

## Order of Worship

Lighting of the Vesper Candle

Words of Welcome (Craig Atwood)

Opening Music (Mary Foil solo)

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Call to Worship (Craig) John 1:1-5

Prayer (responsively)

Leader: O gracious Light, pure brightness of the everlasting  
Father in heaven,

Response: **O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed**

L: Now as we come to the setting of the sun,

R: **As our eyes behold the vesper light,**

L: We sing your praises, O God:

R: **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

L: Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is  
past.

R: **Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or  
weep this night. Amen**

First Reading (Bill Gramley)

Two Poems

Lighting of the first candle (Bill)

L: We light this candle as we remember those whom we have  
lost. And loved. And still love. In the quiet of this moment we  
remember their names, faces, and voices.

(Silence)

L: We cherish the memories that bind us to them in this season.

R: **May the love of God surround them – and us – eternally.**

Music (Mary solo)

“In the Bleak Midwinter”

Reading (Craig)

“Those Winter Sundays” by Robert Hayden

Lighting of the second candle (Craig)

L: We light this candle as we acknowledge the pain of loss and  
the darkness of grief. We recall times of disbelief, anger,  
depression, and emptiness that we felt. And still feel.

(Silence)

L: We pray for comfort as we remember all that we have lost as  
the years have passed, including the loss of who we once were.

R: **Renew us, O God, and refresh us with your Spirit. Lead  
us into the future.**

Music (Nancy Johnston)

“In the Bleak Midwinter” Rosetti

Time for contemplation

Reading (Terry Overton)

Psalms 22 and 23

Lighting of the third candle (Terry)

L: We light this candle as we remember those who stood by us  
and supported us when we could not stand on our own.

(Silence)

L: We remember their hugs, tears, and prayers. We remember the  
gifts of food and kind gestures. We remember their  
encouragement and words of hope.

R: **We remember that dawn comes after the longest nights.**

Music (Mary solo)

Lo, How a Rose e'er Blooming

Reading (Debbie Drake)

“Heavy” by Mary Oliver

Lighting of the fourth candle (Debbie)

L: We light this candle to remind us of the gift of faith and the  
persistence of hope, which is the meaning of Christmas. We  
remember that we are not alone, and we offer prayers for others.

(Silence)

L: Let us remember that Christ is the light that shows us the way  
and is our companion on the journey.

R: **Dear Christ, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope within  
us. Be our light now and forever.**

Closing music: Hymn 297 “Silent Night” (Mary on guitar)

Blessings and parting (Craig)