

A LITURGY OF REMEMBRANCE

FIRST CANDLE

We light this first candle to remember those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember clearly, their names, their faces, their voices, their bodies, the memory that binds them to us in this season. We hold them before God, giving thanks for their lives in ours. .

I invite you to name them, aloud or in the silence of your hearts....

ALL: Lord, we remember with love these ones we have named. Accept our love and thanksgiving as we entrust them to your loving care. May your eternal love surround them. Help us to find joy in the people, events and the beauty which still surrounds us. We ask that you save a place for us with them as we anticipate the day when we are all in your presence forever. May this truth sustain us in the days to come. Take our sad and heavy hearts and comfort us. God of sorrow, draw near!

SING:

*O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the son of God appear
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

SECOND CANDLE

We light this second candle to remember the pain of loss: loss of relationships, loss of trust, loss of jobs, loss of health, loss of faith, the loss of joy, the loss of peace. We acknowledge the pain of the past, O God, and we offer it to you, asking that into our wounded hearts you will place the gift of peace, shalom.

I invite you to name these losses aloud or in the silence of your hearts....

ALL: God of mystery, we turn our hearts to you. We come before you in need of peace, grateful for the mystery of life and ever keenly aware of your promises of guidance and protection. We want to place our trust in you, but confess that our hearts grow fearful and anxious. We forget so easily that you will be with us in all things. Remind us that through you all things are possible. Refresh, restore, renew us, O God. Amen.

SING

*O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

THIRD CANDLE

The third candle we light for those who experience a loss of direction in their lives. God of the Exodus, you led Moses and your people through the wilderness to a new land. Hear our prayer. We want so much to have a sense of direction, to know where we are and where we ought to be headed. But the darkness and the questions stay.

You ask us to be full of faith, to believe deep within that you are our signpost, that you are our wisdom and our guide, and to trust in your presence. We accept and lay before you the times we have walked alone, in darkness; speak your clear words to us once again: "*Do not fear, I go before you.*"

ALL: God of our depths, we cry out for you to be our guide. Help us to have a strong sense of direction and grant that we may have the reassurance of knowing that we are on the right path. Take our lives and use them according to your will. Take all that is lost in us and bring it home with you. Amen.

SING:

*O come, Thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things, far and nigh
To us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

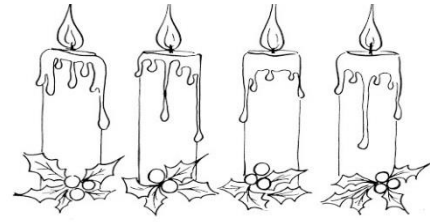
FOURTH CANDLE

We light this fourth candle to remember faith, the gift of light and as a sign of the hope God offers to us in the story of Christmas. We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time where there shall be no more pain or suffering or tears. We remember that the loving God who came to share this life with us promises us comfort and peace.

ALL: O God 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. Lift up our hearts, we pray, and enable us to grow in the power of love. May our lives bring comfort and encouragement to others. We ask this, and all things, in the name of Jesus Christ whose life is our light. Amen.

SING:

*O come, Desire of nations, bind, all peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife, and quarrels cease; Fill the whole world with heaven's peace
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*



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