



Join Zoom Worship (login beginning at 12 Noon EDT)

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Sunday, December 20, 2020 7:00 pm

The service begins in silence so all may participate in a time of reflection: May God help each of us to participate tonight and throughout the season as we are able.

HYMN 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.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
who orderest all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow, a light has shone. For the yoke that was weighing upon them, and the burden upon their shoulders, you have broken in pieces, O God, our Redeemer.

Let us pray:

God of mercy, hear our prayer in this Advent season for ourselves and for our families who live with painful thoughts and memories. We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow and peace for the past. We ask these things in the name of your Christ, who shares our life in joy and sorrow, death and new birth, despair and promise. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

ISAIAH 40:1, 25-31

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.
To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One.
Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these?
He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name;
because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing.
Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel,
'My way is hidden from the Lord,
and my right is disregarded by my God'?
Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.
He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.
Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;
but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

Silent meditation on the reading.

PSALM 121

I will lift up my eyes to the hills, from where is my help to come?
My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth
He will not let your foot be moved and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.
Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord himself watches over you; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.
So that the sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.
The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; it is he who shall keep you safe.
The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth for ever more.

Silent meditation on the reading.

MATTHEW 11:28-30

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Silent meditation on the reading.

HYMN O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them victory over the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

**A LITURGY OF REMEMBRANCE
Lighting of Four Advent Candles****First Candle**

The first candle we light to remember those persons whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember their name, their voice, their face, the memory that binds them to us in this season. We hold them before God, giving thanks for their lives in ours.

Please take a moment to remember those who have died. I invite you to name them, aloud or in the silence of your hearts....

Please feel free to name those you have loved and lost.

Lord, each of us takes our loved one by the hand and leads them to you, the God of love, Here we present them to you. Accept our love and thanksgiving as we entrust them to your loving care. We want our loved ones to be free at home with you. We ask that you save a place for us beside them. We ask that you fill us with motivation and energy in the days ahead when we feel like giving up; remind us often of our true homeland when we are caught up in the desolation of the journey. Help us to find joy in the people, events and the beauty of nature which surrounds us.

Thank you for the gift each of these people has been in our lives. We want to believe that we will celebrate the treasure of love with them again, when we are all in your presence forever. May this truth sustain us in the days to come. Take our sad and aching hearts and comfort us. Comfort us, for we only feel hollowness and emptiness. God of sorrowing, draw near! Amen.

HYMN O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Fourth Candle

The fourth candle we light as a sign of hope, the hope that the Christmas story offers to us. We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

O God whose spirit is known by those whose hearts are thankful, and who makes cheerfulness a companion of strength, lift up our hearts, we pray, to a joyous confidence in your care. Guide us when we cannot see the way. Teach us to know that a shadow is only a shadow, because the light of eternal goodness shines behind the object of our fears. Where there is love in life, teach us to find it; help us to trust it and enable us to grow in the power of love. So may our lives bring comfort and encouragement to others. We ask it, in the name of Jesus Christ whose life is our light. Amen.

HYMN O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

**O come, thou Root of Jesse's tree,
an ensign of thy people be;
before thee rulers silent fall;
all peoples on thy mercy call.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

In the spirit of this season let us now confidently ask our God for all the good things we need: For ourselves as we participate in this Christmas as special people coping with our many different losses.

In your mercy, hear our prayer.

For our families and friends, that they may continue to help and support us.

In your mercy, hear our prayer.

For any person we have loved who has died, for all the losses we know in our lives, that all may be redeemed by your Easter promise.

In your mercy, hear our prayer.

For our family and friends, that you may bless them with love, peace, and joy.

In your mercy, hear our prayer.

For peace throughout the world as proclaimed by the Christmas Angels on that faraway hillside.

In your mercy, hear our prayer.

For greater understanding of the lessons of love and acceptance as taught by Jesus your Christ.

In your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of great compassion and love, listen to the prayers of these your people. Grant to all, especially the bereaved and troubled ones this Christmas, the blessing we ask in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray

