



CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, BROCKTON, MA

December 16, 2020

7:00 pm



WORDS OF WELCOME

PRELUDE *Karl Koza*

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Tonight, we gather through the Holy Spirit seeking refuge in God's presence and in our connections with one another,

P: for we are lost, we are lonely, we are afraid.

L: Tonight, we gather daring to wonder if God has indeed come in Jesus,

P: discerning the rejection we have known, intimate with our failed relationships, holding our heartache in hands of tenderness.

L: Tonight, we gather with neighbors and strangers, a family made one by our brokenness and hurt,

P: coming with our hearts full of hope, and our pockets filled with doubts.

L: Tonight, we gather just as we are,

P: for God has promised to meet us here and to welcome us for who we are.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

HYMN

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (verse 1)

ALL SING: O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel. That mourns in lonely exile here until the Child of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES--

The Candle for our Memories

Matthew 11:28-29

Jesus said, "Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verse 2)

ALL SING: O Come, O Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh; To us the path of knowledge show, and help us in that way to go. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

The Candle for Our Grief

Isaiah 41:8-10

But you, O Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend. I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, " 'you are my servant': I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous hand."

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verse 3)

ALL SING: O Come, O come, O Adonai, who came to all on Sinai high, And from its peak of single law proclaimed the majesty and awe. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

The Candle for Ourselves

Lamentations 3:19-26

"Grieving, my soul thinks back; these thoughts cripple, and I sink down. Gaining hope, I remember and wait for this thought: How enduring is God's loyal love; the Eternal has inexhaustible compassion. Here they are, every morning, new!"

Your faithfulness, God, is as broad as the day. Have courage, for the Eternal is all that I will need. My soul boasts, "Hope in God; just wait."

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verse 6)

ALL SING: O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by your advent here; Love stir within the womb of night, and death's own shadows put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

The Candle of Faith

Revelation 21:1-6a

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth has passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God, he will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." He said to me: "It is done. I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end."

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verse 7)

ALL SING: O come, Desire of Nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind; Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

TIME OF HEALING PRAYER

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

John 1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.

The true light that shines on all people was coming into the world. The light was in the world, and the world came into being through the light, but the world did not recognize the light. The light came to his own people, and his own people didn't welcome him. But those who did welcome him, those who believed in his name, he authorized to become God's children...

The Word became flesh and made his home among us.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verse 1)

ALL SING: O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Child of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

BENEDICTION *Blessing for the Longest Night: by Jan Richardson*

All throughout these months as the shadows have lengthened, this blessing has been gathering itself, making ready, preparing for this night.

It has practiced walking in the dark, traveling with its eyes closed, feeling its way by memory by touch by the pull of the moon – even as it wanes.

So believe me when I tell you this blessing will reach you even if you have not light enough to read it; it will find you even though you cannot see it coming.

You will know the moment of its arriving by your release of the breath you have held so long; a loosening of the clenching in your hands, of the clutch around your heart; a thinning of the darkness that had drawn itself around you.

This blessing does not mean to take the night away but it know its hidden roads, knows the resting spots along the path, knows what it means to travel in the company of a friend.

So when this blessing comes, take its hand. Get up. Set out on the road you cannot see.

This is the night when you can trust that any direction you go you will be walking toward the dawn.

Amen.

POSTLUDE

Participating in Today's Worship Service:

Rev. Jeffrey Kardisco, Senior Pastor

Ann-Marie Illsley, Associate Pastor

Murray Kidd, Music Director

Sylvia Berry, Accompanist

Alisa Cassola, Soloist

Karl Koza, Soloist

David Wilcox, ASL Interpreter

**This liturgy was adapted from Jon Komperda and Sharon N. Fennema. Sharon N. Fennema's original liturgy was published in "Before the Amen."
This liturgy was also adapted from an order developed and used at The Cathedral Church of Saint Andrew, Honolulu, Hawaii.*