REMEMBRANCE SERVICE – CELEBRATION OF LIFE

**Hales Corners Lutheran Church**

**Friday, December 15, 2017, 6:30 to 8:00 pm**

**Proofed & Ready by JP – 12/5/2017 (except Poem)**

**PRELUDE Jana Petersen, Piano**

**“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus” Jana Petersen & Fred Dreher**

**GREETING** **Pastor Keith Johnson**

**Pastor Johnson:** We invite you to stand and greet those around you and share the name of who you are remembering tonight.

**OPENING MEDLEY** - **“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”**

O come, O come, Emmanuel,   
And ransom captive Israel,   
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.

Chorus: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel   
 Shall come to thee, O Israel!

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. (Chorus) W&R 154 – PD CCLI823255

The first Noel, the angel did say, **“The First Noel”**Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,   
On a cold winter’s night that was so deep.

Chorus: Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,   
 Born is the King of Israel.

Then let us all with one accord sing   
Praises to our heavenly Lord,   
Who hath made heaven and earth of naught,   
And with His blood our life hath bought. (Chorus) Traditioinal English Carol TWC162-PD CCLI823255

There is a Redeemer Jesus, God’s own Son: **“There Is A Redeemer”**

Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One.

Chorus: Thank You, O my Father, for giving us Your Son,  
 And leaving Your Spirit till the work on earth is done.

When I stand in Glory, I will see His face;  
There I’ll serve my King forever in that holy place. (chorus) Words and Music © 1982 Birdwing Music/BMG Songs

Ears to Hear Music CCLI 823255

**INVOCATION Pastor Johnson**

**PRAYER**

**Pastor Johnson:** Dear Heavenly Father, We come to You tonight to acknowledge the “blue feelings” we are having at this Christmas time. Sometimes we even feel guilty because we have these feelings. It is supposed to be a time of joy and celebration and yet it can be some of the darkest times for us. We offer up to You all those things we are feeling and all the situations that worry us, and ask that You heal our pains and remove the loneliness. Help us to recognize the pressures of the season that drag us into the darkness and turn them over to You.

**ALL:** **Amen**. **We wait upon the Lord.**

Pastor:We will read Psalm 77 from the Message paraphrased by Eugene Peterson responsively.

**Congregation: I yell out to my God, I yell with all my might, I yell at the top of my lungs.**

**First Reader:** He listens.

**Second Reader:** I found myself in trouble and went looking for my Lord; my life was an open wound that wouldn’t heal. When friends said, “Everything will turn out all right,” I didn’t believe a word they said.

**First Reader**: I remember God – and shake my head. I bow my head – then wring my hands. I’m awake all night – not a wink of sleep; I can’t even say what is bothering me.

**Second Reader:** I go over the days one by one, I ponder the years gone by. I strum my lute all through the night, wondering how to get my life together.

**Congregation: Will the Lord walk off and leave us for good? Will He never smile again? Is His love worn threadbare? Has His salvation promise burned out?**

**First Reader:** Has God forgotten His manners? Has He angrily stalked off and left us?

**Second Reader:** “Just my luck,” I said. “The High God goes out of business just the moment I need Him.”

**First Reader:** Once again I’ll go over what God has done, lay out on the table the ancient wonders; I’ll ponder all the things You’ve accomplished, and give a long, loving look at Your acts.

**Congregation: O God! Your way is holy! No god is great like God! You’re the God who makes things happen; You showed everyone what You can do –**

**Second Reader:** You pulled Your people out of the worst kind of trouble, rescued the children of Jacob and Joseph**.**

**First Reader:** Ocean saw You in action, God, saw You and trembled with fear; Deep Ocean was scared to death.

**Congregation: Clouds belched buckets of rain, Sky exploded with thunder, Your arrows flashing this way and that.**

**Second Reader:** From Whirlwind came Your thundering voice, Lightning exposed the world, Earth reeled and rocked.

**First Reader:** You strode right through Ocean, walked straight through roaring Ocean, but nobody saw You come or go.

**Congregation and Readers: Hidden in the hands of Moses and Aaron, You led Your people like a flock of sheep. Now, lead us O God. Lead us into this season of hope and promise.**

**Pastor:** Please be seated.

**CANDLE LIGHTING**

**First Reader:** We light this first candle in memory of those persons we have lost through death. We give thanks for them and their lives. We treasure the memories in this difficult season.

**People: May God’s eternal love surround them.** (A Moment of silence.)

**First Reader:** A candle will be lit to represent each person who has passed on to glory. We come tonight to pay tribute to those persons who lived with us, who were an influence in their community and loved by their family. We offer praise to God for all the blessings offered us in the presence and person of the one whom we have learned to know and to love . . . individuals who have touched our lives.

As we read the name of your loved one and light the candle, you may stand in memory of them and then sit down again.

**Reading of Names**:

**Second Reader:** We light this second candle to ask for deliverance from the pain of loss. All of the losses we face that bring sadness and darkness to this time of year - the loss of relationships, the loss of health, the loss of jobs. We ask God to bring us comfort. We realize that the pain of loss can be heightened at this time of year and we ask for peace and renewal.

**People: Refresh, restore, renew us O God, and lead us into your future**. (A Moment of silence.)

**First Reader:** We light this third candle for each of us. We offer up to God our pasts, the times of regret and sorrow, the times of mourning, the difficult memories, the times of grief and sadness, and of loneliness and pain. We ask God to take away the darkness. “the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death, light has dawned.” Matthew 4:16

**People: Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness.** (A Moment of silence.)

**Second Reader:** We light this fourth candle as a symbol of hope and promise. We invite and celebrate the coming of the One who promises us no more suffering. . . . the One who promises us light. “Jesus spoke to them saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”

**People: Let us remember the One who shows the way, Who brings the truth and Who bears the life.** (A moment of silence.)

**First Reader:** Our first **Scripture Reading** is from the book of Psalms, chapter 46 beginning with verse 1. “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging . . . the Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.”

**Second Reader**: Our second **Scripture Reading is from**  the book of Revelation, chapter 22 beginning with verse 3.

“The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve him. They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever . . . Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the last, the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.

This is the word of the Lord.

**SPECIAL MUSIC - “I Got Saved” Fred Dreher & Jana Petersen**

**MESSAGE Pastor Keith Johnson**

**POEM “The Passing of a Loved One” Mary Steinbrenner**

**SONG OF THE DAY - “Silent Night”**

Silent night, holy night, All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and Child. Holy Infant so tender and mild.  
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight.  
Glories stream from heaven afar; heavenly hosts sing alleluia.  
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love’s pure light.

Radiant beams from Thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord at Thy birth. Joseph Mohr/Franz Gruber W&R186 CCLI823255

**ANNOUNCEMENTS Pastor Johnson**

1. Thank you for joining us in our Remembrance Service.
2. We invite you to worship with us for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.
3. Thank you to those who brought a gift in memory of their loved one. Each gift will be wrapped and given to those in need at our inner city ministry at Ebenezer Stone. Our free will offering baskets at the doors will also be given to the inner city ministry.
4. We thank our GriefShare Ministry Team for planning and organizing this worship service, for Jana Petersen and Tracy Bonin for sharing their musical gifts, and for all the volunteers who assisted with the worship service.
5. Prayer Ministers are available to pray with you after this service in front of the altar.
6. Please remember to pick up your picture and take a candle after the service.
7. A reception is being held for everyone in the Atrium. We invite you to join us for some refreshment following this service.

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**Leader:** Please stand for the closing prayer.

**ALL: Most gracious, heavenly Father. We ask You to free us from the darkness that traps us in sadness. We ask that the words be spoken even when we cannot express them ourselves. Our experience of Christmas has been changed because of a loss. We used to look forward to this time of year, too, but now we only feel like we are outside looking in on the joy. The celebration of Jesus’ birth . . . the real Christmas . . . reminds us of hope and promise. Please be near us this night. Amen.**

**BENEDEICTION**

**CLOSING SONG - “Joy to the World”**

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room  
And heav'n and nature sing. And heav’n and nature sing,   
And heav’n, and heav’n, and nature sing.

He rules the world with truth and grace   
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness   
And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders of His love. Isaac Watts , 1719 LW53-PD, CCLI823255

**(Free will offering at doors - ushers to stand next to each basket. Candles extinguished after service. Prayer ministers available in the front of the sanctuary.)**