

Evening Liturgy for Advent Sunday

From Iona Community

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Opening responses

This is the time
when light fades
and shadows lengthen
and sounds are subdued –
all as God intended.

Amen.

This is the time
when bodies relax,
minds unwind,
and tiredness comes –
all as God intended.

Amen

This is the time
when others greet the morning
while we meet the night,
and the world continues to sing,
in all the accents of creation,
a love-song to its Maker.

Blessed be God's Name.

Prayer

Come, Emmanuel, be our guest,
stay with us for day is ending.
Bring to this place your poverty,
for then shall we be rich.
Bring to this place your pain,
that in sharing it, we may also share your joy.
Bring to this place your understanding of us,
that we may be freed to learn more of you.
Bring to this place your Holy Spirit,
that we and all things might be made new.
With friend, with stranger,
with the unknown and well known ones
be among us tonight,
**for the doors of this house are open,
and the doors of our hearts we leave ajar.**

Scripture reading Isaiah 64, 1 – 9

“Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you!

² As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you!

³ For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.

⁴ Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

⁵ You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways.

But when we continued to sin against them, you were angry. How then can we be saved?

⁶ All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

⁷ No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you;

for you have hidden your face from us and have given us over to our sins.

⁸ Yet you, LORD, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

⁹ Do not be angry beyond measure, LORD; do not remember our sins for ever.

Oh, look upon us we pray, for we are all your people.”

Reflection

Night prayer

What if the darkness covers us
and the day around us turns to night?
Darkness is not too dark for God
to whom dark and light are one.

Let us pray

You never sleep, God.
You are always awake, always watching,
always willing the world and its people
to turn in the right direction.
So tonight, will you comfort those who cannot sleep
because of illness, or worry, or fear;
or for reasons they cannot understand.

God be near them.

God be near them.

And tonight will you be close to those who wait
patiently or impatiently for a birth, or a death, for a visit,
or for the pieces of their life's jigsaw to fit together.

God be near them.

God be near them.

And tonight will you be close to those who wonder,
who look for inspiration,
who long to be with the one or the ones they love,
who hope to recognise the right time
when they can say 'I'm sorry,'
or 'I love you,'
or even 'Enough is enough.'

God be near them.

God be near them.

And God, listen to us
as we share with you
whatever joys or sorrows,
discoveries or questions
we will take with us into the night.

God be near us,

God be near us.

Into your hands we commit ourselves –
our souls, our bodies, our minds, our futures –
for all things come from you
and are best kept in your care.

Amen

"O Emmanuel" by Malcolm Guite (from "Sounding the Seasons")

O come, O come, and be our God-with-us
O long-sought With-ness for a world without,
O secret seed, O hidden spring of light.
Come to us Wisdom, come unspoken Name
Come Root, and Key, and King, and holy Flame,
O quickened little wick so tightly curled,
Be folded with us into time and place,
Unfold for us the mystery of grace
And make a womb of all this wounded world.
O heart of heaven beating in the earth,
O tiny hope within our hopelessness
Come to be born, to bear us to our birth,
To touch a dying world with new-made hands
And make these rags of time our swaddling bands.

Closing responses

For the day now done

thanks be to God.

For the rest before us

thanks be to God.

Because God never sleeps
so that we can,

thanks be to God.

For the coming of Emmanuel

For His coming again and the hope we have for eternity

thanks be to God.

“Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains would tremble before you!

Oh, look upon us we pray, for we are all your people.”

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Amen

The Blessing

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