

Opening Prayer: Eternal God, you sent your only Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior. Through him, we have come to know the joy of Salvation. You have promised to be with us and we have experienced the strength of your presence through the Holy Spirit. You have taught us through Christ, that you will come again, and we have been made confident. Hear us, Lord God, as we confess our need for you and our unworthiness of you. Then graciously prepare our lives, within and without, to receive the blessings of our Savior's birth. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer: Almighty God, Father of us all and Father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, you are the source of everything. You support everything, you shelter us, you welcome everything, you endure everything, you reach truth and you remind us of what is truly sacred. You point us to the highest and the best, and you send us back to ordinary ways of life. Our life, you bring together shepherds and angels, the holy mothers and a manger, straw and stable, straw. You bring together the eternal and the here and now.

On this winter day, when we will have seen the sun setting early, and in all our daily rounds, when we have been too much impressed by the sun's setting

we want to behold a new day. Let  
us see a new light shining - the light  
of Christ and his holiness. Let us ex-  
perience a new <sup>age</sup> ~~day~~ dawning, an age of  
freedom and justice. Let us rejoice  
in a new government of all the people, a  
government of peace and joy and love.

On this 3rd Sunday in Advent, let us  
wait with patience and hope for the  
light and life of Jesus Christ. Our quiet  
needs his forgiveness; your weakness needs  
his strength; our poverty needs his blessing;  
Our loneliness needs his nearness; our sick-  
ness needs his healing; our hostility needs  
his peace; our death needs his resurrection of life.  
We have watched the sun setting for  
too long, and we have lamented the dark for  
too long. ~~And we have~~ Come, light of the  
world and fill us with your light.