

Opening prayer: Eternal God, you sent your only Son,  
 Jesus Christ to be our Saviour. 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, as we confess our need for  
 you and our unworthiness of you. Then graciously  
 prosper our lives, within and without, to receive the  
 blessings of the Saviour's birth. Amen.

Pastoral prayer: Almighty God, Father of us all and  
 Father of our Lord and Prince, Jesus Christ, you are the  
 source of everything. You welcome everything if our  
 nature requires it. You reveal 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 the ordinary ways  
 of our lives. You bring together shepherds and angels,  
 the Holy Mother, and a manger, stand and stable  
 straw. You bring together the eternal and the here and  
 now.

On this autumn day, when we will have seen the  
 sun setting early, and in our daily rounds, when we have  
 been too much impressed by the sun's setting, we  
 must to help us a new day, let us see a new light  
 shining - the light of Christ and his holiness. Let us  
 experience a new day dawning, an age of freedom and justice.

On this third Sunday of Advent, let us wait with patience  
 and hope for the light and life of Jesus Christ. Our  
 quiet need for his forgiveness, our weakness, our  
 need for his strength, our poverty, our need for his blessing, our loneliness,  
 our hostilities need his peace, our sickness needs his healing,  
 our weariness of life. We have watched the sun set, and  
 we have lamented the dawn for too long. Come, bright  
 light of the world and let us wait here.