

WELCOME

We are glad you are worshiping with us today and hope you will come again. If you would like more information about the church, please provide us your contact information on the Friendship pad. Additional materials are available in the Narthex, just inside the front door, and in the Atrium area, just off of the right side parking lot.

If you are in need of a large-print hymnal or hearing device, please see an usher.

For **EMERGENCY** purposes, a defibrillator (in a red case) is available for trained CPR users on the cabinet outside of Pastor Jack's office, as well as one mounted in a white cabinet on the wall outside of the Outreach Room.

SESSION

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Mon.—Fri., 9 am - 4 pm

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

8:30 AM REVELATIONS

9:30 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL

10:30 AM TRADITIONAL SERVICE

5:30 PM 2ND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH
BEGINNING SEPT.—MAY

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PRELUDE

WORDS of WELCOME

Rev. Ruth Roberts

* CALL to WORSHIP

The people walked in darkness have seen a great light;
On those who lived in a land of deep shadow a light has shined.

**For the yoke that was weighing on them, and the burden upon their shoulders,
you have broken into pieces, O God, our Redeemer.**

Prayer

* HYMN No. 9

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

CALL to CONFESSION

Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation. Hear our prayers for forgiveness so that truth shall spring up from the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

LITANY of CONFESSION *(responsive)*

O come, Emmanuel, come to us for we are lonely for God.

Come, bring the peace of God-with-us.

O Come, Wisdom from on high,

Forgive our sins. Lead us in the ways of knowledge,

And show us the paths of peace.

Glorious Shoot from the Jesse tree,

Come, and bring life, fresh and green and lovely, to our spirits.

O Rose which blooms in the snow of winter,

Come, and grant to us the blessed gift of hope.

O Bright Morning Star of the darkened world,

Come and be for us the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Jesus our Christ, we welcome you. Come and be known among us, for we want to be your people. Amen.

SILENT PRAYERS of CONFESSION

ASSURANCE of PARDON

A new shoot shall spring from the root of Jesse and all the earth will be filled with the glory of God.

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

ORIGINAL POEM

by Grace Bailey

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 40:1-11

PSALM 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come?

My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

God will not let your foot be moved. The one who keeps you will not slumber.

Behold! The one who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Holy One is your keeper. The Holy One is your shade on your right hand.

The sun shall not hurt you by day nor the moon by night.

God will keep you from all evil and will keep your soul.

God will keep your going out and your coming in

From this time one and forevermore.

MEDITATION

LITANY of REMEMBERING

This first candle we light to remember those whom we have loved and lost.

We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices, the memory that binds us to them in life and in death, and even in the season of Advent.

May God's eternal love surround them.

This second candle we light to redeem the pain of loss; the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, the loss of health. 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 the future.

The third candle we light to remember ourselves this Christmastime. We pause to remember these past weeks and months: the disbelief, the emptiness, the anger, the down times, the poignancy of reminiscing, the sadness, the hugs and handshakes of family and friends, all those who stood with us. We acknowledge the care we have felt, and dare to give thanks for the support we have known.

Let us remember that, though God is met in darkness, ultimately, dawn defeats night, and light overcomes darkness.

The fourth candle we light to remember God's promises and the gift of peace and hope which the Christmas story offers the world. We are a country at war, and yet we know that in Christ, God shares our life, knows pain and suffering, and leads us to new life. We remember God, who promises us a time of no more pain and suffering, who bends the instruments of war into farming tools, and desires abundant life for all.

Jesus Christ shows us the way, and the darkness of this world will not overcome his light.

The light shines in the darkness.

And the darkness will not overcome it.

BLESSING for HEALING & WHOLENESS, and CANDLE LIGHTING

The congregation is invited to come forward to light a candle of hope and, if desired, to share a personal petition with the pastor, to be lifted up in prayer and to receive a blessing and anointing with oil.

CAROLS *(seated)*

HYMN No. 36

HYMN No. 37

HYMN No. 53

"In the Bleak Midwinter"
"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"
"What Child Is This"

PRAYER of PREPARATION for CHRISTMAS

We open the stable door, and kneel before the infant.

We worship with the shepherds, and adore the Christ child.

We give our love with Mary and Joseph,

And wonder at the "Word made flesh".

We are aware of the love of God, and sing glory with the angels.

We offer our gifts with the wise men, and receive the living Lord.

We hold Him in our arms, and then go our way rejoicing, glorifying and praising God.

* HYMN No. 49

"Once in Royal David's City"

* BENECTION

POSTLUDE

Thank you for being here with us!