



*"An inclusive community, celebrating God's unconditional love
through engaging worship and faithful service"*



December 21, 2021
A Light in the Darkness:
A Contemplative Christmas Solstice Service

For Light

*Light cannot see inside things,
That is what the dark is for:
Minding the interior,
Nurturing the draw of growth
Through places where death
In its own way turns into life...*

*And when we come to search for God,
Let us first be robed in night,
Put on the mind of morning
To feel the rush of light
Spread slowly inside
The color and stillness
Of a found world.*

~ selected verses by John O'Donohue
from *To Bless the Space Between Us*

~GATHERING~

Gathering Music

You are invited to greet those around you or sit quietly.

Ringing of the Bell

Prelude

“The Peace Carol”

B. Beers

Words of Welcome

Pastor Clare Gromoll

The Calling

One: This is a time of expectation, a season when everything around us seems to be alight with anticipation. We gather in quiet hope, like the stars who shine with beauty, unvoiced and undemanding, whose depth is seen most clearly in the darkest of nights.

All: Let us hold each other now, we who are awaiting the light, listening and waiting for the comfort and hope we seek.

*****Advent Carol**

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

#116

Vs. 1-2, 6-7

*****Advent Candle Lighting**

Hannah & Evelyn Wulff,
Carol Dusbabek

One: Advent is a season of waiting and watching for God’s presence with us. Today we light the first candle of HOPE, the second candle of PEACE, the third candle of JOY, and the fourth candle of LOVE. As we seek to fulfill our congregation’s purpose; we are wondering, longing, and expecting the new life that God is bringing forth among us.

All: We welcome this new life that embraces all beings with hope, peace, joy, and love!

*****Advent Candle Song**

“In the Darkness, Light a Light”

*German carol
words by Judith Melander*

see page 4



In the dark - ness, light a light; Ad - vent can - dle, warm and bright, Fire of love in



dark of night. Em - man - u - el! We wait for you, O Je - sus.

*****Prayer of Longing**

God of fathomless love, in this moment, we open ourselves to you. Help us to set down and rest from the worries of this season. We cannot fix every problem and nothing will be perfect, but you still love us. You call us to share ourselves with those who need support, to listen when another is brave enough to speak, and to not allow fear and anger to color our actions. Thank you for the joy you offer, even in the midst of all the grief and suffering we encounter.

prayerful silence

*****Assurance of Grace & Invitation to Pass the Peace**

We safely share a sign of peace with those nearest to us

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you! All: And also with you!

~IN A TIME OF DARKNESS~

Invitation

Sung Response

“In Silence We Wait”

by Susan Masters

Cantor sings once, then we sing together twice more

**In silence we wait,
in darkness you come to us;
bring us your light.**

First Candle **Darkness to Light**

One: Light looked out and saw darkness.

All: "I will go there," said Light.

One: "I will go..."

Singing Bowl Meditation (*holds us in a moment of silence*)

Second Candle **War to Peace**

One: Peace looked out and saw war.

All: "I will go there," said Peace.

One: "I will go..."

Singing Bowl Meditation

Third Candle **Hatred to Love**

One: Love looked out and saw hatred.

All: "I will go there," said Love.

One: "I will go..."

Singing Bowl Meditation

Fourth Candle **Losing to Finding**

One: Together, we say:

All: **We looked out and saw who and what was missing.**

One: "I will go there," said the Holy One...

Singing Bowl Meditation

Sung Response

"In Silence We Wait"

by Susan Masters

We sing three times

**In silence we wait,
in darkness you come to us;
bring us your light.**

~FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT~

A Reading From The Prophets

Mary Maren Bjork

Isaiah 61: 1-4, 10-11

The Spirit of Exalted God is upon me, for God has anointed me:
God has sent me to bring good news to those who are poor; to heal
broken hearts; to proclaim release to those held captive and liberation
to those in prison;

to announce a year of favor from God,
and the day of God's vindication; to comfort all who mourn,

to provide for those who grieve in Zion—to give them a wreath of
flowers instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of tears, a cloak of
praise instead of despair. They will be known as trees of integrity,
planted by God to display God's glory.

They will restore the ancient ruins, and rebuild sites long devastated;
they will repair the ruined cities, neglected for generations.

I will joyfully exult in God, who is the joy of my soul!

My God clothed me with a robe of deliverance and wrapped me in a
mantle of justice, the way a bridegroom puts on a turban and a bride
bedecks herself with jewels.

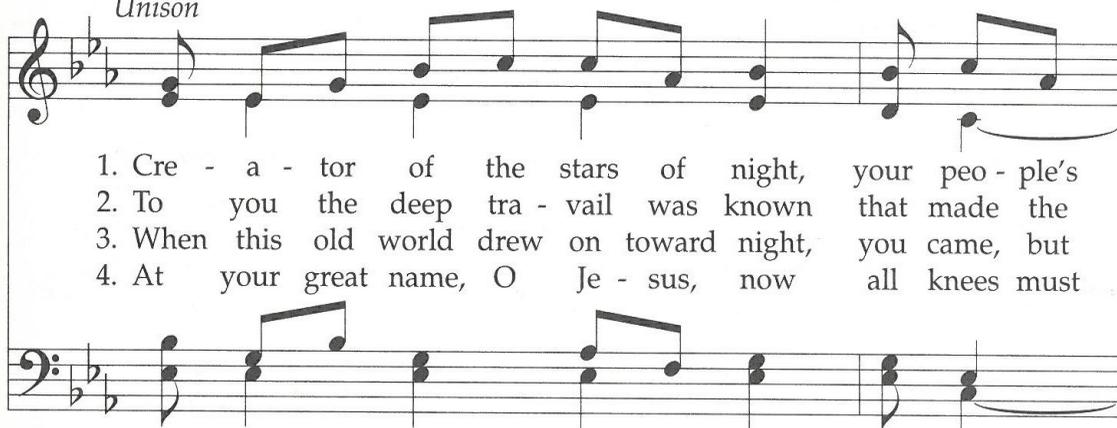
For as the Earth brings forth its shoots, and a garden brings its seeds
to blossom, so Exalted God makes justice sprout, and praise spring up
before all nations.

Carol

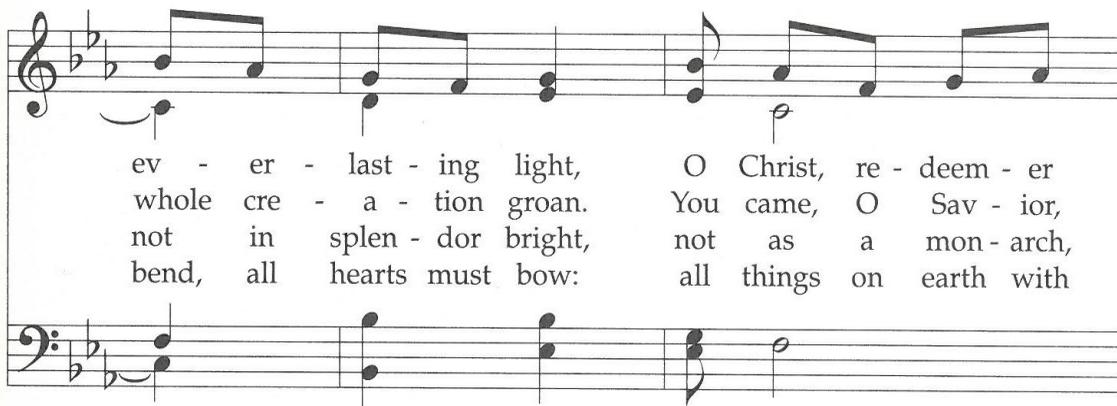
“Creator of the Stars of Night”

*Chalice Hymnal #127
see page 7*

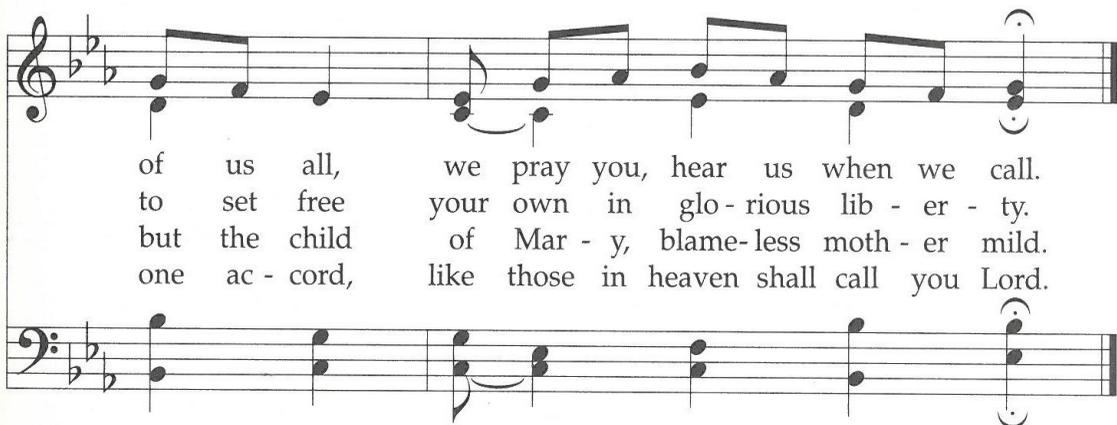
Unison



1. Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, your peo - ple's
2. To you the deep tra - vil was known that made the
3. When this old world drew on toward night, you came, but
4. At your great name, O Je - sus, now all knees must



ev - er - last - ing light, O Christ, re - deem - er
whole cre - a - tion groan. You came, O Sav - ior,
not in splen - dor bright, not as a mon - arch,
bend, all hearts must bow: all things on earth with



of us all, we pray you, hear us when we call.
to set free your own in glo - rious lib - er - ty.
but the child of Mar - y, blame - less moth - er mild.
one ac - cord, like those in heaven shall call you Lord.

Luke 1: 26-38

Six months later, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a young woman named Mary; she was engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. Upon arriving, the angel said to Mary, “Rejoice, highly favored one! God is with you! Blessed are you among women!”

Mary was deeply troubled by these words and wondered what the angel’s greeting meant. The angel went on to say to her, “Don’t be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. You’ll conceive and bear a son, and give him the name Jesus—‘Deliverance.’ His dignity will be great, and he will be called the Only Begotten of God. God will give Jesus the judgment seat of David, his ancestor, to rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will never end.”

Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have never been with a man?”

The angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you—hence the offspring to be born will be called the Holy One of God. Know too that Elizabeth, your kinswoman, has conceived a child in her old age; she who was thought to be infertile is now in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible with God.”

Mary said, “I am the servant of God. Let it be done to me as you say.”
With that, the angel left her.

Sung Response

“Wait for the Lord”

Taizé Community

Soloist sings once, then all sing three times

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The first system has the lyrics: "Wait for the Lord, whose day is near." The second system has the lyrics: "Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!" The piano accompaniment features chords and moving lines in both hands, with some notes beamed together. The vocal line is simple and clear, with some notes marked with a colon to indicate a longer duration.

***A Reading From The Prophets

Isaiah 9: 2-6

The people walking in darkness are seeing a brilliant light—
upon those who dwell in a land of deep shadows light is shining!

God, you have made the nation greater—you have brought them
abundant joy! They celebrate in your presence as with the harvest
celebrations, or as warriors celebrate when dividing spoils.

For the yoke that burdened them, the weight on their shoulders, t
he rod of their oppressors—you have shattered it,
as you did at the defeat of Midian.

For every boot that tramped in battle, every cloak that was dragged
through blood, is now used as fuel for the fire.

For a child is born to us, an heir is given us, upon whose shoulders
dominion will rest. This One shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the
Strength of God, Eternal Protector, Champion of Peace.

*Lighting the Christ Candle

~A TIME FOR PRAYER~

Christmas Intercession

“When the World Was Dark”

Adapted for the Iona Community Resource *Cloth for the Cradle*

Invitation to the Lighting of Prayer Candles

*We invite you to come forward and place your written prayer request in the bowl, then light a candle as a sign of **hope** for comfort from grief, **healing** from struggle, and **strength** for whatever trial or challenge we are facing, alone or together.*

Interlude

“Star Child”

Young

Played while prayers are brought forward and candles lit

~OFFERING OUR GIFTS~

Invitation to Offer Our Gifts

Prayer of Dedication

To you, O Holy One, we offer something of what we have for the compassionate care of those we may not know. Take these gifts, and speed them to those in need of finding *hope, healing, and strength*. In the name of One who brings good tidings to the afflicted, binds up the broken-hearted, and brings release to all who are bound, we pray. Amen.

Offertory**“Koppangen”(Holy Night)**

by Pereric Moraeus
Sung by Claire Bjork

The opening verse is first sung in its original Swedish, then in English

There is silence around me in this peaceful winter night.
From the church down in the valley I can see the candlelight.

And I stopped for a moment in this winter paradise,
When I heard a choir singing through the darkness and the ice.

And the rays of lights behind the window's vaulted frames
Have united the souls in hope that something great is waiting.
And I know that those who have left us here had the same thoughts as I,
We're like flames in the darkness and stars up in the sky.

And I see how they sparkle and they fade before my eyes
And the truth is coming closer like a wonder in disguise.
We are caught here for a moment like an imprint of a hand
On an old and frosted window or a footprint in the sand.

For a while I'm eternal—that's the only thing I know,
I am here, and we share our dreams about our destination.
It is cold out here, the snow is white, but I'm warm deep inside.
I am warm, 'cause I know that my faith will be my guide.

Now there is silence around me; I have heard those words again
In a hymn of grace and glory saying, "Nothing is in vain!"
I can sing, and believe it, let the message reach the sky:
O silent night, let your promise never die.

And I long for the others; it is peaceful in the church.
He was born for a purpose, and that's why we're here together.
Holy night, I feel like a child inside, and indeed, I believe
So there's light in the darkness upon this Christmas eve.

Poetry**How the Light Comes**

by Jan Richardson

Sending Forth

Carol	“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”	#131
Postlude	“Prayer of Peace”	unknown

*Please depart the Sanctuary quietly, greeting one another in hushed tones
You are welcome to linger in the quiet and candlelight
Please join us afterward for treats and conversation downstairs*

Join us for upcoming worship services:

- Christmas Eve, 7 or 9 pm (RSVP, arrive early for gathering music)
 - Dec. 26, 9:30 am
 - Jan 2, 9:30 am @ People’s Park

If so moved, we encourage you to make a donation to “Offering & Tithes” (our general fund). By scanning the QR Code, which takes you to the “Giving” page on our website.



Thank you for all who made today wonderful: Music Dir. Michael Bjork, Worship Accompanist Sharon Neuenfeldt & Claire Bjork (beautiful music), Carol Dusbabek & Mary Maren Bjork (liturgists), Evelyn & Hannah Wulff (acolytes), Matt & Hannah Wulff (greeters), Sue Favilla & Team (fellowship hosts), Kimberly Jackson (recorder)



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