

# Congregational Prayer – Finding You in Advent

Thank you God for bright lights in dark times  
for sparkles and colours twinkling in the night  
for the whimsy and fun of Christmas decorations  
for the crimson of poinsettias and the deep evergreen of trees.  
Thank you for savoury dishes and tasty treats,  
for an abundance of food which allows for feasting,  
all gifts from your good hands.  
Thank you for the sound of Christmas carols,  
of voices raised together in praise to you,  
thank you for the sound of children laughing.

In this season which is joyful for so many,  
there are those among us who suffer.  
Loneliness can seem more lonely,  
estrangement more strange,  
grief more grievous and deep.  
Empty cupboards feels emptier at Christmas.  
In the land of your birth, missiles and tanks wander  
while children cry with fear.  
We need your presence as Immanuel, God with us.

This Christmas, we want to be finding you--  
finding you in the silence of the gray morning  
and in the sweet smile of a child;  
finding you in the dark starry sky  
and in the warm handshake of a friend;  
finding you in the familiar Christmas narrative  
and in the story of a stranger;  
finding you in our own hearts  
and in the face of our enemies.

Immanuel, God with us,  
we wait for your presence this Christmas;  
help us to give with generous hearts  
and receive with thankfulness.  
Give us patience in the face of irritation  
and kindness in the face of anger;  
fill us with contentment and peace

and remove all jealousy from us.  
May our celebration of your birth  
give honour to you in all we say and do  
and may we enter the New Year refreshed and  
with our eyes peeled for the peace  
you are bringing on earth. Amen

Carol Penner (Canada), 2012. [leadinginworship.com](http://leadinginworship.com)  
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