

A Service of Light..



...in the Midst of Darkness

Special Music

There's Still My Joy

Welcome and Invitation

Come Immanuel!

Leader: Come, Immanuel, God with us to be.
Come down from paradise and occupy
This dirty stable of humanity.
Come and live rough, as we do; come and die.

All: Come and be lonely as an orphaned child.
Come to where grief is harvested and stored.
Come to where empty aged minds run wild.
Come to the hospice and the cancer ward.

Leader: Come, flee from tyrants as a refugee.
Come be betrayed by those you counted friends.
Come and be tortured with no amnesty.
Come as the means to justify all ends.

All: Come and be broken like a Christmas toy.
Come, be completely human - then we'll know
Your sorrow may bring hope of lasting joy
And God above is God with us below.

Scripture Reading:

Isaiah 9:2,6

Pew Bible pg. 555

Lighting of the First Advent Candle

Reader 1: We light our first candle a single light that the deepest darkness cannot conquer
- small
- insignificant
but a sign of hope.

All: Let it speak to us, of the tiny, flame of hope buried within us -
The stubborn little light that refuses to be extinguished
By all that life has thrown at it.

Second Scripture Reading:

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Pew Bible pg. 538

Lighting of the Second Advent Candle

Reader 2: We light our second candle
a companion to the first -
equally small -
equally insignificant -
but witnessing to the hope that another light brings.

All: Let it speak to us of the light of companionship -
of our families and our friends -
of strangers
and kindnesses found in unexpected places that restored our hope in
human nature.

Third Scripture Reading

Psalms 30:1-5

Pew Bible pg. 439

Lighting of the Third Advent Candle

Reader 3: We light our third candle
recalling nights of watching and waiting
- sleepless
- anxious when dawn seemed to ebb further from the horizon
and hope seemed forlorn.

All: Let it speak to us of the sureness of morning -
of the passing of darkness
of suffering -
and the promise of an eternal sunrise
dawning for those we have loved and lost
and dawning too for us -
though we may yet be in that darkest hour before the dawn.

Fourth Gospel Reading

John 1:1-5,14

Pew bible pg. 864

Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle

Reader 4: We light our fourth candle -
marking the closing of the Advent Season
and the immediacy of Christmas -
a time of peace and joy we may not ourselves feel able to welcome -
as our spirits dwell in dark and wintriness.

All: Let it speak to us of hope -
of being together in this place of healing and wholeness -
of our companionship this night
at the turning of the year -
of faith that we and those we have loved and lost
are held eternally in the hand of the One who bought light into
being -
and who knows each one of us by name.

Reflection & Prayer with Music

Somewhere in Your Silent Night

Somewhere in Your Silent Night (chorus)

Somewhere in your silent night
Heaven hears the song
your broken heart has cried
Hope is here, just lift your head
For love has come to find you
Somewhere in your silent night

“Somewhere in Your Silent Night,” by Mark Hall, Matthew West, and Bernie Herms.
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[During this time you are invited to write the name of person or situation in need of prayer on a strip of cloth. You are then invited to lay the cloth at the manger, as it was a manger that cradled new life in the form of a baby - Jesus, Emmanuel, God with Us.]

Cloths Naming

Intercessions

Communion Liturgy

When there was only chaos,
you whispered of your hopes,
God of every moment,
and light shattered the shadows,
water raced down the valleys,
creatures beyond imagination
grazed in the abundant fields.
You created all which is beautiful
for those shaped in your image,
but loneliness became our companion,
grief wrapped its arms around us,
fear sang its carols to us,
and our dreams turned to nightmares.
So that we would know you are with us
in these moments, these days, these lives,
you became one of us, Jesus walking among us,
reminding us of your promises to us,
not only in the songs of the angels,
but in the quiet whispers of hope
which are lullabied to us in the night.

You are not only holy, God of hope,
you know the pain we have felt,
you have mingled your tears with ours,
you have wept at the graveside of a loved One.

The angelic chorus told of your glory and wonder,
yet Jesus came to let us know of your compassion.
He could have remained safe in the cradle of grace,
but became as poor as we often feel.
He could have clothed himself in holiness,
but knew the humility of wondering
where his next meal might come from,
whether or not he had a place to sleep at night.
He could have trampled death and sin into the dust,

to life that is whole and complete,
where promises are fulfilled,
where hope is the bed
where we can rest our wearied souls.

We believed we will find acceptance,
because Jesus was rejected;
we trust we know new life,
because Jesus experienced our death;
we look to that day when all weeping is done,
when pain and loss is behind us
and we are welcomed into that kingdom called eternity.

As your Spirit moved upon the waters of creation,
filling them with life beyond imagination,
may it move upon the gifts of the Table.

We hunger for hope in the midst of despair,
for life when grief seems to never leave our side,
for wonder where there are only shadows,
and you feed us with that Life which
will never depart from us, but be with us
On this night and in all moments to come.

Our souls are parched from the deserts of our lives,
we thirst for joy in a world burgeoning with sorrow,
the deep pools of love have gone dry,
and you hand us that cup of grace
which will never run empty
but will continue to fill us
the waters of life forever.

On this night, remind us that your morning of hope will come;
in our sorrow, wrap us in the swaddling cloths of healing;
in our loneliness, help us to find you as the Friend who never leaves us;
in our loss, whisper to us your promise that we will be fulfilled
in the future you hold before us in the longest nights.
God in Community, Holy in One, be with us now and forever. **Amen.**

Communion

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

O come O come Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear

O come, Thou, Dayspring from on high
And cause Thy light on us to rise
Disperse the gloomy cluds of night
And death's dark shadow put to flight
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel

O come O come true prophet of the
Lord
And turn the key to heaven's door
Be Thou our comforter and guide
And lead us to the Father's side

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall by His word our darkness dispel

O come our great High Priest and inter-
cede
Thy sacrifice our only plea
The judgment we no longer fear
Thy precious blood has brought us near
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Has banished every fear of hell

O Come Thou King of nations bring
An end to all our suffering
Bid every pain and sorrow cease
And reign now as our Prince of Peace
Rejoice! Rejoice Emmanuel
Rejoice! Rejoice Emmanuel

Closing Song

Silent Night

Silent night, holy night,
all is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heav-
enly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,

heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the
Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night
Son of God, love's pure light;
Radiant beams from thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at
thy birth.

Benediction

*Christmas Eve through the Epiphany
Worship Schedule*

12/24 Christmas Eve 10am- Family Friendly Service

(with glow stick candlelight)

7pm - Traditional Service with candlelight/communion

12/30

*10am - Joint Community Service at Zion UMC,
Lexington Park, MD*

1/6/19

10am - Star Service/Epiphany Sunday

*Weeping may remain for a night,
but rejoicing comes in the morning. -Psalm 51b*

*Musicians: Deborah Frounfelker - piano
Bruce O'Donnel - guitar*

Pastor Dottie Yunger - Lead Pastor

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