



"A Community Of Many Faithing Communities Where All Belong!"

Living Waters Contemplative Life Center | Divine Intervention Ministry to the Homeless
Tippecanoe just.good.food Garden | Food Justice Site PCUSA
Arts and Science Literacy Camps for Children

Welcome To Worship

January 22, 2023

9:30 a.m.



Welcome to this time of being with God and each other.

"Seeing Light in the Darkness" Rev. Trish Eckert

✧ **Prelude: Zo Trembley**

✧ **Welcome and community news**

- Our Adult Education class meets after worship next Sunday the 29th
- Tippe providing a meal for DI the last Saturday of the month

✧ **Readying Ourselves for Worship**

***Surely God is in this place, Holy Ground!
Surely God is in this place,
Holy Ground!***

✧ **A Reading as we Center Ourselves in this Moment**

For Light ~ John O'Donohue (To Bless the Space Between Us)

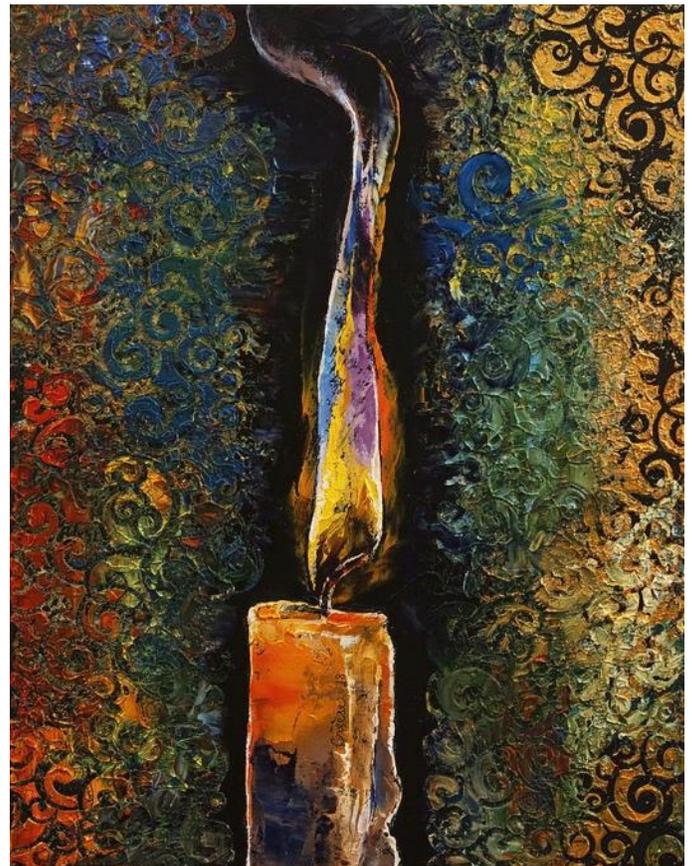
Light cannot see inside things.
That is what the dark is for:
Minding the interior,
Nurturing the draw of growth
Through places where death
In its own way turns into life.

In the glare of neon times,
Let our eyes not be worn
By surfaces that shine
With hunger made attractive.

That our thoughts may be true
light,
Finding their way into words
Which have the weight of shadow
To hold the layers of truth.

That we never place our trust
In minds claimed by empty light,
Where one-sided certainties
Are driven by false desire.

When we look into the heart,
May our eyes have the kindness
And reverence of candlelight.



Art by Michael Creese

That the searching of our minds
Be equal to the oblique
Crevices and corners where
The mystery continues to dwell,
Glimmering in fugitive light.

When we are confined inside
The dark house of suffering
That moonlight might find a window.

When we become false and lost
That the severe noon-light
Would cast our shadow clear.

When we love, that dawn-light
Would lighten our feet
Upon the waters.

As we grow old, that twilight
Would illuminate treasure
In the fields of memory.

And when we come to search for God,
Let us first be robed in night,
Put on the mind of morning
To feel the rush of light
Spread slowly inside
The color and stillness
Of a found world.

✧ **Becoming Present to God and Each Other...Our Check-in**

~ **The Joy of Passing the Peace** ~

✧ **Kid's Time**

✧Gathering as God's People: *Light in the Darkness*

We are on a journey together, moving through this “ordinary time” between Christmastide and Lent. With each passing day, we are experiencing longer stretches of daylight.

As I noted last week, we are spending this time before the Lenten season, to turn our attention to light, which in turn, means that we will observe darkness, as well. We are surrounded by gifts connected to the sacred cycles of seasons; of birth, death, and resurrection; of patterns in our lives and rhythms of connection in the natural world and through our relationships. These cycles are illuminated by light and deepened by the dark. Last Sunday we noticed the appearance of these beautiful mandalas in our sanctuary. As Betty and I discussed the worship space and the introduction of mandalas, Betty described them as “contemplative stars.”

The word *mandala* itself simply means "circle" in Sanskrit. Mandalas are a type of religious and spiritual art with a deep significance for many people.

A mandala is a symbol of the universe in its ideal form, and its creation signifies the transformation of a universe of suffering into one of joy.

A traditional mandala is a square containing a circle, and the entire design is symmetrical and balanced. It can also be used as an aid to meditation, helping the meditator to envision how to achieve the perfect self.



✧ **Gathering Hymn 377 *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light***

✧ **Opening Ourselves to God's Grace**

One: In this gathered time together, may we open ourselves to God's grace; mindful that the Divine presence is with us always and in all ways.

ALL: May God's presence be illumined for us and may we allow our souls to shine and share that spark with others – enabling each of us to shine forth.

✧ **Sharing our Innermost Lives with God**

O God of light and peace, dispel the darkness that shrouds our path. Reveal to us the light we carry and the light that is needed in the world. In the daily round from sunrise to sunset, remind us again of your holy presence hovering near us and in us. Free us from shame and self-doubt. Help us to see you in the moment-by-moment possibilities to live honestly, to act courageously, and to speak from our wisdom. Remind us of your love and grace and guide us in being loving and grace-filled with ourselves, with our loved ones and with the stranger. May we lift up our eyes and look around, grateful that you shine upon us. Help us to perceive your light as well as our light and the light emanating from others. Amen.

✧ **Special Music *God is Light*** – led by Rosie & Bobby

(ALL) God is light, and in God there is no darkness at all!
Oh, how we love within God's presence to dwell!
In this light we enjoy a constant cleansing within—
From every sin!

In the light,
We are walking—
Fellowship,
We're enjoying;
And the love
Of God's Son

(ALL) Is cleansing us from sin.

We confess,
God is faithful
To forgive—
God is righteous.
What a joy!
We are cleansed

(ALL) From every sin!

✧ **Prayer of Intention**

Holy Spirit, may we hear your precious Word for us today. May we grow in wisdom, strength, and love as we open our ears, our minds, and our hearts to the transformative message you have in store for each of us. Amen.

✧ **Bible Wisdom Teaching Isaiah 9: 1-4**

But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

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

You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.

For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

One: May we hear anew the origin stories of our faith and draw from the roots of our tradition.

All: **Thanks be to our God.**

✧ **Message *Seeing Light in the Darkness***



✧ Reflection Questions

- What have you learned about yourself in times of desolation and darkness?
- Where do you most readily find light in your life?
- How do you train your attention to the light when you are struggling?
- How might you share the light with others?

✧ Short Period of Silent Reflection



✧ Sharing Our Wisdom

✧ Hymn 123 *Shine, Jesus, Shine*

✧ Community Prayers & the Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

ALL: Indwelling God,
infused throughout all existence,
we honor you with many names.

Your realm is within the human
heart.
We accept life for all that it can be,
on earth as throughout all
creation.

May we continue to draw
sustenance from this earth,
and may we receive forgiveness
equal to our own.

May we ever move from
separation toward union,
to live in grace, with love in our
hearts,
forever and ever. Amen.



✧ **Benediction**

**The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light!
Therefore, go out into the world with great joy,
and the grace of Bethlehem's Holy Child,
the love of the God who never ceases to amaze,
and the fellowship of the Spirit who never wearies,
will be with you today and evermore.**

Now that the worship has ended, may the service truly begin.

✧ **Our Response:**

***Holy One, now we your servants go in peace. Your Word lives
on in us.***

✧ **Postlude**