

the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. Amen.

*Benediction

LEADER Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping,

PEOPLE **that awake we may watch with Christ,
and asleep rest in his peace.**

LEADER May Almighty God bless, preserve, and keep us,
this night and forevermore.

PEOPLE **Amen.**

*Song

"Abide with Me"

LUYH 466:1-4

*Pass the Peace

Advent Vespers

A Service of Evening Prayer at Covenant CRC



Psalm 88:1-2

Lord, you are the God who saves me;
day and night I cry out to you.
May my prayer come before you;
turn your ear to my cry.

Advent

December 5, 2021

Words of Welcome

Opening Scriptures

Psalm 88:1-4, Isaiah 9:2

LEADER Lord, you are the God who saves me;
day and night I cry out to you.
May my prayer come before you;
turn your ear to my cry.
I am overwhelmed with troubles,
and my life draws near to death.
I am counted among those who go down to the pit;
I am like one without strength.

Silence

LEADER The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

The Christ candle is lit.

Song

"Within Our Darkest Night"

LUYH 417

Greeting

Isaiah 9:6-7, Philippians 1:2

LEADER To us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Silence

Words of Comfort

"Glory in the Darkest Place"

The Fourth Candle: Gratitude for Those Who've Journeyed with Us

LEADER Finally, we light a fourth candle to remember all
who have shared in our sorrow. We pause to thank
God for their compassion, for their presence with us
in times when our hurt went deeper than words
could express. And we remember that God sends his
Holy Spirit to sympathize with our weakness and to
carry our sorrows.

PEOPLE **We thank you, God, for those who hold us close
and point us to your light.**

Silence

Words of Comfort

Matthew 5:4,7

LEADER This is the Word of the Lord.
PEOPLE **Thanks be to God.**

As the music begins, all who wish are invited to the various stations around the sanctuary to prayerfully light a candle in memory, in honor, or in gratitude... in hope, in love, or in defiance of the darkness. You can light your candle from one of the four remembrance candles and then light a smaller candle. You are welcome to keep your candle lit and return to your seat while we continue to sing.

Songs

"Imagine"

LUYH 72

"My Soul in Stillness Waits"

LUYH 63

LEADER Lord, hear our prayer;
PEOPLE **and let our cry come to you.**

Collect

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless

A Litany of Remembrance

The First Candle: Persons Who Have Been Loved and Lost

LEADER We light the first candle and remember those persons who have been loved and lost. We pause here to remember their names, their faces, their voices. We give thanks for the memory that binds them to us in this season.

PEOPLE **Surround us, Lord, with your eternal love.**

Silence

Words of Comfort

Psalm 103:13-17

The Second Candle: Other Occasions of Loss

LEADER We light a second candle mindful of the many sources of loss and grief: the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, or the loss of health. The loss of routine, the loss of certainty, or the loss of a dream. As we gather up all our pain, we offer it to God, asking that into our open hands he will place the gift of peace.

PEOPLE **Hold us, help us, heal us, O God.**

Silence

Words of Comfort

Psalm 139:7-12

The Third Candle: Acknowledging the Pain

LEADER We light a third candle to acknowledge the pain of our loss in this Christmas season. We pause to remember the past weeks, months, and, for some of us, years of difficult times. In the poignancy of memories, we feel all the grief, the sadness, the hurts, and the fears, and we entrust them to Christ, the suffering servant who is victorious over death itself.

PEOPLE **We remember that the dawn overcomes the darkness.**

*Opening Sentences

LEADER Our help is in the name of the Lord;

PEOPLE **the maker of heaven and earth.**

LEADER Jesus Christ is the light of the world,

PEOPLE **the light no darkness can overcome.**

LEADER Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening

PEOPLE **and the day is almost over.**

LEADER Let your light scatter the darkness

PEOPLE **and illumine your church.**

*Song

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

LUYH 56

Prayer of Lament

LEADER Lord God, we long for the coming of your kingdom in Jesus Christ, our Lord. We lament before you the signs that your kingdom has not come in fullness. We lament signs of brokenness in the community of nations.

Silence

LEADER We lament that Christians are persecuted because they profess the name of Jesus.

Silence

Song

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

LUYH 61:7

LEADER We lament the division and disunity within our families, within your church, within our denomination, within our community and within the world.

Silence

LEADER We lament that many of our friends or family have chosen to ignore or disown the gospel of Christ.

Silence

Song

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" *LUYH 61:2*

LEADER We lament the racism that plagues our community and our nation.

Silence

LEADER We lament the physical and emotional abuse of children and spouses in our homes.

Silence

Song

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" *LUYH 61:6*

The Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 11:1-9

Song

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" *LUYH 61:1*

The Psalm

Psalms 88

- 1 Lord, you are the God who saves me;
day and night I cry out to you.
- 2 May my prayer come before you;
turn your ear to my cry.
- 3 I am overwhelmed with troubles
and my life draws near to death.
- 4 I am counted among those who go down to the pit;
I am like one without strength.
- 5 I am set apart with the dead,
like the slain who lie in the grave,
whom you remember no more,
who are cut off from your care.

- 6 You have put me in the lowest pit,
in the darkest depths.
- 7 Your wrath lies heavily on me;
you have overwhelmed me with all your waves.
- 8 You have taken from me my closest friends
and have made me repulsive to them.
I am confined and cannot escape;
- 9 my eyes are dim with grief.
I call to you, Lord, every day;
I spread out my hands to you.
- 10 Do you show your wonders to the dead?
Do their spirits rise up and praise you?
- 11 Is your love declared in the grave,
your faithfulness in Destruction?
- 12 Are your wonders known in the place of darkness,
or your righteous deeds in the land of oblivion?
- 13 But I cry to you for help, Lord;
in the morning my prayer comes before you.
- 14 Why, Lord, do you reject me
and hide your face from me?
- 15 From my youth I have suffered and been close to death;
I have borne your terrors and am in despair.
- 16 Your wrath has swept over me;
your terrors have destroyed me.
- 17 All day long they surround me like a flood;
they have completely engulfed me.
- 18 You have taken from me friend and neighbor—
darkness is my closest friend..

LEADER This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE **Thanks be to God.**

Meditation: One Word of Hope; Countless Community of Hope

*Song

"O Lord, Hear My Prayer" *LUYH 903*