

Quispamsis United Church

December 21st, 2021 - Longest Night/Blue Christmas Service

Liturgical Colour: Blue/Purple

Presider: Rev. Richard Bowley

Musician: Stephen Alexander

Hymn Leader: Sue King

GATHERING TOGETHER

Acknowledgement of Territories

Call to Worship (Responsive):

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by God, and without God nothing came to be. What came to be through God was life, and this life was the light of the world.

The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

-adapted from John 1:1-5

Words of Welcome

Hymn: Come and Find the Quiet Centre VU 374

- 1 Come and find the quiet centre
in the crowded life we lead,
find the room for hope to enter,
find the frame where we are freed:
clear the chaos and the clutter,
clear our eyes, that we can see
all the things that really matter,
be at peace, and simply be.

- 2 Silence is a friend who claims us,
cools the heat and slows the pace,
God it is who speaks and names us,
knows our being, face to face,
making space within our thinking,
lifting shades to show the sun,
raising courage when we're shrinking,
finding scope for faith begun.

**3 In the Spirit let us travel,
open to each other's pain,
let our loves and fears unravel,
celebrate the space we gain:
there's a place for deepest dreaming,
there's a time for heart to care,
in the Spirit's lively scheming
there is always room to spare!**

LISTENING FOR TRUTH

Responsive Reading: Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive

to the voice of my supplications!

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,

Lord, who could stand?

But there is forgiveness with you,

so that you may be revered.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,

and in his word I hope;

my soul waits for the Lord

more than those who watch for the morning,

more than those who watch for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the Lord!

For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem.

It is he who will redeem Israel

from all its iniquities.

Scripture Reflections: Matthew 1 & 2 (selections)

Special Music: In the Quiet Curve of Evening

Message

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn:

Sisters Let us Walk Together

MV 179

1. **Sister let us walk together,
sharing sadness, loss and grief,
we will move through pain to wholeness,
brokenness transformed to peace.**
2. **Brothers let us work together,
seeking justice, healing shame,
filled with hope, embued with courage,
ev'ry violence we will name.**
3. **People let us love together,
joining spirits, linking hands,
we are God's unique creation,
clothed with dignity we'll stand.**

A Litany of Remembering (Responsive):

First Candle is Lit

We light this first candle to remember those whom we have loved and lost. (...)when all Creation waits for the Light.

We remember them with love. May God's eternal love surround them.

Silent reflection

Second candle is lit

We light this second candle to remember the pain of loss: (...) You will place the gift of peace, shalom.

We remember that through You all things are possible. Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into Your future.

Silent reflection

Third candle is lit

We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time. (...)and in knowledge of our own mortality.

We remember that though we have journeyed far, and that, while lost, we may have turned away from the light, the light itself has not failed. We remember that though winter be upon us and though the night be dark, with the turning of the Wheel the dawn will come, and dawn defeats the darkness.

Silent reflection

Fourth candle is lit

We light this fourth candle to remember faith, the gift of light and hope that God offers (...)
Living, breathing, loving, mourning.

We remember the One who shares our burdens, who shows us the way to the Light, and who journeys with us into all our tomorrows.

Silent reflection

Invitation to Light Candles

At this time, you were invited to light the candles that you have brought to this time. As you like what each one, offer the name or names of those that you carried with you into this time and space.

Prayers for Ourselves and Others & Lord's Prayer

Hymn:

Silent Night

VU 67

1 Silent night! Holy night!

**All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

2 Silent night! Holy night!

**Shepherds quake at the sight:
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing Hallelujah,
Christ the Saviour is born, Christ the Saviour is born.**

3 Silent night! Holy night!

**Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

SENDING FORTH

Commissioning (Responsive):

We lift up our eyes to the hills. From where will we look for help?

Our help comes from God, who has made heaven and earth.

God will not let our foot stumble, the One who protects Israel will not slumber

The One who protects us will neither slumber nor sleep.

It is God who protects us, our defence at our right hand.

The sun shall not strike us by day, nor the moon by night.

God will protect us from all evil, God will protect our life

God will protect our going and coming, now and forever.

-adapted from Psalm 121

Benediction

Closing Music