ADVENT PRAYER SERVICE
LONGING FOR THE LIGHT

Opening Prayer:
Advent is a time to get in touch with our heartfelt longings and deepest desires. It is time to give new birth to the soul as we wait in hope for the joyous celebration of the reality of Christ’s presence among us – here and everywhere, now and for all time. Amen.

Reading
Isaiah 55: 10 -13

Response
God who dispels all darkness,
Come to be with us, in each one our situations;
Come to live among us, live with us and in us;
Come to fill the distance that divides and separates us;
Come to reconcile us with You and with one another.

A Reflective Reading from the writings of Ronald Rolheiser
Listen to instrumental music and reflect silently on the following:
We spend about 98 percent of our lives waiting for something else to happen to us. Only rarely do we find ourselves inside what Henri Nouwen called a fully pregnant moment, that is, where we can say to ourselves: “Right now I don’t want to be in any other place, with any other people, or doing anything other than what I am doing right now!” Mostly we are in none situation, with certain people, doing certain things, but are waiting for that to end so that something else or someone else can appear in our lives.

We experience this in many ways: sometimes we are just waiting for our bus to arrive, for our workday to end, or for a cherished friend to visit. But at other times our impatience is deeper and we ache for a new season in our lives, a new person to fall in love with, a more meaningful career, or for the courage to finally face up to a nagging problem. We are always waiting.

In that sense, we are always in “advent,” a word that comes from the Latin, Adventus, meaning “coming.” We long for someone or something to come along and bring new meaning into our lives. For us, as Christians, we see that new meaning in the coming of Christ.
The season of Advent is a time to get in touch with our longing, our aching, our frustrations. Its crimson color speaks not of penance, but of desire – and, in desire, we can, as the mystics say, enter into the loneliness of God and intuit the Kingdom.

**Reflection**
What am I waiting for?
What do I long for in community?
What is it that I desire?

**Intercessions**
*Pause after each intercession allowing participants to name people/places.*

We bring to mind all the people and the places in the world that are in need of light this day:

We bring to mind those places in the world where families and countries are torn apart by conflict, violence, or war, and ask for the light of peace to break through the darkness:

We bring to mind all those places where people have been forced from their homes and are separated from their families and ask for the light of hope to break through:

We bring to mind all those places in the world where people are suffering from disease or illness and ask for the light of healing to break through:

We bring to mind all those places in the world where people are held by poverty, hunger, and isolation and ask for the light of freedom and abundant life to break through:

**Closing Prayer**
O Wisdom, Come to teach us the way of truth.
O Lord of Israel, Come to redeem us with an outstretched arm.
O Root of Jesse, Come to bring us and all those we care about new life; do not delay.
O Key of David, Come to open our prison door, whatever that door may be, and set us free.
O Radiant Dawn, Come to bring light to the darkness in our lives.
O King of all Nations, Come to same us and give us peace.
O God-With-Us, Stay with us and send us forth in your name. Amen.

**Closing Hymn**
*Oh Come, Oh Come Emmanuel*