall leap like a deer
and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy.

Intercessions

Sung "Peace of Christ" all joining hands

Reading/recording poem Christmas - Betjeman

Final Carol In Dulci Jubilo (adapted by JBT)

In dulci jubilo,
Let love within us glow;
See the Christ child lying
Within praesepio,
Who shares our joy and crying,
Matris in gremio.
Alpha es O.

O patris caritas
O nati lenitas
We were told we're guilty
Per nostra crimina;
But we were birthed in beauty
Coelorum gaudia
Our own births were blessed.

Ubi sunt gaudia
But here with human friends;
We hear angels singing
Nova cantica;
With these our songs are mingling
In regis curia.
We can share that joy.

A Christmas Blessing

May you arise this day

In the name of Silence

Womb of the Word

In the name of Stillness

Home of Belonging

In the name of the Solitude

Of your Soul & the Earth

May you arise this day

Blessed by all things

wings of breath

delight of eyes

wonder of whisper

intimacy of touch

eternity of soul

urgency of thought

miracle of health

embrace of God

May you live this day

Compassionate of heart

Gentle in word

Gracious in awareness

Courageous in thought

Generous in love

SCENE 1

Parent: Come on, then, children. Are you ready for bed now? Don't forget Teddy and your Christmas stockings. We must put your stockings ready tonight because it's Christmas Eve. I wonder what you'll find when you wake up in the morning. Who's ready for a story before bed?

"Once upon a time, hundreds of years ago, a man called Caesar Augustus was king of the whole earth."...

Have you ever heard of Caesar Augustus? No!

"At the same time a baby was born. His name was Jesus".

You've heard of him, haven't you? Tomorrow is his birthday, Christmas Day.

"It was winter and the sky was cold. Mary and Joseph spent hours and hours wandering around Bethlehem looking for a place to stay. Everywhere was full. No-one wanted to know them. Everywhere they went they were turned away. At last, a kind woman took Mary by the arm and showed them to a stable in a cave. Well, it was better than nothing. And that's where Jesus was born, with only the straw and the breath of the animals to keep him warm.

Visitors came. There were shepherds, who had been looking after their sheep in the nearby hills. There were wise men who had followed a star to the cave where Jesus was born. Hundreds and hundreds of miles through deserts and through swamps these men had followed a star to find a small child. They took presents for the baby's birthday. In that cold cave in the dark winter there was hope and peace and love, because Jesus had been born."

Child: But why was Jesus so special? Why was he born?

Parent: We are told that God loved everyone so much that he sent Jesus, who was his son, to be born in the world. When Jesus grew up he said that he had come to our world so that people could have a life that is full in every way. But no more questions for now because you must get to sleep early and be ready to enjoy Christmas Day tomorrow. Goodnight. Sweet dreams.

SCENE 2

Song - "Last night I had the strangest dream..."

(Mime the song.)

(Sudden break just before the last verse.)

SCENE 2 (cont.)

Villager: Stop! Please help us!

Is there anyone here who can help us? We have come a long way from our village in El Salvador. We want to find a safe place to stay. Our village has been completely burnt down.

The soldiers arrived with no warning. They started to shoot people all over the place. They burnt our houses and our church.

We ran away with a few other people but we lost sight of them in the forest.

Please help us. We have no home left and there is fighting all around in our country.

(Last verse of song sung sadly.)

Narrator: Does it seem strange to you that the angels announced peace, when somewhere in the world there is always war, and the fear of war? Does it seem to you that the angels made a mistake and that the promise was a disappointment and a cheat? When Jesus was grown up he said to his friends one day,

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, but not as the world gives you peace."

The peace of this world is always uncertain, unless people keep the peace of God.

And war among people spoils this world, but death in the Lord renews it.

Song- "Shalom"

SCENE 3

Man: Do you think we've bought enough wine to keep us going over Christmas? It would be absolutely frightful to run out.

Woman: I should hope so. I've spent an absolute fortune on food and drink, even though we're eating out so much in the next few days. It's so exhausting, Christmas. I really don't know if it's worthwhile.

Man: Why don't you pour yourself a drink and sit down for a rest. It won't be long before we have to go out for dinner at Uncle George's. You'll need a drink or two inside you to cope with that. Thank goodness we only have to go through all this once a year.

Woman: I think I'll have a look at the brochures about those new dishwashers. We've had ours a couple of years now and I'd quite like one of the newer models.

Man: Same goes for the car, of course. I haven't yet decided whether to have the latest Rolls or a Porsche. Perhaps this car magazine will help me decide.

SCENE 3 (cont.)

Song - "Nowhere Man"

Man: Let's just have a quick look at the news before it's time to go out.

Hey, what's happened to the television?

Who are you?

Ethiopian: We are starving in Ethiopia. There are thousands like us.

Man: Where are you off to?

Walker: To get water for the day. It is 4 miles to the nearest well.

Man? Where do you think you're going?

Refugee: We don't know. We are refugees. We cannot stay in our own country any longer, but we don't know where we can go.

Man: Good Lord! What are we supposed to do about that lot?

Woman: Heaven only knows. Do we have to do anything?
Come on. It's almost time to go to Uncle George's.
Perhaps when we've sorted out the dishwasher and the car there'll be something we can send to Oxfam, or Christian Aid, or whoever sorts out people like that.

Song - "It's no good knocking ..."

Narrator: We live in a world where millions of people live in dreadful conditions.
If we are not deaf, we hear the cries of the oppressed.
Their cries are the voice of God.
We who live in rich countries where there are always pockets of wretchedness, hear, if we want to hear, the unvoiced demands of those who have no voice and no hope.
The pleas of those who have no voice and no hope are the voice of God.

Narrator: Are we so cut off that we can worship God at our ease, and fail to see, hear, or serve God where he is present and where he needs us - among the poor and the oppressed.
It is not difficult to hear God's call today in the world about us.
It is difficult to do more than give an emotional response - sorrow and regret.
It is even more difficult to give up our comfort, break with old habits, let ourselves be moved by grace and change our life.

4

SCENE 3 (cont.)

Narrator: Come Lord,
Do not smile and say
you are already with us.
Millions do not know you
and to us who do,
what is the difference?
What is the point of your presence
if lives do not alter?
Change our lives, shatter
our complacency.
Take away the quietness
of a clear conscience.
Press us uncomfortably.
For only that way,
another peace is made,
your peace.

Song - "One man's hands..."

SCENE 4

White 1: What are you doing here? Go back where you belong.

Black 1: We have every right to be here. You should not send us away.

White 2: Keep to your own schools. You cannot come to ours.

Black 2: Our classes are too big. We don't even have enough books.

White 3: Is it possible to be friends?

Black 3: Is it possible to share?

Whites: If we are friends we shall have nothing special for ourselves.

Blacks: If we are friends we shall all be much happier.

All: If we are friends we shall all be free to have a life that is full
in every way.

Song - "Sing a song of freedom"

Narrator: The word was made flesh, but was the skin only white?
The word was made flesh, but people still kill each other in war.
Israel at least gave Jesus a stable to be born in, but today
the world cannot give even this luxury to many of its children.

Narrator: Have we understood what 'the word was made flesh' means if we
cannot see Christ in other people?
Have we done enough to bring about God's kingdom on earth?
Are we prepared to remake the world in God's image or do we like
it better as it is?
Do we really want eternal life more than the things of this world?

Parent: Lord, why did you tell me to love everyone?
I have tried, but I come back to you, frightened ...
Lord, I was so peaceful at home, I was so comfortably settled.
It was well furnished, and I felt cozy.
I was alone, I was at peace,
Sheltered from the wind, the rain, the mud.

But, Lord, you have forced me to open my door,
Like a squall of rain in the face, the cry of people has woken me up.
As a ray of light slips in unnoticed, you have stirred me
...and, foolishly enough, I left my door ajar. Now, Lord, I am lost.
Outside, people were lying in wait for me.
I did not know they were so near; in my house, in my street,
in our school.
As soon as I started to open the door I saw them, with outstretched
hands, burning eyes, longing hearts, like beggars on church steps.

The first ones came in, Lord. There was after all some space in my
heart.
I welcomed them. I would have cared for them and looked after them.
You would have been pleased, Lord, I would have served and honoured
you in a proper, respectable way.
Till then it was sensible ...
But the next ones, Lord, the other people, I had not seen them;
they were hidden behind the first ones.
There were more of them, they were wretched; they overpowered me
without warning.
We had to crowd in, I had to find room for them.
Now they have come from all over, pushing and shoving one another.
They don't come alone any longer but in groups.
They come bending under heavy loads; loads of injustice, of hate,
of suffering.

Lord, they hurt me! They are in the way, they are everywhere.
I can't do anything any more; as they come in, they push the door
and the door opens wider ...
Lord! My door is wide open!
I can't stand it any more. It's too much. It's no kind of a life.
What about my family,
my peace,
my freedom,
and me?

Lord, I have lost everything, I don't belong to myself any more.
There's no more room for me at home.

Narrator: Don't worry, God says, you have gained all.
While all those people came in to you,
I, your God,
Slipped in among them.

Solo song - "Lord, make me like you"

SCENE 5 (cont)

Narrator: Many years ago Jesus said "Love your brother as you would love yourself".

This means simply that we must want for others what we want for ourselves.

Since the coming of Jesus a fire has been burning on earth.

A fire that will never die.

A fire of love.

So light your candles, give presents to each other, eat your Christmas pudding, and sing!

Love has taken root in the world and we believe it with all our strength. It will grow because millions of us believe it, because this love is a person, and that person is God.

Song - "Love is something ..."

Song - "Shalom"

You keep us waiting

A

You keep us waiting
You,
The God of all time
Want us to wait
For the right time in which
To discover who we are,
Where we must go,
Who will be with us,
And what we must do

All: So, thank you for the waiting time.

B

You keep us looking,
You,
The God of all space,
Want us to look
In the right and wrong places
For signs of hope,
For people who are hopeless,
For visions of a better world
Which will appear
Among the disappointments
Of the world we know.

All: So, thank you for the looking time

A

You keep us loving,
You,
The God whose name is love,
Want us to be like you
To love the loveless and the unlovely and the unlovable,
To love those near us without jealousy or design or threat,
And,
Most difficult of all,
To love ourselves.

All: So, thank you for the loving time.

B

And in all this
You keep us.
Through hard questions with no easy answers,
Through failing where we hoped to succeed
And making an impact when we felt we were useless.
Through the patience and the dreams and the love of others,
And through Jesus Christ and His Spirit,
You,
Keep us

*All: So, thank you for the keeping time
and for now and for ever AMEN.*

Pam Freeman

1. From a worn and weary nation –
 VENI IMMANUEL!
 Where and when will come salvation?
 VENI IMMANUEL!
 In the place you least expect,
 in the face of real neglect,
 one appointed, unanointed,
 God has chosen to perfect.
 VENI IMMANUEL! VENI IMMANUEL! VENI IMMANUEL!
2. To an unsuspecting mother –
 AVE MARIA!
 Why choose her and not some other?
 AVE MARIA!
 So that earth might be restored,
 flesh no longer be ignored,
 faith infected, love directed,
 God through woman be adored.
 AVE MARIA! AVE MARIA! AVE MARIA!
3. In the song of God's elected –
 MAGNIFICAT!
 Can the future be detected?
 MAGNIFICAT!
 God the proud will overthrow,
 worldly wealth will lose its glow;
 hunger halted, poor exalted,
 heaven appear through what we know.
 MAGNIFICAT! MAGNIFICAT! MAGNIFICAT!

From Iona "Innkeepers and Sleepers"

2. See overleaf for antiphonal prayer "You keep us waiting"

3 All say:

Immanuel, God with us,
Help us to stand firm in our faith
And to go on discovering what the Good News is for us, here and now.
Help us not to take refuge in words:
Other people's words, abstractions,
Bland formulations, churchy jargon.
Surprise us with your poetry,
Your pictures, which are beyond words,
Your living letters, which are people
Your signs, which are at once here-and-now
And belong to all places, all times, all people,
Your wisdom, which can only be understood by the child in us.
God of surprises, God with us.

Sung Amen

From Advent readings from Iona

Christmas

The bells of waiting Advent ring,

The Tortoise stove is lit again
And lamp-oil light across the night

Has caught the streaks of winter rain
In many a stained-glass window sheen
From Crimson Lake to Hooker's Green.

The holly in the windy hedge

And round the Manor House the yew
Will soon be stripped to deck the ledge,

The altar, font and arch and pew,
So that the villagers can say
"The church looks nice" on Christmas Day.

Provincial public houses blaze

And Corporation tramcars clang,
On lighted tenements I gaze

Where paper decorations hang,
And bunting in the red Town Hall
Says "Merry Christmas to you all."

And London shops on Christmas Eve

Are strung with silver bells and flowers
As hurrying clerks the City leave

To pigeon-haunted classic towers,
And marbled clouds go scudding by
The many-steeped London sky.

And girls in slacks remember Dad,

And oafish louts remember Mum,
And sleepless children's hearts are glad,

And Christmas-morning bells say "Come!"
Even to shining ones who dwell
Safe in the Dorchester Hotel.

And is it true? And is it true,

This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,

A Baby in an ox's stall?
The Maker of the stars and sea
Become a Child on earth for me?

And is it true? For if it is,

No loving fingers tying strings
Around those tissue fripperies,
The sweet and silly Christmas things,

Bath salts and inexpensive scent
And hideous tie so kindly meant,

No love that in a family dwells,
No carolling in frosty air,
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells

Can with this single Truth compare—
That God was Man in Palestine
And lives to-day in Bread and Wine.



I confess to you
that I have not believed in my own possibilities,
that I have not loved myself as much as others,
not my body, not my appearance,
not my talents,
not my way of being myself.

I have allowed others to direct my life.
I have had more faith in the judgment of others
than in my own judgment.

I confess
that I have not developed my talents and skills to their full,
that I have been afraid to stand up for what is right,
that I have avoided conflict.



I confess
that I have not dared to show what I can do,
that I have not dared to live out my talents.
God, my father and my creator,
Jesus, my brother and my saviour,
Spirit, my mother and comforter,
forgive my doubts about myself,
help me stand tall,
give me faith in myself and love of myself.
Amen.

Source: *Sinfonia Occumenica*, translated by Charlotte Methuen

Monica, Mo

EIGHTH READING
Don't miss Christmas
Stuart Henderson

Don't miss Christmas
whilst yearning for the snow
and planning deft manoeuvres
towards the mistletoe
The turkey turning golden
as the sprouts begin to steam
the pudding glazed with brandy
and smashed on double cream

Don't miss Christmas
as mince pies singe your tongue
and you scowl behind your port
at decorations badly hung
where strange relations gather
like a loud, annoying swarm
when the fat logs spit and crackle;
but the homeless can't keep warm

Don't miss Christmas
beware the muddled shelves
displaying Game Boy reindeer
destroying Santa's elves
whilst Mortal Kombat shepherds
chase dragons through the town
the three kings never showed
their helicopter's been shot down

Don't miss Christmas
absorb the silent night
and watch the mucous Saviour
arrive from heaven's height
as in the holy darkness
a virgin strains, then cries,
God's helpless, breathing icon
appears with Mary's sighs

Over

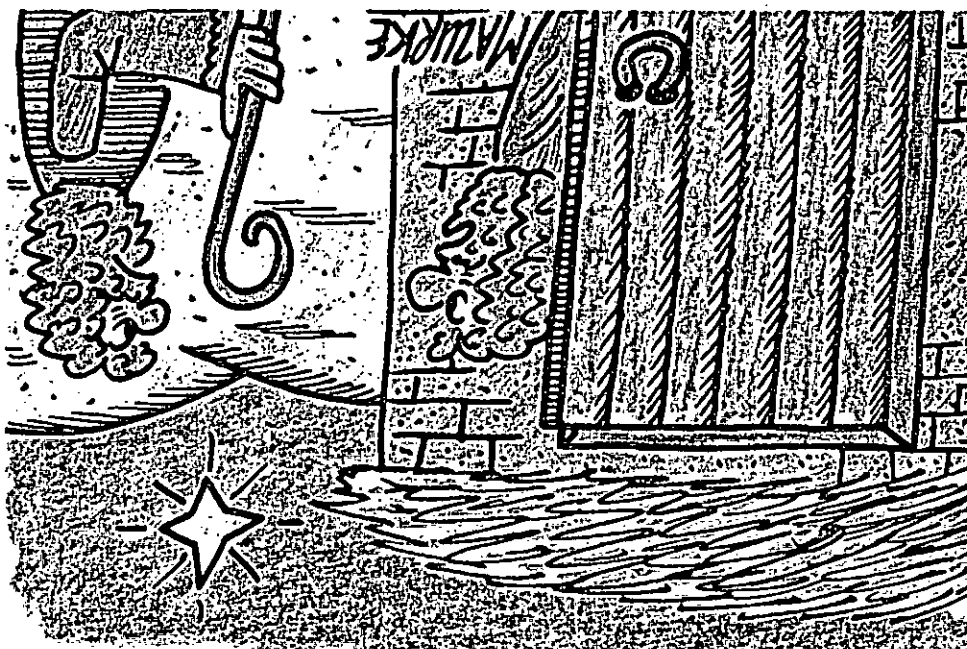
Don't miss Christmas –
the magic of it all
our brittle, gift-wrapped anthem
sleeps in a cattle stall
as the poor and lost and starving
weakly start to sing
it seems only desperate subjects
recognise their King.



'It's a girl!'

NOVEMBER 21 1992

Guardian



'It's a girl!'

NOVEMBER 21 1992

Guardian

Put into groups A & B

Advent Friday Liturgy 03

Centring music Tavernier - protective veil - Section on Incarnation 2.20 mins.

Reading (first line read in turn round the room, all say the second line)

The desert will sing and rejoice
and the wilderness blossom with flowers

All will see the Lord's splendour,
see the Lord's greatness and power

Tell everyone who is anxious:
Be strong and don't be afraid.

The blind will be able to see:
the deaf will be able to hear;

The lame will leap and dance
those who can't speak will shout.

Thy will hammer their swords into ploughs
and their spears into pruning knives;

The nations will live in peace;
they will train for war no more.

This is the promise of God;
God's promise will be fulfilled.

Iona Community

worship book, based on Isaiah 35 and Micah

4.1-4

side 1 - Card of Advent.

Song from Iona Veni Immanuel - words on separate sheet. Taped, join in as you can.

Watchet Auf (poem by Ann Lewin, written after hearing the Bach prelude)

Each verse read antiphonally, Groups A and B.

Advent

Season when

Dual citizenship

Holds us in

Awkward tension

The world, intent on

Spending Christmas,

Eats and drinks its way to

Oblivion after dinner.

The Kingdom sounds
Insistent warnings:
Repent, be ready,
Keep awake
He comes.

Like some great fugue
The themes entwine:
The Christmas carols
Demanding our attention

In shops and pubs,
Bore their insistent way
Through noise of traffic;
Underneath, almost unheard,
The steady solemn theme of
Advent.

With growing complexity,
Clashing, bending,
Rivals for our attention,
Themes mingle and separate,
Pulling us with increasing
Urgency,
Until in final resolution,
The end attained,
Harmony rests in awful
Stillness, and
The child is born.

He comes,
Both Child and Judge.

And will he find us
Watching?

Discussion in pairs – What are our negative feelings about Advent and Christmas (the positive will come in later).

Building the cairn We put down a pebble to represent these feelings, either voicing them or silently.

Song Will you come and see the light

Prayer "Make us Aware" (Kate McIlhagga)
(all to say last line of verses and the last verse)

Merciful God, forgive
that we fall asleep
when you call us to watch and pray.
We fail to see the signs of your coming.

Christ our Saviour, forgive
that we are not watchful
we do not choose hope
or plant the seeds of hopefulness.
We fail to see the signs of your coming.

Forgiving Spirit, forgive
that in the rush of the Christmas season
we forget to stop and listen for the sound of angel
voices
we forget to stop and look for a star
to guide us to Christ.
We fail to see the signs of God's presence.

God over all
Christ within us
Spirit around us
hear our prayer
and send your messenger
of peace to us and to your sleeping world.

Discussion in pairs What for you are the positive aspects of Advent and Christmas?

Give thanks for these (or intercessions) placing flower heads round the central candle

Agape using mulled wine and stollen

(ALL) O loving Creator, bless this special Christmas food, made from the fruits of the earth and a symbol of the abundance with which you have endowed us.

(Pass round the stollen saying something like food for a journey of hope)

(All) O loving Creator bless this warm and sustaining wine, fruit of the earth, which symbolises your comfort and sustaining power.

(pass round with words such as "the cup of rejoicing")

Final Blessing (adapted from R. Becher)

Let us follow, where the Spirit of Hope leads us
Let us listen, as the Child of Peace cries for us
Rejoicing, as the Love of God embraces us and lets us go
With Hope, Peace and love in our hearts
And the blessing of
Creator, Child and Spirit for ever within us.

Circle Dance

1. From a worn and weary nation –

VENI IMMANUEL!

Where and when will come salvation?

VENI IMMANUEL!

In the place you least expect,

in the face of real neglect,

one appointed, unanointed,

God has chosen to perfect.

VENI IMMANUEL! VENI IMMANUEL! VENI IMMANUEL!

2. To an unsuspecting mother –

AVE MARIA!

Why choose her and not some other?

AVE MARIA!

So that earth might be restored,

flesh no longer be ignored,

faith infected, love directed,

God through woman be adored.

AVE MARIA! AVE MARIA! AVE MARIA!

3. In the song of God's elected –

MAGNIFICAT!

Can the future be detected?

MAGNIFICAT!

God the proud will overthrow,

worldly wealth will lose its glow;

hunger halted, poor exalted,

heaven appear through what we know.

MAGNIFICAT! MAGNIFICAT! MAGNIFICAT!

4. Through the midnight air is seeping –

GLORIA!

Why such sound when most are sleeping?

GLORIA!

Thus shall strangers find their way

where a simple family stay,

recognising how surprising

God appears when laid in hay.

GLORIA! GLORIA! GLORIA!

5. Let the very earth cry glory,

HALLELUJAH!

Every tongue retell the story,

HALLELUJAH!

God no longer is confined

out of sight and out of mind.

Gone is distance and resistance;

Christ is here in humankind.

HALLELUJAH! HALLELUJAH! HALLELUJAH!

Will you come and see the light from the stable door?

It is shining newly bright, though it shone before.

It will be your guiding star, it will show you who you are.

Will you hide or decide to meet the light?

Will you step into the light that can free the slave?

It will stand for what is right, it will heal and save.

By the pyramids of greed there's a longing to be freed.

Will you hide or decide to meet the light?

Will you tell about the light in the prison cell?

Though it's shackled out of sight, it is shining well.

When the truth is cut and bruised, and the innocent abused,

will you hide or decide to meet the light?

Will you join the hope alight in a young girl's eyes

of the mighty put to flight by a baby's cries?

When the lowest and the least are the foremost at the feast,

will you hide or decide to meet the light?

Will you travel by the light of the babe new born?

In the candle lit at night there's a gleam of dawn,

and the darkness all about is too dim to put it out:

will you hide or decide to meet the light?

Christmas

The bells of waiting Advent ring,
The Tortoise stove is lit again
And lamp-oil light across the night
Has caught the streaks of winter rain
In many a stained-glass window sheen
From Crimson Lake to Hooker's Green.

The holly in the windy hedge
And round the Manor House the yew
Will soon be stripped to deck the ledge,
The altar, font and arch and pew,
So that the villagers can say
'The church looks nice' on Christmas Day.

And London shops on Christmas Eve
Are strung with silver bells and flowers
As hurrying clerks the City leave
To pigeon-haunted classic towers,
And marbled clouds go scudding by
The many-steepled London sky.

And girls in slacks remember Dad,
And oafish louts remember Mum,
And sleepless children's hearts are glad,
And Christmas-morning bells say 'Come!'
Even to shining ones who dwell
Safe in the Dorchester Hotel.

And is it true? And is it true,
This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,
A Baby in an ox's stall?
The Maker of the stars and sea
Become a Child on earth for me?

And is it true? For if it is,
No loving fingers tying strings
Around those tissued fripperies,
The sweet and silly Christmas things,
Bath salts and inexpensive scent
And hideous tie so kindly meant,

No love that in a family dwells,
No carolling in frosty air,
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells
Can with this single Truth compare—
That God was Man in Palestine
And lives today in Bread and Wine.

Copyright John Betjeman

The accompaniment to this carol is fairly hard. I am sorry I couldn't simplify it, but I have put brackets here and there around difficult notes that could be omitted without great damage.

Song: Roots (June Boyce Tillman)

Trees stand firm, roots reach down,
Grounded in the earth's deep warming.

Branch and leaf stretching out
Draw their Wisdom from connecting.

We abide in love
Firmly found in human friendship.

We can stand unafraid
Rooted in a God incarnate

Homeless Christ, form our roots,
So our branches blossom freely

BLESSING OF THE CRIB

All Bless, Lord, this crib which has been prepared to honour Jesus, our Saviour, our brother and redeemer. Through taking on our humanity, he has brought us new life.

(the figure of the christ child is placed in the crib)

Reader Let all creation rejoice at this good news

All Blessed be God from whom all goodness comes

Reader For Christ came that we might learn your ways

All Glory to God in the highest, the bringer of peace and reconciliation

Reader As Christmas has no meaning without Easter, let us rejoice in our redemption by singing

Alleluia Amen (3 times)

2 Poems: The sheepdog UA Fanthorpe

Christmas John Betjeman (read or Donald Swann on tape)

All greet each other with the Peace

Folder for Xmas eve readings

Christmas Eve blessings of tree and crib

The candle is lit

Carol: the holly and the ivy

Poem: Jesus of Nazareth (Brian Wren)

Who comes? A child,
delivered on a stable floor.
His mewling, newborn cry
is all that God can say
of costly, unprotected love
in Christ, alive today.

All Come, singing fire
of truth, compassion, right,
and melt our hardened apathy,
till love is new and bright.

Who comes? A Jew,
declaiming from a prophet's scroll.
His liberating cry
is all that God can say
of seeking, giving, freeing love
in Christ, alive today.

All Come, singing breeze,
from worlds already new.
Blow in and out of weary minds
till faith is singing too.

Who comes? A man,
in dying moments on a cross.
His godforsaken cry
is all that God can say
of faithful, never-ending love
in Christ, alive today.

All Come, singing light
from new creation's dawn,
where trees of healing deck the streets,
and joy is newly born.

A carol for Christmas night (June)

Reader Shout for joy, you heavens, for the Lord has been at work
Shout aloud, you earth below!
Shout for joy, you mountains,
And you, forests and all your trees!
For the Lord has redeemed Jacob
And displayed his glory in Israel

Blessing of the Tree

Reader On this holy night we pray to you, O Creator, to bless this tree that we have decorated in honour of the coming of your anointed one to bring us out of the darkness into the joy and light of the new Creation

(the lights on the tree are turned on)

All: Let the wilderness and the dry lands be glad
let the wasteland rejoice and bloom
let it bring forth flowers like the lily
let it rejoice and sing for joy.

Taped Song: Christmas - words Betjeman, music and sung by Donald Swann

Reading from Julia Esquivel (Guatemala)

Song: Come and see the light at the stable door (tune Kelvingrove)

Blessing of the Crib

All Bless, Lord, this crib which has been prepared to honour Jesus, our Saviour, our brother and redeemer. Through taking on our humanity, he has brought us new life.

(the figure of the christ child is placed in the crib)

Reader Let all creation rejoice at this good news

All Blessed be God from whom all goodness comes

Reader For Christ came that we might learn your ways

All Glory to God in the highest, the bringer of peace and reconciliation

Reader As Christmas has no meaning without Easter, let us rejoice in our redemption by singing

Alleluia Amen (3 times)

All greet each other with the Peace

Final Carol In Dulci Jubilo

Advent hope

Now is the season of hope unfolding,
the dark winter season, when hope waits to be born.
Let us come before God with receptive and willing spirits.
May our souls magnify God's name,
and our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour.

Pregnant with hope

Now is the time of watching and waiting
a time pregnant with hope
a time to watch and pray.

Christ our advent hope,
bare brown trees,
etched dark across a winter sky,
leaves fallen, rustling,
ground hard and cold,
remind us to prepare for your coming;
remind us to prepare for the time
when the soles of your feet will touch the ground,
when you will become one of us
to be at one with us.

May we watch for the signs,
listen for the messenger,
wait for the good news to slip into our world, our lives.
Christ our advent hope,
help us to clear the way for you;
to clear the clutter from our minds,
to sift the silt from our hearts,
to move the boulders that prevent us meeting you.

Help us to make straight the highways,
to unravel the deception that leads to war,
to release those in captivity.
May sorrow take flight,
and your people sing a song of peace
and hope be born again.

Clear the way

Gracious God,
as the days shorten
and the pale wintry sun
bathes the sky with light,
so may our anxiety abate
and the warmth of your love
cleanse and purify our lives.

Promised One,
as ice skims the pond
and bright frost
gilds the leaf with glory,
may the clarity of your call
awaken us to new hope
and new beginnings.

Holy Spirit of transformation,
help us to clear the way
for the coming Christ-child.
As the red sun sinks behind black branches,
slip into our lives
and surprise us by the welcome warmth
of your coming.

Reader From Egypt you redeemed us, O Loving God, and from the house of bondage you delivered us, during famine you fed us, and with plenty you sustained us; from the sword you delivered us, from pestilence you freed us and from grievous and binding diseases you rescued us.

Reader Do not abandon us, O God, for evermore. Therefore the limbs which you formed in us, the spirit and breath which you breathed into our nostrils and the tongue you placed in our mouths, they shall give thanks, bless, praise, glorify, exalt, reverence, sanctify and proclaim the sovereignty of your name.

Reader Every part of us shall sing of your salvation, according to the word that is written "all my bones shall say; God, who is like unto you who delivered the poor from those that are too strong for them, yes the poor and the needy from those who oppress them.

Reader Who is like you, who is equal to you, who can be compared to you, the great, the mighty and awe inspiring God, the most high, possessor of heaven and earth? We shall praise you, laud and glorify you, and bless your holy name as it is said of David "Bless the Lord O my soul; and all that is within me, bless the holy name".

All sing "Shalom" (**hold hands**)

Shalom my friends shalom my friends, shalom, shalom
The peace of Christ be with you all, shalom, shalom (x3).

All. O God of all creation, we know that you love us

Because you have give us so much, for you have given us faith

for you have given us the redeemer and his resurrection

Because you have given us the new life of the risen Christ.

All. We give you thanks for the fruit of the vine which we share in common, signifying that we are all part of the vine that is Christ's body.

(the 4th cup is now passed round, each saying to the person next to them, "the cup of promise"- short silence

all. We have now celebrated the Passover according to its customs and shared together the food and cup that foreshadow your promise of eternal life. May we go on sharing such meals together through the years to come until we see the new Jerusalem, the holy city, coming to pass.

Final Song Now the Green Blade Rises

ADVENT CELEBRATION

Someone lights the candles and all say:

Thus says the Lord our God
Who created the heavens and spread them out
Who gave shape to the earth and what comes from it
Who gave breath to its people, and life to all that move on it.

I, God, have called you to serve the cause of right;
I have taken you by the hand and formed you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations
To open the eyes of the blind, to free captives from prison, and
those who live in darkness from the dungeon.

Leader And Jesus said to the people
'I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will not be
walking in the dark; He will have the light of life'

Child Why are we having a party tonight?

Parent We are celebrating the advent of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Child What is Advent? What does it mean?

adult In Advent we remember especially that Jesus Christ came when our
fathers in Israel had been prepared for him, and we look forward to
his promised return again in glory.

A carol is now sung

A litany of prophecy (read in turn by those taking part)

reader My servant will be alight to the nations and my salvation shall reach
the ends of the earth

all Blessed is he who fulfills the promise (this response is made to each
prophecy)

readers 'The virgin is with child and will give birth to a son whom she will
call Emmanuel

I place the key of the House of David on the shoulder of my servant

A shoot shall spring forth from the stock of Jesse, a branch from its
root.

You Bethlehem, the least of all the clans of Judah, out of you will be
born for me the one who is to rule over Israel

See now, your king comes to you; he is upright, he is triumphant,
humble and riding on a donkey. On a colt, the foal of a donkey.

The Lord is like a shepherd feeding his flock; He shall look for the lost
one, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded and make the weak strong.

For as the rain and snow came down from heaven and return not there but
water the earth, making it yield and give growth, to provide seed for
the sower and bread for the eating

So shall my word be that goes out of my mouth; It shall not return to me
empty, without carrying out my will, doing that for which it was sent.

When Israel was a child I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt.

This is the covenant I will make with Israel; Deep within them I will
plant my law, writing it on their hearts. When those days arrive
then I will be their God, and they shall be my people

The law will go out from Zion, and the oracle of the Lord from Jerusalem
They will hammer their swords into ploughshares, their spears into sickles

Nation will not lift sword against nation, for there a child is born
for us, a son given to us, and the government will be upon his shoulders;
and his name will be called 'Wonder counsellor, mighty God, everlasting
father, prince of peace'.

See my servant will prosper
He shall be lifted up, exalted, rise to great heights.
As the crowds were appalled on seeing him - so disfigured did he look
and yet ours were the sufferings he bore
ours the sorrows he carried.
By his sufferings shall my servant justify many, taking their faults
on himself. Harshly dealt with he bore it humbly.
He never opened his mouth, like a lamb that is led to the slaughter-house.

I have endowed him with my spirit
That he may bring true justice to the nations
He does not break the crushed reed, nor quench the wavering flame
He will not fail or be discouraged, until true justice is established on the
earth.

I gazed into the visions of the night
and I saw, coming on the clouds of heaven, one like a son of man.
His dominion shall not pass away and his kingdom shall not be destroyed.

For the day is coming now, burning like a furnace;
When all the arrogant and all evil-doers will be stubble;
The day that comes shall burn them up.
But for you who fear my name,
the sun of righteousness shall shine out, with healing in his rays.

A voice cries 'Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord
Make a straight highway for our God across the desert'.
Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill laid low.
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed
and all mankind shall see it.

Song or period of silence

Litany of repentance (readers should pause after each response)

Leader Our fathers were asked to do penance in the desert to prepare for your
coming on earth, O Lord. Help us, your faithful people, to turn back
to God so that we may meet the light of your day

Reader Are our hearts and minds open to you, Lord?

All Help us to be ready for your coming (This is the response throughout the litany)

Reader When can your will be done on earth as it is in heaven?

Response

How much of our lives have we kept from you, O Lord?

Response

Will we give up what we were doing when something else is needed?

Response

Have we understood what the word was made flesh means if we cannot see
Christ in our fellow men?

Response

Have we done enough to bring about your kingdom on earth?

Response

Have we lived as if we really expected you to return?

Response

Reader Are we prepared to remake the world in your image or do we like it better as it is

All Help us to be ready for your coming

Reader Have we used the gifts you have given us to build up the body of Christ to its fulness?

Response

Reader Have we forgotten that your church must be like a pilgrim in a foreign land?

Response

" Do we really want your eternal life more than the things of this world?

Response

" You, Lord, are the living bread which has come down from heaven, your flesh given for the life of the world

All Come Lord, do not delay

Reader The grass withers, the flower falls but your word remained for ever.

All Come Lord, do not delay

Reader We are your people and you are our God

All Come Lord do not delay

Reader You gave yourself for the sins of many and we wait for the fullness of your salvation All Come Lord do not delay

" Put your law in our minds and write it on our hearts. All Come Lord...

" The day of the Lord will be a day of judgement All " "

" The lion will lie down with the lamb and man will not kill man any more All Come

" In the new heaven and the new earth righteousness will abound Come...

" O grave where is your victory, O death where is your sting Come ..

Now follows either a shared meal and eucharist or alternatively

Song

Litany Continued (On the real meaning of christmas)

Reader People celebrate Christmas, which is your coming, by over-eating and drinking too much; but the Baptist did it by calling for penance and living on locusts and wild honey

All Help us to see what Christmas means

Reader Will the voice crying in the wilderness be heard at the office parties and in the crowded department stores?

response Help us ...

Parcels for the pensioners on Christmas Eve but do we really want goodwill to end on Boxing Day?

response Help us...

Is it the season of turkeys, gifts and parties or is it the birthday of love?

response Help us...

If you come to the outcasts and sinners, did you not come also to the homeless, the unmarried mothers and the drug addicts?

response

If Christ is to be found in people are they not more important than outdated rules, laws, social systems and our own economic needs?

response

Reader How near do we want you to be - two thousand years ago in Bethlehem,
or in our suffering neighbour All Help us to see what Christmas means

" The word was made flesh, but was the skin only white? All Help us.....

" Israel only gave you a stable for your birth but today the world cannot
provide even this luxury for many of its children to be born.

All Help us.....

Refreshments The following prayer is said over whatever is provided (preferably
simple)

Leader Blessed are you, O Lord our God, creator of this food and drink that
we share together as a sign of your Kingdom, which is to come in glory,
and yet is already here now in so far as you live among us in the love
we have for one another.

A reading

Bidding prayers

final song Shalom

Shalom my friends Gods peace my friends go with you now
And stay with you in all you do, Shalom, Shalom.

ADVENT CELEBRATION

Someone lights the candles and all say:

Thus says the Lord our God
Who created the heavens and spread them out
Who gave shape to the earth and what comes from it
Who gave breath to its people, and life to all that move on it.

I, God, have called you to serve the cause of right;
I have taken you by the hand and formed you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations
To open the eyes of the blind, to free captives from prison, and
those who live in darkness from the dungeon.

Leader And Jesus said to the people
'I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will not be
walking in the dark; He will have the light of life'

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A shoot shall spring forth from the stock of Jesse, a branch from its
root.

You Bethlehem, the least of all the clans of Judah, out of you will be
born for me the one who is to rule over Israel

See now, your king comes to you; he is upright, he is triumphant,
humble and riding on a donkey. On a colt, the foal of a donkey.

The Lord is like a shepherd feeding his flock; He shall look for the lost
one, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded and make the weak strong.

For as the rain and snow came down from heaven and return not there but
water the earth, making it yield and give growth, to provide seed for
the sower and bread for the eating

So shall my word be that goes out of my mouth; It shall not return to me
empty, without carrying out my will, doing that for which it was sent.

When Israel was a child I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt.

This is the covenant I will make with Israel; Deep within them I will
plant my law, writing it on their hearts. When those days arrive
then I will be their God, and they shall be my people

The law will go out from Zion, and the oracle of the Lord from Jerusalem
They will hammer their swords into ploughshares, their spears into sickles

Nation will not lift sword against nation, for there a child is born
for us, a son given to us, and the government will be upon his shoulders;
and his name will be called 'Wonder counsellor, mighty God, everlasting
father, prince of peace'.

See my servant will prosper
He shall be lifted up, exalted, rise to great heights.
As the crowds were appalled on seeing him - so disfigured did he look
and yet ours were the sufferings he bore
ours the sorrows he carried.
By his sufferings shall my servant justify many, taking their faults
on himself. Harshly dealt with he bore it humbly.
He never opened his mouth, like a lamb that is led to the slaughter-house.

I have endowed him with my spirit
That he may bring true justice to the nations
He does not break the crushed reed, nor quench the wavering flame
He will not fail or be discouraged, until true justice is established on the
earth.

I gazed into the visions of the night
and I saw, coming on the clouds of heaven, one like a son of man.
His dominion shall not pass away and his kingdom shall not be destroyed.

For the day is coming now, burning like a furnace;
When all the arrogant and all evil-doers will be stubble;
The day that comes shall burn them up.
But for you who fear my name,
the sun of righteousness shall shine out, with healing in his rays.

A voice cries 'Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord
Make a straight highway for our God across the desert'.
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Song or period of silence

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Leader Our fathers were asked to do penance in the desert to prepare for your
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to God so that we may meet the light of your day

Reader Are our hearts and minds open to you, Lord?

All Help us to be ready for your coming (This is the response throughout the litany)

Reader When can your will be done on earth as it is in heaven?

Response

How much of our lives have we kept from you, O Lord?

Response

Will we give up what we were doing when something else is needed?

Response

Have we understood what the word was made flesh means if we cannot see
Christ in our fellow men?

Response

Have we done enough to bring about your kingdom on earth?

Response

Have we lived as if we really expected you to return?

Response

A

h.

Reader Are we prepared to remake the world in your image or do we like it better as it is

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Reader Have we used the gifts you have given us to build up the body of Christ to its fulness?

Response

Reader Have we forgotten that your church must be like a pilgrim in a foreign land?

Response

" Do we really want your eternal life more than the things of this world?

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" You, Lord, are the living bread which has come down from heaven, your flesh given for the life of the world

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Reader The grass withers, the flower falls but your word remained for ever.

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Reader We are your people and you are our God

All Come Lord do not delay

Reader You gave yourself for the sins of many and we wait for the fullness of your salvation All Come Lord do not delay

" Put your law in our minds and write it on our hearts. All Come Lord...

" The day of the Lord will be a day of judgement All " "

" The lion will lie down with the lamb and man will not kill man any more All Come

" In the new heaven and the new earth righteousness will abound Come...

" O grave where is your victory, O death where is your sting Come ..

Now follows either a shared meal and eucharist or alternatively

Song

Litany Continued (On the real meaning of christmas)

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" Israel only gave you a stable for your birth but today the world cannot
provide even this luxury for many of its children to be born.

All Help us.....

Refreshments The following prayer is said over whatever is provided (preferably simple)

Leader Blessed are you, O Lord our God, creator of this food and drink that
we share together as a sign of your kingdom, which is to come in glory,
and yet is already here now in so far as you live among us in the love
we have for one another.

A reading

Bidding prayers

final song Shalom

Shalom my friends Gods peace my friends go with you now
And stay with you in all you do, Shalom, Shalom.

ADVENT MEAL ON A THEME OF JESUS CHRIST THE LIBERATOR

The table is set with an Advent Wreath. The liturgy starts with someone lighting the appropriate number of candles (according to which week of advent it is).
The readings should be done by each person in turn round the table, so that there is no one leader.

Reader And Jesus said to the people
"I am the light of the world. Those who follow me will not be walking in the dark; they will have the light of life"

All Come Lord, do not delay - bring us out of the darkness into the light, out of death into life, from mourning into joy. Help us to open our hearts and minds to your transforming power.

Reader B Tonight we celebrate the triple coming of Christ our Saviour, who in the past came down on earth to share our humanity and bring us back to closeness with our loving creator:

Reader C Who in the present comes to us bringing new life

Reader D Who in the future will come again in glory to bring about the fulfilment of the kingdom when peace and justice will be established.

All Thus says our loving Creator
who made the heavens and spread them out
who gave shape to the earth and what comes from it
who gave breath to its people, and life to all that move on it.

I have called you to serve the cause of right;
I have taken you by the hand and formed you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people, and
a light to the nations.

Carol (O Come O come Emmanuel)

Prophetic readings from Scripture The response to each passage is "Come, Lord, do not delay"

Reader A voice cries "prepare in the wilderness
a way for the most High.
Make a straight highway for our God
Across the desert",
Let every valley be filled in,
Every mountain and hill be laid low
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed
and all humanity shall see it. (Is 40 3-5)

Response - Come Lord, do not delay

Reader Rejoice heart and soul, daughter of Zion!
Shout with gladness, daughter of Jerusalem!
See now your king comes to you;
he is victorious, he is triumphant,
humble and riding on a donkey,
The bow of war will be banished.
He will proclaim peace for the nations. (Ze 9 9-10)

Response - Come Lord

Reader A shoot will spring from the stock of Jesse
a new shoot will grow from the roots
On him will rest the spirit of the Most High
The spirit of wisdom and insight,
The spirit of counsel and power. Is 11 1-2

Response - Come Lord do not delay

Reader Then the eyes of the blind will be opened,
The ears of the deaf unsealed,
Then the lame will leap like a deer
and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy;
for water will gush in the desert
and streams in the wastelands,
The parched ground will become a marsh
and the thirsty land springs of water. (Is 35,5-7)

Response - Come Lord ...

Reader The anointed one shall save the poor when they cry
and the needy who are helpless
Having pity on the weak
and saving the lives of the poor
who will be rescued from oppression
for their blood is dear (ps 72)

Response - Come Lord ...

Reader The law will go out from Sion,
and the oracle of the Lord from Jerusalem
They will hammer their swords into ploughshares,
their spears into sickles.

Response - Come Lord ...

Reader Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth..
I saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of
heaven from God. I heard a loud voice proclaiming from the
throne now at last the people of God will have the Most High
dwelling among them. Every tear shall be wiped from their eyes;
there shall be an end to death and to mourning and crying and pain,
for the old order has passed away. (Rev)

Song: The Secret (from the Iona song book "Folly and Love" p16-17)

Litany of Repentance

All: Our ancestors were asked to do penance in the desert to prepare for
your coming on earth, O Christ our Saviour. Help us to turn back
our hearts and minds to our loving Creator, so that we may meet the
light of your day.

(readers should pause before after each question)

Reader Are our hearts and minds open to you, Lord?

All Help us to be ready for your coming (this is the response for this litany)

Reader How much of our lives have we kept from you, O Lord?

Res. Help us to

R. Are we prepared to change what we are doing when something else is needed?

All Help us to be ready for your coming

R. Have we understood what the word was made flesh means if we cannot see Christ in the poor and powerless?

All Help us

R. Are we doing enough to bring about your kingdom here on earth?

All Help us ...

R. Do we live as if we really expected you to return?

All Help us ...

R. Are we prepared to remake the world in your image or do we fear change too much?

All Have we buried the talents you have given us rather than using them to build up the body of Christ?

R. Have we forgotten that your Church must be like a pilgrim in a foreign land?

All Give us the strength to follow out your will on earth.

(short silence)

Reading from A thousand Reasons for Living - Helder Camara p 113

Blessing over the food

All Blessed are you, Source of all our being, creator of this food and drink that we share together as a sign of your kingdom, which is to come in glory, and yet is already here now in so far as you live among us in the love which we have for one another.

Song Shalom (all hold hands)

Shalom my friends, shalom my friends shalom, shalom
The peace of Christ be with us today, shalom, shalom (x 3)

(the meal/refreshments now follow)

Litany of liberation

Reader Good will to all, but does it stay in words only?

All Liberate us, Jesus our Saviour, so that we may walk with you

Reader Free us from celebrating your birth in a stable by overeating and drinking

All Liberate us, Lord Jesus, so that we may follow your way

R. Free us from the pressures of the consumer society

All Liberate us, Lord Jesus, so that we may follow your truth

R Free us from all prejudice based on sex, class or race

All Liberate us, Lord Jesus, so that we may experience your new life in us

R. Free us from putting rules before the needs of people

All Liberate us Lord Jesus so that the truth may make us free

R. Free us from the feeling that we can do nothing in the face
of the problems of the world

All Liberate us Lord of justice and righteousness

R. Free us from all that stops us from loving both ourselves
and our neighbour

All Liberate us, Lord Jesus, so that we may show forth your love to
the world

Reading Magnificat of waiting for the fullness of time (p79 "Miriam of Nazareth")

Bidding Prayers

Final Prayer

All Come Lord Jesus into our hearts and send your spirit to set us on
fire with new life and hope. Help us to reflect the life-giving love
of the Creator, Redeemer and Spirit in all our relationships and
actions.

Final Song When He Comes Back or other suitable carol