

EVENING WORSHIP CHRISTMAS MOURNING | DECEMBER 10, 2017

**Indicates standing, as you are able, in body or in spirit.*

We stand in our sanctuary singing joyous Christmas Carols basking in the glow of joy and wonder. We look forward to celebrations of Christ's Birth and the festive proclamations of "Joy to the World."

However, for some in our congregation, it is not calm, bright, or joyful. Christmas is a dark time in which grief is profound, loss seems keenly painful and overwhelming sadness that seems out of place. The wait and the pain of the "not yet" of Advent seems more relevant and recognize the pain. Let us do so in the context of the Christmas promise and with the birth of Christ as fulfillment and joy.

Prelude

**Savior of the Nations, Come*

Lift Up Your Hearts #74:1,4,6,7

**God's Greeting*

**Passing of the Peace*

**Comfort, Comfort Now My People*

Lift Up Your Hearts #59

Offering Kuyper College

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

On Sundays during Advent, we arrive for worship, and we light candles representing peace, hope, joy, love, and light. As we light a new candle each week, we use the added glow of candlelight to show our rising anticipation for the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, a time of joy, fulfillment, and wonder. This evening we light the same candles, but we do so to honor the fact that for many people Christmas joy is masked with darkness and pain. While others around us are caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season and are busy making plans, many of us are frozen in our grief and sorrow. So tonight, we light our Advent candles to acknowledge that Jesus Christ came into a broken and sinful world and became the incarnate Lord who keenly knows all our thoughts and feelings and meets us where we are.

**(sing) O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.**

We light the candle of Peace...praying that in a world where there seems to be no peace, in all the unsettled places in our own lives, in our anxieties and fears, you would be our Prince of Peace.

**(sing) O come, desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease, and be thyself our King of peace.**

We light the candle of Hope...acknowledging our hopelessness. We often despair about broken relationships, about our inability to rectify a bad situation, about our addictions, about our own never-ending sadness. We pray that you would be hope to the hopeless.

**(sing) O come, O Key of David, come and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.**

We light the candle of Joy...though joy may be difficult to find because of our physical surroundings or our emotional and mental state. We pray that your joy would be our strength.

**(sing) O come, O come, great Lord of might, who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times did give the law in cloud and majesty and awe.**

We light the candle of Love...acknowledging that our love for others can be the source of so much pain. We miss those whom we love but are no longer here this Christmas. We grieve with those whom we love who are suffering. We struggle with feelings of being unloved. "Love divine, all loves, excelling, joy of heaven, to earth come down." Show us your love.

**(sing) O come, O Bright and Morning Star, and bring us comfort from afar!
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night and death's dark shadows put to flight.**

The Christ Candle represents light, remains unlit. For it is in darkness that we meet tonight and in darkness that we gather together to pray, to find comfort, and to be reminded of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World who meets us in this place.

**(sing) O come, O Key of David, come and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.**

Psalm 88

Holy Bible, pg. 925

Meditation

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Lift Up Your Hearts #465

A Time of Prayer and Personal Meditation

During this time, you may come forward and pray with a prayer partner or pray quietly at your seat.

If you come forward, you may ask for prayer for yourself or for another person, and you may be as specific or as private as you desire.

If you remain in your seats, please be encouraged to pray for those in our congregation and community that are currently experiencing grief, loss, and sorrow.

Psalm 142

I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy.

I pour out before him my complaint; before him, I tell my trouble.

When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who watch over my way. In the path where I walk, people have hidden a snare for me. Look and see, there is no one at my right hand; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life.

I cry to you, LORD; I say, “You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.” Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me. Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.

Lord Jesus, loving Savior, few things in life are worse than to be in trouble and to be alone. When the burden of living is great and the snares of the world are complex, be our companion and our peace. Cover us with your presence until we again find tranquility and joy. Amen.

My Soul in Stillness Waits

Lift Up Your Hearts #63

**God’s Blessing*

**Praise the Lord Who Heals*

Lift Up Your Hearts #442

Postlude

Preaching: Rev. Rick Pinckney

Audio: Dave Ronda

Reader: Bev Vanderwell

Prayer leaders: Bob Boersma, Carol Couwenhoven, Rick Pinckney

Organ: Kevin Soodsma

Violin: Alyssa Peters

Song Leader: Laura Pinckney

First Coming

Madeliene L'Engle

*He did not wait till the world was ready,
Till men and nations were at peace.
He came when the Heavens were unsteady,
And prisoners cried out for release.*

*He did not wait for the perfect time.
He came when the need was deep and great.
He dined with sinners in all their grime,
Turned water into wine.*

*He did not wait till hearts were pure.
In joy, he came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished shame
He came, and his Light would not go out.*

*He came to a world, which did not mesh,
To heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh
The Maker of the stars was born.*

*We cannot wait till the world is sane
To raise our songs with joyful voice,
For to share our grief, to touch our pain,
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!*