

Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,
All who are dear to us, and all who have no peace.
The night heralds the dawn.
Let us look expectantly to a new day,
new joys, new possibilities.
In your name we pray. Amen.

Collect

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

*Song

"Silent Night/Peace, Peace" *LUYH 85:1-2*

You are invited to add this chorus after vs.1 and 2 of "Silent Night"
Peace, peace, peace on earth and good will to all.
This is a time for joy, this is a time for love.
Now let us all sing together
of peace, peace, peace on earth.

*Benediction

*Sending

LEADER Go forth in the name of the promised Christ.

PEOPLE **Thanks be to God.**

*Pass the Peace

Blue Christmas Vespers

A Service of Evening Prayer at Covenant CRC



Cause of Our Joy

Small as you are, your fragrance
Fills all the world,
Fragrance of hope,
Fragrance of the gospels.

Come to the old woman
Whose lodging is the street
Come to the drugged boy
The landlord, the general
Come to the haunted hunter by his jungle river
Come to the banker, the prisoner, the torturer
The hungry, the shut-in, the runaway in danger
Come to the backward child.

Whether or not we know you
Come to the rich and poor
Come to us all.

-Anne Porter

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 18, 2022

Words of Welcome

LEADER Come all who are weary
of wealth, of poverty, of power, of struggle,
of division
Come all who are heavy-laden
with too much, with too little, with anxiety,
with fear, with anger
Come all who have hope
for liberation, for peace, for freedom,
for the kingdom
Hear these words
"See, I am making all things new."
Light and peace, in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

PEOPLE **Thanks be to God.**

Opening Scriptures

Psalm 139:11-12

LEADER If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me, and the
light around me turn to night," darkness is not dark
to you, O Lord; the night is as bright as the day;
darkness and light to you are both alike.

Silence is kept.

Song

"Within Our Darkest Night"

LUYH 417

*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.**

we have spent blaming ourselves, and you, for all
that we have suffered. We remember that dawn
defeats the darkness. Amen.

The Fourth Candle

LEADER We light this fourth candle to remember faith, the
gift of light and hope that God offers to us in the
story of Christmas.

Silence

LEADER We remember that the loving God who came to
share this life with us promises us comfort and
peace. We remember Jesus, our Messiah, who
shares our burdens, who shows us the way to the
Light, and who journeys the way with us.

PEOPLE **Thanks be to God.**

Candlelighting

*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... for
healing, for hope, for peace... or simply 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

"This Is Our God"

"You Are Holy"

LUYH 598

Prayer for the Night

LEADER Lord, it is night. The night is for stillness.
Let us be still in your presence, O God.
It is night after a long day.
What has been done has been done;
what has not been done has not been done; let it be.
The night is dark.
Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our
own lives rest in you.
The night is quiet.

A Litany of Remembrance

The First Candle

LEADER We light this candle to remember those persons who have been loved and lost. We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices.

Silence

LEADER We embrace and give thanks for the memories that bind them to us in this season of expectation, when all Creation waits for the Light. We remember them with love. May God's eternal love surround them

The Second Candle

LEADER We light this second candle to remember the pain of loss: loss of relationships, loss of trust, loss of jobs, loss of health, loss of faith, the loss of joy.

Silence

LEADER We acknowledge and embrace the pain of the past, O God, and we offer it to You, asking that into our wounded hearts and open hands You will place the gift of peace, shalom. We remember that through You all things are possible. Refresh, restore, and renew us, O God. Amen.

The Third Candle

LEADER We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember the past weeks, months, and for some of us years, that have been heavy with our burdens.

Silence

LEADER We accept and lay before you, God, the sharpness of memory, the sadness and grief, the hurt and fear, the anger and pain. We accept and lay before you the ways we feel we have fallen short, and the times

LEADER Let your light scatter the darkness
PEOPLE **and illumine your church.**

*Song

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

LUYH 61:1-3

The First Lesson

Isaiah 9:2-7

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

Song

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

LUYH 61:4,6

Prayer

The Second Lesson

Matthew 11:28-30

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

Meditation: Rest and Healing

Song

"Come to Me"

Words and music: Wendell Kimbrough
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You are weighed down; you are worried.
Child I see you; child I know you.
Bring your burdens; bring your labor. Come to me.

Chorus:

*Come to me, come to me, come to me if you are weary.
I will give you, I will give you my rest.*

I am gentle; I am humble.
Let me teach you, let me show you.
Trade your burden; mine is easy. Come to me. *(to chorus)*