



Red Clay Creek *Presbyterian Church*

Sunday | December 20, 2020 | 4:00 pm



Let there be Light... and Hope!

Calling the Community to Worship

A PRAYER FOR HOPE & REMEMBRANCE

Outside the lights are twinkling on festive Christmas trees.
Families are gathering and preparing their feasts.
But some of us have hearts heavy with sadness,
aching from losses that cast shadows of loneliness on our days.

Come Lord Jesus, shed light along our weary path.
Show us the way to a quiet place where we can find rest.

As the winter days grow shorter, and the sun goes down more quickly, be with us.
Warm our hearts. Let us feel your presence.

Come Lord Jesus, melt away the dreary winter grey.
Fill us with hope, and care for us tenderly.
Show us that brighter days are not too far away.

In the name of Jesus, God with us. Amen.

—Christine Fischer

PRELUDE

WELCOME TO OUR SERVICE OF LIGHT AND HOPE

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: God is near to all who call; their cries are heard.

Many: God has promised, “I will never forget you, my people.
I have carved you on the palm of my hand.
I will not leave you orphaned.
I will never forget my own.”

One: “Comfort, O comfort my people,” says our God.
In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord.

Many: Every valley shall be lifted up,
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places, a plain.

One: For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Many: God, indeed, is near to all who call.
We come as we are to call on God who hears the cries of his people.

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 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.

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife, and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

WELCOME THE LIGHT

One: This afternoon, we come together to mourn the losses we have suffered and
acknowledge the challenges endured:

the loss of a loved one or a relationship;

a fearful diagnosis;

an injury or an illness;

the loss of stability;

the shaking of the foundations of our lives.

We recall the time before fear, uncertainty and loss,
and bring to mind those people, places and activities
we especially miss at the holidays.

We remember them by name in the quiet of our hearts.

We still see them and celebrate our memories of them.

We remember the many emotions and experiences that the holidays evoke:
sadness, grief, disbelief, anger, guilt, as well as gratitude for the care of family
and friends, and the support of all who have stood with us.

In the beginning, God says, "Let there be light.."

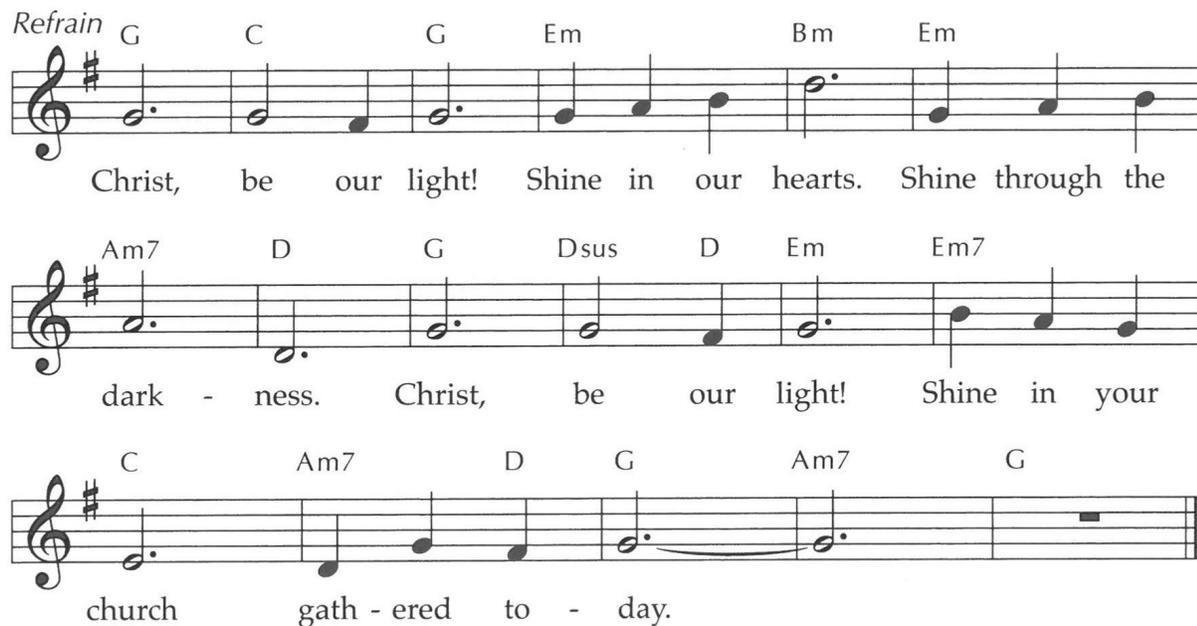
Many: And there is light.

(The 1st candle is lit, followed by a time of silence.)

One: After times of loss and grief and change, we give thanks for the light that offers us
HOPE.

Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness

Refrain



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the
dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your
church gath - ered to - day.

By blending biblical images and current vignettes in the present tense, this hymn connects Christ's promise that he is the Light of the world (John 8:12, 9:5) and his charge to his followers to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). This is part of the church's servant calling.

One: In the lives of our forebears,
God showed the way from a place of pain to a land of promise.
When our journey is hardest, the way ahead unclear,
and we wonder if the tears will ever stop,
God says, "Let there be light."

Many: **And there is light.**

(The 2nd candle is lit, followed by a time of silence.)

One: We remember the journeys of our lives, how far we travel,
and give thanks for the light that leads us in the way of PEACE.

One: In our yesterdays and in our todays,
There are moments we treasure;
A friendship grows, truth is discovered, faith deepens.
On the mountaintop and in quiet places,
God says, "Let there be light.

Many: **And there is light.**

(The 3rd candle is lit, followed by a time of silence.)

One: We remember the ways in which we have been blessed,
and give thanks for the light that shines JOY in our lives.

MUSICAL RESPONSE

Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness (refrain only)

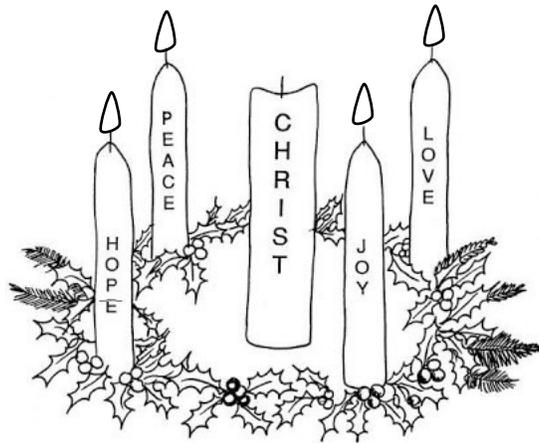
One: As we look forward to the future, we know that shadows will come again;
yet, in our hearts shines the everlasting light.

(The 4th candle is lit, followed by a time of silence.)

One: God will come, offering comfort and hope.
May our knees bend in thanksgiving and worship
as we embrace God's holy light; the light of LOVE.

MUSICAL RESPONSE

Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness (refrain only)



Proclaiming the Word

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 25

Leader One: To you, O God, I lift up my soul;

Leader Two: *my God, in you I trust.*

Leader One: Let me not be put to shame, nor let my foes gloat over me.

Leader Two: *Let none who wait for you be shamed.*

Leader One: Show me your ways, teach me your paths.

Leader Two: *Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are God, my savior.
For you I wait all the day long.*

Leader One: Remember your mercy, O God, and your steadfast love,
for they are as old as time.

Leader Two: *According to your steadfast love, remember me, for your goodness' sake, O God!*

Leader One: You are upright and good, O God,
therefore you show the path to those who go astray.

Leader Two: *You guide the humble to do what is right, and teach the lowly your way.*

Leader One: All your ways are loving and sure

Leader Two: *for those who keep your covenant and commandments.*

Isaiah 43 (select verses)

But now thus says the LORD,
The One who created you, O Jacob,
the One who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.
For I am the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
Because you are precious in my sight,
and honored, and I love you,
Do not fear, for I am with you...

Luke 1:46-55

Rev. Dr. Tracy Keenan

And Mary said,
“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

HOMILY

Mary in 23B

Rev. Dr. Tracy Keenan

Responding to the Word

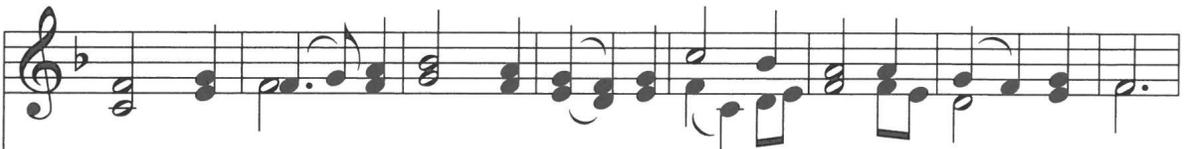
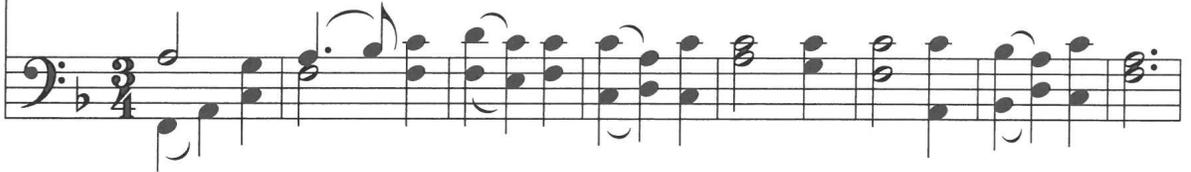
HYMN

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus (see next page)

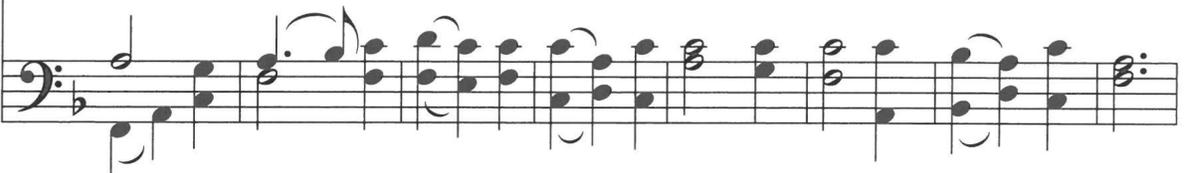
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus



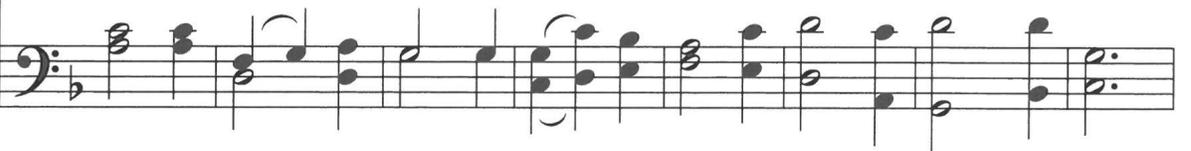
1 Come, thou long - ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and yet a king,



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra-cious king-dom bring.



Is-rael's strength and con-so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art;
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long-ing heart.
by thine all - suf-fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo-rious throne.



With its opening "Come," this hymn sounds the note of entreaty and invitation that characterizes the Advent season (from the Latin *adventus* = "coming"). Its blending of memory and hope helps us to give voice to our present faith as we stand between the past and the future.

LITURGY OF REMEMBERING

One: We remember and hold in our hearts those whom we have loved and lost.
We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices, the memories that bind them to us in this season.

Many: **May God's eternal love surround them.**

One: We pray that God would redeem the pain of loss; the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, the loss of health, the loss of hopes and dreams.

We pause to gather up the pain of the past.

We offer it to God, asking that from God's hands we receive the gift of peace.

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

One: At this time of year and in these moments, we think about ourselves.

We pause and remember these past weeks and months;

the disbelief, the anger, the times of feeling down, the poignancy of reminiscing, the hugs and kisses and handshakes of family and friends,

all those who have accompanied us on the journey.

We give thanks for all the support we have known.

Many: **Let us remember that dawn defeats the darkness.**

One: May the flicker of our faith receive God's light,
and in Christ may we be gifted with hope.

Here we remember that God, in Christ, shares our life,

promises us a place and time where there will be no more pain and suffering.

Many: **Let us remember our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace,
who bears the light and shows us the way, unveiling the truths of eternal life.**

THE CANDLES OF LIGHT AND HOPE

You are invited to light a candle near your screen in honor or memory of a loved one, for the world, or for yourself if the approach of the holiday season is causing heightened feelings of sadness or anxiety. Worship leaders will light candles in the sanctuary as we all meditate in remembrance, and in hope, as a symbol for those who cannot be in our sanctuary this year, and for all the candles lit in our homes this year.

MUSICAL OFFERING

Before the Marvel of This Night

PRAYER

Going Forth to Serve in Christ

HYMN

Love Has Come, vss. 1,3 (see next page)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE



Love Has Come

Capo 3: (D) F (Bm7) Dm7 (Em7) Gm7 (A) C

1 Love has come: a light in the dark - ness!

3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us!

(D) (Bm7) (Em) (A7) (D)
F Dm7 Gm C7 F

Love shines forth in the Beth - le - hem skies. See, all
Love is life ev - er - last - ing and free. Love is

(A) (D) (Bm) (D) (A) (G) (D)
C F Dm F C B^b F

heav - en has come to pro - claim it; hear how their song of
Je - sus with - in and a - mong us. Love is the peace our

(Em7) (F#7) (G) (A) (Bm) (A7)
Gm7 A7 B^b C Dm C7

joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to you, a
hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the gift of

(D) (A) (G) (A) (D) (A) (A7) (Dsus) (D)
F C B^b C F C C7 Fsus F

Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.
Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Here is a chance to sing a familiar French carol tune with new words, the most important clearly being "Love." The senses "seen and heard" (as in Acts 4:20 and elsewhere) organize the first two stanzas, while the third holds the summary statement: "Love is the gift of Christmas."



STEPHEN MINISTRY

Need someone to come alongside you (or your friend, neighbor, coworker or relative) and provide comfort and support during this holiday season? With over 50 hours of training, our Stephen Ministers give you a trained listener who can help during a through a difficult time. We are available to listen and talk with you confidentially about any personal concern. To learn more about Stephen Ministry or to request a Stephen Minister, please contact:

- Rev. Dr. Randall T. Clayton (randy@rccpc.org);
- Rev. Eric Koenig-Reinke (eric@rccpc.org);
- The Church office at 302-998-0434; or,
- Our Stephen Minister Coordinators: Suzanne Courter-Jann, 302-530-3468; or, Leslie Gast, 302-239-2006.

The Rev. Dr. Tracy Keenan is the Missional Presbyterian of New Castle Presbytery. After having pastored four churches in both Pittsburgh, PA and Columbus, OH, she came to New Castle Presbytery because she was inspired by our emphasis on helping churches live courageously into their calling. She is the primary staff person for the Ignite team and presbytery mission partnerships. Tracy and her husband, the Rev. Jim Mehler, have two grown daughters. She plays the piano, writes music and stories, rides a Harley, and looks for the joy.

The graphic on the cover of the bulletin is titled “Shine” by artist Mike Moyers. Source: from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=57144> [; original source: <https://www.mikemoyersfineart.com/>.

We invite you to join us for our Christmas Eve LiveStream services at 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm and our regular Sunday morning LiveStream worship at 10:30 am. Visit our website for details: <http://www.rccpc.org/>.

WORSHIP LEADERSHIP

Rev. Dr. Randall T. Clayton, *Interim Pastor*

Rev. Eric Koenig-Reinke, *Designated Associate Pastor*

Rev. Dr. Tracy Keenan, *Missional Presbyterian of New Castle Presbytery*

Suzanne Courter-Jann and Sandy Sarjeant, *Stephen Ministers*

Jeffrey Miller, *Director of Music*

Barbara Vanderkraats, *Pianist & Soloist*

Dave Howarth and Al Leonhard, *Media Production*