

This, tonight, is the meeting place

Christmas prologue

These words may be helpful as a prologue to a watchnight service, especially where those attending are regular churchgoers.

**This, tonight,
is the meeting place
of heaven and earth.**

**For this, tonight,
is the stable
in which God keeps his appointment
to meet his people.**

**Not many high are here,
not many holy;
not many innocent children,
not many worldly wise;
not all familiar faces,
not all frequent visitors.**

**But, if tonight
only strangers met,
that would be enough.**

**For Bethlehem was not the hub of the universe,
nor was the stable a platform for famous folk.**

**In an out-of-the-way place
which folk never thought to visit –
there God kept and keeps his promise;
there God sends his son.**

When the world was dark

Christmas intercessions 1

This prayer may be read as below, or may be interspersed with moments of silence or the singing of a chant such as O LORD MY PRAYER from Taizé.

When the world was dark
and the city was quiet,
you came.

You crept in beside us.

And no-one knew.
Only the few
who dared to believe
that God might do something different.

Will you do the same this Christmas, Lord?

Will you come into the darkness of today/tonight's world;
not the friendly darkness
as when sleep rescues us from tiredness,
but the fearful darkness,
in which people have stopped believing
that war will end
or that food will come
or that a government will change
or that the Church cares?

Will you come into that darkness
and do something different
to save your people from death and despair?

Will you come into the quietness of this city/town,
not the friendly quietness
as when lovers hold hands,
but the fearful silence
when the phone has not rung,

the letter has not come,
the friendly voice no longer speaks,
the doctor's face says it all?

Will you come into that darkness,
and do something different,
not to distract, but to embrace your people?

And will you come into the dark corners
and the quiet places of our lives?

We ask this not because we are guilt-ridden
or want to be,
but because the fullness our lives long for
depends on us being as open and vulnerable to you
as you were to us,
when you came,
wearing no more than nappies,
and trusting human hands
to hold their maker.

Will you come into our lives,
if we open them to you
and do something different?

When the world was dark
and the city was quiet
you came.

You crept in beside us.

Do the same this Christmas, Lord.
Do the same this Christmas.
AMEN.