



A STABLE ADVENT

“SHELTER FOR YOUR SOUL”

WEEK 2: THE SHEPHERDS ~

THE NIGHT SHIFT

PERSONAL PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE^[1]



Today, with this gathered community,
I sit.
I wait for you, O God:
for your presence,
though you are always near;
for your peace,
through the distractions of
the week.
I wait to hear your word,
to see the light of your face in Jesus Christ,
to be renewed by your Spirit.

I sit,
I wait in faith with your people.
Accept our praise, forgive our sin, send us out refreshed;
in the name of Christ.
Amen.

¹ UiW2, pg. 144
Artwork by Sarah Lea West

CALL TO WORSHIP AND CANDLE-LIGHTING

In a world of rush and restless change,
step into the hush of this sanctuary,
with these hearts beside you—
ready to seek God here and now,
to breathe in gentle rhythm,
to listen quietly and wait with hope,
to find what's holy in simple acts of love,
and to welcome the Christ
who makes a home in each of us.

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

Through the Word, all things came to be:
Jesus is the life, the light, of all people.
Even now, the light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness cannot put it out.

DAY STAR^[2]

May the hope of Christ rise up.
May it guide from near and far.
May the light of Christ shine out,
shine like a day-star.

² Music and lyrics by Trisha Watts

POEMPRAYER: THANK YOU^[3]

Thank you, Lord, thank you.

Thank you for all the gifts that you have given me today.

Thank you for all I have seen, heard, received.

Thank you for the water that woke me up, the soap that smells good, the tooth-paste that refreshes me.

Thank you for the clothes that protect me
for their colour and their style.

Thank you for the newspaper so faithfully there,
for the comics, my morning smile, for useful meetings,
for justice done and for big games won.

Thank you for the street-cleaning lorry and the men who run it, for the morning shouts and all the early noises.

Thank you for my work, my tools, my efforts.

Thank you for the metal in my hands, for the whine of the steel biting into it, for the satisfied look of the foreman and the load of finished pieces.

Thank you for Jim who lent me his file, for Danny who gave me a cigarette, for Charlie who held the door for me.

Thank you for the welcoming street that led me there, for the shop windows, for the cars, for the passers-by, for all the life that flowed swiftly between the windowed walls of houses.

Thank you for the food that sustained me, for the beer that refreshed me.

Thank you for the car that meekly took me where I wanted to be, for the fuel that made it go, for the wind that caressed my face, and for the trees that nodded to me on the way.

³ By Michel Quoist in "Prayers of Life"

Thank you for the boy I watched playing on the footpath.
Thank you for his rollerskates and for his comical face
when he fell.

Thank you for the morning greetings I received,
and for all the smiles.

Thank you for Mother who welcomes me home, for her tactful
affection, for her silent presence.

Thank you for the roof that shelters me, for the lamp that
lights me, for the radio that plays, for the news, for music and
singing. Thank you for the bunch of flowers so pretty on my
table.

Thank you for the tranquil night.

Thank you for the stars.

Thank you for the silence.

Thank you for the time you have given me.

Thank you for life.

Thank you for grace.

Thank you for being there, Lord.

Thank you for listening to me, for taking me seriously, for
gathering my gifts in your hand to offer them to your Father.

Thank you, Lord.

Thank you.

SACRED SCRIPTURE: LUKE 2:8-12 (NIV)

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby,
keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord
appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around
them, and they were terrified.

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS (ADVENT CANDLES)

God of stillness and peace,
as we remember the shepherds called from their fields,
we light this candle for all who are overwhelmed
by the busyness and business of this season.
We pray for those working tirelessly over this time,
keeping the world moving;
serving and saving others;
or simply trying to keep food on the table, a roof overhead.

We pray for those without meaningful employment,
for those working in unsafe environments,
for those who feel trapped in their roles,
for those burdened by the pressure to provide,
and for everyone longing for purpose and fulfilment.

TIS 286 VERSEs 1 & 2

Light one candle for hope,
one bright candle for hope.
He brings hope to every
heart.
He comes! He comes!

Light one candle for peace,
one bright candle for peace.
He brings peace to every
heart.
He comes! He comes!

LIVING SERMON: THE NIGHT SHIFT

- I wonder why the shepherds were the first to receive such a message of peace.
- I wonder how the shepherds felt about their night watch turning into a special mission.
- I wonder if this night shift experience changed the way the shepherds saw themselves/their lives afterwards.

AN AFFIRMATION OF THE WORLD AS AN EXPRESSION OF GOD'S GRACE (INDONESIAN)

I believe In God, who is love
and who has given the earth to all people.
I believe In Jesus Christ, who came to heal us,
to free us from sin and evil.
I believe in the Spirit of God, who works
in and through all who are turned towards the truth.
I believe in the community of faith called to serve all people.
I believe in God's promise finally to destroy
the power of sin in us all and to establish the kingdom of
justice and peace for all humankind.

I do not believe in the right of the strongest,
nor in the force of arms,
nor in the power of oppression.
I do not believe in racism,
in the power that comes from wealth and privilege,
nor in any established order that enslaves.

I do not believe that war and hunger are inevitable,
nor peace unattainable.

I do not believe that suffering need be in vain,
that death is the end,
that the disfigurement of our world is what God intended.

But I do believe, always and in spite of everything,
in God's power to transform and transfigure,
fulfilling the promise of a new heaven and a new earth
where grace and generosity will flourish.

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Go now as people who have found shelter in God's love.
Step out into the world with open hands and open hearts,
ready to welcome Christ in every neighbour and stranger.
May you carry hope to those who feel lost,
kindness to those working this season,
and courage to those facing the long dark night of the soul.

And may the Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace. Amen.