

Another Advent, A Blue Christmas

A SERVICE OF COMPLINE
EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS
DECEMBER 15, 2020



Prelude

The Uses of Sorrow

(In my sleep I dreamed this poem)

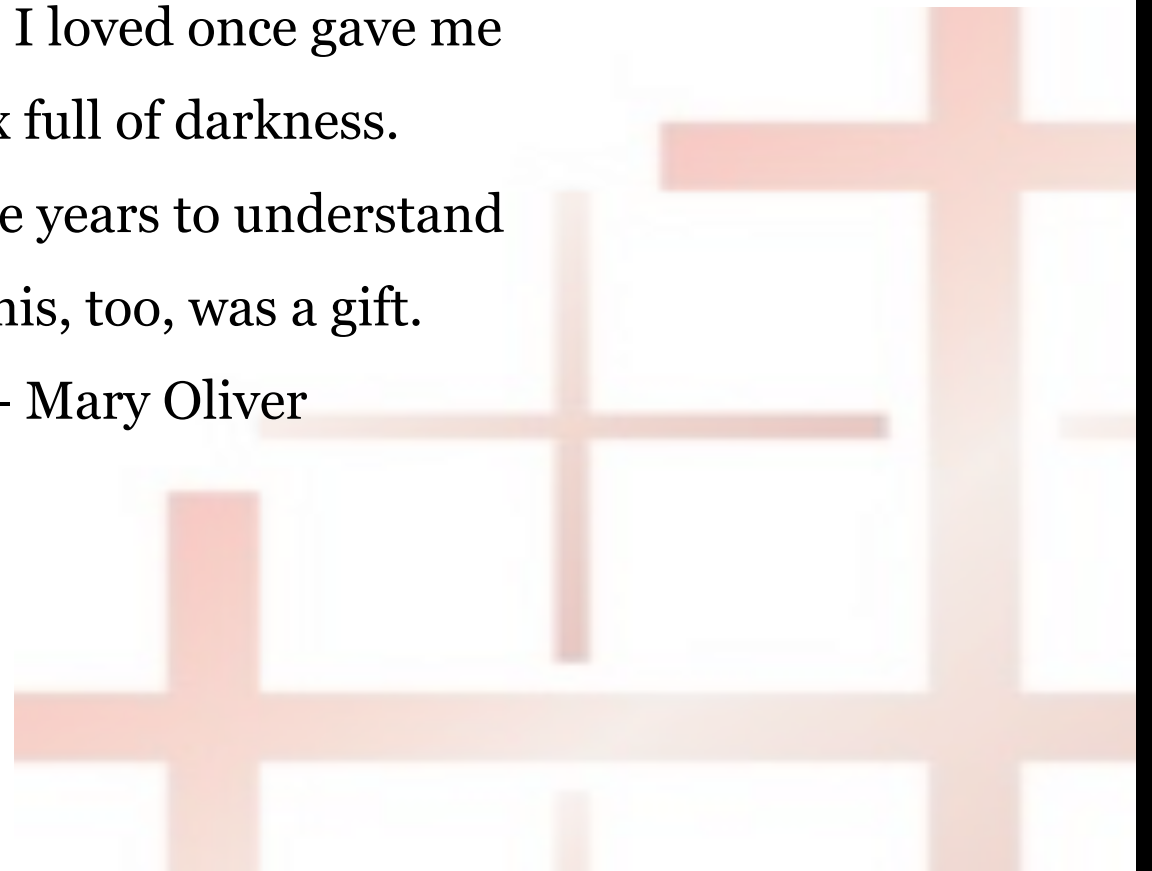
Someone I loved once gave me

a box full of darkness.

It took me years to understand

that this, too, was a gift.

– Mary Oliver



Welcome

- Candles!
- Zoom etiquette
- Praying and being prayed for
- Silences and what to do with them
- Introductions



Opening Sentences

The Lord Almighty grant us a peaceful night and a perfect end. **Amen.**

Our help is in the Name of the Lord;

The maker of heaven and earth.

O God, make speed to save us.

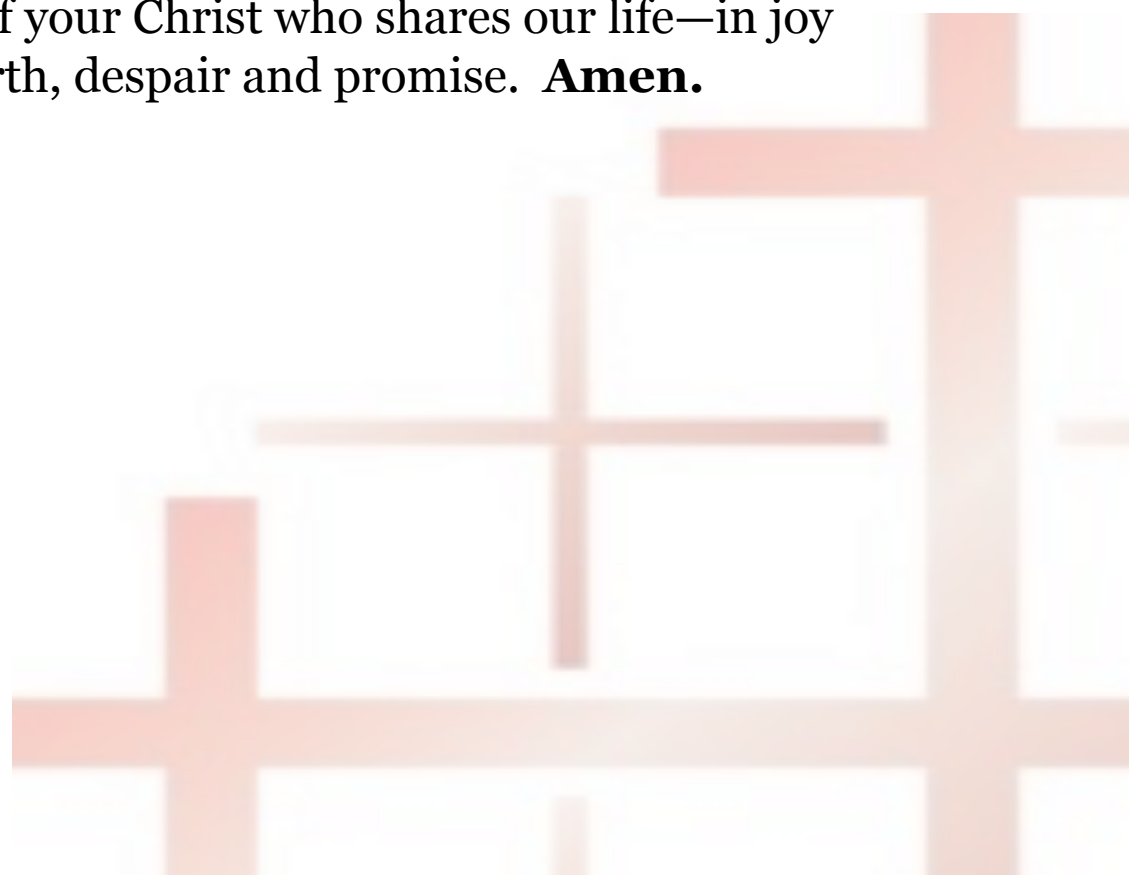
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Alleluia.

Gathering Prayer

God of mercy, hear our prayer this Advent season for ourselves and for our families who live with painful thoughts and memories of loss. 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.**



Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; **in your great compassion blot out my offenses.**

Wash me through and through from my wickedness **and cleanse me from my sin.**

For I know my transgressions, **and my sin is ever before me.**

Against you only have I sinned **and done what is evil in your sight.**

And so you are justified when you speak **and upright in your judgment.**

Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, **a sinner from my mother's womb.**

For behold, you look for truth deep within me, **and will make me understand wisdom secretly.**

Psalm 51 (cont.)

Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; **wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.**

Make me hear of joy and gladness, **that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

Hide your face from my sins **and blot out all my iniquities.**

Create in me a clean heart, O God, **and renew a right spirit within me.**

Cast me not away from your presence **and take not your holy Spirit from me.**

Give me the joy of your saving help again **and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

I shall teach your ways to the wicked, **and sinners shall return to you.**

Psalm 51 (cont.)

Deliver me from death, O God, **and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.**

Open my lips, O Lord, **and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, **but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.**

The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; **a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Psalm 121

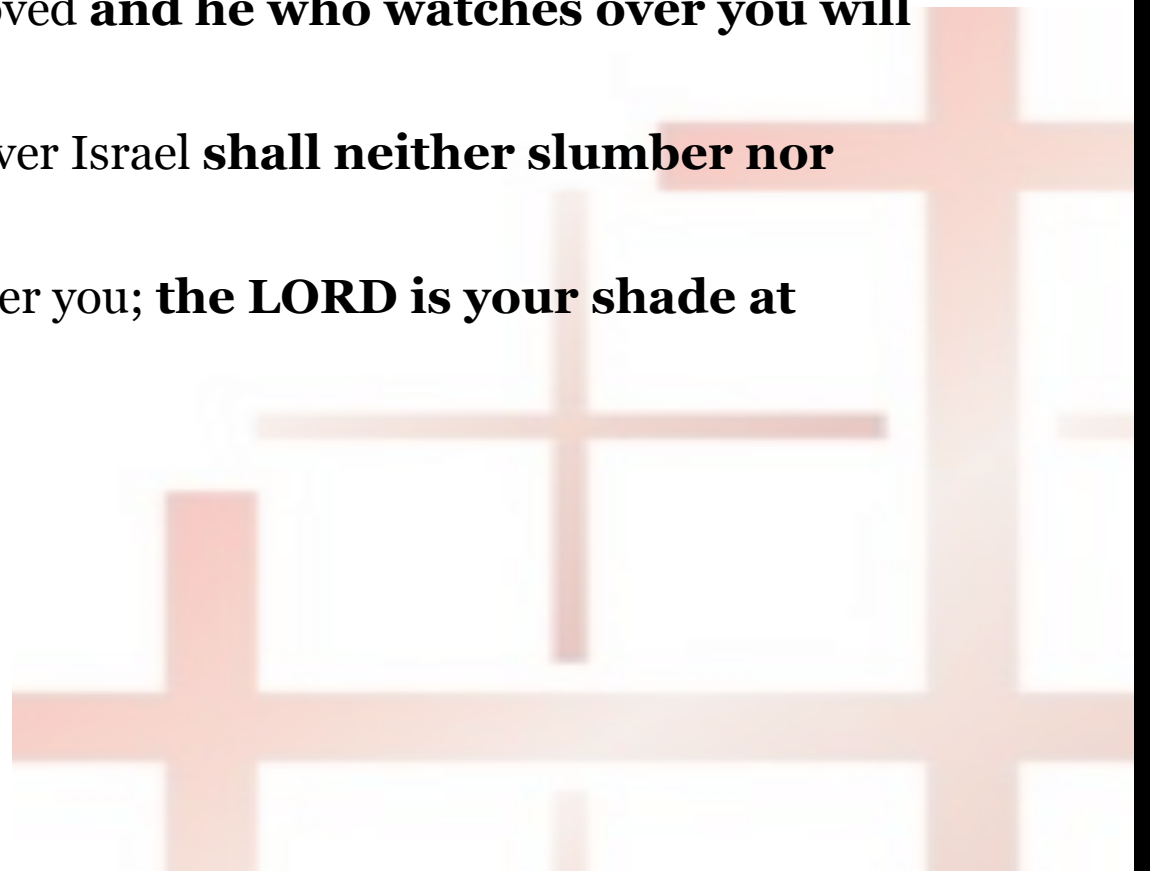
I lift up my eyes to the hills; **from where is my help to come?**

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,**



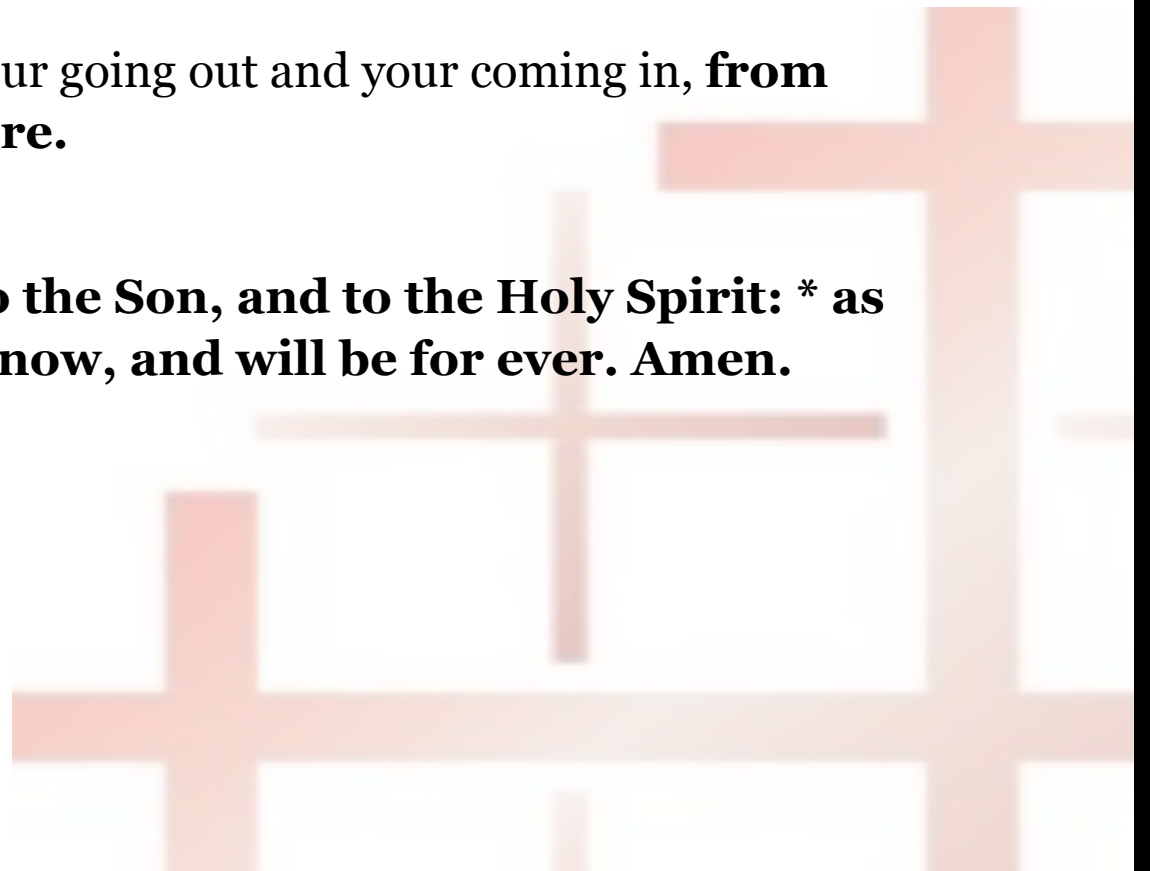
Psalm 121 (cont.)

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 evermore.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: * as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.



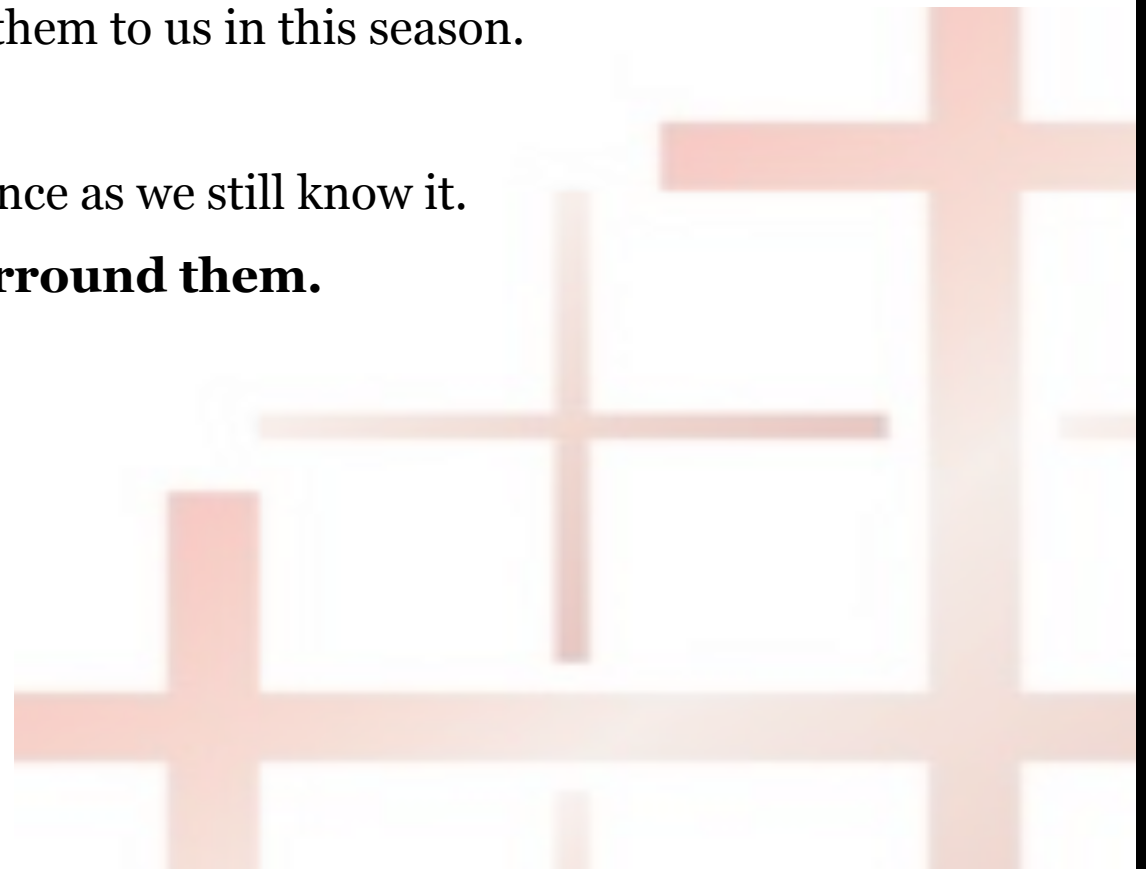
The First Candle

This first candle we light to remember those whom we have loved and lost, those we fear we may lose, those from whom we are estranged, those who are distant. We pause to remember their name, their face, their voice, the memory that binds them to us in this season.

(The first candle is lit.)

We give thanks for their presence as we still know it.

May God's eternal love surround them.



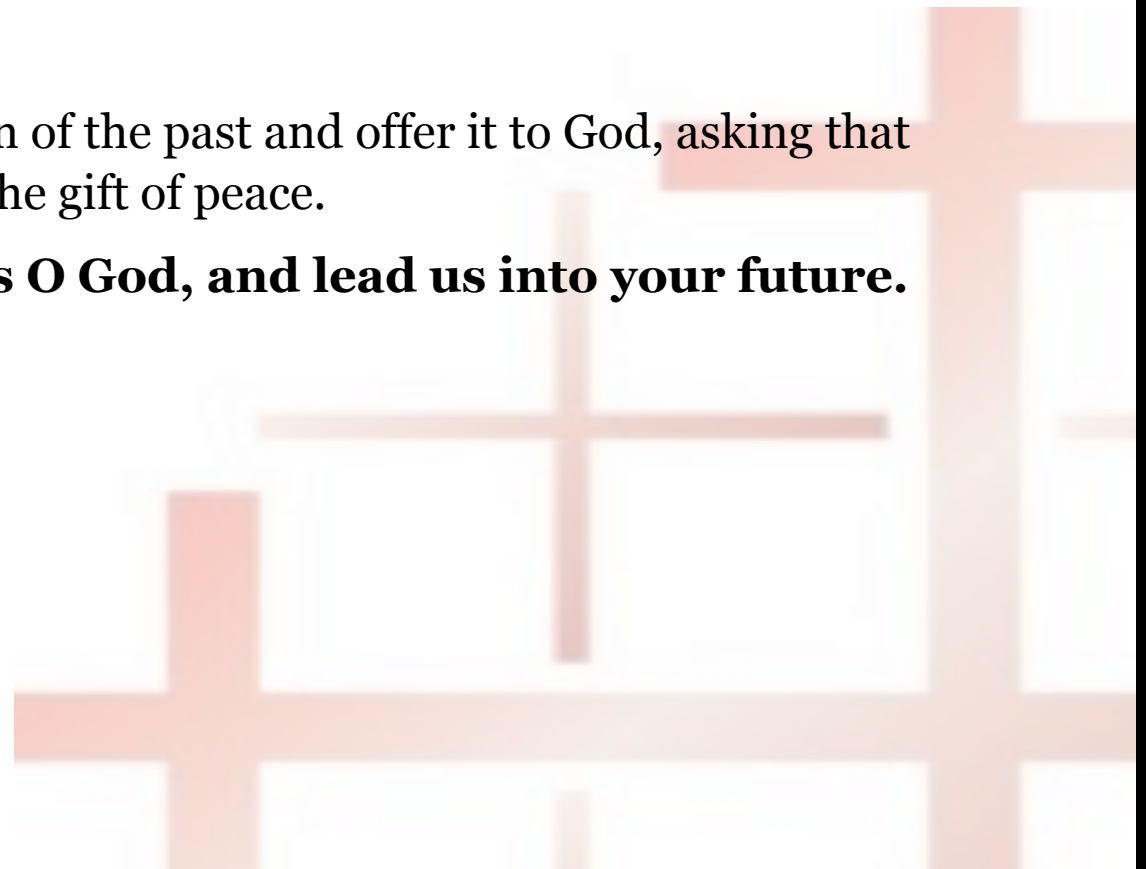
The Second Candle

This second candle we light is to redeem the pain of loss; the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, the loss of security and safety, the loss of faith, the loss of hope, the loss of health.

(The second candle is lit.)

We pause to gather up the pain of the past and offer it to God, asking that from God's hands we receive the gift of peace.

Refresh, restore, renew us O God, and lead us into your future.



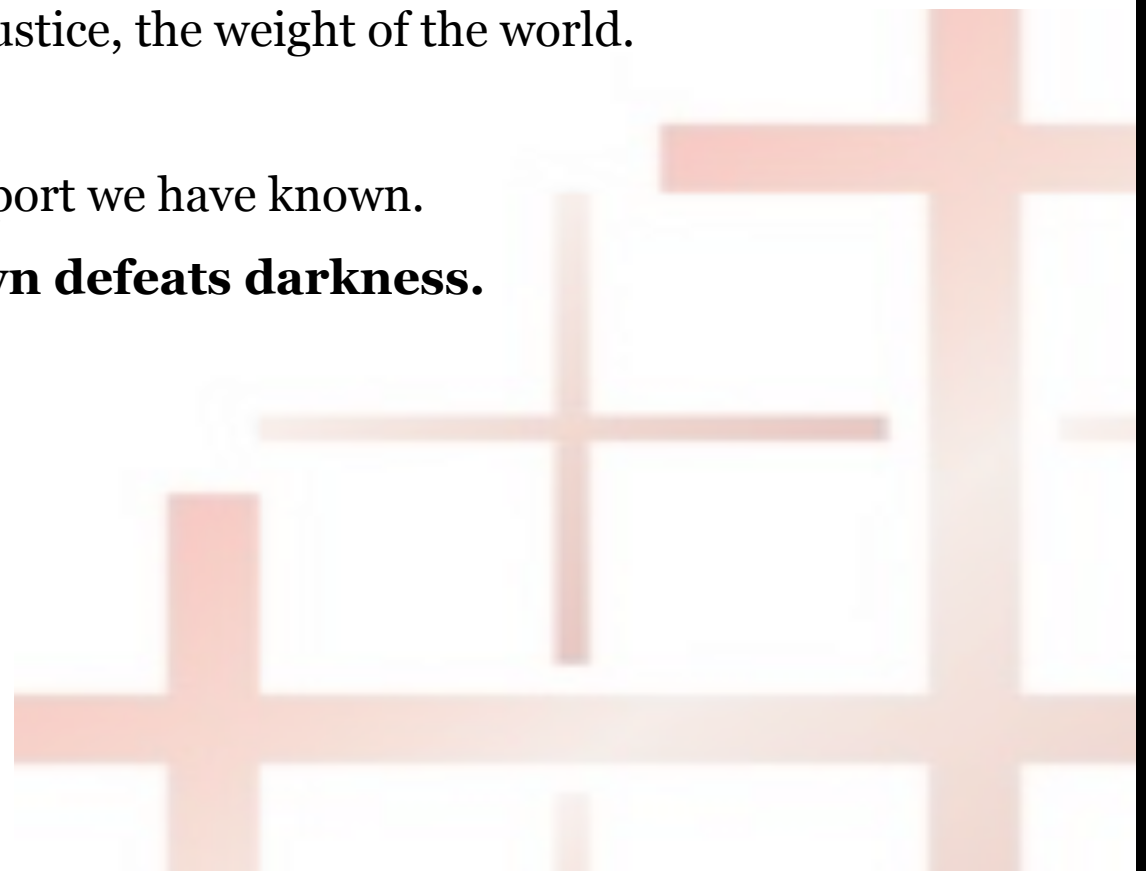
The Third Candle

This third candle we light is to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember these past weeks and months: the fear, the disbelief, the anger, the down times, the poignancy of reminiscing, the pain of distance, the cry of injustice, the weight of the world.

(The third candle is lit.)

We give thanks for all the support we have known.

Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness.



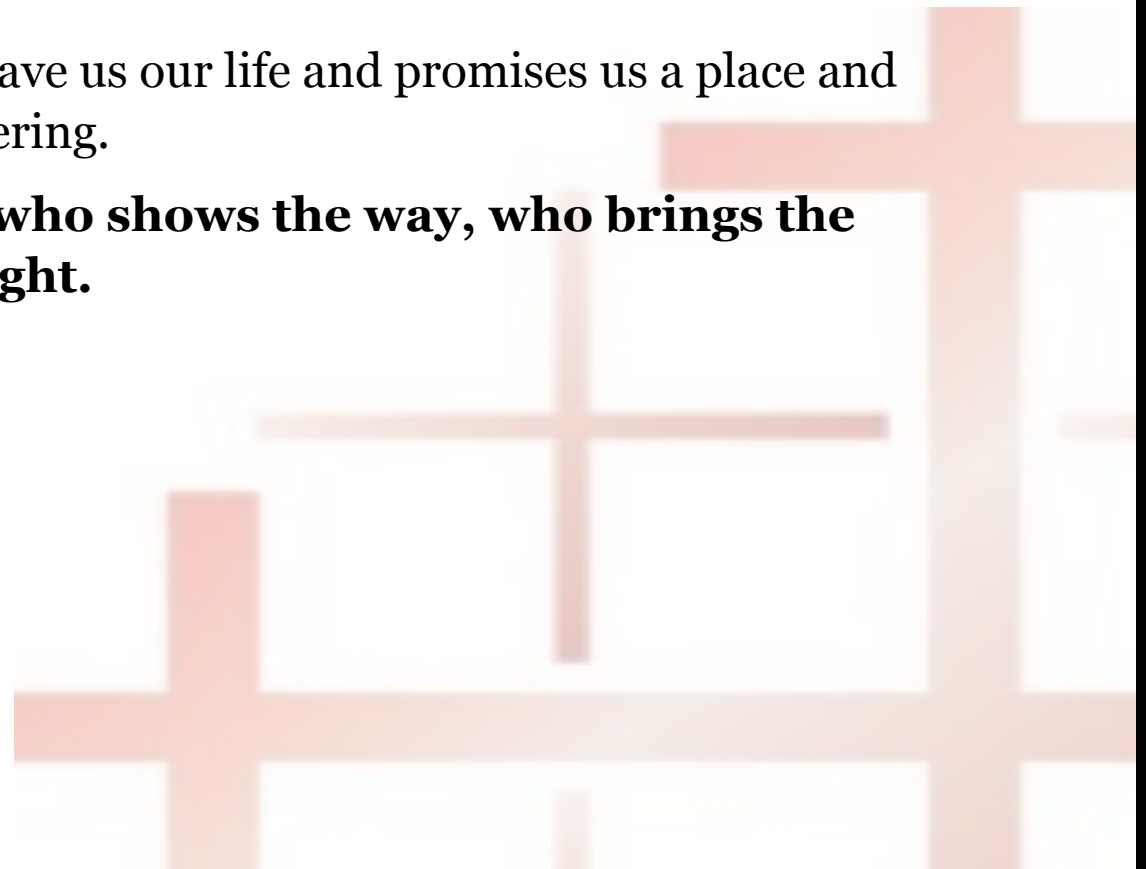
The Fourth Candle

This fourth candle is lit to remember our faith and the gift of hope which the Christmas story offers to us.

(The fourth candle is lit.)

We remember that God who gave us our life and promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

Let us remember the one who shows the way, who brings the truth and who bears the light.



A Reading from Mark (Mk 5: 21-43)

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.” So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, “If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.” Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my clothes?” And his disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, ‘Who touched me?’” He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

A Reading from Mark (cont.)

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Here ends the reading.

Prayers

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit;

For you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.

Keep us, O Lord, as the apple of your eye;

Hide us under the shadow of your wings.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Collects

Lord, hear our prayer;

And let our cry come to you.

Let us pray.

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. **Amen.**

Thanksgivings and Intercessions

In the spirit of this season let us now confidently ask God for all the things we need;

For ourselves as we participate in whatever way we can this Christmas. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For our families and friends that they may continue to help and support us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the person we have loved that has died. For all the losses that we know, that all may be redeemed by your Easter promise. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all our family and friends that they may know love and peace and happiness in you. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the peace proclaimed by the Christmas angels, to come throughout the whole world. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Song of Simeon

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.

Lord, you now have set your servant free **to go in peace as you have promised;**

For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior, **whom you have prepared for all the world to see:**

A Light to enlighten the nations, **and the glory of your people Israel.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.

Dismissal

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out!

May the God who is light and love, who shakes heaven and earth, whom death could not contain, who lives to disturb and heal us, bless us with power to go forth and proclaim the gospel.

And may the almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us, now and always. **Amen.**

