

# **An Ecumenical Service of Remembrance and Healing**

*to acknowledge the grief and sense of loss felt by many this holiday season and to stand together in solidarity, prayer, and hope.*



*Community Church of Santa Rosa Beach  
3524 US Highway 98 West, Santa Rosa Beach, FL  
December 8, 2020 at 1 p.m.*

Ministers: Steve Squires, Community Church  
Scooter Ward, Community Church  
Emily Proctor, Caring and Sharing of South  
Walton, Freeport Presbyterian  
Richard Proctor, Christ the King Episcopal  
David Butler, Faith Assembly of God  
CC Whittinghill, Faith Assembly of God  
Michael Lambeth, Good News United Methodist  
Ronnie McBrayer, A Simple Faith  
Dan Tharpe, Minister at Large

## O Come, O Come, Emmanuel 154

Unison

Em Bm G Am Am G D G D Bm C G

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive  
 2 O come, thou Day-spring, come and cheer our spir - its by thine  
 3 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, and or - der all things,  
 4 O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind all peo - ples in one

Am Em Bm Em Am Am Em B7 Em Bm C D Em

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here, un -  
 ad - vent here; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night, and  
 far and nigh; to us the path of knowl - edge show, and  
 heart and mind; bid en - vy, strife and quar - rels cease; fill

Refrain (Harmony)

D Bm G G Am Am G D G D Em Bm G

til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 death's dark shad - ows put to flight.  
 cause us in her ways to go. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -  
 the whole world with heav - en's peace.

Am Am G D Em D G G C G Am Em D Em

man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

## **Welcome & Opening Prayer**

### **Call to Worship**

Leader: In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
What has come into being in Him was life,  
and the life was the light of all people.

**People: The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has not overcome it.**

### ***Music – O Come, O Come Emmanuel – Verses 1 & 2***

### **A Reading from Ecclesiastes 3**

Leader: A Reading from Ecclesiastes 3:  
For everything there is a season,  
and a time for every matter under heaven:  
a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to break down, and a time to build up;  
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

Leader: We light this candle  
for all who weep and mourn the absence of loved ones  
this holiday season, recognizing that death and loss  
touch every human life.

Moving through any kind of change can be challenging,  
even painful, but comfort is always available  
through God in Christ, who abides in us  
and invites us to abide in Him.

Jesus did not pity those who mourn, but said  
to his followers in his Sermon on the Mount,  
“Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.”



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May we find some of that comfort for ourselves today.  
And as we acknowledge our loss, may we find ourselves  
blessed by gratitude, wisdom, peace, faith, hope, love  
and courage for everyday living.

**People: The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has not overcome it.**

***Music - O Come, O Come Emmanuel – Verses 3 & 4***

**A Reading from John 11**

Leader: A Reading from John 11:  
When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him,  
she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord,  
if you had been here, my brother would not have died."  
When Jesus saw her weeping,  
and the Jews who came with her also weeping,  
He was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved.  
He said, "Where have you laid him?"  
They said to him, "Lord, come and see."  
Jesus began to weep. So some of them said,  
"See how he loved him!" But some of them said,  
"Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man  
have kept this man from dying?"

Leader: We light this candle  
for all who are angry at God  
for not preventing the losses  
that wreak such havoc in our lives and others'.  
The existence of so much suffering, sin, and evil  
is a mystery not easily explained.  
Still, we wonder that Emmanuel,  
God with us, was also angry, and suffered

# How Deep The Father's Love For Us

## Verse 1

How deep the Father's love for us  
How vast beyond all measure  
That He should give His only Son  
To make a wretch His treasure  
How great the pain of searing loss  
The Father turns His face away  
As wounds which mar the Chosen One  
Bring many sons to glory

## Verse 2

Behold the Man upon a cross  
My sin upon His shoulders  
Ashamed I hear my mocking voice  
Call out among the scoffers  
It was my sin that held Him there  
Until it was accomplished  
His dying breath has brought me life  
I know that it is finished

## Verse 3

I will not boast in anything  
No gifts no pow'r no wisdom  
But I will boast in Jesus Christ  
His death and resurrection  
Why should I gain from His reward  
I cannot give an answer  
But this I know with all my heart  
His wounds have paid my ransom

CCLI Song # 1558110

Stuart Townend

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grief, betrayal, and even death.  
We pray for reconciliation with God,  
however we find ourselves estranged.

**People: The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has not overcome it.**

***Music – “How Deep the Father’s Love for Us”***

**A Reading from Matthew 2 and a Lamentation for the Slaughter  
of the Innocents**

Leader: A reading from Matthew, chapter 2:  
When Herod saw that he had been tricked  
by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed  
all the children in and around Bethlehem  
who were two years old or under, according to the time  
that he had learned from the wise men.  
Then was fulfilled what had been spoken  
through the prophet Jeremiah:  
“A voice was heard in Ramah,  
wailing and loud lamentation.”

**People: It was Rachel weeping for her children,  
refusing to be comforted because they were no more.**

Leader: And still too many cry,  
on every continent and in every nation,  
who have lost loved ones too soon and unnecessarily  
to violence and war, to famine and disease,  
to abuse, addiction, mental illness, and suicide,  
to miscarriage, still birth, and other untimely deaths.  
We cry out for the innocents slaughtered  
all over the world, where misguided ideology, vengeance,  
and mental illness have taken so many lives.

We cry out for those lives lost, homes and businesses and whole communities devastated by natural disasters and especially the Covid-19 pandemic.

Especially we cry out for the over 250,000 lives lost in the United States to the Coronavirus, and for those families who had to remain painfully separated from their loved ones in times of suffering and dying and grieving.

A voice was heard in Ramah  
sobbing and loudly lamenting.

**People: It was Rachel weeping for her children,  
refusing to be comforted because they were no more.**

*(silence)*

**Leader:** A voice is heard in all places of sadness.  
It is the voice of God, our Mother and Father,  
who has seen the pain of her children  
and seen beyond it. It says,

“Keep your voice from weeping  
and keep your eyes from tears;  
for your grieving has been heard  
and your work shall be rewarded....  
There is hope for your future.  
I have prepared a place for your children  
and will keep them in perfect peace,  
until the old things have disappeared and  
there is a new heaven and a new earth.”

We light this candle  
for all who died unnecessarily  
or too soon, and for all whose lives and whose holidays  
will never be the same because of it.



Let us pray together...

**People: Gracious God, hold in your loving embrace those whose names are written on our hearts or on our consciences until the day when we see them again and know that our grieving is over and that all your promises are kept. Move us as Christians and as citizens to turn our anger and lamentation into a commitment to reduce the unnecessary loss of life, and into a commitment of resources to care for the most vulnerable among us. Amen.**

### ***A TIME FOR HEALING AND REMEMBERING***

#### **A Reading from Romans 8**

Leader: I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.  
For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God...  
We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

Leader: We are here to recognize our losses and remember those we loved who have died. When the loss is someone we have loved or been loved by, we grieve mightily but we may also rejoice and feel gratitude for what we had, the person we knew,

or the love we shared before the loss.

As we light a candle in remembrance, as far as is possible, let us do so with gratitude for all that was good about their time here on earth and with us.

But sometimes when a loved one dies there is also turmoil caused by the painful and broken parts of relationships that still need healing or forgiveness. Sometimes our loss is not a death of a person but the death of a trusting relationship, a covenant such as marriage, a job or some hope we had for the future, and the pain or anger overwhelms any sense of gratitude, and we can only lift up to God the jagged edges of our hearts and lives for healing.

For some of us our loss this holiday season may be a loss to our sense of health, ability, or mental well-being. Perhaps we are facing a new diagnosis, testing, chronic pain or illness, treatment, or a new limitation that may affect our ability to enjoy or experience the holidays the way we would like or the way we feel others expect us to.

And so we light this candle  
for all who are most in need of healing and peace.

### **Lighting of the Candles & Prayers**

Leader: As the music plays, we invite you to come forward to the table at the top of each aisle, take a candle from the basket, light it from the candle in the center of each table and lay it on the table in remembrance of a loved one who has died or a loss heavy on your heart or in hope of healing or a new start.

You may light the candle in silence  
or name the person, loss or hope aloud.

In the past we have also offered individual prayers  
for healing and the anointing of oil.

This year, we invite you to instead write down any  
specific prayer requests you might have on the card  
located in your pew, so that each one who needs  
individual prayers can know themselves seen, heard and  
prayed for. Leave them on your pew and they will be  
prayed for by the pastors here, according to your  
instructions.

Leader: Let us pray.

Gracious God, source of life eternal and abundant,  
in Jesus Christ you heal the sick and mend the broken,  
you forgive sinners and restore the lost to community.  
In Christ you revealed yourself to be  
the light of the world.

As these candles bring light into this holy space,  
may your love shine into every dark corner  
of our lives and hearts.

By your Spirit, and through our prayers for one another,  
come upon all who are in need of healing, compassion,  
comfort, forgiveness and new life that they may know  
your healing touch, be comforted and made whole,  
to the glory of Jesus Christ our redeemer. Amen.

### ***Instrumental music***

*Those who wish may come forward one at a time, maintaining a  
distance of 6 feet apart, to light a candle, either in silence or naming  
their loved one out loud.*

## **Litany of Remembrance**

Leader: Having lit our candles, please join me in the litany of remembrance for loved ones lost:  
In the rising of the sun and its going down,

**People: We remember them.**

Leader: In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of the winter,

**People: We remember them.**

Leader: In the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring,

**People: We remember them.**

Leader: In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer,

**People: We remember them.**

Leader: At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn,

**People: We remember them.**

Leader: At the beginning of the year and when it ends,

**People: We remember them.**

Leader: When we are lost and sick at heart,

**People: We remember them.**

Leader: When we have joys we yearn to share,

**People: We remember them.**

Leader: As long as we live, they too shall live,  
for they have shaped who we are and

**People: We remember them.**

Leader: I invite you to gaze at these flames... then close your eyes.  
You should still be able to see them in your mind's eye.  
So it is with our loved ones.

Leader: Having remembered our loved ones,  
with gratitude in our hearts,  
we now light the candle of love:  
for the love we have for life  
and for God who is the source of life,  
for the love that those we have lost had for us  
and the love we had and still have for them,  
for the love we have for those still physically present  
in our lives, for the love that has supported us in our grief,  
and for the love that sustains us going forward.

Leader: The light shines in the darkness,  
People: **and the darkness has not overcome it.**

***Special Music – “Winter Snow” by Michael Lambeth***

### **A Unison Reading of Psalm 23**

Leader: Please join me in saying together Psalm 23:

People: **The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.  
He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake.  
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil; for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff— they comfort me.  
You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
my whole life long.**



# It Is Well With My Soul

## Verse 1

When peace like a river  
Attendeth my way  
When sorrows like sea billows roll  
Whatever my lot  
Thou hast taught me to say  
It is well  
It is well with my soul

## Chorus

It is well with my soul  
It is well  
It is well with my soul

## Verse 2

Tho' Satan should buffet  
Tho' trials should come  
Let this blest assurance control  
That Christ hath regarded  
My helpless estate  
And hath shed His own blood  
For my soul

## Verse 3

My sin O the bliss  
Of this glorious tho't  
My sin not in part but the whole  
Is nailed to the cross  
And I bear it no more  
Praise the Lord  
Praise the Lord O my soul

CCLI Song # 25376

Horatio Gates Spafford | Philip Paul Bliss

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## Verse 4

And Lord haste the day  
When the faith shall be sight  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll  
The trump shall resound  
And the Lord shall descend  
Even so it is well  
With my soul

**Music – “It Is Well with My Soul”**

**A Litany from Romans 8**

**Leader:** Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

**People:** Neither death, nor life,  
nor things present, nor things to come,  
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,  
nor anything else in all creation,  
will be able to separate us from the love of God  
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

**Benediction**

**Postlude**

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The cover image is by Martha Kelly, from her illustrations of the Presbyterian Women's Study Guide to Revelation ([www.marthakellyart.com](http://www.marthakellyart.com)).

“Lamentation for the Slaughter of the Innocents” was adapted from the Iona Community Wild Goose Worship Group’s “Women Weeping: Christmas Meditation 2” in *Cloth for the Cradle: Worship resources and readings for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2000), pp. 118-121.