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The evening may be introduced.
Silence may not be kept.
Some drinks may be served; the congregation gather around a table.

Call to worship

Full-bellied God, radiant mother of earth, luminous current in all of us
We wait for you
Giver of the Christ, who took the fire of love into the heart of darkness
We wait for you
Reckless Spirit, who flouts the darkness of prescribed ways and prejudice in her spangled dress
Dance with us and within us as we celebrate your life among us.

Confession

Pause for reflection

We come with the darkness in ourselves:
The shadows of memory, troubled dreams and fears in the dark.

Pause

We come with the darkness of our world:
The unbroken cycle of damage to children, the failure of war, those whose past overshadows them, those for whom justice is not near.

Pause

We come with the unknown darkness that lies behind the lit windows in the streets around us:
Behind the faces of the other in the night, hurrying on their way.
We come with darkness

Pause

The night will soon be over.
God did not wait 'til our lives were spotless;
God did not wait 'til every child was loved;
God did not wait 'til the hungry were fed;
God did not wait 'til the broken-hearted were comforted.
God came to a world such as ours to lighten the way,
To bring hope and guide us into the ways of peace.

A candle is lit.

God, we welcome the light.
Bless this food to us; nourish our thoughts we pray
Amen.

Some thoughts on Advent as a time of preparation are shared.
The congregation may eat and drink.

Prayer Before Communion

Out of the womb of darkness:
The Spirit hovered over creation as her waters broke,
And all that exists came into being

Out of the womb of darkness:
We seek the holy path that refuses the exclusion of one group by another.

Out of the womb of darkness:
We dare to give birth to welcome.

Out of the womb of darkness:
**We journey with sacred intention,
As nights draw in towards the shortest day.**

Out of the womb of darkness:
**We wait in hope for a God who comes as kin
Holding out a newborn's tiny hand.**

Eucharistic Prayer

God come down from your place; be born in our world and lighten our hearts this Advent.
Cross the threshold from heaven to Earth here in this meal.

Pour out your Spirit on these bodily things that they may become for us the God whom
we can see and touch and taste and hear and smell.

For we long to sense you anew. We recall that time when ordinary people like us had supper with
you. At your last meal with your friends, you took bread and broke it as a sign of what would happen
to your body.

You said: 'Take and eat. This is my body. Do this as often as you eat it in remembrance of me.'

You shared a cup of wine, as a sign of your blood which would be shed when the midday sun went
black, saying: 'Drink this everybody, for this is my blood shed as a sign of the new relationship
between God and the Earth and all its peoples.'

Draw us to yourself, to each other, and to all your people in heaven and on Earth.

The elements are distributed

Closing Prayer

May God wait with us as we wait for the light of justice and peace with each other,
with the earth, and with our God.

We leave this place cherishing the darkness that we might know the light.

Blessed is the light-giver

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

Reworked from 'Doing December Differently'
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Liturgy for the Celebration of a Birthday

The Congregation are furnished with full glasses.

Infinite God, ageless and timeless,
God who was born and counted time with us,
God who knows each hair on N's head (*an alternate liturgy shall be said for the bald*)
Thank you for N's years that have passed.

The first toast is drunk, remembering joys and sorrows.

Infinite God, ageless and timeless
God who rose eternal and sees far ahead
God who traces out each step N might tread
Thank you for N's years still to come.

The second toast is drunk, a prayer of hope for the future.

A cake may be presented, and a traditional song sung.

A third toast is drunk, a celebration of the present.