

## Holy Darkness: Service of Word and Prayer for Advent Darkness Holds Promise- December 15, 2021

### Greeting

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, the love of Christ that guards our hearts and minds, and the joy and consolation of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

### Opening Prayer

Stir up our hearts, O God, to prepare a pathway for your Christ.

By his coming speak peace to your people and turn our hearts toward you, that your saving grace and splendid glory may dwell in all the earth; through Jesus Christ, whose day draws near.

**Amen.**

### Silence

### Opening Song: *Come now, O God* ACS 902

- 1 Come now, O God, when our love is forsaken.  
Come, when our bedrock of faith has been shaken.  
Come, when our deepest of hopes are mistaken.  
Come, Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.
- 2 Come, when we squander the freedom you gave us.  
Come, break the systems of sin that enslave us.  
Come, though we wonder if you can still save us.  
Come, Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.
- 3 Come, put an end to our self-serving madness.  
Come, while the world is enshrouded in sadness.  
Come, turn the tears of our mourning to gladness.  
Come, Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.

Text: David Bjorlin, b. 1984

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### Scripture: **1 Samuel 3:1-10**

<sup>1</sup>Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

<sup>2</sup>At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; <sup>3</sup>the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. <sup>4</sup>Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" <sup>5</sup>and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. <sup>6</sup>The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." <sup>7</sup>Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. <sup>8</sup>The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. <sup>9</sup>Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

<sup>10</sup>Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

**Reflection:** *Darkness Holds Promise*

***O God, you search me* ACS 1082**

O God, you search me and you know me.  
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.  
When I walk or lie down you are before me:  
ever the maker and keeper of my days.

Before a word is on my tongue, Lord,  
you have known its meaning through and through.  
You are with me beyond my understanding:  
God of my present, my past, and future, too.

For you created me and shaped me,  
gave me life within my mother's womb.  
For the wonder of who I am, I praise you:  
safe in your hands, all creation is made new.

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957

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**Prayer**

In Christ Jesus we meet the God who knows our weakness and bears the wounds of the world.  
Therefore, let us be bold as we pray, trusting that God draws near to those in any kind of need.

**Concluding Prayer**

Into your wide embrace, O God, we place all our prayers, spoken and unspoken, trusting that you will receive them into your heart of mercy, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior.

**Amen.**

**Lord's Prayer**

**Song: *We are waiting for Jesus* ACS 905**

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| 1 We are waiting for Jesus; Jesus brings peace.<br>We are waiting for Jesus; Jesus brings peace.<br>Sun of justice, shine upon us;<br>we are trusting in your promise.<br>We are waiting for Jesus; Jesus brings peace. | 2 We are waiting for Jesus; Jesus brings peace.<br>We are waiting for Jesus; Jesus brings peace.<br>Loving Shepherd, walk beside us;<br>stir our hearts, and gently guide us.<br>We are waiting for Jesus; Jesus brings peace. |
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Text: John Helgen, b. 1957

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**Blessing**

Keep watch, dear Lord,  
with those who work, or watch, or weep this night,  
and give your angels charge over those who sleep.  
Tend the sick, Lord Christ;  
give rest to the weary, bless the dying,  
soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted,  
shield the joyous;  
and all for your love's sake.

**Amen.**

Christ goes with you into this dark night.

**Thanks be to God.**