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Original Manger image: Grayson Joralem on Unsplash

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 This is the night when watchful hearts see heaven meet earth
 This is the night when listening hearts hear good news God sends. And
 so this night all Christian folk,
 light lamps of hope

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And swing them out
with joyful shout
for life and birth
For heaven on earth
And word of peace for all God's friends.
Sr.Raphael Consedine pbvm

Mother or another family member lights the candle and then moves her hands 3 times around the candles and towards her, (as if bringing in or guiding in the light). She covers her eyes for a moment and then recites the blessing.

Blessed are you, Almighty God, our Heavenly Father.
We thank you for your presence with us.
This candle which I now kindle in our home and in our hearts,
reminds us of the eternal bridge of light
that reaches from creation itself to the spirit of free people -
of God's love for us and our love for others
of hope for ourselves, and for our beloved world
of peace in our hearts and on our earth
of joy to our world and our whole being
of the light Christ brings into our lives and our world
we invite you, Jesus, Light of the World, to fill our hearts with your light,
love, and revelation, through the power of your Holy Spirit.

We are called to go to Bethlehem, bearing our light ...

R/ This night reminds us of God's greatest gift – Jesus, born in a stable beneath a star's heavenly light. The Star over Bethlehem is God's sign of peace to all of humanity.

ALL: We welcome the arrival of the Prince of Peace in our midst.

The Baby is put in the crib



R/ The baby born to a poor peasant girl is God's gift of love. This proves God's love toward us.

All: We thankfully accept God's gift; we rejoice in God's love for us!

R/: Tonight, heaven and earth meet; in a stable, God comes to meet His people.
This is an out of the way place where Mary gives birth to Jesus. One single
candle lights a dark space; Christ has come to light our world.
Jesus, we come before you in silent amazement
Thank you that, because of your birth, we know that God is with us
We welcome you into our minds and hearts

Like the shepherds, we come to the stable,
uncertain of what we have heard and seen,
longing to hear words of acceptance, peace and joy.

Like the wise ones, we have journeys to make,
gifts to offer, and hope in our hearts,
that together we can do our part in changing our world for the better.

Just as we are here, and the shepherds and wise men came to visit, we bring others
to the crib.

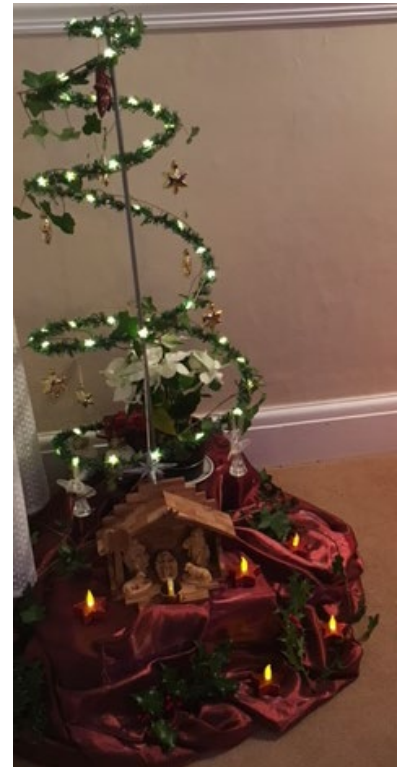
Everyone takes a wine glass – and each in turns prays – beginning with:

I raise this cup and I want to ask for ...(*eg: healing for ... /peace in ... /
justice for... / for those we know /our country/ our world/ the poor / children who are
hungry / migrants ... etc*) *After each 3 sentences, take a sip from your glass. When
everyone has said what they want to ask for, drink the remainder of the contents.*

Crib Blessing

**Lord, bless our crib.
May it be a sign to us of your presence in our world. God
of every nation and people,
From the beginning of creation you have made manifest
your love.
When our need was great
You sent you Son to be born of Mary.
To our lives he brings joy and peace, justice, mercy, and
love.
Lord, bless us who look on this manger.
May it remind us of the humble birth of Emmanuel - God-
with-us
May we experience in our lives the joy, comfort and inspiration
which your Son Jesus came to bring us. May we come to share
your glory.**

Rejoice, for God is with us — Emmanuel.
In the darkness of our world shines God's light.



God is truly with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God!

Everyone takes time to greet each member of the family, to say something good and wish them a blessing of for example, peace or happiness.



Closing Prayer

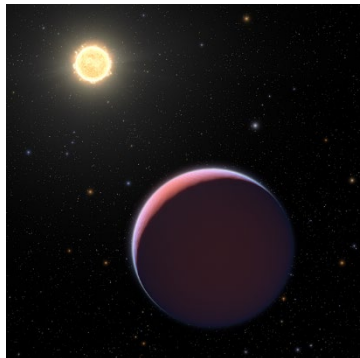
Together we pray:

Holy Spirit of God, you give birth to all good things. Fill our hearts with love and power so that we will fill our hearts with joy; hope in God, be loving enough to forgive, work for peace and justice on our earth, be a blessing to our family and friends. Amen

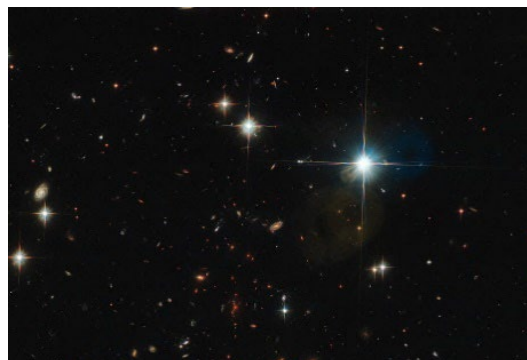
Celebration!

Put on some carols, celebrate with food and drink and enjoy each other's company in the presence of the Holy One.

A Happy and Holy Christmas to you all!



APOD Picture: Hubble/Nasa 18th Jan. 2016



Hubble/NASA