



"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 29, 2023

9:30 a.m.



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

"Treasures in the Darkness" Rev. Trish Eckert

✧ **Prelude: Zo Trembley**

✧ **Welcome and community news**

- Our Adult Education class meets after worship this morning
- We have updated the zoom links to our 3 weekly worship services

✧ **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**

A Blessing for Traveling in the Dark ~ Jan Richardson



A night sky with a band of stars
Go slow
if you can.
Slower.
More slowly still.
Friendly dark
or fearsome,

this is no place
to break your neck
by rushing,
by running,
by crashing into
what you cannot see.

Then again,
it is true:
different darks
have different tasks,
and if you
have arrived here unawares,
if you have come
in peril
or in pain,
this might be no place
you should dawdle.

I do not know
what these shadows
ask of you,
what they might hold
that means you good
or ill.

It is not for me
to reckon
whether you should linger
or you should leave.

But this is what
I can ask for you:

That in the darkness
there be a blessing.
That in the shadows
there be a welcome.
That in the night
you be encompassed
by the Love that knows
your name.

*from Jan Richardson's blog, The Advent Door
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✧ **Becoming Present to God and Each Other...Our Check in**

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

✧ **Kid's Time**

✧ **Gathering as God's People: *The Gifts Revealed in Darkness***

In this "ordinary time," in the weeks since Christmastide, leading up to the Lenten season, we've explored the gifts of light as we imagine the star that the magi followed, witnessed the increase in daylight hours since December 22nd, and noted the images of light and color and pattern that mandalas offer us as a center point for contemplation. This week we will consider the gifts of darkness - these gifts might take some deeper consideration to find, since light imagery is so rich in describing how we benefit. Yet, we know deep down that darkness is also a sacred aspect of our lives.

As we've turned our attention to light, we've noted 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. We cannot know light without darkness and vice versa.

We know full well that life is filled with both joy and sorrow. We are never exempt from pain, and just when we think we have life under control, a lightning bolt may hit and shatter our well-constructed walls. Darkness comes in varying intensity, and by several means. We see the darkness, we touch and feel it, we lose our way in it. And candles are lit. We see. We hope. There is darkness and there is light. We live with both.

Richard Rohr says that if our posture with the darkness is to ‘stand angrily, obsessively against it, ... we will become mirror images of it.’ A mature posture in life is to be honest in naming the darkness and to pay attention to what we experience and come to know as we move through the dark/unknown/mystery times in our lives.

Our acts of justice, sacrifices of love, and ministry projects provide a glimmer in dark places - a sign of a greater Light remains with us always. And in a mysterious way we will find life’s gifts, which sometimes hide in the darkness. Today we’ll hear Bible Wisdom teachings that reference the dark just as we continue to attend to the light. Let us especially carry within us what God says in the Book of Isaiah, “I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches stored in secret places.”



✧ **Gathering Hymn 123 *Shine, Jesus, Shine***

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

One: Come, God.

Come walk with your people, for you alone are our strength and glory,

ALL: and we put our trust in You.

One: Come, God.

Come walk behind us, beside us, before us,
for you alone are our shelter and direction,

ALL: and we put our trust in You.

One: Come, God.

Come, seek and find and put us right,
for you alone are the light in our darkness,

ALL: and we put our trust in You.

One: Come, God.

We know you are near.

The sound of your footsteps sets us dancing.

ALL: Help us to praise and worship You.

✧ **Sharing our Innermost Lives with God**

God of all who stumble in the shadows,
we seek you as beacon and guide.

So often we are overcome by dread, fear, guilt, and shame.

Be with us as we navigate

Lead us through all danger,

sustain us through all desolation,

and reveal to us the gifts that await us in the darkness. Amen.

✧ **Special Music *Lead Us*** – sung and played by Rosie Rain

✧ **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 45: 1-7**

Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped to subdue nations before him and strip kings of their robes, to open doors before him-- and the gates shall not be closed:

I will go before you and level the mountains, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron,

I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places, so that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name.

For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I surname you, though you do not know me.

I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides me there is no god. I arm you, though you do not know me, so that they may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is no one besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other.

I form light and create darkness; I make weal and create woe; I the Lord do all these things.

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** *Treasures in the Darkness*



✧ **Reflection Questions**

- What are you most frightened of in dark times?
- What gifts have you found in the dark?
- How do you open yourself to those gifts and revelations?
- In what ways have your experiences of the dark shaped you?

✧ **Short Period of Silent Reflection**



✧ **Sharing Our Wisdom**

✧ **Hymn 302 *When Hands Reach Out and Fingers Trace***

✧ **Community Prayers & the Pastoral Prayer**

The Lord's Prayer

**ALL: Dear One,
closer to us than our own
hearts,
farther from us than the most
distant star,
you are beyond naming.**

**May your powerful presence
become obvious
not only in the undeniable
glory of the sky,
but also in the seemingly base
and common processes of the
earth.**

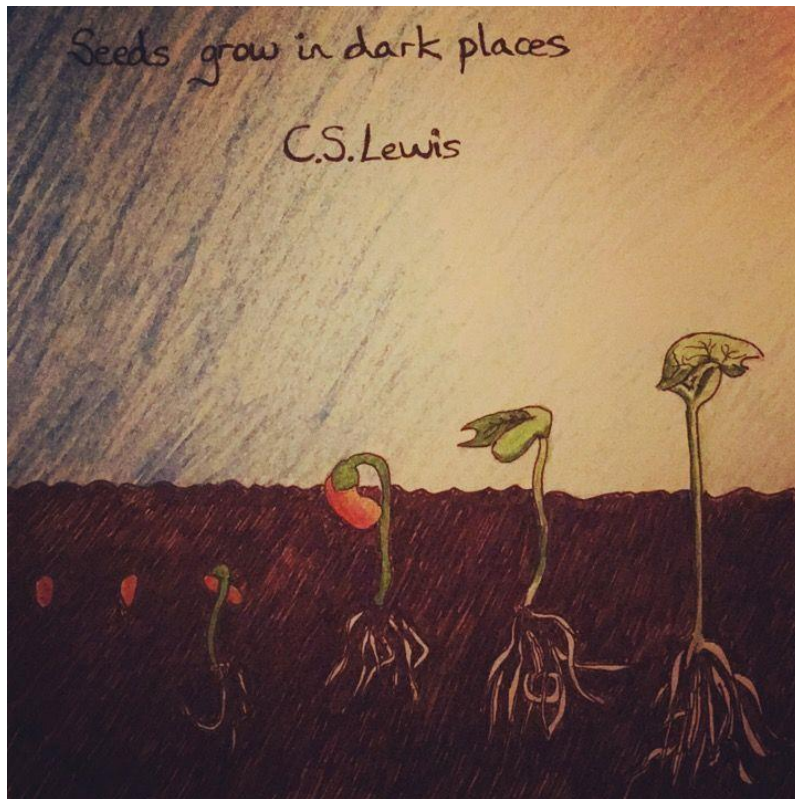
**Give us what we need, day by
day,
to keep body and soul
together, because
clever as you have made us,**

**we still owe our existence to
you.**

**We recognize that to be
reconciled with you,
we must live peaceably and
justly with other human
beings,
putting hate and bitterness
behind us.**

**We are torn between our
faith in your goodness
and our awareness of the evil
in your creation,
so deliver us from the
temptation to despair.**

**Yours alone is the universe
and all its majesty and
beauty.
So it is. Amen.**



✧ **Benediction**

In the darkness,
May you awaken to the hidden treasures awaiting you
May you remember the goodness of rest and renewal
May you notice the glimmers of joy, peace, and grace that surround you.
Amen.

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**