

A Liturgy for the Weary

(Longest Night Service)

December 21, 2023

6:00pm

GATHERING

Gathering Music (VT 225 *We come*)

...we come, we cry, we watch, we wait, we look, we long for you...

Welcome*

Reading: *Weariness Feels Like* (Rev. Sarah Speed)

Advent Candle Lighting

Friends, in the Advent season, we light the candle of hope.

Tonight, we light it for all who feel hopeless. Tonight, this light shines bright for prisoners, for patients with chronic illness, for individuals fighting to get out of debt, for refugees waiting for a safe place to rest, and for relationships that have no clear way forward.

Tonight, we light this candle for the hopeless.

May God's hope find them now.

In this season, we light the candle of peace.

Tonight, we light the candle of peace again for all who need peace. This light shines bright for the anxious and unsettled—for those in seasons of transition and discernment, for all who struggle with mental health, and for people navigating rocky, new beginnings.

May God's peace find them now.

In this season, we light the candle of joy.

Tonight, we light the candle of joy for all who need it. May this light shine for those who are overburdened, overstretched, worn out, and worn down. May this candle shine for those who need a good laugh, even in seasons of grief.

May God's joy find them now.

In this season, we light the candle of love.

Tonight, we light the candle of love again for all who need it. May this light shine for loved ones lost, for love that has been betrayed, for love that has been neglected or forgotten, and for all who long for love and find themselves lonely.

May God's love find them now.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

Opening Hymn: *Hope is a Candle (verses 1-3)* VT 211



THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Reading: *Lamentations 3:19-24; John 14:25-27*

Silent Prayer & Reflection

- *What resonated with you in the scriptures we just heard?*
- *Where do you need comfort in your life?*
- *Who or what are you praying for this night?*

RESPONSE

Written Prayer | Prayer Moons

Candle Lighting

Bless the Lord, My Soul VT 127

As you are comfortable, you may come forward and light a candle. The candle can be lit as a prayer request for you or someone you love, as a light to honor someone lost, or as a signal of hope. When you return to your seat, we invite you to draw a prayer moon from the basket to pray for over the week. Let us pray. Let us sing. Let us share the light.

Prayer of Gratitude

Hymn *Away in a Manger* VT 257

SENDING

Benediction

Sending Music

... linger as long as you'd like to pray in silence. When you are ready, you can make your way downstairs to the fellowship hall for a soup supper, followed by an opportunity to go Christmas caroling in the church neighborhood.

Sound: Adam Pounds

Livestream: Jonathan Wenger

Piano: Pastor Tonya Ramer Wenger

Worship Leaders: Pastor Jim Unruh, Pastor Tonya

Reading: Julie Goering

Scripture Reader: Sara Blodgett

**Liturgy and Prayers by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org*

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Hope Is a Candle [#VT211](#)

Music - ©2006 MennoMedia Inc.

Contributors: James E. Clemens

Bless the Lord / Tengo Sed de Ti [#87200](#)

Words and Music - ©1991 Taizé, Les Presses de (North America)

Contributors: Jacques Berthier, Taizé Community

Child of the Poor [#80115](#)

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Contributors: Scott R Soper, GREENSLEEVES, Scott Soper

Go Tell It on the Mountain – harmonization [#95988](#)

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PUBLIC DOMAIN

O Come, O Come, Immanuel

Text: anon., O Antiphons, ca. 8th-9th c.; “Veni, veni Emmanuel,” 12th c.; stanzas 1–5 trans. John Mason Neale (England), *Medieval Hymns and Sequences*, 1851, alt.; stanzas 6–7 trans. Henry Sloane Coffin (USA), *Hymns of the Kingdom of God*, 1916

Music: trope melody (present-day France), 15th c.

Away in a Manger

Text: stanzas 1–2 anon., *Little Children’s Book* (USA), 1885; stanza 3 Vineyard Songs, 1892

Music: James R. Murray (USA), *Dainty Songs for Little Lads and Lasses*, 1887