

Holy Darkness: Evening Service of Word and Prayer for Advent

*Power in the Spirit 2021
Sunday Evening, July 11th*

Greeting:

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, the love of Christ that guards our hearts and minds, and the joy and consolation of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Song:

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (Stz. 1&2)

*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 you, O Israel.

*O come, O Wisdom from on high, embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay; teach us your will and guide our way.*

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Opening Prayer:

Stir up our hearts, O God, to prepare a pathway for your Christ. By His coming speak peace to your people and turn our hearts toward you, that your saving grace and splendid glory, may dwell in all the earth; through Jesus Christ, whose day draws near. **Amen.**

Lighting of the Advent Wreath:

Silence for reflection

We praise you, God, for this evergreen crown that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the first candle, awaken us from sleep, that we will be ready to greet our Lord when He comes with all the saints and angels. Enlighten us with your grace, and prepare our hearts to welcome Him with joy. We ask this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

The first Advent Candle is lit as we sing together:

*Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.
Wait for the Lord; be strong, take heart!*

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Scripture & Reflection:

Darkness is Holy

From the very beginning, darkness and light have been part of God's magnificent universe. When God creates the light, the darkness is not extinguished or cursed, but it is complemented. Light and darkness each have a purpose in the created order. Each is necessary for the unfolding of God's salvation history. Day and night together—as two parts of a whole—are declared “good.”

A reading from Genesis.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights — the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night — and the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." ²¹So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

²⁷So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it;

and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." ²⁹God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. ²And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. ³So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

(Silence for Reflection)

Song of Reflection

In a Deep, Unbounded Darkness (ACS 1093)

1 In a deep, un-bound-ed dark-ness, long be-fore the
 2 Though our world is ev-er-chang-ing, you are con-stant;
 3 Joy trans-forms our lips to boast-ing on-ly in your
 4 God of Ha-gar, God of Sa-rah, God of no-mad

first light shone, you, O God, be-yond all mer-it
 firm, and sure, faith-ful to your cov-'nant prom-ise.
 match-less grace, send-ing Christ to dwell a-mong us,
 A-bra-ham; God of Mir-iam, God of Mo-ses,

worked a won-der faith makes known: in your mer-cy,
 Trust-ing you, we live, se-cure: sing-ing prais-es,
 Word made flesh in time and space: Friend and Sav-ior,
 Fi-'ry Pil-lar, great I AM: lead us home-ward,

in your mer-cy, you em-braced us
 sing-ing prais-es, long as heart and
 Friend and Sav-ior, in whose life we
 lead us home-ward, to the love-feast

as your own, ev-er-more and ev-er-more.
 breath en-dure, glimpse your face,
 of the Lamb,

Prayer

In Christ Jesus we meet the God who knows our weakness and bears the wounds of the world. Therefore, let us be bold as we pray, trusting that God draws near to those in any kind of need.

Let us remember before God all who are frightened... all who have received unexpected news...all who dream...all whose relationships are strained...all who must make difficult decisions...all who must leave their homeland...all for whom the world has no room...all the joys or concerns we offer now in the silence of our heart...

Gathering our many prayers into one, we pray for you to Stir up your power, Lord Christ and come. In your mercy receive our prayers, and by your power hasten the day when peace and justice kiss and steadfast love and faithfulness meet for the sake of the world you love. **Amen.**

We boldly pray the Prayer Jesus taught us:

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. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Blessing:

God all mighty, God most merciful bless us, keep us, and give us peace. **Amen.**

Song:

Deep Peace (ACS 1018)

The musical score for 'Deep Peace' is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems of music. The first system has a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The bass staff has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The lyrics are: 'Deep peace of the run - ning waves, deep peace of the'. The second system also has a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The bass staff has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The lyrics are: 'flow - ing air, deep peace of the shin - ing stars to'. The third system has a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The bass staff has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The lyrics are: 'you, deep peace of the qui - et earth. earth.'. Above the treble staff, there are two markings: 'To repeat' and 'Last time'. The 'To repeat' marking is above a double bar line. The 'Last time' marking is above a double bar line. The music ends with a double bar line.