Prelude: O Come, O Come Emmanuel arranged by Lanz; Katie Wynkoop

Greeting: Betsy Tannehill

Welcome to this time of worship. We come together tonight, seeking God’s comfort. May the readings, the songs and the candles bring us the hope, the peace, the joy and the love that we seek. Remember, “The Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (Samuel 16:7) “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” Deuteronomy 31:8

If you would like to join us for Communion, please prepare a piece of bread or cracker and some juice for the meal.

Call to Worship: Mona and Betsy
The world feels dark and cold.
We may be afraid or angry, adrift, or anguished, or alone.
Do not leave us in the dark cold of night.
For we are in need of you.
The glitter of Christmas and the sounds of cheer are everywhere.
But the reality of everyday life is still so very hard.
What if you will not help us? What if the darkness wins?
You who called light into being, are you not also Lord of the darkness?
Tonight we gather, daring to wonder if God has come, is coming, will come in Jesus.
We would worship the One who took flesh and dwelt among us.
Tonight we gather to offer to God all that is within us.
Take our glimmer of faith and our shimmers of fear.
May we love you just as we are,
For you do love us. Come, let us worship God.

Music: Breathe on my Breath of God, by Benjamin Martin (Martin Spencer, tenor, and Cora Kuyvenhoven, cellist)
Prayer: Mona

Holy One,
You are the One in whom I live and move and have my being.
You know my words before they are on my lips.
You know my pain and the whole truth of my life.
Heal me. Help me.
Open my heart to any lessons that are here for me.
Maker of All that is, teach me truth in my deep places.
Christ, lead me through this place of death to resurrection.
Spirit, take me ever deeper into Love and set me free. Amen

Poem:

Blessed are those who mourn (pp. 209-210) (from July 26
Flash floods of tears, torrents of them,
Erode cruel canyons, exposing
Long forgotten strata of life
Laid down in the peaceful decades:
A badlands beauty. The same sun
That decorates each day with colors
From arroyos and mesas, also shows
Every old scar and cut of lament.
Weeping washes the wounds clean
And leaves them to heal, which always
Takes an age or two. No pain
Is ugly in past tense. Under
The Mercy every hurt is a fossil
Link in the great chain of becoming.
Pick and shovel prayers often
Turn them up in valleys of death.

[Jesus said,] “You’re blessed when you feel you’ve lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.” Matthew 5:4
Scripture: Psalm 10: 12-18 Andrea Eberhard

Reflection – Jon Carlisle – based on Psalms 13 and 10

Communion – Jon Carlisle & Linda Billman

Music: Sarabande from Suite No.2 in D–, by J.S.Bach (Cora Kuyvenhoven, cellist)

Scripture: Isaiah 43:1-5a and Jeremiah 29:11-14 – Andrea Eberhard

Lighting the Candles: Bob and Sandy Tullett
Leader: We light this first candle to remember those persons who have been loved and lost. We pause to remember their names, their faces, and their voices. We give thanks for the memories that bind them to us this season.

People: May God’s eternal love surround them. A time of silence

Leader: We light this second candle to redeem the pain of loss: the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, and the loss of health. As we gather up the pain of the past, we offer it to you, O God, asking that into our open hands, you will place the gift of peace.

People: Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into your future. A time of silence

Leader: We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember the past weeks, months and for some of us, years. We remember the poignancy of memories, the grief, the sadness, the hurts, and the pain.

People: Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness, and that Christ has come to bring light into our dark world. A time of silence

Leader: We light this fourth candle to remember our world where pain and sorrow, homelessness and disease, conflict and war occur in the lives of millions of people. We hold in tenderness and prayer the collective suffering of our world at this time. We grieve precious lives lost and vulnerable lives threatened. We ache for ourselves and our neighbors, standing before an uncertain future. We remember the countless acts of terrorism and the repercussions in their
aftermath. We know that injustice and poverty, oppression and hunger are all too common.

**People May God help us to have compassion for others as we work towards peace and justice for people everywhere. Lord, heal our hearts, heal our land, and help us to live as brother and sister.**  
* A time of silence

Leader: As we light the Christ candle, we remember our faith and the gift of hope, which God offers to us in the Christmas story. We remember that Jesus was born to bring us abundant life, forgiveness, and healing. God shares our life, and promises to be with us at all times; good and bad.

**Advent Blessing/Benediction;** Jon Carlisle

Blessed are you  
Who bear the light In unbearable times,  
Who testify to its endurance amid the unendurable,  
Who bear witness o its persistence  
When everything seems in shadow and grief  
Blessed are you  
In whom the brightness blazes-  
Your heart a chapel,  
An alter where n the deepest night  
Can be seen the fire that  
Shines forth in you  
In unaccountable faith,  
In stubborn hope,  
In love that illumines  
Every broken thing it finds.

--Jan Richardson from “Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessing for the Seasons”

From beyond the bounds of time and with a love stronger than death, our God comes to us: our God, our rock, our light, our hope, our Beloved who will not let us go. May you go in peace: wrapped in love, sustained by hope, and cherished by the Holy One. Amen.

**Postlude:** Of the Father’s Love Begotten arranged by Maynard; Katie Wynkoop