

AN ADVENT SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE, HOPE AND HEALING

December, 2014

Prelude: Quiet music for quieting your spirit

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER:

LEADER: Almighty God, you are the source of health and healing, the spirit of calm, and the central peace of the universe. We ask that you would fill us with such an awareness of your presence within that we may have complete confidence in you. In all pain and weariness and anxiety may we rest in your protecting care; may we know ourselves to be encircled by your loving power so that we may allow you to give us health and strength and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen

GENERAL CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Leader: Let us confess our sin, in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all men.

All: Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbors,
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Leader: Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy on us,
pardon and deliver us from all our sins,
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,
and keep us in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Music: Hymn There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit in this Place

THE FIRST CANDLE

The candle is lit.

Leader: *The first candle we light is to remember the hope that God gives in the face of disappointment and gloom. In these two scriptures we are reminded that God knows us, hears our prayers, hears our cries for help and gives us hope.*

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 29:11-13 and Psalm 42:1-6

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to

harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Psalms:

.As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long,
“Where is your God?”

These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng.

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God

Leader : Eternal God, our heavenly Father, you love us with an everlasting love, and turn the shadow of death into the morning: We bow before you with reverent and submissive hearts; speak to us afresh your gracious promises, that filled with the hope that comes from you we may be lifted above our darkness and distress into the light of your presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Hymn: The King of Love My Shepherd Is (Vs #1)

THE SECOND CANDLE

The candle is lit.

Leader: The second candle we light is to remember the peace that God gives in the face of turmoil and confusion.

Psalm 46

1. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
- 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved,
and though the mountains be toppled into the depths of the sea:
- 3 Though its waters rage and foam, and though the mountains tremble at its tumult.
- 4 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.
- 5 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
- 6 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be overthrown;
God shall help her at the break of day.
- 7 The nations make much ado, and the kingdoms are shaken;
God has spoken and the earth shall melt away.
- 8 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.
- 9 Come now and look upon the works of the Lord,
what awesome things he has done on earth.
- 10 It is he who makes war to cease in all the world;

he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire.

11 "Be still, then, and know that I am God;

I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth."

12 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Leader : Lord, you alone are God, gracious and merciful, and you invite all who love your name to cast away all fear and anxiety and to lay their burdens on you.

Protect us under the shadow of your wings, and give us now and evermore that everlasting peace which you have promised to those who obey your word; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn: The King of Love My Shepherd Is (verse #2 & 3)

THE THIRD CANDLE

The candle is lit.

Leader The third candle we light is to remember the joy that God gives in the face of bereavement and sorrow.

Psalm 30

1 I will exalt you, O Lord, because you have lifted me up and have not let my enemies triumph over me.

2 O Lord my God, I cried out to you, and you restored me to health.

3 You brought me up, O Lord, from the dead; you restored my life as I was going down to the grave.

4 Sing to the Lord, you servants of his; give thanks for the remembrance of his holiness.

5 For his wrath endures but the twinkling of an eye, his favor for a lifetime.

6 Weeping may spend the night, but joy comes in the morning.

7 While I felt secure, I said, "I shall never be disturbed.

You, Lord, with your favor, made me as strong as the mountains.

8 Then you hid your face, and I was filled with fear.

9 I cried to you, O Lord; I pleaded with the Lord, saying,

10 "What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the Pit? will the dust praise you or declare your faithfulness?

11 Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me; O Lord, be my helper."

12 You have turned my wailing into dancing;

you have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.

13 Therefore my heart sings to you without ceasing;

O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you for ever.

Leader Father of mercies and God of all comfort, look in your tender love and pity on those whose lives are filled with sorrow. Be to them their refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; and as you have delivered us from eternal death, so make us partakers of everlasting joys; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn: The King of Love My Shepherd Is (verse #4)

THE FOURTH CANDLE

The candle is lit.

Leader: The fourth candle we light is to remember the love that God has for us even in times of isolation and loneliness.

Psalm 86

1 Bow down your ear, O Lord, and answer me,
for I am poor and in misery.
2 Keep watch over my life, for I am faithful;
save your servant who puts his trust in you.
3 Be merciful to me, O Lord, for you are my God;
I call upon you all the day long.
4 Gladden the soul of your servant,
for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
5 For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
and great is your love toward all who call upon you.
6 Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplications.
7 In the time of trouble I will call upon you, for you will answer me.
10 For you are great; you do wondrous things; and you alone are God.
11 Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth;
knit my heart to you that I may fear your name.
12 I will thank you, O Lord my God, with all my heart,
and glorify your name for evermore.
13 For great is your love toward me;
you have delivered me from the nethermost pit.
14 The arrogant rise up against me, O God,
and a band of violent men seeks my life;
they have not set you before their eyes.
15 But you, O Lord, are gracious and full of compassion, *
slow to anger, and full of kindness and truth.

Leader: God of love, present in all places and at all times, pour your Spirit of healing and comfort on every lonely heart. Have pity on those bereft of human love and on those to whom love has never come. Be to them a strong consolation and ever-present help, and in the end give them fullness of life, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Hymn: The King of Love (verse 5)

The Christ candle remains unlit as a sign of waiting for Emmanuel, God-with-us.

Responsive Prayer

Leader: Lord of Life and love, we lift up our hearts to you in hope and trust as we come

together to remember our hurts, our losses, our struggles, and our pain. We have experienced loneliness and inner emptiness, yet we know you remember us.

All: You give our lives meaning and hope for your promises cannot fail and your love is unchanging.

Leader: We lift our souls to you, our God, asking you to comfort our lonely hearts, give us strength to face our struggles with courage and hope.

All: Revive our fainting spirits that we may look forward and upward in great faith to our Heavenly home. May our joys as well as our sorrows be touched by your light and love.

Leader: Jesus, Lord of Life, our refuge and strength in every time of need; may we feel your loving, healing presence surrounds us this Advent.

All: Increase our faith, dispel our fears, and lift us from the darkness of sadness into the light of your presence.

Leader: Grant, O Lord, that we may walk in your presence, with your love in our hearts, your truth in our minds, and your strength in our wills.

All: May our Advent and Christmas be filled with reasons to be thankful. Having loved and having been loved is perhaps the most wondrous gift of all.

Leader: Lord, in your mercy Christmas comes again, and in faith we set out on the road to Bethlehem to see this thing that has happened. Lead us on our journey, and kindle in our hearts a spirit of expectancy.

All: May we not rest until we bow in wonder and adoration before the Child of Mary, the everlasting Son of the Father, singing, "Glory to God in the highest!"

Leader: Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer. Amen

LAYING ON OF HANDS AND ANOINTING WITH OIL

Leader: Blessed are you, sovereign God, gentle and merciful, creator of heaven and earth. Your Word brought light out of darkness, and daily your Spirit renews the face of the earth. Your anointed Son brought healing to those in weakness and distress.

He broke the power of evil and set us free from sin and death that we might praise your name for ever. By the power of your Spirit may your blessing rest on those who are anointed with this oil in your name; may they be made whole in body, mind and spirit, restored in your image, renewed in your love, and serve you as sons and daughters in your kingdom. Through your anointed Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit we lift our voices of thanks and praise:

All: Blessed be God, our strength and our salvation, now and for ever. Amen.

Those who wish to receive the ministry of anointing of oil and prayer are invited to come kneel at the altar. Following this you are invited to pray and meditate at your seat or come for prayer with members of the Healing Team.

Continuous music...during anointing and prayer

After you have finished praying, feel free to stay as long as you wish and leave as the spirit leads, praying silently the following benediction:

Benediction

Almighty God, so draw my heart to you, so guide my mind, so fill my imagination, so control my will, that I may be wholly yours. And then use me I pray, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people. Through Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior, Amen.

We commit ourselves to God and leave in his care.

Because the Holy Spirit is continually at work in each of us, pushing us toward wholeness, the process of healing is like removing sticks and leaves from a stream until the water runs clear. If we simply get out of the way of the Lord's work in us, we can trust that we are being led to the particular kind of wholeness God wills for us.