

St Paul's United Church
Longest Night
December 21st 2014

We Gather

Words of Welcome

Hymn Come and Find the Quiet Centre VU 374

We Come Before God

Call to Worship

Hear my voice, O God, when I call; have mercy and answer me.
Your face, O God, I seek.

***Do not hide your face from me; do not reject your servant
in anger, you who have been my helper.***

Do not cast me off, or forsake me, O God my Saviour.

***Though darkness may surround me, my God will light my
way.*** *Adapted from Psalm 27*

Scripture Readings

Matthew 1 (selected verses)

John 1 (selected verses)

Hymn O Come, O Come Emmanuel VU 1(VS 1-5)

Message A Light Within the Darkness

We Respond to God's Word

A Candle Lighting Liturgy: Safe Now In God's Hands

Resource: Gathering Advent Year B

Each year during Advent, we use a wreath to help us keep track of the time leading up to Christmas. The traditional names of the candles are hope, peace, joy and love. Tonight we use this wreath to help us in our journey towards Christmas without our loved ones. We will light a candle, invite you to quiet reflection. We will return to the moment with a responsive offering followed by the singing of

to my life.

(when all have come forward, one more candle is lit)
I light this candle for all those named in our hearts, held in the love of God, who brighten our days and nights.

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Sharing the Brightness of Our Loved Ones

And now we share their light with one another. Do they not still warm our hearts and bring us light? Blessed be.

Hymn Sisters Let Us Walk Together MV 179

Prayers of the People & Lord's Prayer

Call: God, hear our prayer...

~~**Response: And in your love answer.**~~

Hymn Silent Night VU 67

Commissioning and Benediction (Unison)

***We return to the world from which we came: a world of pain,
a world of promise; the world which God loved so much the
Christ was sent among us. May we be filled with hope for
tomorrow as we journey there together. AMEN***

St. Paul's Christmas Worship Services

Sunday, Dec. 21: 4th Sunday of Advent

7:00 p.m. Longest Night service at St. Paul's United
with Leadership provided by Rev. Ellen
Bearisto and Rev. Richard Bowley

Christmas Eve Services

7:00 p.m. Family Service

11:00 p.m. Holy Communion

Lord listen to your children praying.

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The Candle of Our Loved Ones

Think of them as you have known them through the years-speak their names in your heart or on your lips-invite them to be present with us now.

(moment of silence)

Those hearts that we have treasured
Safe now in God's hands.

Lord, listen to your children praying.
Lord send your Spirit in this place.
Lord, listen to your children praying.
Send us love, send us power, send us grace.

The Candle of Life Shared

Think of the time you had with one another-whether it was long or short, smooth or troubled-moments, occasions, lifetimes...

(moment of silence)

The lives that we have shared
Safe now in God's hands.

Lord, listen to your children praying.
Lord send your Spirit in this place.
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Send us love, send us power, send us grace.

The Candle of the Journey of Grief

When your loved one died, life as you knew it ceased to be. You were thrust on a journey of grief, a journey into the unknown. Think of some of the places this journey has taken you so far.

(moment of silence)

The journeys of our living
Safe now in God's hands.

Lord, listen to your children praying.
Lord send your Spirit in this place.
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Send us love, send us power, send us grace.

The Candle of the Life Ahead

As you live into the future, day by day, now that God is with you. Place yourself in God's care.

(moment of silence)

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The future, as the past,
Safe now in God's hands.

Lord, listen to your children praying.
Lord send your Spirit in this place.
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Send us love, send us power, send us grace.

The Christ Candle

The fifth candle is the Christ candle. Through this experience of love and loss, there has never been a moment when you have been alone, for Christ is with you. Put your hand into his as you continue the journey. Let him be your guide and your support.

(moment of silence)

The candle of companionship
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Send us love, send us power, send us grace.

Remembering Our Loved Ones

We feel the presence of our loved ones here tonight-it is almost tangible. And so now I invite you, if you wish, to come forward, light a candle for loved ones, and speak their name aloud or whisper it from the depths of your heart. They surround us with their love and care. They are present with us. If you do not wish to come forward, feel free to remain seated, embraced by those who love you, embraced by God. If you feel called to come forward later or at the end of our time together, allow the Spirit to move you. As you come forward music will be laying softly in the background.

I light this candle for (name), a person who was light

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