

AN ADVENT SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE, HOPE, AND HEALING

WELCOME

CENTERING SONG

Psalm 62: For God Alone My Soul In Silence Waits

Refrain: *For God alone my soul in silence waits;
surely my hope is in him.*

For God alone my soul in silence waits.
He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my stronghold so that I shall not be shaken. **Refrain**

In God is my safety and my honor;
God is my strong rock and my refuge. **Refrain**

In God is my safety and my honor;
God is my strong rock and my refuge.
Put your trust in him always, O people,
pour out your hearts before him, for God is our refuge. **Refrain**

Opening Hymn: There is a Longing

GATHERING

Leader: In the name of God: Creator, Healer, and Comforter.

All: Blessed be God now and forever.

Leader: Come, all who labor and are heavy-laden;
Come, all who are broken in body or spirit;
Come, all who care for others in any kind of need or sickness.
The Holy One offers comfort, strength, and healing.
Let us pray.

**All: God of all,
draw near to us, who are weary and burdened,
sick and suffering.**

Leader: Open our eyes to see that you are present with us in our pain,
leading us toward health and wholeness.

Fill us with your love,
and open us to your healing grace.

All: Amen.

Lord Of All Hopefulness (Hymn #482)

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy, Whose trust, ever child-like, no cares could destroy, Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray, Your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith, Whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe, Be there at our labours, and give us, we pray, Your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace, Your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace, Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray, Your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm, Whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm, Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray, Your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

Words: Jan Struther (pseudonym of Joyce Anstruther Graham Plaszek, 1901-1953), 1931; © Oxford University Press. Music: *Slane* (Irish traditional melody)

THE FIRST CANDLE: THE CANDLE OF HOPE

Leader: We light the first candle to remember the hope that God gives in the face of disappointment and gloom. God knows us, hears our prayers, listens to our cries for help and gives us hope.

Reading Jeremiah 29:11-13

"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.

Hymn: As longs the Deer for cooling Springs

Prayer

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.

All: Amen.

Silence for reflective meditation on the hope we have through Christ.

THE SECOND CANDLE: THE CANDLE OF PEACE

Leader: We light the second candle to remember the peace that God gives in the face of turmoil and confusion. May the transforming power of the Prince of Peace live within us through His Spirit of Peace.

Reading John 14:26-27

Jesus said, "The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."

Hymn: In Labor All Creation Groans

Prayer

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.

All: Amen.

Silence for reflective meditation letting God's peace fill your heart and mind.

THE THIRD CANDLE: THE CANDLE OF JOY

Leader: We light the third candle to remember the joy that God gives in the face of bereavement and sorrow.

Reading Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Hymn: O Come, O Come Emanuel

Prayer

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.

All: Amen.

Silence for reflective meditation on the gift of the Joy of the Lord.

THE FOURTH CANDLE: THE CANDLE OF LOVE

Leader: We light the fourth candle to remember the love that God has for us especially during times of sadness, isolation and loneliness. Let us reaffirm our trust in the unconditional loving presence of Jesus, God-with-us. Let us welcome his presence and healing love.

Reading Lamentations 3:22-26

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

Hymn: God is Love

Prayer

Leader: Gracious God and Lover of all you have made, we thank you for your great love toward us. You have redeemed us in Christ, and we welcome your infinite Love living in us. Through the light and power of God's Spirit in us, let us know the strength of your love so that together in Christ we may rejoice in you now and forever.

All: Amen.

Silence for reflective meditation on God's infinite love.

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

Responsive Prayer

The people pray the portions in bold.

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.

You give our lives meaning and hope, for your promises cannot fail and your love is unchanging

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.

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.

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

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

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.

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.

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.

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!"

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer. Amen

Hymn: Christ Be Our Light

BENEDICTION

Almighty God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imagination, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours. And then use us as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people. May our God of Hope and Love, grant you strength for today, courage for tomorrow, and fill you with Peace. Through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. **Amen.**