The Riverside Church
in the City of New York

SERVICE OF HOPE & CONSOLATION
DECEMBER 8, 2019 2:00PM
CHRIST CHAPEL
Blessing in the Chaos
To all that is chaotic in you,
let there come silence.

Let there be
a calming
of the clamoring,
a stilling
of the voices that
have laid their claim
on you,
that have made their
home in you, that go with you
even to the
holy places
but will not
let you rest,
will not let you
hear your life
with wholeness
or feel the grace
that fashioned you.

Let what distracts you cease.
Let what divides you
cease.
Let there come an end
to what diminishes
and demeans,
and let depart
all that keeps you
in its cage.

Let there be
an opening
into the quiet
that lies beneath
the chaos,
where you find
the peace
you did not think
possible
and see what shimmers
within the storm.

- Jan Richardson
**Organ**

Sarabande from “Holberg Suite”, Op. 40, No. 2  
*Edvard Grieg*

**Welcome**

Rev. Lynn Casteel Harper

**Call To Worship** from Psalm 27:1, 13-14

One:  The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?

All:  The Lord is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?

One:  I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord  
in the land of the living.

All:  Wait for the Lord;  
be strong, and let your heart take courage;  
wait for the Lord!

**Opening Prayer**

**Hymn**

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*  
*Veni Emmanuel*

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

**Isaiah 40:1, 25-31**  
*Minister Derrick Jordan*

**Song**

*I Will Lift Up My Eyes*  
*John Purifoy*
Psalm 121

One: I will lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?

All: My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

One: He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.

All: He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

One: The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

All: The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.

One: The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.

All: The Lord will keep your going out
and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.

One: May God give us courage in the days to come.

Hymn

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
Veni Emmanuel

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer, our spirits by thine advent here.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Matthew 11:28-30

Hymn

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
Veni Emmanuel

O come, O Desire of nations, bind, in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease and be yourself our King of Peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Lighting of Candles of Hope and Remembrance
For a Time of Sorrow

Howard Thurman

I share with you the agony of your grief,
The anguish of your heart finds echo in my own.
I know I cannot enter all you feel
Nor bear with you the burden of your pain;
I can but offer what my love does give:
The strength of caring,
The warmth of one who seeks to understand
The silent storm-swept barrenness of so great a loss.
This I do in quiet ways,
That on your lonely path
You may not walk alone.

Lament Psalm Eight

Ann Weems

God, have you forgotten our covenant?
Have you forgotten your promise?
Can’t you enter my world of tears?
Can’t you make your home
in a heart that is broken?
O God, acknowledge that you hear my cry?
Send word that you are on the way!
Answer me so that I can cling to some hope
of your presence, for I have believed
that you would come.
I have trusted that you would keep your word.
I will praise your name through my tears
and continue to worship you, my hope and my life,
for you are merciful and just,
and compassion is your name.
You will be with me;
You will bless and keep me,
and I will live in your abundant love
for all time.
May you know tender shelter and healing blessing
when you are called to stand in the place of pain.
May the places of darkness within you be surprised by light.
May you be granted the wisdom to avoid false resistance
and when suffering knocks on the door of your life,
may you be able to glimpse its hidden gift.
May you be able to see the fruits of suffering.
May memory bless and shelter you with the hard-earned light of past turmoil,
to remind you that you have survived before,
And though the darkness is now deep,
You will soon see approaching light.
May this give you confidence and trust.
May a window of light always surprise you.
May the grace of transfiguration heal your wounds.

You are invited to come forward and light a candle in remembrance of a loved one, in acknowledgment of a loss, or in the hope of the light of Christ.

**Organ**

Adagio (Concerto in A minor, BWV 593)  
*J. S. Bach*

**Prayer for Healing**  
*Rev. Northern*

**One:** The God of strength moves within us;
**All:** the God of courage hears our distress.

**One:** The God of hope reveals wholeness to us;
**All:** the God of healing touches us when we are broken.

**One:** When the pain overwhelms us, when the burden is too heavy,
**All:** we turn to our God, who sustains us and comforts us.

**One:** When there is loneliness, when there is isolation,
**All:** we turn to our God, who loves us tenderly and fiercely.

**One:** For God created us, redeemed us and sustains us,
**All:** and we are not alone.

Lead us in your ways, O God, and bring us your healing touch.

**Hymn**  
*Stuttgart*

Come, Thou long expected Jesus  
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel’s strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.
Benediction

Rev. Northern

Postlude

Comfort, Comfort, You My People (Op. 5, No. 2)  
Paul Manz

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