

Dennis Union Church

an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ

Service of Hope and Light

Tuesday December 10, 2024

7:00 p.m.

Gathering Music

“Sarabande”

J.S. Bach

Words of Welcome

Call to Worship

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone.

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

Hymn

“Come Again, Poor Jesus”

Tune: “In the Bleak Midwinter”

*When our souls are wintry, when our hearts are cold,
come to us, dear Jesus, as you did of old.*

*When our hearts, unsheltered, feel the winds above,
come to us and warm us with your gentle love.*

*Shepherds on the hillside, poor, without a friend,
kept their watch in silence, vigil without end.*

*But then in the darkness, angels brought the word:
“God has not forgotten, and your prayers are heard.”*

*To the simple, poor ones, Jesus came that night.
Come again, poor Jesus. Bless us with your light.
Lamb of God, be with us in our joy and pain,
and companion us, Love, to new life again.*

Invocation

**Gentle God, from the beginning you promised to be our God, and to be with us
always. In Christ you come to share our darkness, to bless our days and our nights,
our joy and our sorrow, our living and our dying. Come, O gentle Savior,
be with us, show us the way, and embrace us with your Spirit. Amen.**

Psalms of Lament and Assurance

Lament

“Lament Psalm Two”

Ann Weems

Silent Reflection

Assurance

Psalm 46:1-3, 9-11

Musical Reflection

“Trauern und klagen”

J. S. Bach

Increasing the Light

Introduction

John 1:1-5

We light this first candle to remember 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.

May God’s eternal love surround them.

We light this second candle 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 your future.

We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmastime. We pause and remember these past weeks and months: the disbelief, the anger, the down times, the joy and sorrow of memories, the hugs and handshakes of family and friends who care for us. We give thanks for all the support we have known.

Let us remember that after every night comes the dawn of a new day.

We light this fourth candle to remember our faith and the gift of hope that the Christmas story offers to us. We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

Let us remember the One who shows us the way, who brings the truth and bears the light.

The Christ candle is lit.

Responsive Prayer

Tender and merciful God in lighting these candles, we bring before you the pain, sorrow, the struggles and anxieties we wrestle with this season.

Help us to remember that in you there is yet more truth and light to be revealed and we can, by your grace, be people who live by faith with hope, joy and peace.

May your light reside inside us, perhaps dim for a time, but always lit – an ember of the Holy within us.

This light reminds us that we are not alone.

Hear us now as we pray as you have taught us:

**+O Holy One, 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 debts
as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory forever. Amen.**

(+Our Creator, Father)

Hymn

“Savior, In the Holy Darkness”

Tune: “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

*Savior, in our longing darkness,
waiting in our deepest night,
come and grace our hunger and yearnings;
for we live by hope, not sight.
Christ, we long for you. Come bless us.
Help us all to walk in the light.*

*Savior, in this deepening darkness,
how we long to see your face!
Yet you move, unseen among us
with your mercy and your grace.
Give us eyes of faith to see you,
hidden in each time and place.*

*Savior, in this holy darkness,
no one sees the flight of the dove.
No one hears the song of the angels.
Yet there shines a lone star above.
Grant this joy, to know your presence here.
Come and fill our hearts with your love.*

Contemporary Reading

“We Live by Hope”

by Rev. Steve Garnaas-Holmes

Sacrament of Communion

Invitation

Communion Prayer

Words of Institution and Prayer of Consecration

Sharing the Bread and Cup by Intinction

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Holy God, for this journey through darkness where the light breaks through, we offer our heart with gratitude and lean into hope once more. For this bread of life and cup of salvation, for Jesus born in us, we give you thanks and praise. Amen.

Blessing "Dove of Peace"

Benediction "A Celtic Blessing"

Deep peace of the running wave to you,
deep peace of the flowing air to you,
deep peace of the quiet earth to you,
deep peace of the shining stars to you,
deep peace of the son of peace to you.
Amen.

In closing this evening, feel free to go when you are ready or sit for a while in the quiet.

Postlude "Aria" (from *Goldberg Variations*) J. S. Bach

Hymn lyrics and portions of liturgy by Rev. Steve Garnaas-Holmes unfoldinglight.net.
"A Celtic Blessing" written by John Philip Newell.

Participants in tonight's service:

Rev. Nancy S. McHugh Joe Hesse Heidi Wright
Musician: Maggie Bossi
Deacon: Patti Goyette



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Ministers: All the people
Pastor: Rev. Nancy S. McHugh
Director of Music: Margaret Bossi
Director of Children and Family Ministries: Open
Sunday School Leader: Evy Sirignano
Finance Secretaries: Elise Gordon and Steve Kuhrtz
Office Administrator: Jane Wilson
Sexton: Dave Crocker