

## **Immanuel | God with us**

What if God was with us?

What would Christmas be like?

### **Advent Calendar**

Cardboard windows and gold numbers;  
A candle burning down digits while cash flows  
Like chocolate and pies and rivers and drink.

I've been counting the cost of Christmas,  
working out what's been taken away;  
occupied Palestine and tinsel banned,  
Fatwas, obese Santas, drunk bishops;  
it seems divisions have been multiplied.

Guns blaze; 3, 4, 5 prostitutes lie dead.  
Fractions of God and sex and virgins,  
Tough equations requiring complex solutions.

It is Advent.  
Wait until I count to 25,  
And I'm left with only this remainder:  
One + Infinity giving birth to one become naught,  
To raise us to the power of love.

Some people have waited so long for God to be with them.  
As we celebrate a symbolic meal of communion with God, we remember...

### **Communion**

[Call] As Sarah waited...Ninety years for a son to fulfil God's promise.  
[Response] We wait in hope for what we thought had been spoken to us.

[Call] As Moses waited...40 years in the desert, being prepared by God to lead his people.  
[Response] We wait for emptiness and humility; for bravado to wither.

[Call] As Israel waited...40 years of wandering, hungry, depressed, thirsting, unsure.  
[Response] We wait for the right time to act

[Call] As the Prophets waited...1000 years of promises that God would raise up a Saviour.  
[Response] We wait for the signs that God has not forgotten.

[Call] As Mary waited...9 months of her 14 years for the child of God.  
[Response] We feel the birth-pains, yet fear for the child.

[Call] As John the Baptist waited...Scanning the crowds for the one whose sandals he would not be worthy to untie.  
[Response] We long for an experience of the Divine

[Call] As Jesus waited... 30 years of creeping time.40 days in the desert of temptation.3 years of misunderstanding.3 days in the depths of hell.  
[Response] So we wait for God's time. Preparing the way. Our turn to toil on levelling mountains and straightening paths. Our turn to watch the horizon. Our turn to pass on the hope that He who promised is faithful and will come back.

[Call] So God, we ask you to bless this bread. In its brokenness we remember the sacrifice you made for us.  
[Response] May it nourish the visions you have planted in us, and strengthen us in the wait to see your promises come to pass.

[Call] We ask you to bless this wine. The grapes crushed and left to ferment remind us of the transforming power of your death - goodness from brokenness. In drinking it, we covenant to waiting for the time when you will return and make all things new.  
[Response] As we wait, we recognise ourselves as wombs of the divine. May this bread and wine serve to feed that which you have created in us, and sustain us until we see birth.