

THE GATHERING

Prelude

*“How Long”
Chris Martirano*

MILLER

Call to Worship

In the midst of festivities, shouts, and bright lights, we feel the darkness of our souls.

Come, God of Power and Light, help us.

In the midst of gatherings, we feel alone and alienated.

Come, God of Peace and Hope, hear our cries.

In the midst of celebration, our hearts cry out.

Lord, hear us and come to us. Bring us peace.

Amen.

Opening Prayer

God of love and understanding, we gather here this evening to confront our pain in the midst of the world's celebration. Help us to know that you are present with us in all of our moods and feelings and seasons. Grant us a taste of the hope, peace, joy, and love that you promise to all of your people through the gift of your son Jesus. Amen.

Please stand as you are able for the hymn.

Hymn 196 “Come Thou Long Expected” HYFRYDOL

All sit.

CANDLELIGHTING

Leader: We light four candles tonight. We light these candles for our own needs. We light one for our grief, one for our courage, one for our memories and one for our love.

Reader: This candle represents our Grief. We own the pain of losing loved ones, of dreams that go unfulfilled, of hopes that evaporate in despair.

Reader lights a candle.....a brief silence follows

Reader: This candle represents our Courage. It

symbolizes the courage to confront our sorrow, to comfort each other, to share our feelings honestly and openly with each other, and to dare to hope in the midst of pain.

Reader lights a candle.....a brief silence follows

Reader: This candle represents our Memories. For the times we laughed together, cried together, were angry at each other or overjoyed with each other. We light this candle for the memories of caring and joy we shared together.

Reader lights a candle.....a brief silence follows

Reader: This candle represents our Love. The love we have given, and the love we have received. The love that has gone unacknowledged and unfelt, and the love that has been shared in times of joy and sorrow.

Reader lights a candle.....a brief silence follows

Leader: In the center of this circle (or table) we light the Christ candle, remembering that Jesus Christ is always in the center of our lives. He hears our cries, he knows our hearts and, in the midst of all our thoughts and emotions, he offers us hope and healing.

Leader lights the Christ Candle

Leader: Let us pray....

Comforting God, wrap us in your presence in this time of remembrance. With these candles, help us find your light, a light that will guide us day-by-day, step-by-step, as we try to live life fully and wholly. We cherish the special ways in which our loved ones have touched us. We thank you for the gift their lives have been to us. Now comfort us. Encourage us. Empower us. Amen.

THE WORD

Scripture Readings

Leader: In this scripture Jesus shares the parable of the feast to which many are invited but choose not to come, and others who have felt alienated are invited to the

feast. In God's divine order, all are invited; no one is excluded.

Luke 14: 5-24

Hymn 2218 TFWS

“You Are Mine”

ST. LOUIS

V. 1 – Chris Martirano

V. 2-4 – Congregation (see back) Please rise.

All sit.

Leader: When burdens get piled on top of other burdens, the load can crush us. In his promise, Jesus offers us help to carry our burdens and responsibilities. We do not have to bear them alone, he will always help us.

Matthew 11: 28-30

Please stand as you are able.

Hymn 230 “O Little Town of Bethlehem” ST. LOUIS

All sit.

THE RESPONSE

Meditation Stations

You are invited to move as the Spirit directs you to one of our meditation stations. You may spend as much time as you like at any of the stations. You may visit just one or experience God's presence at all of them. Though this is created to be an individual experience, you may be sharing the station with another. If you have the desire for the pastor to be with you, please summon him with a look or gesture.

1. **Baptismal Waters:** At this station you remember that God has covenanted with you to be in relationship through your baptism. Drop a stone in the water and listen for the splash. Gather some water on your fingers and rub your forehead. Sit or stand quietly as you feel God's presence.
2. **Finger Labyrinths:** Take a copy of a labyrinth from the front. With your finger, enter the labyrinth and follow it slowly to the center. As you round the corners, pause and thank God for His presence

in your life or ask God for a healing. Once you have reached the center, symbolically the place where you can be in God's presence, feel God near. Rejoice and be glad.

3. Sand Station: Sand reminds us of many things. It attests to time as in the passing of sand in the hour glass. It brings to mind purification as sand filters the muck from the waters. At this station, feel the sand, even play in it as you remember how God has been with you throughout time as life has changed and that through Jesus, God has made you pure.
4. Prayer Station: Come kneel at the altar for a time of personal prayer. If you would like a prayer partner, please look at one of the persons behind the altar. They will be waiting for your invitation to pray together. Tell them your name and your prayer

THESENDING

Leader: Our world, with its hurts and hatred, is not the way God would have us live. God's kingdom promises something so startlingly new that it takes our breath away. Those who weep now will not weep later. There will be no need of tears.

Revelation 21:1-7

Hymn 239 "Silent Night" STILLE NACHT

Benediction

Postlude

You are invited to remain in the sanctuary as long as you want following the service. If you wish to speak privately to someone as you leave, the pastor will be available in the parlor.

You Are Mine

Leader or All

A D A E

1 "I will come to you in the si - lence;
 2 "I am hope for all who are hope - less;
 3 "I am strength for all the de - spair - ing,
 (4) am the Word that leads all to free - dom; I

F#m D Esus E

I will lift you from all your fear.
 I am eyes for all who long to see. (2) In the
 heal - ing for the ones who dwell in shame.
 am the peace the world can - not give.

A D C# F#m

You will hear my voice; I claim you as my choice. Be
 shad - ows of the night, I will be your light. ♪
 All the blind will see; the lame will all run free, and
 I will call your name, em - brac - ing all your pain. Stand

Bm A D Esus E Esus E

still and know I am here. (to stanza 2)
 Come and rest in me. (to Refrain)
 all will know my name. (to Refrain)
 up, now walk and live! (to Refrain)

Refrain All

A D E F#m7 D

Do not be a - fraid, I am with you. I have called you each by

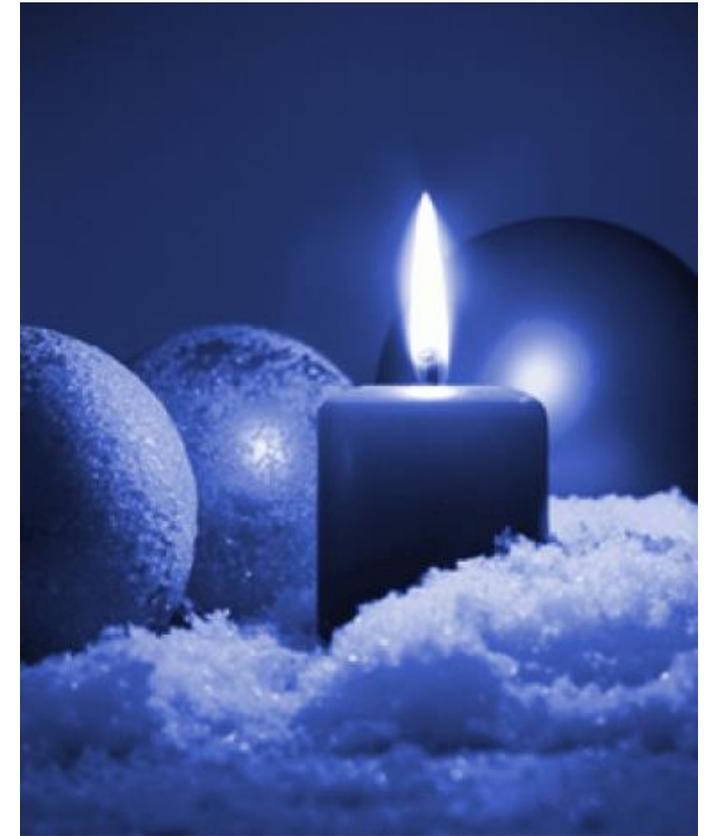
Esus E A D E F#m F#m7

name. Come and fol - low me, I will bring you home; I

D Esus E A E D E A E D E

love you and you are mine." 4 "I

New Milford United Methodist Church
 68 Danbury Road
 New Milford, CT 06776



December 21, 2014

7:00 p.m.

Phone: 860-354-4596
 Email: office@newmilfordumc.org
 Web: www.newmilfordumc.org