

## DECEMBER 30, 2018 WORSHIP

### Pastoral Prayer

Holy God, as the pine needles fall and the carols fade away, we begin a new season with you. The brightness of the nativity that has touched the dimness in our lives has passed, but today we still gather to worship you in simple gratitude, here with you and with one another. We enter a year full of unknowns, yearning to believe it is filled with possibility and hope. Gracious One, we stand at a crossroads between what is past and what is yet to be. We recognize how often we spend our time ruminating over those things that are gone, lingering over regrets and missed opportunities. Or, we anticipate what lies ahead, focusing our fears on things that may never happen. You reorient us to be present with you in this moment, for you are the God who is called "I am." Help us to discover your presence by choosing to make time for you in our everyday lives this year, five minutes at a time. Help us to stop, to breathe, to listen, to drink in your word – that we might walk in your ways.

O Lord of compassion, we pray now for those who find it difficult to see joy in these moments– ones who are paralyzed by problems, broken hearted by grief, burdened with anxiety, and disillusioned by disappointments. We pray for each one who needs your touch in a special way this morning. We pray for those in this community:

And so we offer to you our prayers of concern this holy holiday season – that you would grant a lifting of the spirit, a reassurance of your presence that each might see the brightness of a new day dawning.

O Lord on this morning, when the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the shepherds are back with the flocks, then the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal those broken in spirit, to feed the hungry, to release the oppressed, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among all peoples, to make a little music with the heart... And to radiate the Light of Christ, every day, in every way, in all that we do and in all that we say in the name of our Savior who is Christ the Lord and in whom we pray. Amen.

## Benediction

And now may the grace of God deeper than our imagination,

The Strength of Christ greater than our need,

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit richer than our togetherness

Guide and sustain us today and in all our tomorrows.