***Introduction and Welcome***

*Be still*

*Be attentive to the divine presence*

(a silent pause is kept)

*God of death and resurrection*

*as the seasons move into mid-winter*

**We come to you**

*in the midst of death*

**We welcome your life giving Spirit**

*as mortals made in your image*

**We welcome each other**

**Welcoming the God of the circle of the seasons**

(as the leaders read each prayer the people face that direction)

*God of the East and sun rising*

**We call to you to bring us light in the darkness**

*God of the South and the warm breeze*

**We call to you to be the embrace between us**

*God of the West and sun setting*

**We call to you as we approach the darkest day**

*God of the North and the cold winds*

**We call to you to be the fire in our hearts**

**Christ Jesus**

**Be the life within us**

**Be the love between us**

**Be the light that guides us**

**This day**

**And for eternity**

***Entering a time for reflection and rest***

The sunnier days have become nights made bright by the presence of stars

The suns heat hidden behind the outreach of moon-cast shadows

The created order enters into a time of laying down

Of resting, of stillness, of waiting, for the coming of the Son.

***Laying down and letting rest (during the 9th century song)***

**Creator of the stars of night,  
your people’s everlasting light,  
O Christ, Redeemer of us all,  
we pray you, hear us when we call.**

**In sorrow that the ancient curse  
should doom to death a universe,  
you came to save a ruined race  
with healing gifts of heav'nly grace.**

**When earth drew on to darkest night,  
you came, but not in splendour bright,  
not as a king, but the child  
of Mary, virgin mother mild.**

**At your great name, majestic now,  
all knees must bend, all hearts must bow;  
all things on earth with one accord  
join those in heav’n to call you Lord.**

**To God the Father, God the Son,  
and God the Spirit, Three in One,  
praise, honour, might, and glory be  
from age to age eternally.**

***St Lucy’s day and old mid-winter***

***Departing and travelling further***

(people face each direction as it is spoken)

*God of the East and the suns rising*

**Bless us now with the inspiration of your light**

*God of the South and the promise of Summer*

**Bless us now with your warmth**

*God of the West as the sunsets upon us*

**Bless us now through the dark hours and at the time of death**

*God of the North and the season of coming winter*

**Bless us now with a season for reflection**

***Procession of light***

**Nightly, go heavy hearts  
Round farm and steading  
On earth, where sun departs,  
shadows are spreading.  
Then on our darkest night,  
Comes with her shining light  
Santa Lucia! Santa Lucia!**

**Night-darkling, huge and still.  
Hark, something's stirring!  
In all our silent rooms,  
Wingbeats are whisp'ring!  
Stands on our threshold there,  
White clad, lights in her hair,  
Santa Lucia! Santa Lucia!**

**Darkness shall fly away  
Through earthly portals.  
She brings such wonderful  
words to us mortals!  
Daylight, again renewed  
will rise, all rosy-hued!  
Santa Lucia! Santa Lucia!**

***Blessing***

*And May the blessing of the God of life and death*

*In whom the seasons grow and fade*

*In whom all of us are held in love*

*Our Father and Mother who made us*

*Our Brother Jesus who mends us*

*Our Sustainer the Spirit who moulds us*

*Be upon as at this time*

*And in all times to come*

*Go in peace, God is with us*

***West Midlands Forest Church and St James, Hill***

***Moving to Mid-Winter:***

***A Celebration for Old Mid-winter***

***And St Lucy’s Day***