2018 Advent Devotional

Devotional Theme: Treasures of Darkness

Guiding Statement
Most of us avoid darkness, or we at least prefer light over darkness. Darkness can be scary. Total darkness – the absence of all light – can be downright unsettling. Without the ability to identify by sight our surroundings, we easily succumb to fear, afraid of threats, both real and imagined.

Our faith leads us to remember, and take comfort in, the promise of God to be with us especially in the darkest times of our lives. The hymn "In Deepest Night" helps us remember that promise.

In Deepest Night (ELW, No. 699)

In deepest night, in darkest days,
when harps are hung, no songs we raise,
when silence must suffice as praise,
yet sounding in us quietly
there is the song of God.

When friend was lost, when love deceived,
dear Jesus wept, God was bereaved;
so with us in our grief God grieves,
and round about us mournfully
there are the tears of God.

When through the waters winds our path,
around us pain, around us death:
deep calls to deep, a saving breath,
and found beside us faithfully
there is the love of God.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953
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"The song of God," "the tears of God," "the love of God" – these are treasures that God provides us especially in our darkest times, gifts to which we cling as we feel our way through the night, eager for the dawn to come.

We invite you to share a story from your experience as part of this Advent devotional that illustrates these treasures we find in the darker moments of life. Your story may just provide the hope someone who is stumbling their way through the deepest of nights needs to get through another day. May God bless you as you witness to your faith in the God who comes down to us to be Immanuel, God-with-us.

Things for Writers to Keep in Mind

1. Editing: the OSL pastoral staff will review each devotional that is submitted. Each devotional selected for inclusion in the devotional booklet will be proofread for grammar and punctuation. Minor editing may occur for the sake of sentence structure and ease of reading. Other more substantive changes suggested by the editor or the pastoral staff will only be made in consultation with the author.

2. Date: You may select a date for your devotional (December 1-25), or the editor will assign a date. Date preferences will be accommodated, if possible; in case of duplication, the editor will decide on dates.
3. Scripture: Choose a brief passage of scripture to be printed with your devotional. This passage may serve as the basis for what you write.
4. Devotional: Write a brief devotional (250 words max.) that shares a story from your life experience of how a time of darkness actually opened you to encounter the treasures of God.
5. Prayer: While not required, it is suggested that each devotional end with a brief prayer (2-3 sentences).

Deadline: November 9, 2018. Send devotionals to Bill Reynolds, breynolds@oslchurch.com, in the Church Office, preferably as a Word document attached to an email message.