

Remembering Jesus... at Christmas

During advent we prepare to welcome the messiah, Jesus. We remember the prophecy, the wonder of the Christmas story and reflect on how he invites, shepherds and guides by his way of life and through his relationship with the Almighty. Christmas Eve marks when the prophecy came to life and the messiah was born. Christians around the globe share communion during this festival of remembering and welcoming Emmanuel, God with us.

You may participate by yourself, with your family, friends or by leading any group you may be with. Before beginning, take a moment to gather Communion elements of bread and juice. Only a small amount is necessary and you may choose to substitute items (some use crackers, wafers or wine, etc.). Use what you have, and be sure to gather enough for everyone present. If you are in a group, choose who will be the leader. This person will read through the texts and prompt others who may want to participate. You may want to choose a few people for different parts of the service. However, one person is fine too.

Proceed through the text with the leader or leaders speaking the lines in normal weight font and the group present responding with lines in bold. Lines in italics are directions for the leader. When you reach the suggested carols, your group may choose to sing from memory or find a selection online. You can also visit mvcturlock.com/christmas-eve-communion where you will find video clips and lyrics in this service order to use.

Opening Prayer

In the quiet of the night
A woman gives birth:

**A personal act of faith;
Accepting God's charge upon her.**

In the quiet of the night
A husband becomes a father:

**A personal act of faith;
Accepting God's charge upon him.**

In the quiet of the night
A baby breathes the air:

**A personal act of sacrifice;
God steps out of the divine into the mundane, for us.**

Amen, Come Lord Jesus!

Carol: Mary Did You Know or O' Holy Night

The Celebration of Communion

***An Excerpt from "The Most Wondrous of Nights" by Rev. Andrew O'Neil**

God of all times and places, we gather at your table of grace to remember your vision of hope for all people and for your creation.

Through Abraham and Sarah, you revealed your promise in the surprise of a child. Through prophets, you called your people to make way for peace and justice. In Jesus, you revealed the way of forgiveness and love. Through the ever-circling year, your Word discloses to us—again and anew—your promise for the restoration of all creation.

Gathering to share this sign of hope and fulfillment, we remember Jesus, the child born into obscurity, on the margins of society, amid fear and uncertainty. We remember the fragility of that revelation... the hope he stirred... the imagination he inspired, and we sing (or speak) together...

***It came upon a midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
of angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold.
"Peace on the earth, good will toward men, from heaven's all-gracious King"
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.***

We remember Jesus, the One who blazed a new and risky path of extravagant generosity and of passionate concern: temple-shaker, world-maker, rule-breaker, risk-taker; the author and finisher of our faith.

We remember Jesus' self-giving love and the offer of himself for others, even those who gave him over to death, and we sing...

***And ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way with painful steps so slow,
Look now! For glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing!***

(The leader gestures towards the elements while speaking)

On that night, in the midst of great confusion and fear, Jesus broke bread with friends and said, "This is my body, which I give for you and for all. Do this to remember me."

With a blessing, he took the cup and offered it to them saying: "This cup is God's covenant which is given for all. When you drink this, remember me."

*(The Leader then serves each person while speaking the blessing
"Christ came to bring you light and life.")*

Come Lord Jesus, and bless us by these gifts, and what we do here to remember you so that we might sing your song of love for You, your people and for your world.

**For Lo! The days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old,
When with the ever circling years shall come the time foretold.
When peace shall cover all the earth, it's ancient splendors ring
And the whole world sends back the song, which now the angels sing.**

Carol: It Came Upon a Midnight Clear or O' Little town of Bethlehem

Closing Prayer

God of shepherds and kings, you gather us by the light of your star of promise. You lead us not only to hope in the future, but to trust in your presence and renewal of life in every time and place.

Guide us tonight, by the light of that star. Lead us to the edges of this world, where uncertainty is met with the renewal of life and the transformation of this world is most deeply felt in Your love remembered and shared, one with another.

Be with us on this most wondrous of nights, we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen, Come Lord Jesus!

*Excerpt from The Most Wondrous of Nights by Andrew O'Neil is used under the creative commons license:
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