

Great Thanksgiving for the Second Sunday of Lent  
(Dark Night)

Invitation:

Come from your darkest night to seek the light of Christ.  
Come in all your confusion to find Christ's listening ear.  
Come with all your hunger and find bread and wine at this table,  
food for your journey.

Confession:

**It is true that we do not understand Your ways nor Your thoughts.  
It is true that we do not bear much spiritual fruit in our lives,  
and others do not find an abundance of love, joy or peace in us.  
We are not gentle or kind enough and struggle with self-control.  
So we come to You, O Christ, in our darkness with a hunger to  
not only understand You but to follow You faithfully. Amen.**

Words of Assurance:

One: Jesus turns none away. Everyone is always welcome to seek his grace,  
mercy and forgiveness. Come into the light of Christ and be made whole.  
In the holy name of Jesus, you are forgiven.

**All: Jesus will not turn you away either. In the holy name of Jesus, you are forgiven.  
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

Thanksgiving:

One: No matter how dark the night,

**All: the light of Christ shines out into our darkness.**

One: No matter the questions that lie heavy upon our hearts,

**All: with patience Christ always listens to our hearts.**

One: Feel the joy of acceptance.

**All: Joy courses through our souls as we are held in God's everlasting embrace.**

One: As You hold us in the warmth of Your love we feel safe.

In a world filled with uncertainty, we feel secure.

We don't need all the answers right away, as we learn from You, they will come.

We know that the future is in Your creative hands.

Even now the future is being shaped out of the decisions we make.

You take it all, our horrible mistakes, as well as our faithful sacrifices,

shaping what will come next.

We have faith that You are able to take the chaos of our lives and create something good.

When all is dark and our world is crumbling underneath our feet,

we know that You are working to repair the damage our sins have caused.

You are seeking to replant Eden, even as we continue to pollute.

You are rebuilding paradise, even while we keep trying to burn it down.

We praise you for your patience with us.

We join with those around the world in true repentance.

We join with them in seeking a new dawn that will overcome this dark night of our souls.  
We join together to worship the God who wants us not to perish  
but to receive the eternal life and a peace that the world is incapable of giving.  
Heaven and earth are declaring Your glory and the intent of Your heart as we proclaim:

**All: You love, all of us!**  
**You gave us Your only son!**  
**Now, this we believe!**

**We will not perish!**  
**Now is our eternal life**  
**With You forever!** (Based upon John 3:16)

One: You do love us,  
and Jesus now dwells with us always, even to the end of time!  
Through his life we see Your love, a gift of Your Holy Spirit.  
You love Your enemies, even us.  
You love the insignificant, even us.  
You love those who seem strange, even us.  
You love those who keep getting it all wrong, even us.  
You love those who dwell outside the norm, even us.  
You love those who are forgotten, even us.  
You love sinners who stand condemned, even us.  
And for this we are so thankful.

The world loves honor, glory and power.  
However Your love is expressed by humility, civility, and grace.  
By Christ embracing the simple act of a slave,  
by washing feet,  
the challenge of Your great love was demonstrated  
for all to feel, understand and follow.

On the darkening night of betrayal,  
Jesus first took the bread of Passover,  
blessed it as they all remembered the struggles of the past,  
and shared it with the men, women, and children gathered there, saying:  
“Take and eat this is my body broken and given for you.”  
In your darkness, look for the light.

After supper Jesus took the cup of Passover wine,  
blessed it as they all remembered God’s struggle with the human heart,  
and shared it with the men, women, and children gathered there, saying:  
“Drink from this cup each of you, for this is the cup of my blood,  
poured out freely as a sign of God’s eternal covenant,  
promising forgiveness to you and to all the world.”  
In your darkness, look for the light.

We have found Your light in our darkness,  
the dawn breaking after a long dark night,  
Jesus rising with healing in his wings.  
It is this reality that we celebrate with  
this declaration of faith:

**All: On Good Friday Christ died.  
On Easter morning Christ arose.  
On Pentecost Christ came again to dwell in our hearts with power.**

One: Dawn of newness, Wisdom's light  
infuse these gifts of bread and wine  
allow them to become for our lives  
the body and blood of Christ the light of the world.

Dawn of newness, Wisdom's light  
infuse the gift of our lives  
our fears, our dreams, and our hope  
allow them to become for the world, your church,  
the triumphant body and enthusiastic bride of Christ the light of the world.

Dawn of newness, Wisdom's light  
awaken the Choptank Charge to fresh possibilities.  
Free them from feelings of discouragement.  
Open their hearts to Your dream for their future.  
Fill them with joy, and renewed excitement about being disciples of Jesus Christ.

**All: We pray to glorify the Trinity.  
We pray in the name of Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
according to the will of the God who created all things good.  
May our lives bring You glory, honor and immense pleasure,  
until the end of time. Amen.**

One: Now let us pray according to the pattern laid out by Jesus Christ:

**All: Holy Light that casts out all of our darkness  
open our hearts to experience Your presence always.  
Supply the needs of our lives, both known and unknown.  
Forgive our ignorance and the harm it does,  
as we forgive the ignorance of others and the harm done to us.  
Keep us from making assumptions about the lives of others,  
delivering us from the evil those assumptions cause.  
For Your truth, and Your wisdom, guide our steps, now and always. Amen.**

Prayer after communion:

Thank you for including us in this holy mystery in Jesus Christ. In Jesus we have seen a great light that has vanquished all our darkness. Thank you for opening our eyes, so that we

might see You. Thank you for opening our ears, so that we might hear Your voice. You have inspired us by the hospitality of Your table. Now send us out to extend that hospitality to others as we bring the light of Christ out into the world. This is our greatest joy. Amen.