

Hannah Service (1 - Candles)

A Service of Grief, Hope, and Worship

Words in italics are to be spoken - they may also be included in the bulletin if you choose.

Prepare ahead of time:

Supplies

- Christ Candle
- Tea candles floating in a bowl of water, sitting in a bowl of sand, or arranged on a cloth on the altar table. We recommend that the candles be lit using the Christ candle during the time of response.
- Lighter: Keep a lighter near by!

People:

- Musician
 - Speakers: You will need readers or speakers for each of these. You might have a different leader for each, or one person might lead multiple parts of the service:
 - Invocation
 - Statement of Worship
 - Litany
 - Meditation/Message of Hope
 - Candle Lighting
 - Closing Prayer
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Prelude

Invocation

Holy One, we gather, claiming your presence, remembering that you are always with us. Come into our tired wrestling and nourish us with your promises. Seep into our broken spirits and teach us how to hope again. Amen.

Hymn – Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand, I am tired, I am weak, I am worn; through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light, Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home.

When my way grows drear, precious Lord, linger near, when my life is almost gone, hear my cry, hear my call, hold my hand lest I fall: Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

When the darkness appears and the night draws near, and the day is past and gone, at the river I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand: Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

Statement of Worship

Grief is cumulative. The grief that accompanies the season of Mother's Day and Father's Day for those whose lives have been touched by fertility grief is always complicated. During this season of polycrisis, when every thing about every day is difficult, this grief that accompanies this season will be more pronounced. This grief is likely to feel even more overwhelming, perhaps more suffocating, than it might otherwise be. Tonight, in the midst of this grief in which we might drown, we gather in community, lighting candles together against the darkness. You are invited to draw near to the grief, and to offer light into the shadows, and to worship God whose steadfast love sustains us.

Litany From Psalm 69 and "Precious Lord, Take My Hand"

ALL: Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck!

Leader: In the abundance of your steadfast love, answer me! With your faithful help, rescue me!

People: Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand.

Leader: In your abundant mercy, turn to me. Do not hide your face from me.

People: I am weak, I am tired, I am worn!

Leader: Do not let the flood sweep over me. Do not let the Pit close its mouth over me.

People: Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light.

Leader: Come quickly to answer me in my distress. Draw near to me. Redeem me.

People: Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me home.

Message of Hope (This is a brief meditation by clergy).

Hymn – If You Will Trust in God to Guide You

If you will trust in God to guide you, and hope in God through all your ways,
God will give strength, what-e'er betide you, and bear you through the evil days.
Who trusts in God's unchanging love builds on the rock that will not move.

God will embrace your pain and weeping, your helpless anger and distress.
If you are in God's care and keeping, in sorrow will God love you less?
For Christ, who took for you a cross, will bring you safe through every loss.

Sing, pray, and keep God's ways unswerving, so do your own part faithfully,
And trust God's word; though undeserving, you'll find God's promise true to be.
God never will forsake in need the soul that trusts in God indeed.

Candle Lighting (the pianist is encouraged to continue playing the hymn, or another meditative song, during this time.)

Those who have gathered are invited to come forward and light a candle, remembering the deep and abiding love that sustains us through our grief and loss. You may light a candle in silence, or you may give voice to your grief.

Time of silence

Hymn – How Firm a Foundation

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in God's excellent word! What more can be said than to you God has said, to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled!

Fear not, I am with thee, oh, be not dismayed, for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid. I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand, upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

When through the deep waters I call thee to go, the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow; for I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless, and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, my grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply. The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

The soul that on Jesus still leans for repose, I will not, I will not desert to its foes' that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no never, no never forsake!

Closing Prayer

God of mercy and light, thank you for meeting us here. As we leave this gathering, we cling to the promise that though all hell should endeavor to shake us, you, our God, will never forsake us. God, by your grace, hear all of our prayers. Make us a people of Hope. Amen.

Postlude