

Great Thanksgiving for Advent  
“Waiting for God”

Invitation:

One: Come and wait. Open your eyes and be alert.  
Listen deeply to your heart and to one another.  
Feel the gentle leading of the Holy Spirit as you are led to this moment,  
inviting you to wait upon the Lord and to renew your strength at this table.

Confession:

**All: Forgive us, for our impatience with You, when it is we who are not paying attention. When You were hungry and thirsty, we failed to even notice and did not offer You any hospitality. When You were naked and alone in your poverty, we did not move a finger to address Your needs. When You were in bondage, we thought good riddance and tried to throw away the key. In our blindness we are left wondering if all our waiting is worth it. Forgive us. Heal us. Be patient with us, for we want to not only see You, but to worship before You all our days. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon:

One: We are not alone. Those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength. Christ is with us and in the name of Jesus Christ you are forgiven. Go and sin no more.  
**All: You are not alone. Christ is with you too and in the name of Jesus Christ, you too are forgiven. Go and sin no more. Thanks be to God, Amen.**

Thanksgiving:

One: Our waiting is over.  
**All: You dwell in the fullness of this time.**  
One: You are never far from us.  
**All: Wherever we may be You are always there.**  
One: We rejoice in Your presence.  
**All: You take us by the hand and dance with us rejoicing.**

One: You have been waiting for us.  
You are present in every child waiting to be fed.  
You are present, waiting for safety as the bombs shake Your home.  
You are present, behind prison bars waiting to once again to be free.  
You are present, waiting in a hospital bed for a healing touch and a comforting prayer.  
You are present, waiting for us to notice that You are here,  
our incarnate Saviour,  
who takes our flesh and dwells among us every single moment.  
You look so human that we have easily look right past You,  
but You always see us and keep waiting for us:  
to take the time to travel the extra mile;  
to turn the other cheek and seek reconciliation with You  
who remind us time and again of our enemies.  
During this Advent Season we wait together

each praying that we might catch a glimpse of Your hope,  
some light in our darkness,  
the One we need to make our joy complete.

**All: Come into our world,  
the world that came into being through Your love,  
allow us to know Your presence with us.  
Come to Your own who are waiting.  
We want to accept You.  
We want to believe in Your name.  
We want to be Your children,  
and live according to Your will.** (Adapted from John 1:10-13)

One: You are the One who is, who was, who is always present  
and was present in the life of Jesus Christ whom we cannot wait to see.  
Jesus looks like any other peasant baby,  
fully human but never seeming to be fully divine.  
Jesus looked like any young child filled to overflowing with questions,  
but we were surprised like his parents that Jesus would feel compelled to seek answers.  
Like all of us, Jesus was tempted to be self-serving,  
to seek personal glory and power,  
but unlike us, Jesus chose to be sacrificial, compassionate, and humble.

The disciples desired greatness.  
Jesus desired the grace of servitude,  
stooping down to wash the feet of others,  
in each recognizing the God he loved.  
Christ waits for us to recognize the presence of God.

At Passover Jesus took the holy bread with a thankful heart.  
It was set aside to remember God's broken heart.  
Jesus took this bread, broke it, and shared it with all, saying:  
"Take and eat this is my body broken and given for you."  
Christ waits for us to recognize the presence of God.

After supper Jesus took the cup of wine with a thankful heart.  
It was set aside to remember God's broken heart.  
Jesus took this cup and shared it with all, saying,  
"Drink with me, this is the cup of my blood,  
poured out to demonstrate divine compassion  
expressed through God's eternal covenant of grace,  
granting the forgiveness of not only your sins but the sins of the whole world."  
Christ waits for us to recognize the presence of God.

We do wait, earnestly seeking Your presence.  
We know that You are alive, and on the move in our world.

We proclaim this holy truth displayed in this holy mystery we now proclaim:

**All: Christ died for the sins of the whole world.  
Christ arose giving everyone the assurance of eternal life.  
Christ comes again through human need wanting for us to love him.**

One: Patient Persistence, Pure Presence  
settle upon these gifts of bread and wine,  
allowing them to become for us and the world  
the sacred body and blood of Christ,  
God with us now.

Patient Persistence, Pure Presence  
settle upon the gift of our lives  
our open hearts, our open minds, our willing hands,  
allowing them to become for the world  
Your church, the living body and compassionate bride of Christ,  
God with us now.

Patient Persistence, Pure Presence  
settle upon the Choptank Charge of the United Methodist Church  
as they wait upon You.  
Give them a clear vision,  
so they might see You more distinctly  
in the lives of those inside and outside their churches.  
Give to them attentive hearing,  
so they might hear Your voice upon the gentle breeze  
so that they might respond to Your cries and prayers.  
Give them the strength that they need to respond to Your call  
within their communities and throughout Your world.

**All: We ask this prayer because we want to see Jesus as he dwells among us.  
We ask this prayer because we want to see your Holy Spirit moving among us.  
We ask this prayer because we want to feel Your creative touch and inspiration  
upon our lives, so that our lives might bring You the glory, honor and praise that  
You have been waiting for, now and always. Amen.**

One: Now let us pray after the manner that Jesus taught us, praying:

**All: You who are, were, and have always been present,  
bestowing upon all Your grace.  
May we see that grace in everyone, and may everyone see that grace in us.  
Give us what we need, so that none may go without.  
Forgive us for ignoring Your presence in the lives of others,  
just as we forgive others for ignoring Your presence in dwelling in us.  
We are so tempted to pretend we don't notice You,**

**so deliver us from this evil  
by helping us realized that how we treat others we are treating You.  
Because you are Immanuel, You dwell with us always. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

Prayer after communion:

Thank you for allowing us to share in this Your holy mystery. We have been waiting for this moment and so have you. In this meal we have seen You. We have tasted Your goodness. We have seen Your face, and felt Your touch. Now send us our into the world, so we might continue in our communion with You, as we experience You as friend and foe, as young and old, as agreeable and as those who are struggling to find their way. You are with us always, so let us dance with You always. Amen.