



# ORDER FOR WORSHIP

*Service of the Longest Night*

December 21, 2020

*"Light in the Darkness". A service to bring light and hope; to reflect on pain, sadness, loss, and loneliness felt while trusting God to bring healing. Find hope and comfort – you are not alone – God knows you and loves you unconditionally. The days and light will grow; the darkness will recede.*

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

## GATHERING

*We Contemplate our Circumstances*

### PRELUDE

### WELCOME and OPENING PRAYER

From the one who was, who is, and who is to come:  
Grace and peace be with you all.

**And also with you.**

In the Northern Hemisphere, December 21 is the longest night, the winter solstice. It marks the shortest day of the year, the official start of winter. Tradition says that nature and all her creatures stop and hold their breath to see if the sun will turn back from its wanderings, if the days will lengthen and the earth will once again feel the sun's warmth. On this darkest day of the year, we come with our honest yearnings seeking the return of light and hope.

We begin this service with bringing the light of the Advent Candles to this time and space.

Faithful God, you are the source of all mercy and consolation. With this candle, we remember the hope that you kindle among us through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. We remember your promise of redemption. Sustain us by your assurance that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness will not overcome it.

*The first candle is lit.*

Merciful God, your light shines even in our darkest hours, and your love neither fails nor forsakes us. With this candle, we acknowledge the fear and sadness that grips our lives. We remember our struggles with painful emotions, difficult thoughts, and unfulfilled desires. We bring to you our loneliness, despair, doubt, anxiety, anger, disappointment, and our yearning for friendship and understanding. Grant us your peace that surpasses all human understanding.

*The second candle is lit.*

Almighty God, you turn the shadow of death into daybreak. With this candle, we remember those whose absence still fills our hearts with sorrow and leaves holes in our lives. We cherish their memories and commend them into your unfailing light. Surround them with your eternal love, and grant us your peace.

*The third candle is lit*

Compassionate God, your steadfast love accompanies us, and your light shines on the broken places in our lives. With this candle, we acknowledge our unspoken pains and hidden griefs. Bind up our wounded hearts and soothe our troubled spirits. Give us strength and comfort through your promise to make us whole.

*The fourth candle is lit.*

## SONG

### Wait for the Lord

The musical score for 'Wait for the Lord' is presented in two systems. Each system consists of a vocal line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment line in the bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: 'Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.' and 'Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!'. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line with chords that support the vocal melody.

Text: Taizé Community  
Music: WAIT FOR THE LORD, Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994  
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*God speaks to  
us in scripture  
reading,  
preaching, and  
song*

## WORD

*We Hear Words of Lament and Hope*

### READING: PSALM 130

#### Waiting for Divine Redemption

##### *A Song of Ascents.*

<sup>1</sup> Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD.

<sup>2</sup> Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive  
to the voice of my supplications!

<sup>3</sup> If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities,  
Lord, who could stand?

<sup>4</sup> But there is forgiveness with you,  
so that you may be revered.

<sup>5</sup> I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,  
and in his word I hope;

<sup>6</sup> my soul waits for the Lord  
more than those who watch for the morning,  
more than those who watch for the morning.

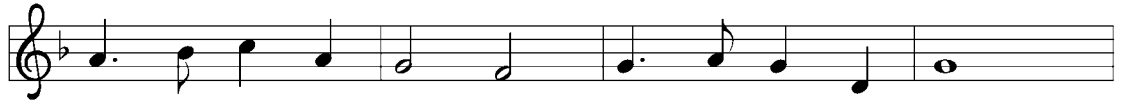
<sup>7</sup> O Israel, hope in the LORD!

For with the LORD there is steadfast love,  
and with him is great power to redeem.

<sup>8</sup> It is he who will redeem Israel  
from all its iniquities.

### SONG

## In the Bleak Midwinter



1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,  
2 Heav - en can - not hold him, nor . . . earth sus - tain;  
3 What . . . can I give him, poor . . . as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;  
heav'n and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign;  
If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed  
if I were a wise . . . man I would do my part;



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.  
the Lord . . . God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.  
yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

Text: Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830–1894  
Music: CRANHAM, Gustav Holst, 1874–1934

### REFLECTION

## THANKSGIVING

*We Invite: Come, Lord Jesus, Come*

*In everything  
Give  
Thanks.  
1 Thessalonians 5:18*

### SONG "ALL WHO ARE THIRSTY"

All who are thirsty  
All who are weak  
Come to the fountain  
Dip your heart in the stream of life  
Let the pain and the sorrow

Be washed away  
In the waves of His mercy  
As deep cries out to deep  
(We sing)

Come Lord Jesus come  
Come Lord Jesus come  
Come Lord Jesus come  
Come Lord Jesus come

From One License:  
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Type: Words and Music; First Line: All who are weak  
Contributors: Brenton Brown, Glenn Robertson

Tune: © 1998 Vineyard Songs (UK/Eire) Text: © 1998 Vineyard Songs (UK/Eire)

## PRAYER

Sustained by the light of Christ shining forth in our darkness, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

God of hope and redemption,  
fill your church with your light. Come among us. Make your church a beacon of hope for all who seek refuge, strength, and hope.

**Come Lord Jesus, Come**

God of love and mercy,  
protect your world from harm. Shelter those who face severe weather. Bring warmth and comfort to those who are worn down by the effects of cold and dark.

**Come Lord Jesus, Come**

God of strength and wisdom,  
guide all who are in positions of power and leadership. Bring peace to communities torn apart by conflict and justice to all who are oppressed. Give courage to those who put themselves in danger to help others.

**Come Lord Jesus, Come**

God of mercy and grace,  
bring hope to all who suffer. Nourish the hungry. Provide meaningful labour for the unemployed. Bring companionship to those who are lonely. Protect those whose needs make them vulnerable to exploitation or abuse. Comfort all who are burdened by illness or grief, especially those we name now.....

**Come Lord Jesus, Come**

God of light and life, bless our community. Uphold all who provide services for mental health care, medicine, and support for those who cannot live safely on their own. Bring respite for those who are weary and strength for all who provide compassion and care for the vulnerable ones among us.

## Come Lord Jesus, Come

God of memory and hope,  
with thanksgiving we remember those who have died, especially those we name  
now.....and all who are most dear to us. As we treasure their  
memory, we look with hope to your promise to bring us together with all your saints  
into the eternal light of your presence.

## Come Lord Jesus Come

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your  
promise, through your Son, Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

**Amen.**

## SONG

### *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*



1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,  
2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come with peace - ful wings un - furled,  
3 And you, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,  
4 For lo! The days are has - t'ning on, by proph - ets seen of old,



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:  
and still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world.  
who toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and slow:  
when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,



“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all - gra - cious king.”  
A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing,  
look now, for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing;  
when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.  
and ev - er o'er its ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.  
oh, rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - gels sing!  
and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810–1876  
Music: CAROL, Richard S. Willis, 1819–1900

# SENDING

*We are Sent*

*God blesses us  
and sends us  
in mission to  
the world.*

**BLESSING**

**POSTLUDE**

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not  
overcome it.*

*(John 1:5)*



## ST. PHILIP'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

### SERVING TODAY

The Rev. Tuula Van Gaasbeek	Pastor
Chris Ritcey-Conrad	Music Director
Dave Pascoe	Technical Producer
Sarah Pascoe	Musician
Anne Bindernagel	Musician

#### PRAYER REQUESTS

Make your prayer requests to Pastor Tuula: text, call or from our website:  
<http://www.stphilipstoronto.com/prayer-requests/>

#### HELP WHEN NEEDED

The first step is always hard: asking for help. If you need help, to talk, or are scared, Pastor Tuula is available and "on-call" over the holidays. Call and together figure out if more help is needed. The office may be closed, but Pastor Tuula can be reached @416-859-5588.

In an emergency, use this link <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/crisis-resources>.

#### CHRISTMAS 2020

Read Jenny Soupionis's article on coping in the lockdown, [2020: A Charlie Brown Christmas?](#)

#### **God Is Light**

*This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)*

#### **God Is Possibility**

*.....with God, all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26)*