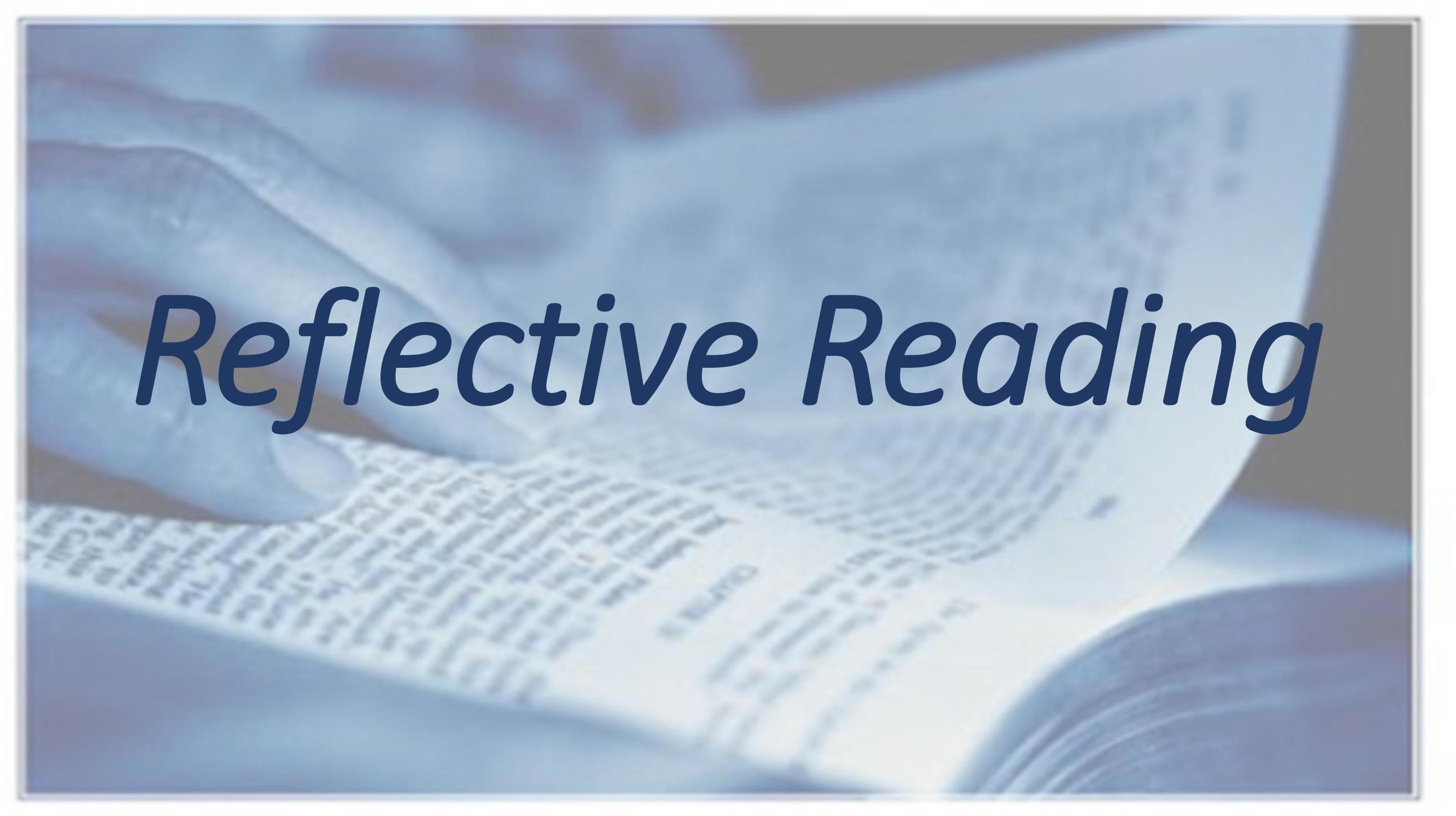


Welcome Home!

Blue Christmas Service

December 5, 2021



A hand is shown holding an open newspaper, with the text "Reflective Reading" overlaid in a blue, italicized font. The background is a soft-focus image of the newspaper's pages, with some text visible but mostly blurred. The overall color palette is dominated by light blues and greys.

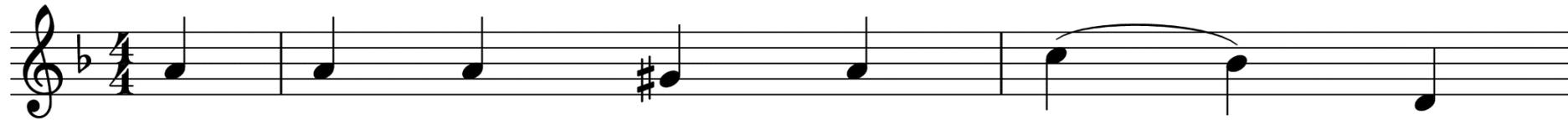
Reflective Reading



***Hymn**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

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1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem,



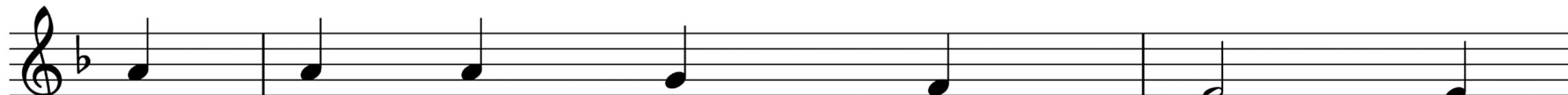
how still we see thee lie;



a - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep



the si - lent stars go by.



Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth



the ev - er - last - ing light;



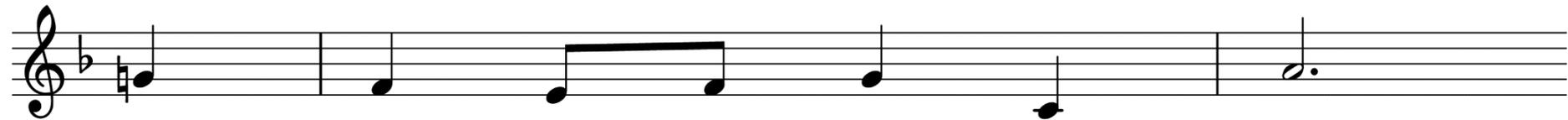
the hopes and fears of all the years



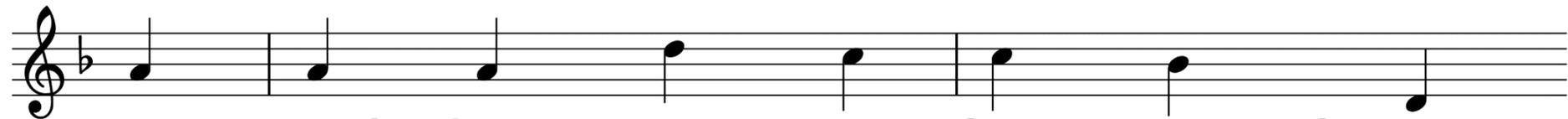
are met in thee to - night.



3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly,



the won - drous gift is given;



so God im - parts to hu - man hearts



the bless - ings of his heaven.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

United Methodist Hymnal #230



The image displays the musical notation for the hymn 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'. It consists of four staves of music, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff contains the lyrics 'No ear may hear his com - ing,'. The second staff contains 'but in this world of sin,'. The third staff contains 'where meek souls will re - ceive him, still'. The fourth staff contains 'the dear Christ en - ters in.' and ends with a double bar line. The notes are primarily quarter and eighth notes, with some rests and a sharp sign on the note for 'will' in the third staff.

No ear may hear his com - ing,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still
the dear Christ en - ters in.

4. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem,
de - scend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and en - ter in,
be born in us to - day.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "O Little Town of Bethlehem". It consists of four staves of music in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4-A4 (half), G4 (quarter). The second staff continues with: G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (half). The third staff continues with: Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter). The fourth staff continues with: C4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter).

O Little Town of Bethlehem

United Methodist Hymnal #230

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'. It consists of four staves of music, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff contains the lyrics 'We hear the Christ - mas an - gels'. The second staff contains 'the great glad tid - ings tell;'. The third staff contains 'O come to us, a - bide with us,'. The fourth staff contains 'our Lord Em - man - u - el!'. The music is written in a simple, clear style with a consistent rhythm.

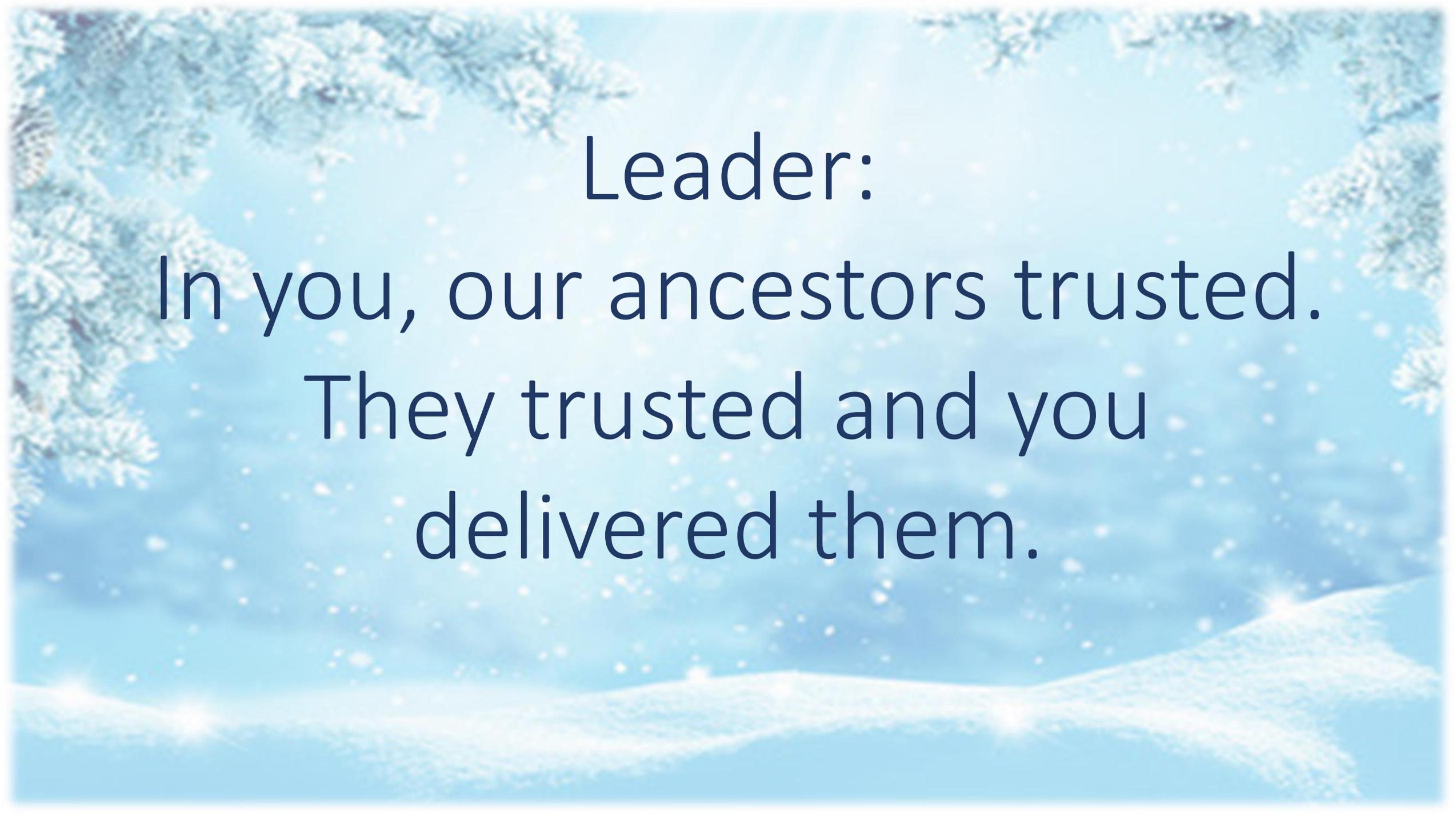
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels
the great glad tid - ings tell;
O come to us, a - bide with us,
our Lord Em - man - u - el!

First Reading
Ecclesiastes 3:1-11
(Gayle Bailey)

Psalm 22

Leader: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, so far from the words of my groaning?

Congregation: O my God, I cry by day but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.

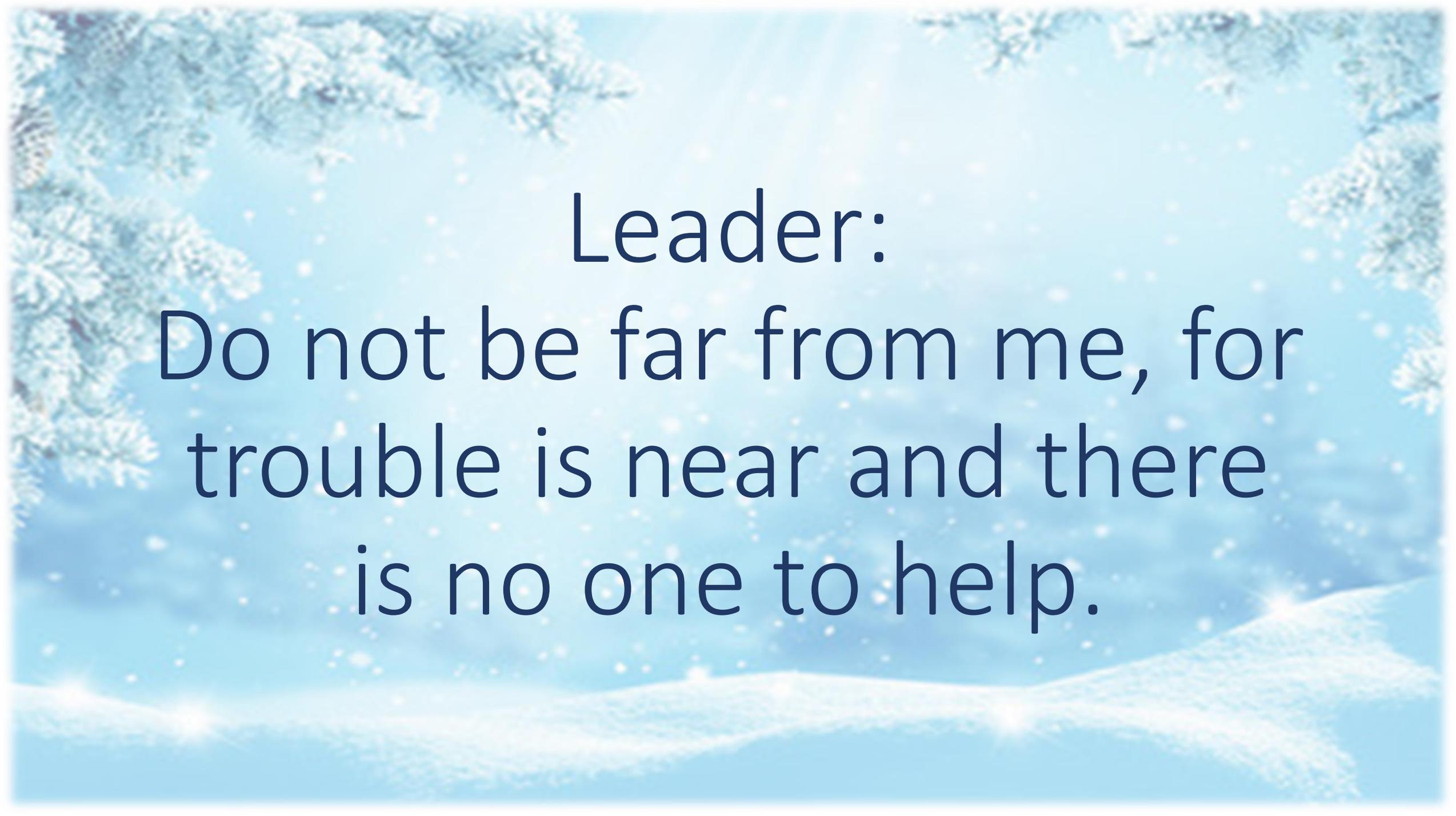


Leader:

In you, our ancestors trusted.
They trusted and you
delivered them.

Congregation:

It was you who brought me from the womb, you who kept me safe on my mother's breast. Since my mother bore me, you have been my God.

A winter scene with snow-covered evergreen trees and a snowy landscape under a bright sky. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

Leader:

Do not be far from me, for
trouble is near and there
is no one to help.

Congregation:

God does not despise the
affliction of the afflicted. God
does not hide from me.
When I cry to God, God hears
me. Thanks be to God.

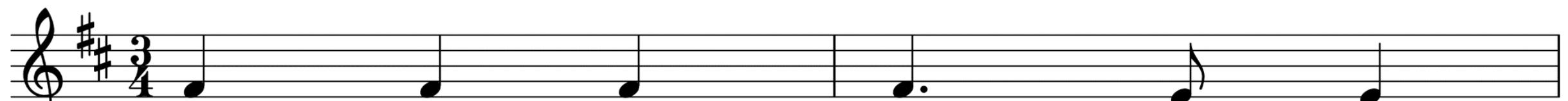
Second Reading

Isaiah 43:1-3A



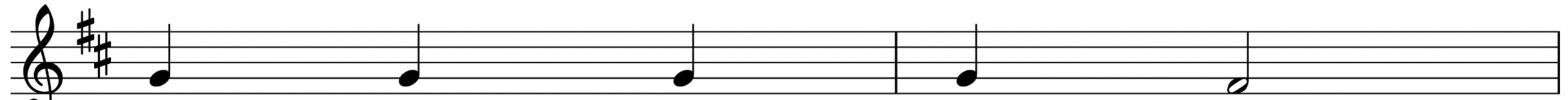
***Hymn**
Great is
Thy
Faithfulness

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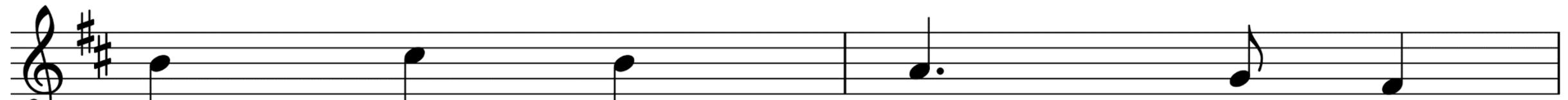
1. Great is thy faith - ful - ness,

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), 3/4 time signature. The melody consists of six quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4.



O God my Fa - ther;

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody consists of six quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4.



there is no shad - ow of

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody consists of six quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4.

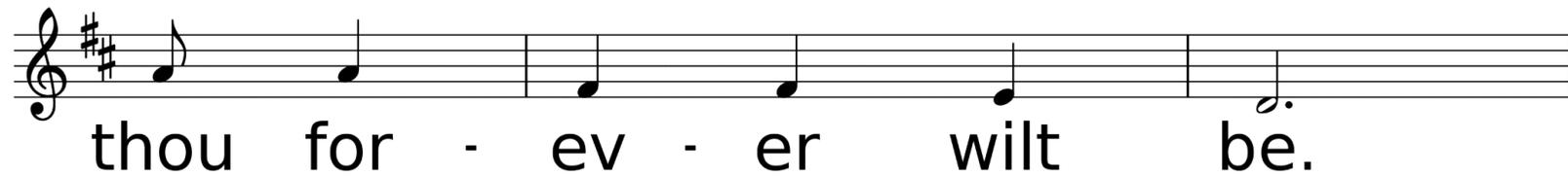
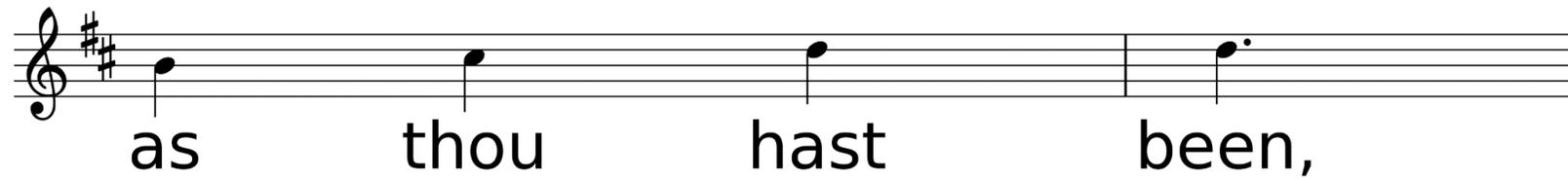
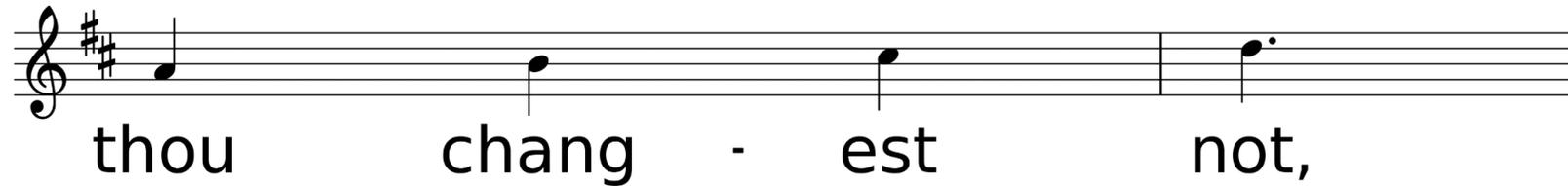


turn - ing with thee;

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody consists of six quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4.

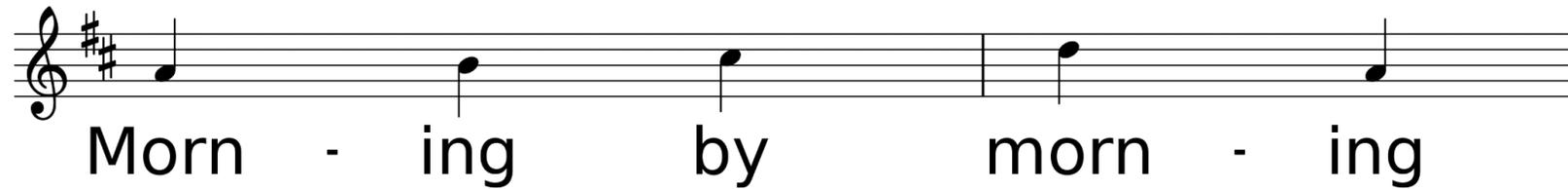
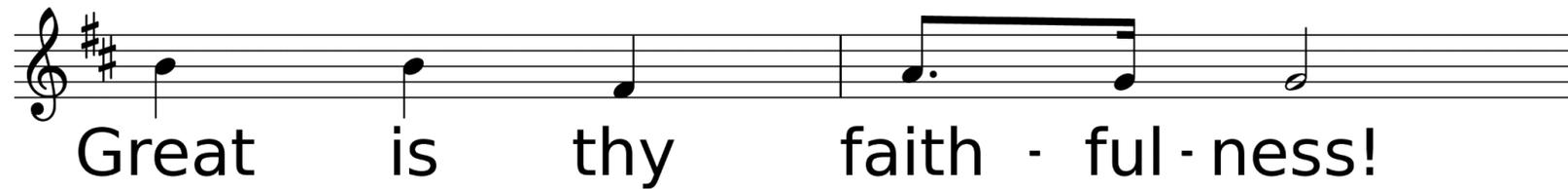
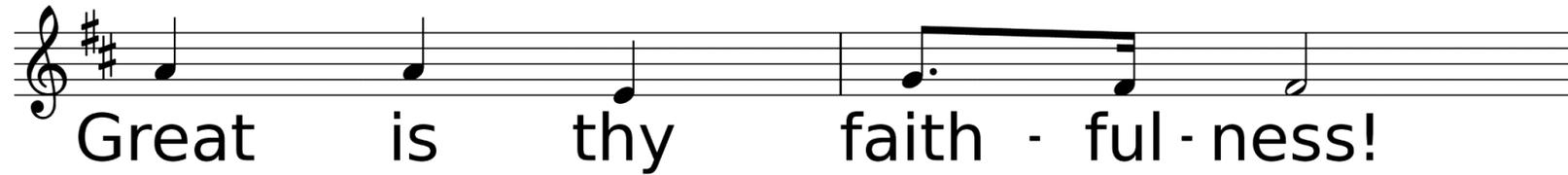
Great is Thy Faithfulness

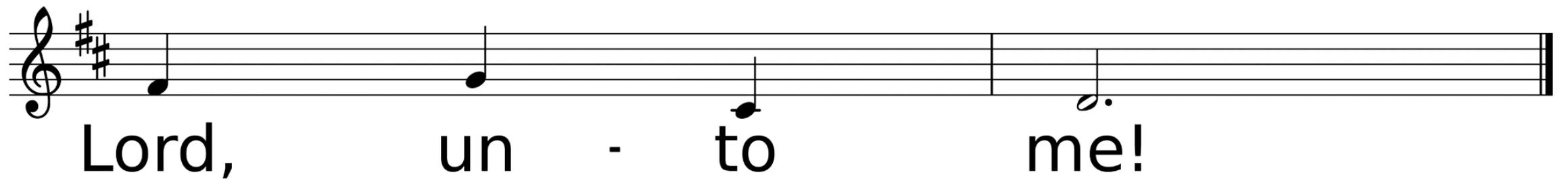
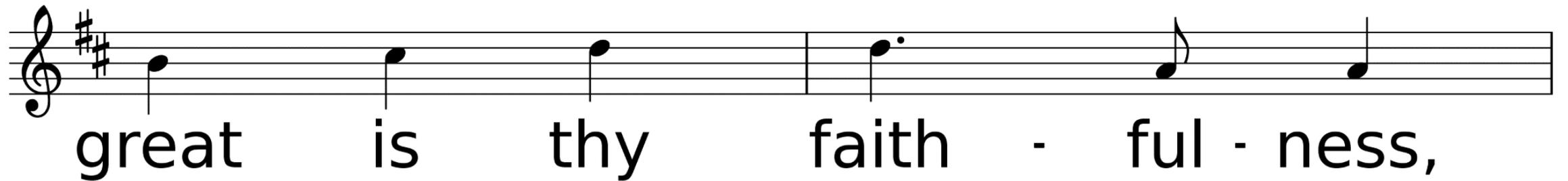
United Methodist Hymnal #140

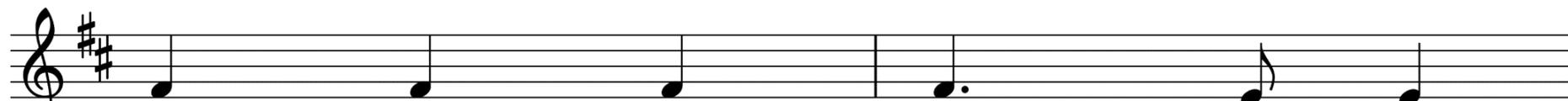


Great is Thy Faithfulness

United Methodist Hymnal #140







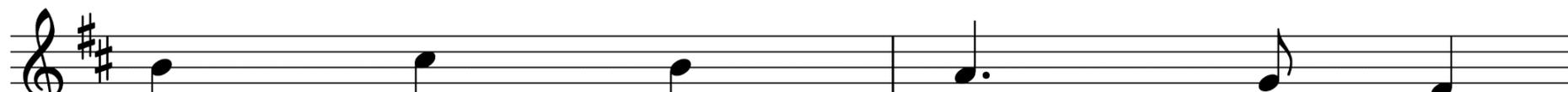
3. Par - don for sin and a

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4. The lyrics are: 3. Par - don for sin and a



peace that en - dur - eth,

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4. The lyrics are: peace that en - dur - eth,



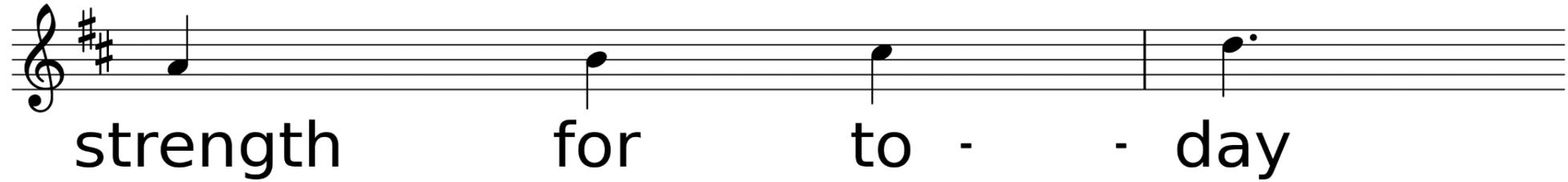
thine own dear pres - ence to

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4. The lyrics are: thine own dear pres - ence to

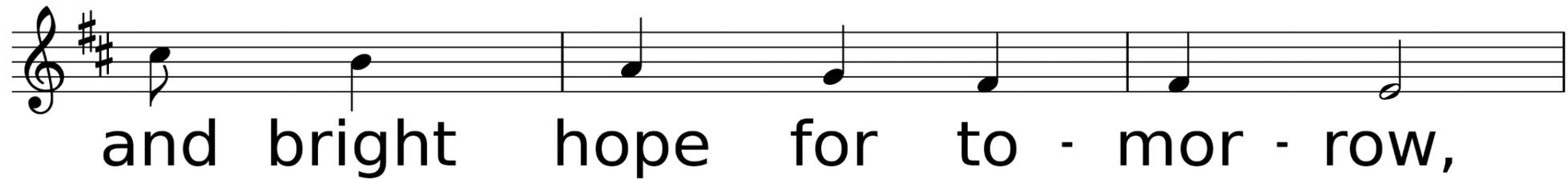


cheer and to guide;

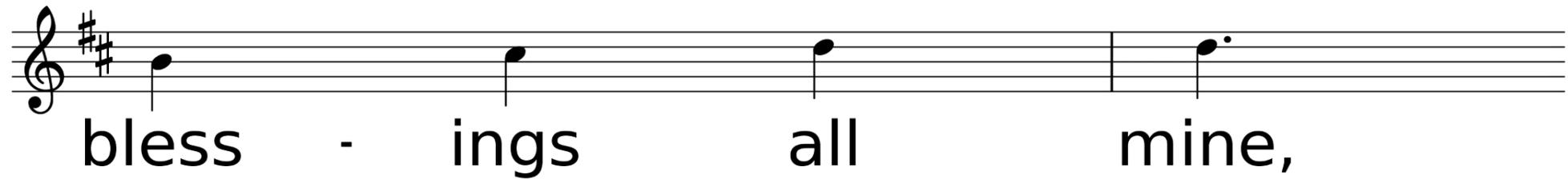
Musical staff 4: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4. The lyrics are: cheer and to guide;



strength for to - - day



and bright hope for to - mor - row,



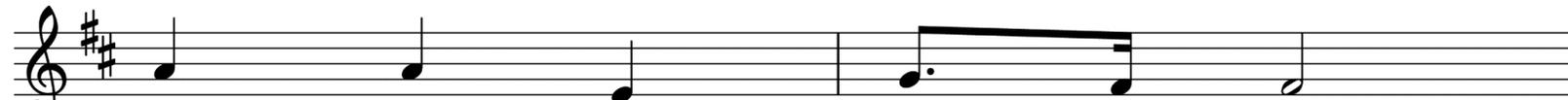
bless - ings all mine,



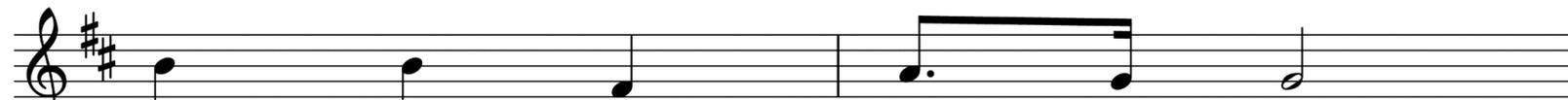
with ten thou - sand be - side!

Great is Thy Faithfulness

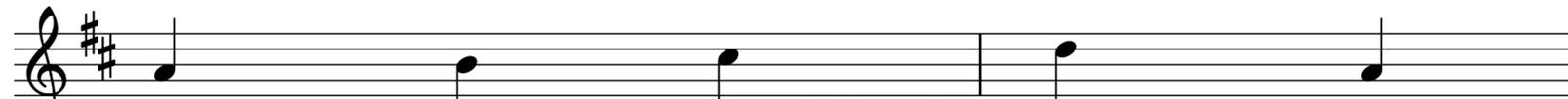
United Methodist Hymnal #140



Great is thy faith - ful - ness!



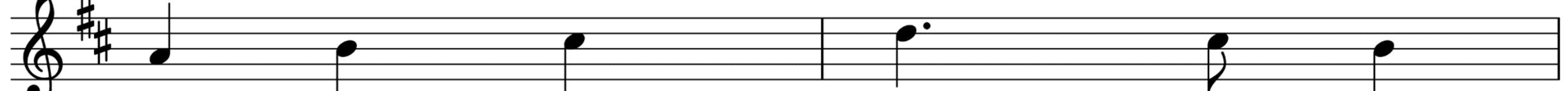
Great is thy faith - ful - ness!



Morn - ing by morn - ing



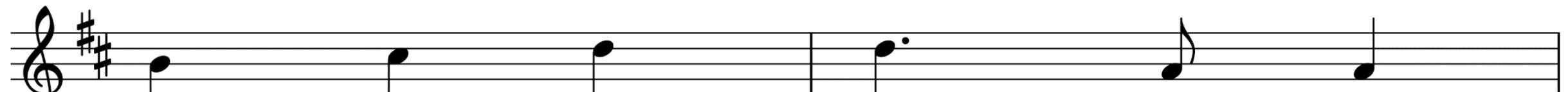
new mer - cies I see;



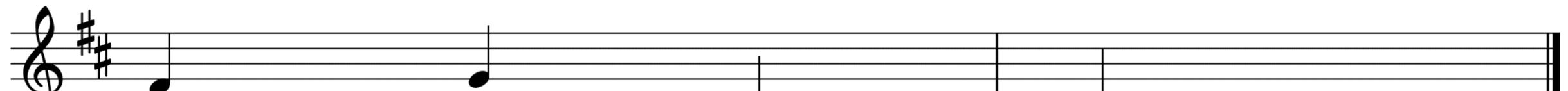
all I have need - ed thy



hand hath pro - vid - ed;



great is thy faith - ful - ness,

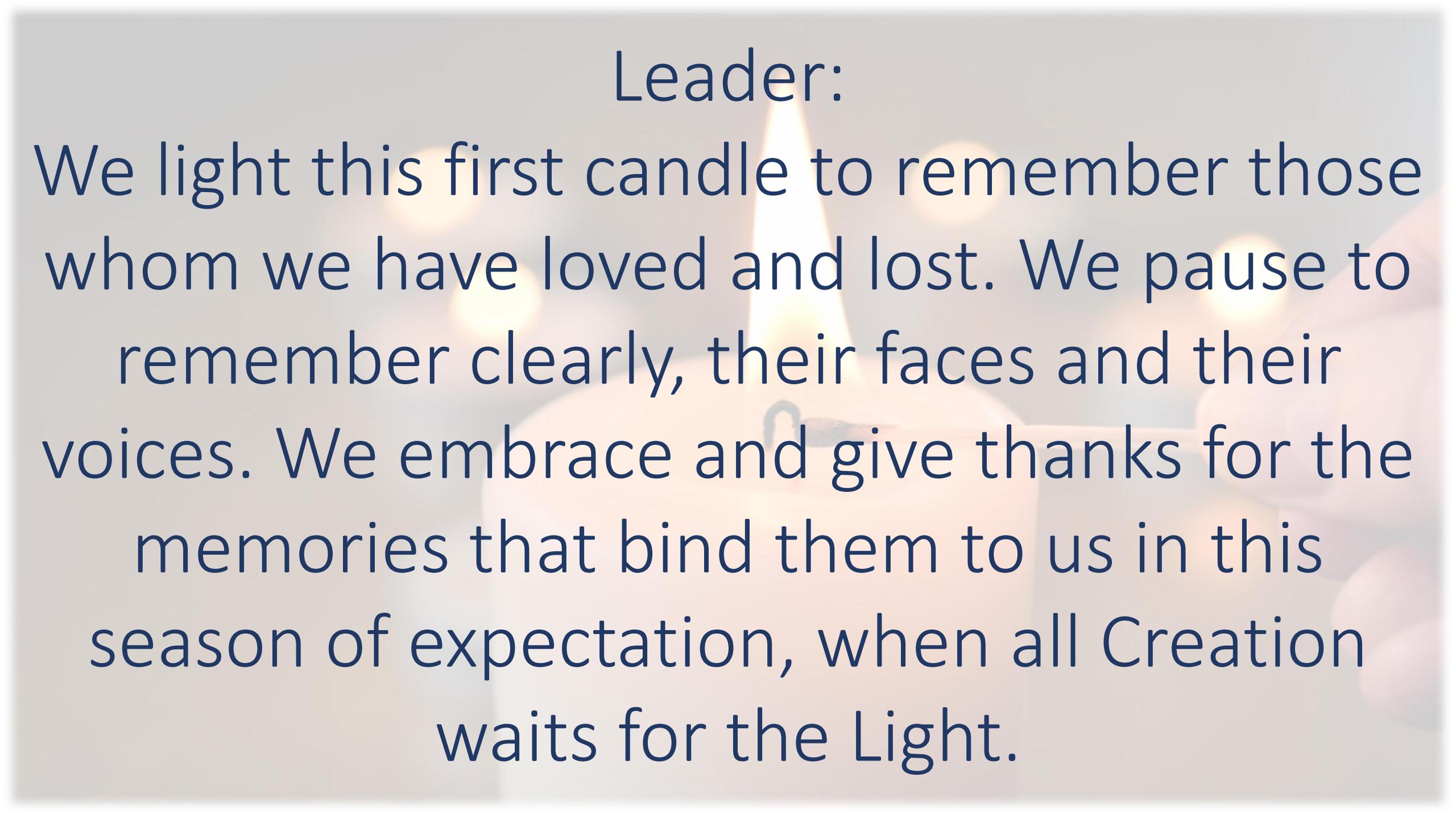


Lord, un - to me!

A lit candle in a blue bowl, with the flame glowing brightly. The background is a soft, light blue gradient.

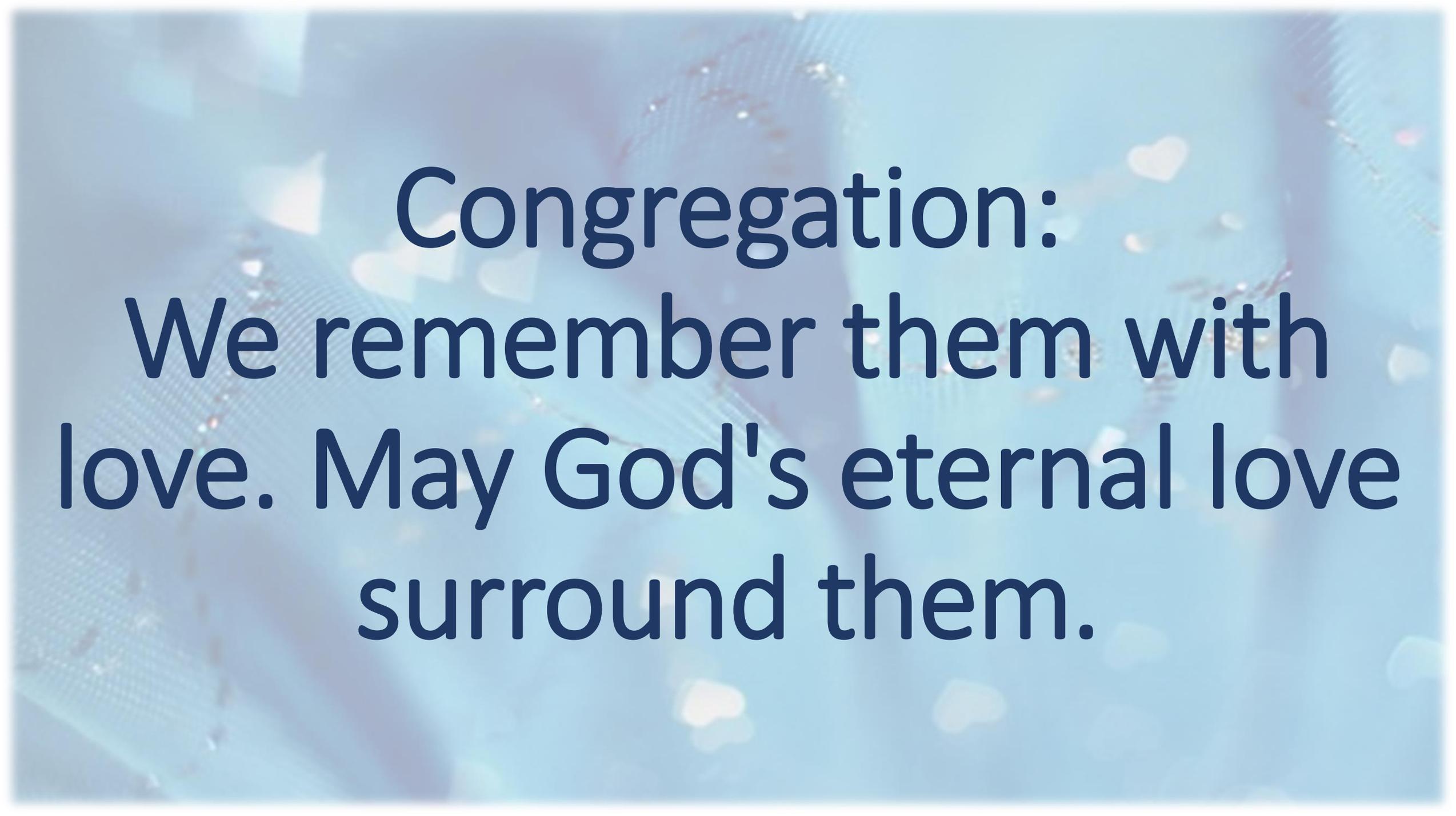
Litany of Remembrance

First Candle is Lighted

A close-up photograph of a hand lighting a candle. The flame is bright yellow and orange, and the background is softly blurred with other lit candles, creating a warm, intimate atmosphere. The text is overlaid on this image.

Leader:

We light this first candle to remember those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember clearly, their faces and their voices. We embrace and give thanks for the memories that bind them to us in this season of expectation, when all Creation waits for the Light.



Congregation:
**We remember them with
love. May God's eternal love
surround them.**

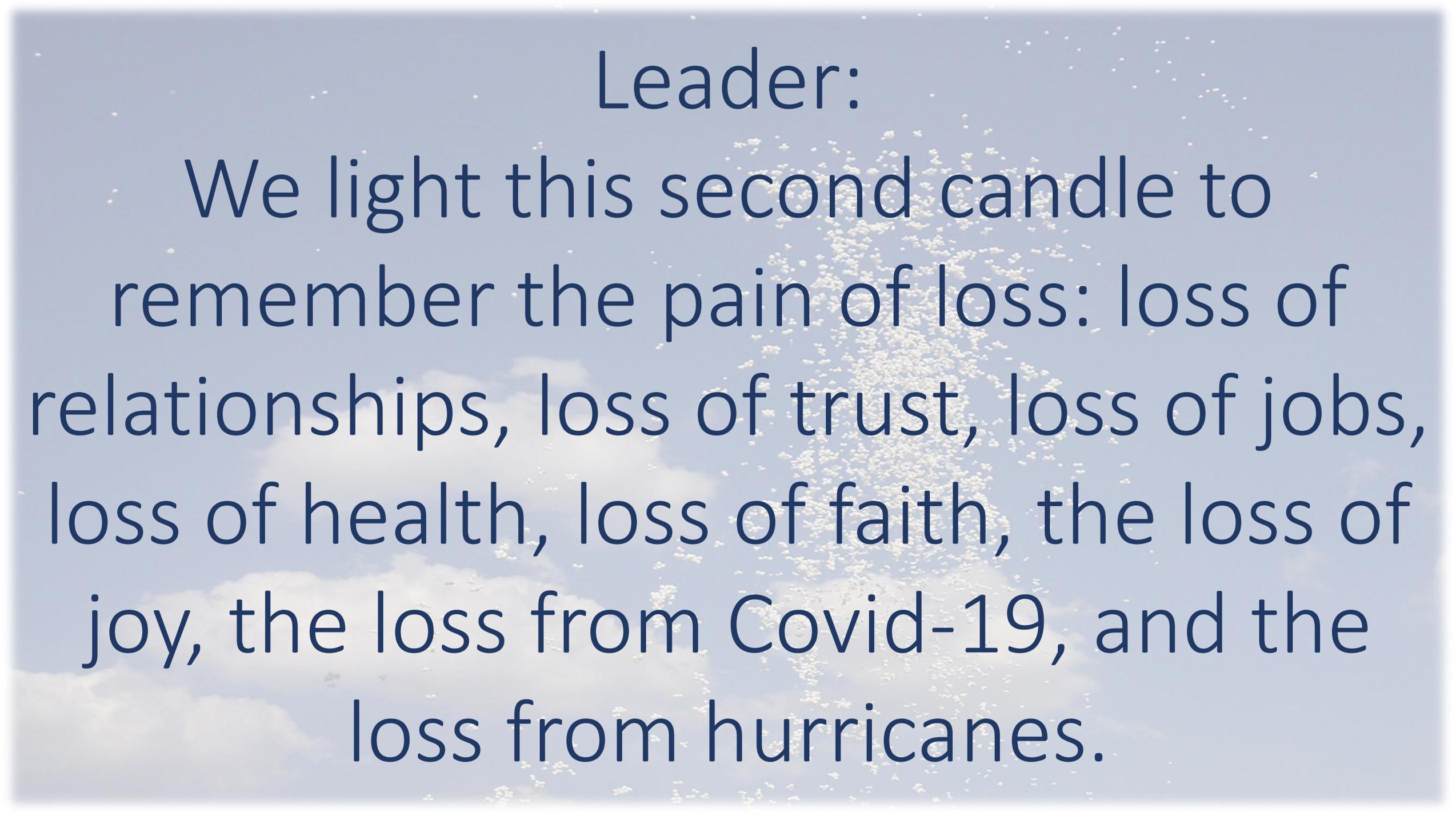
Sung Response

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
thee, O Israel.

A photograph of a Christmas tree silhouette with two lit blue candles in glass holders. The scene is set against a light-colored wall. The tree silhouette is in the center, and the candles are on either side. The text "Silent Reflection" and "Second Candle is Lighted" is overlaid on the image.

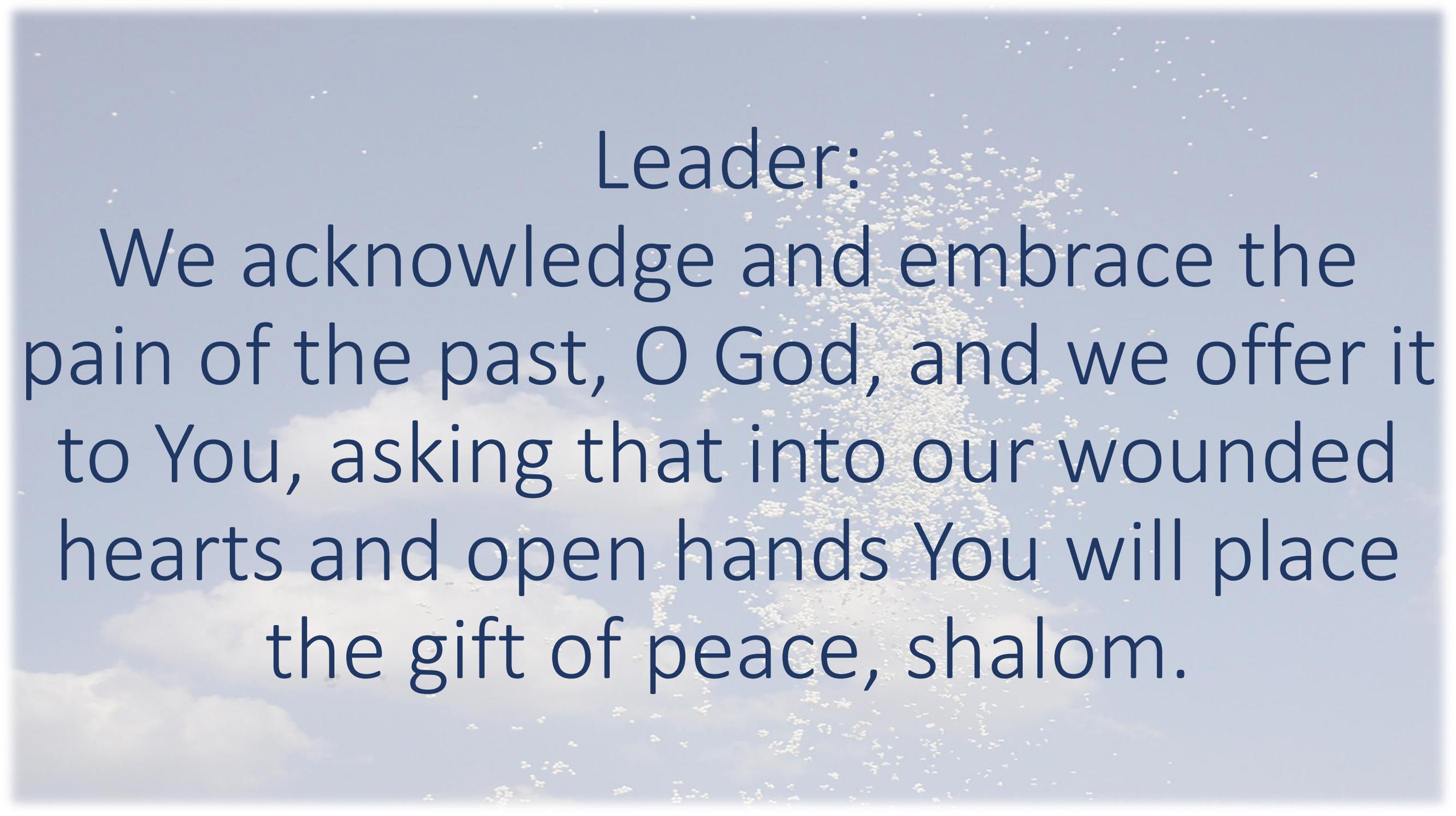
Silent Reflection

Second Candle is Lighted



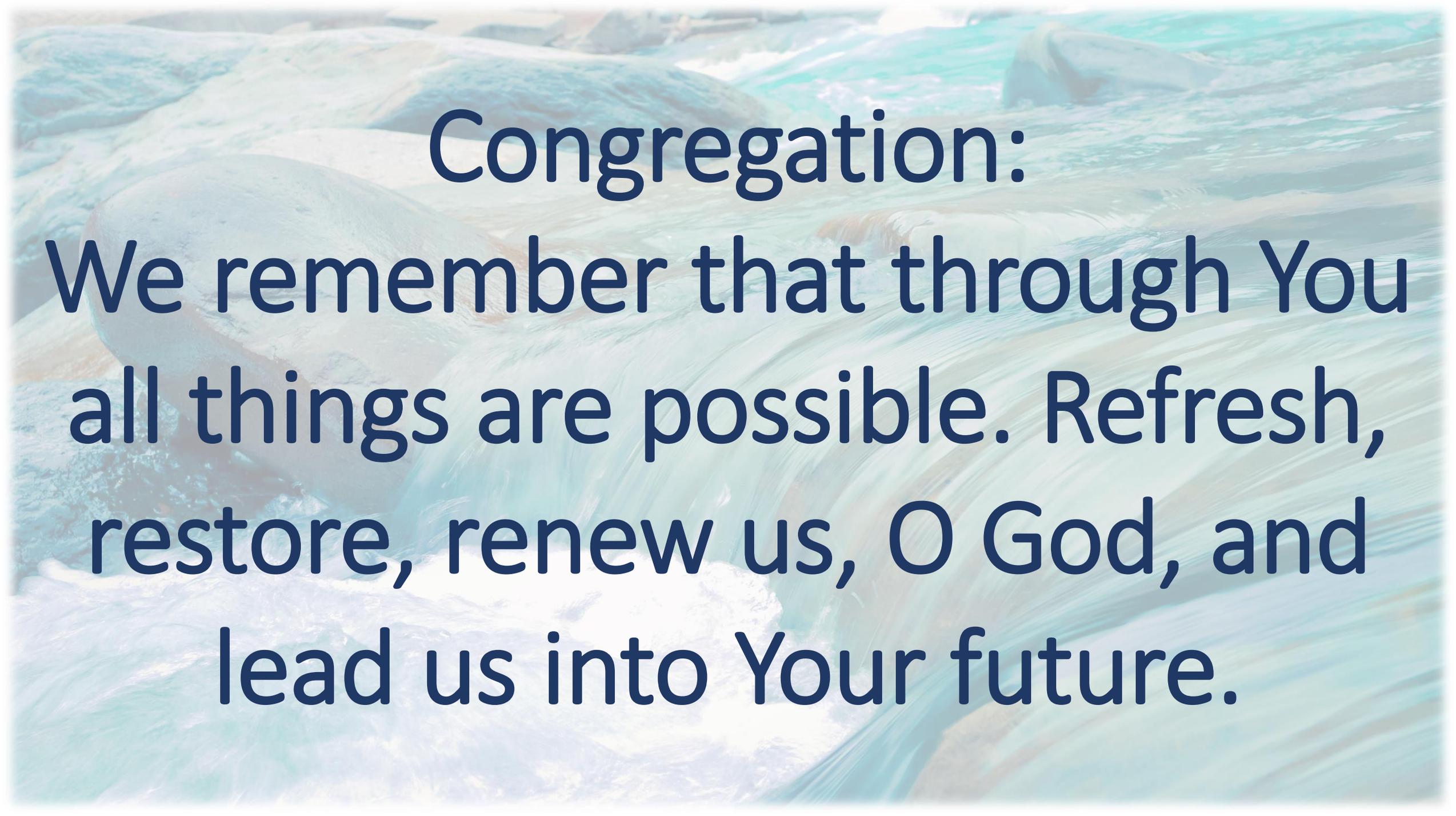
Leader:

We light this second candle to remember the pain of loss: loss of relationships, loss of trust, loss of jobs, loss of health, loss of faith, the loss of joy, the loss from Covid-19, and the loss from hurricanes.



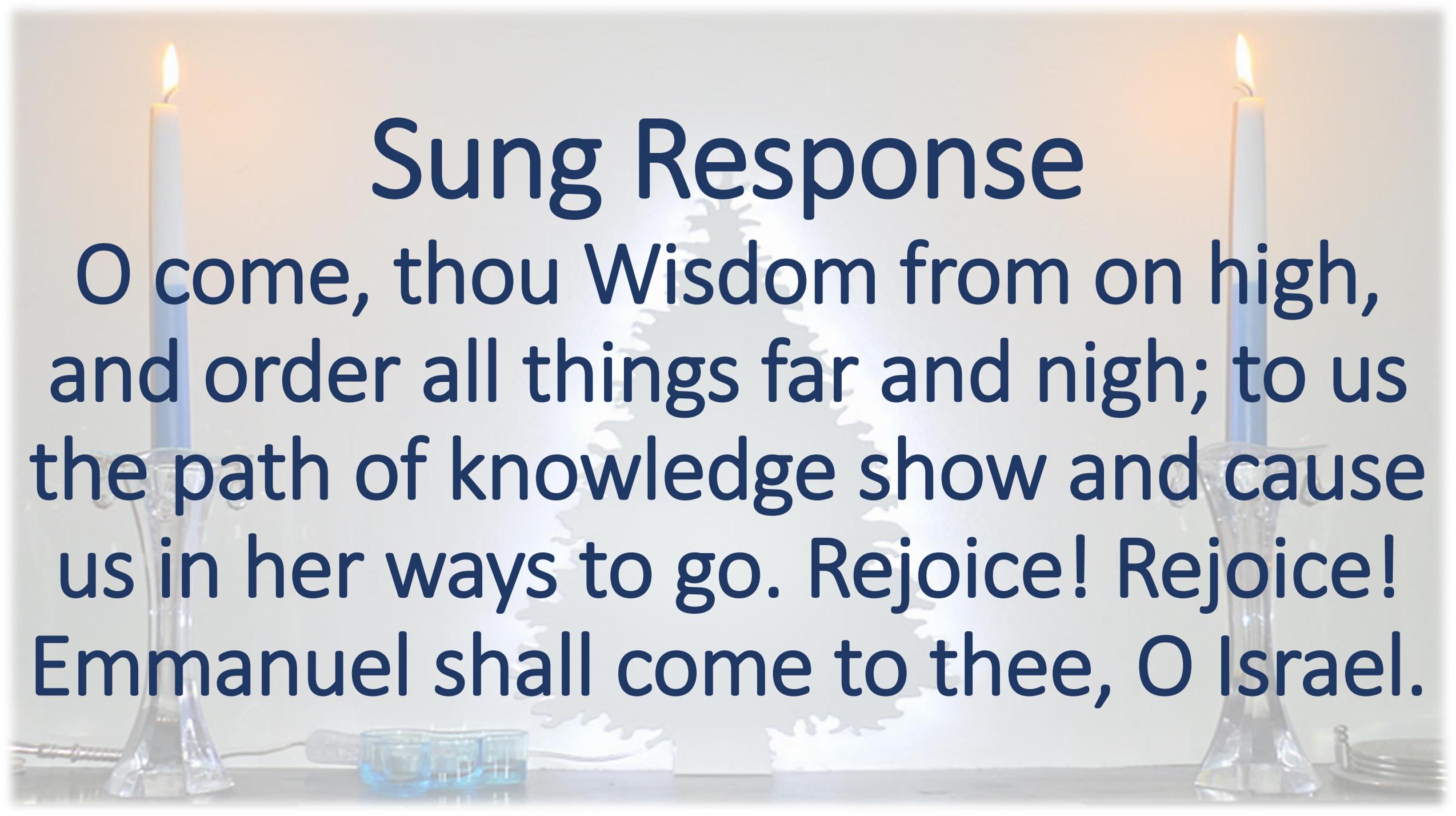
Leader:

We acknowledge and embrace the pain of the past, O God, and we offer it to You, asking that into our wounded hearts and open hands You will place the gift of peace, shalom.



Congregation:

**We remember that through You
all things are possible. Refresh,
restore, renew us, O God, and
lead us into Your future.**



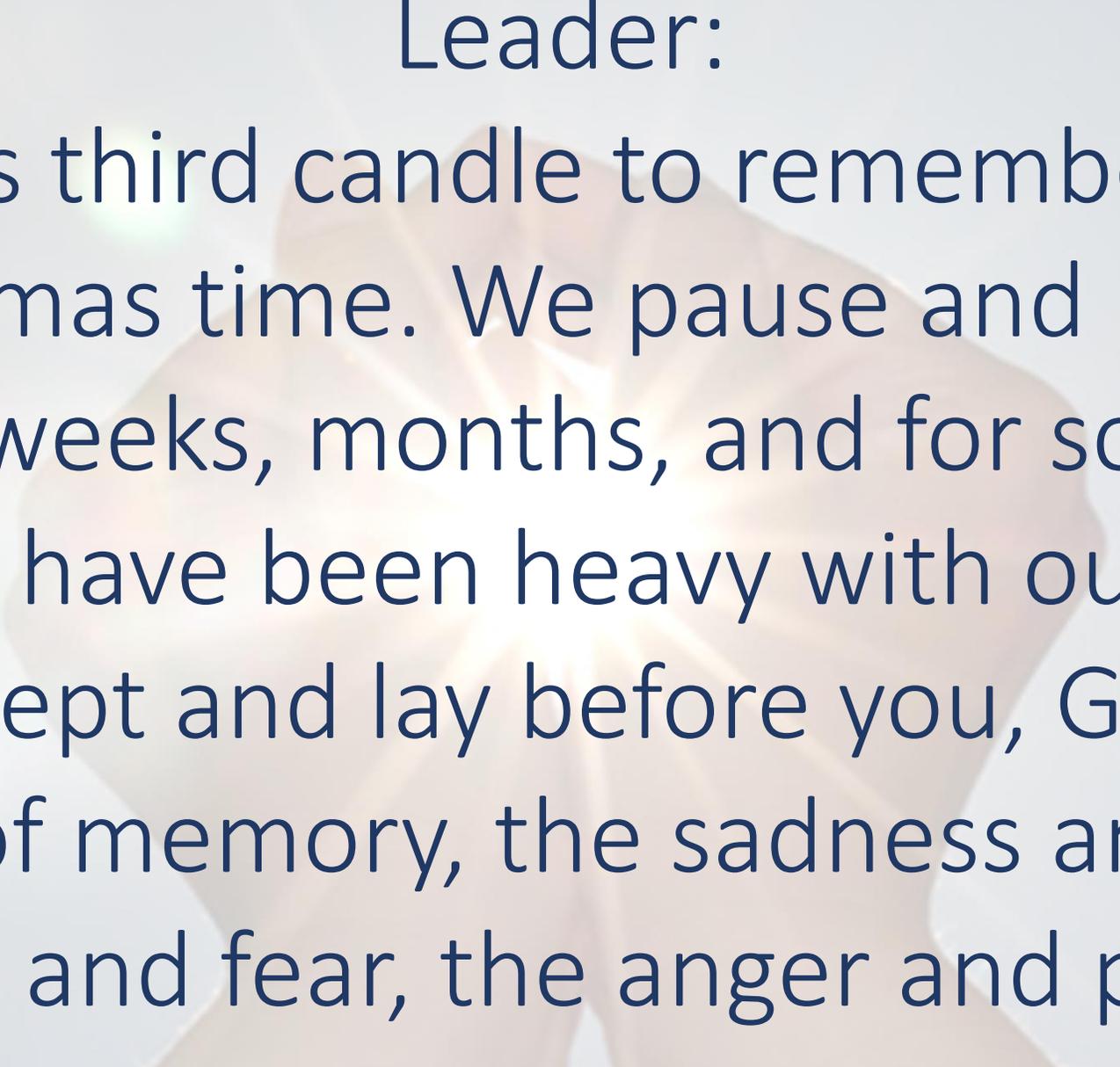
Sung Response

O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
and order all things far and nigh; to us
the path of knowledge show and cause
us in her ways to go. Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

A photograph of three lit candles on a reflective surface. One large candle is in the center, and two smaller candles are in front of it. The scene is dimly lit, with the light from the candles illuminating the surrounding area and creating reflections on the surface below. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

Silent Reflection

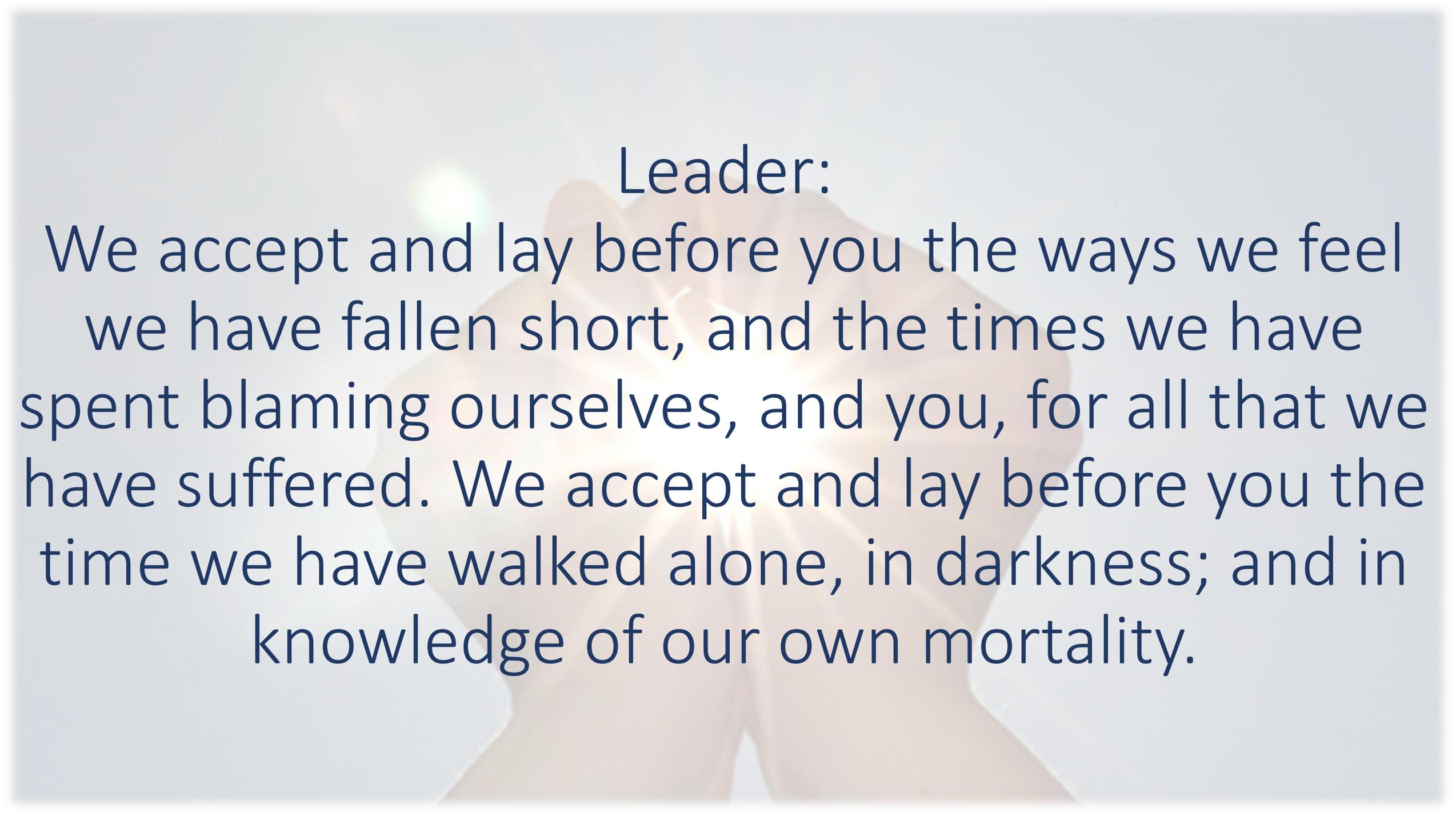
Third Candle is Lighted

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a lit candle. The candle is lit, with a bright flame and a soft glow. The hand is positioned in the center of the frame, and the background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue. The overall mood is warm and hopeful.

Leader:

We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember the past weeks, months, and for some of us years, that have been heavy with our burdens.

We accept and lay before you, God, the sharpness of memory, the sadness and grief, the hurt and fear, the anger and pain.



Leader:

We accept and lay before you the ways we feel we have fallen short, and the times we have spent blaming ourselves, and you, for all that we have suffered. We accept and lay before you the time we have walked alone, in darkness; and in knowledge of our own mortality.

Congregation:

We remember that though we have journeyed far, and that, while lost, we may have turned away from the light, the light itself has not failed. We remember that though winter be upon us and though the night be dark, with the turning of the wheel the dawn will come, and light defeats the darkness.

Sung Response

O come, thou Dayspring, come and
cheer our spirits by thy justice here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall
come to thee, O Israel.

Silent Reflection

Fourth Candle is Lighted



Leader:

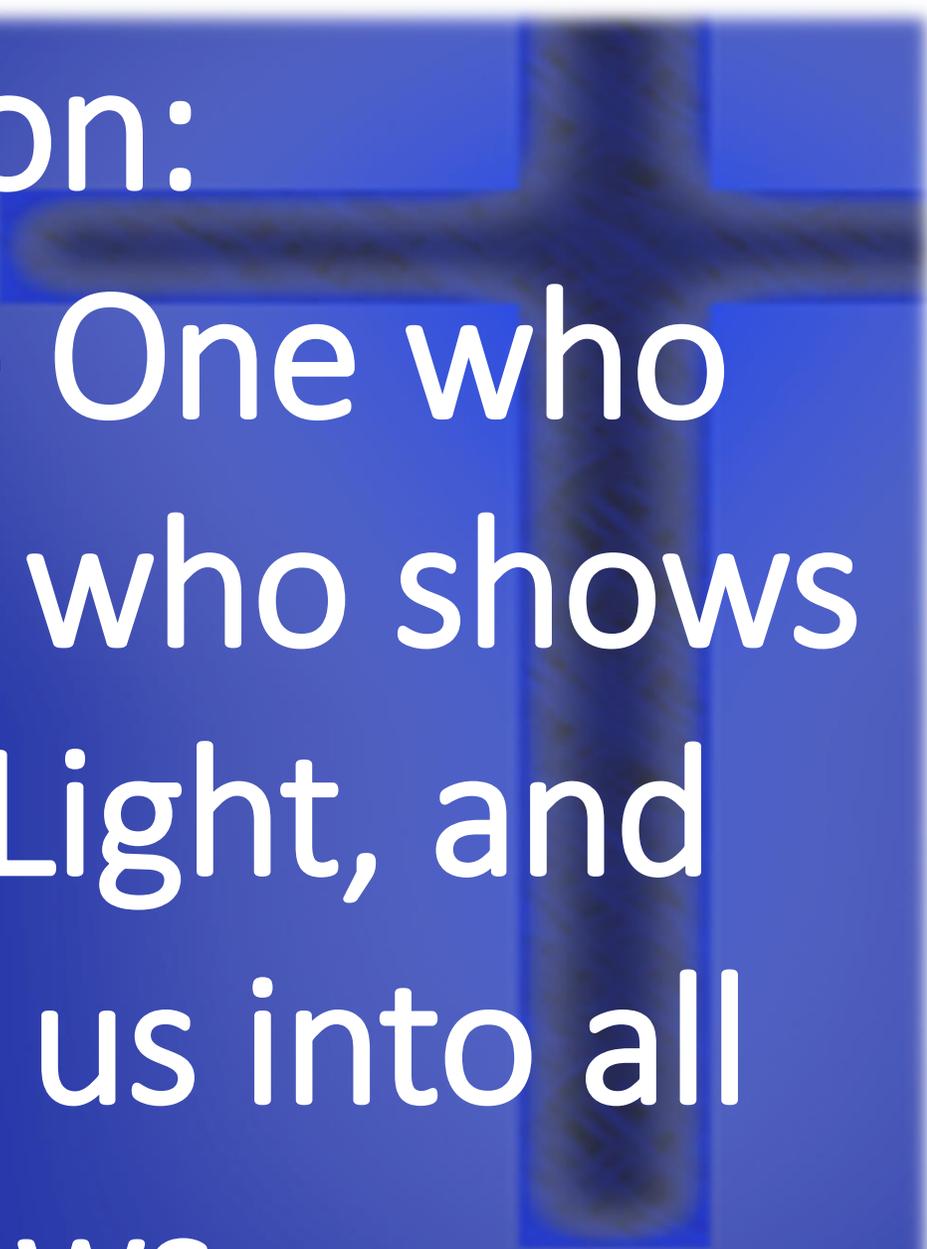
We light this fourth candle to remember faith, the gift of light and hope that God offers to us in the stories of Christmas, which also began in abandonment, insecurity, and humbleness, and in a poor stable.

Leader:

We remember that the loving God who kept the light shining in the temple and who came to share this life with us promises us comfort and peace.

Congregation:

We remember the One who
shares our burdens, who shows
us the way to the Light, and
who journeys with us into all
our tomorrows.



Sung Response

O come, Desire of nations bind all peoples in one heart and mind. From dust thou brought us forth to life; deliver us from earthly strife. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.



Laying Our Burdens Down

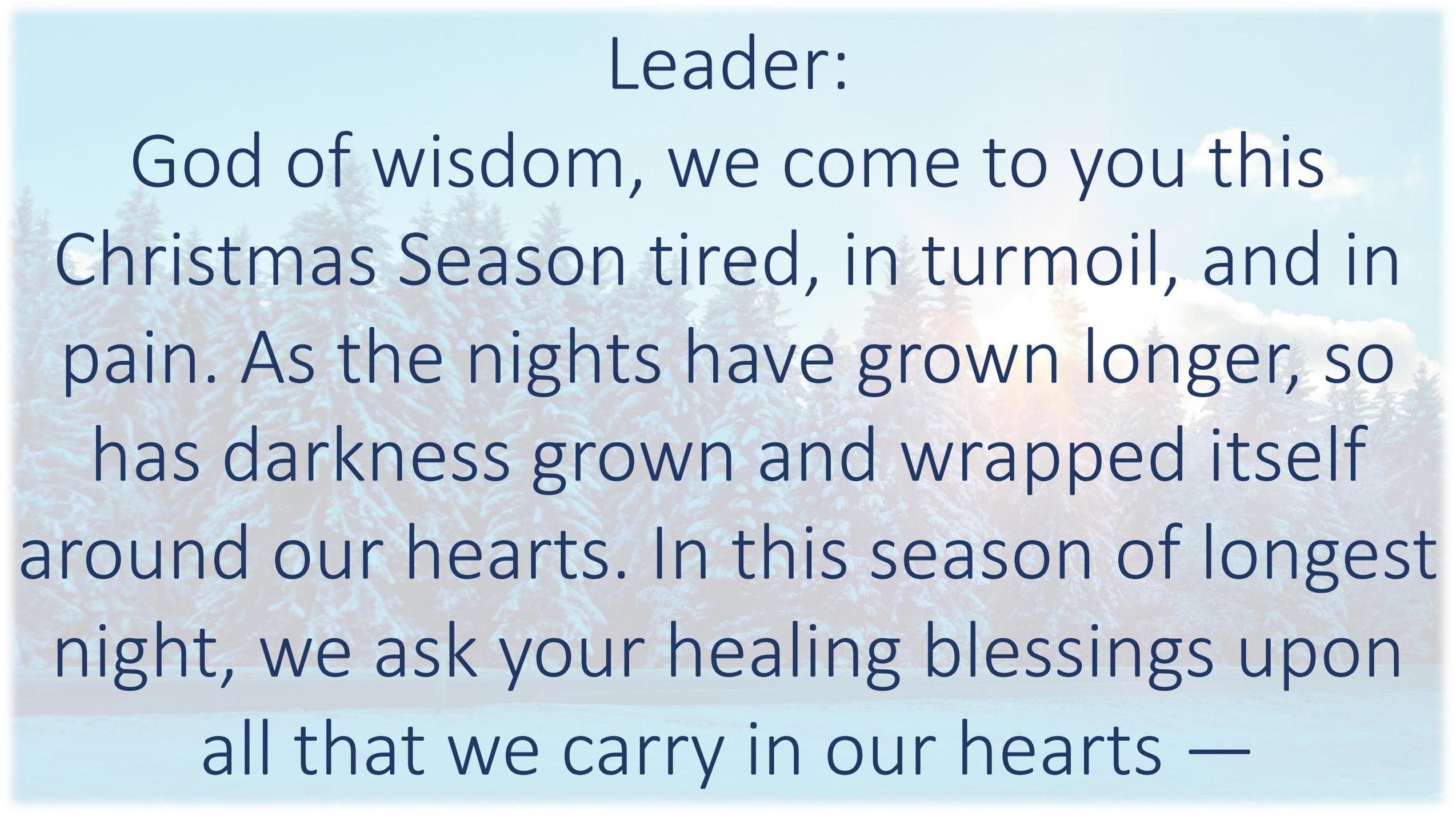


Silent Reflection

Third Reading
Isaiah 40: 1-5,
11, 28-31



*The Prayers
of the People*

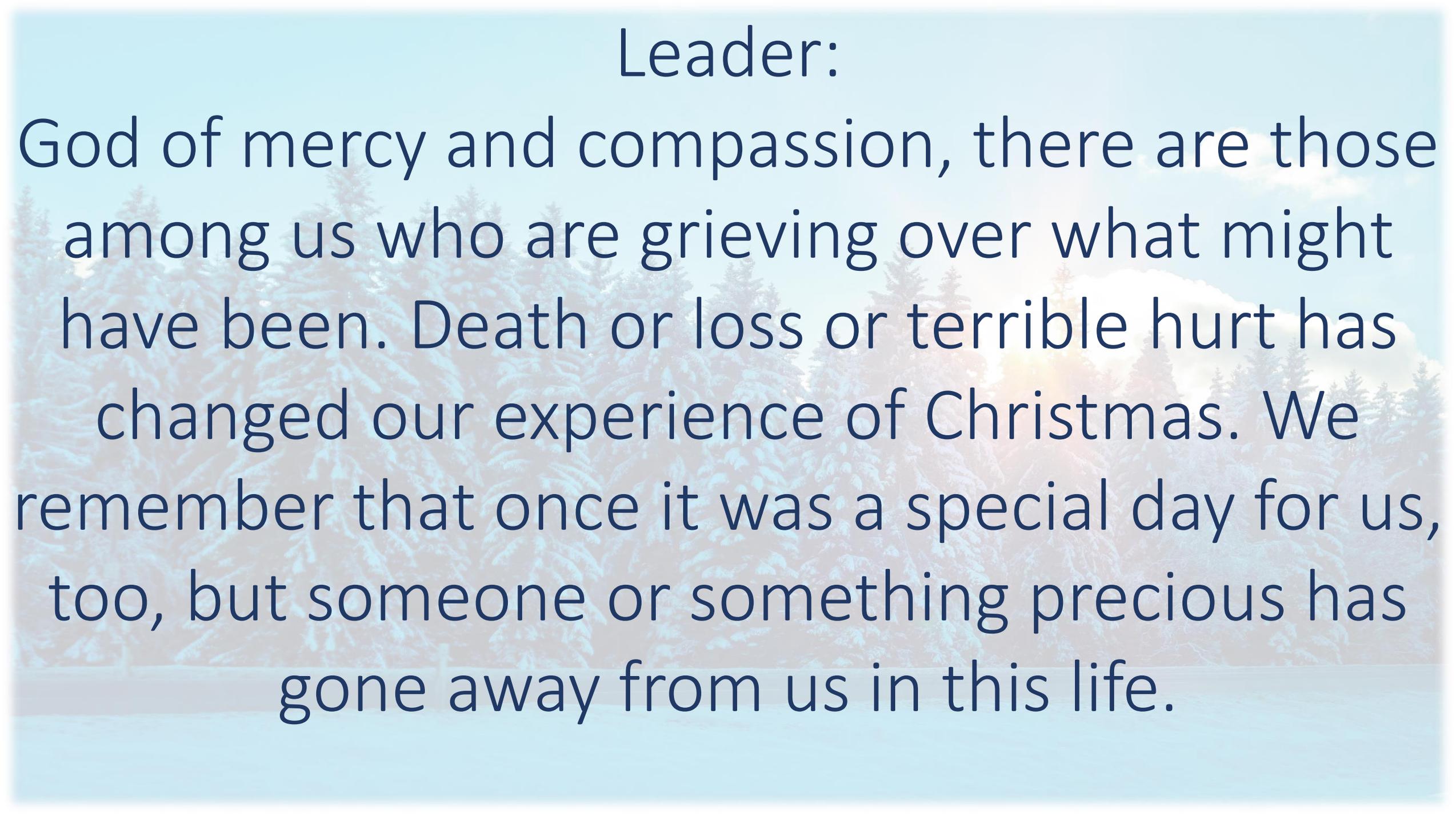


Leader:

God of wisdom, we come to you this Christmas Season tired, in turmoil, and in pain. As the nights have grown longer, so has darkness grown and wrapped itself around our hearts. In this season of longest night, we ask your healing blessings upon all that we carry in our hearts —

A wooden cross is suspended from a thin branch, set against a bright, sunlit background with a soft blue and white glow. The cross is the central focus, with its vertical post and horizontal arms clearly visible. The background is filled with a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset, and there are some blurred elements of nature, like leaves and other branches, adding to the serene atmosphere.

**Congregation:
Lord, hear our prayer.**

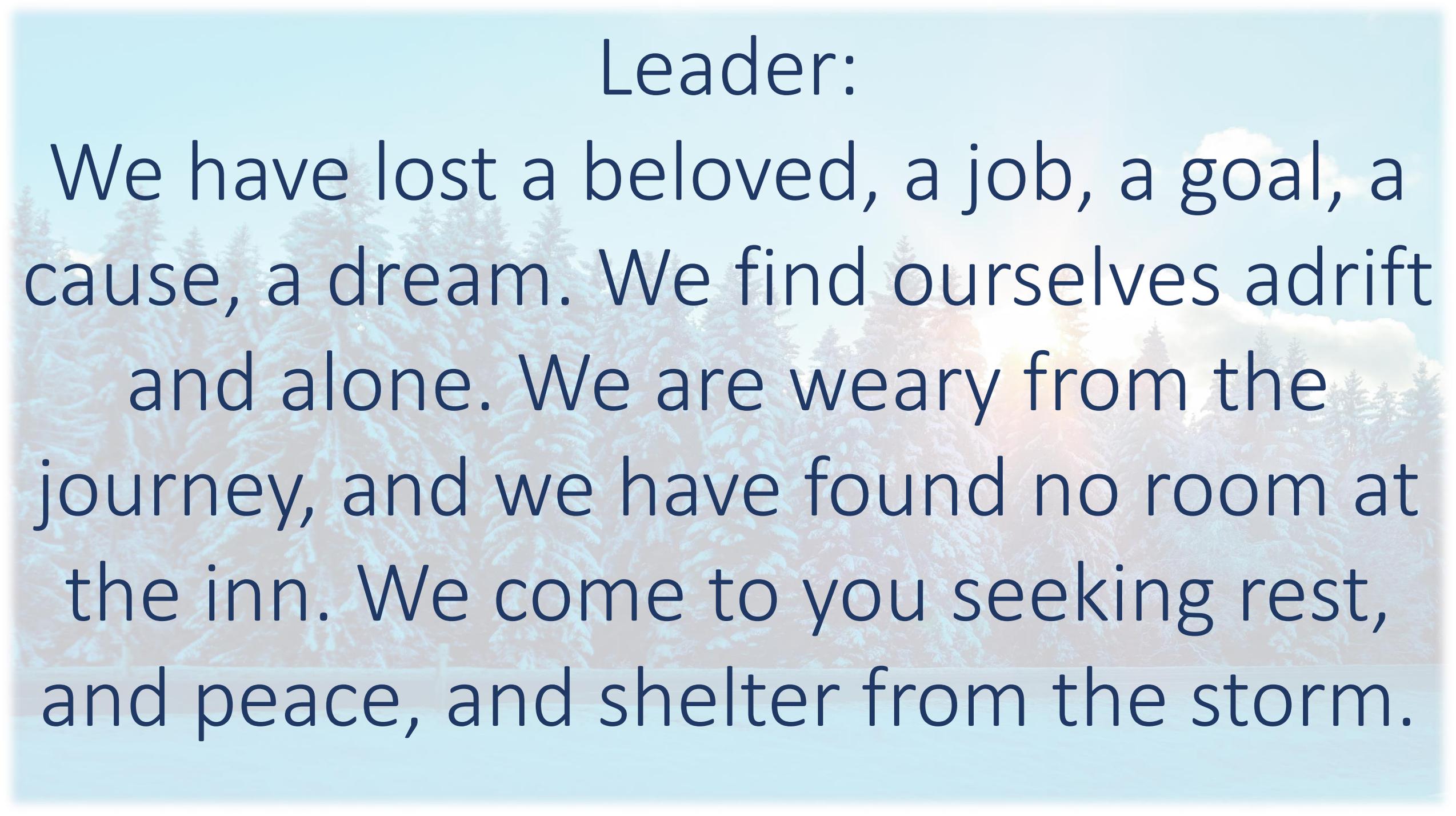


Leader:

God of mercy and compassion, there are those among us who are grieving over what might have been. Death or loss or terrible hurt has changed our experience of Christmas. We remember that once it was a special day for us, too, but someone or something precious has gone away from us in this life.

A wooden cross is suspended from a thin branch, set against a bright, sunlit background with a soft blue and white glow. The text is overlaid on the image in a dark blue, sans-serif font.

**Congregation:
Lord, hear our prayer.**



Leader:

We have lost a beloved, a job, a goal, a cause, a dream. We find ourselves adrift and alone. We are weary from the journey, and we have found no room at the inn. We come to you seeking rest, and peace, and shelter from the storm.

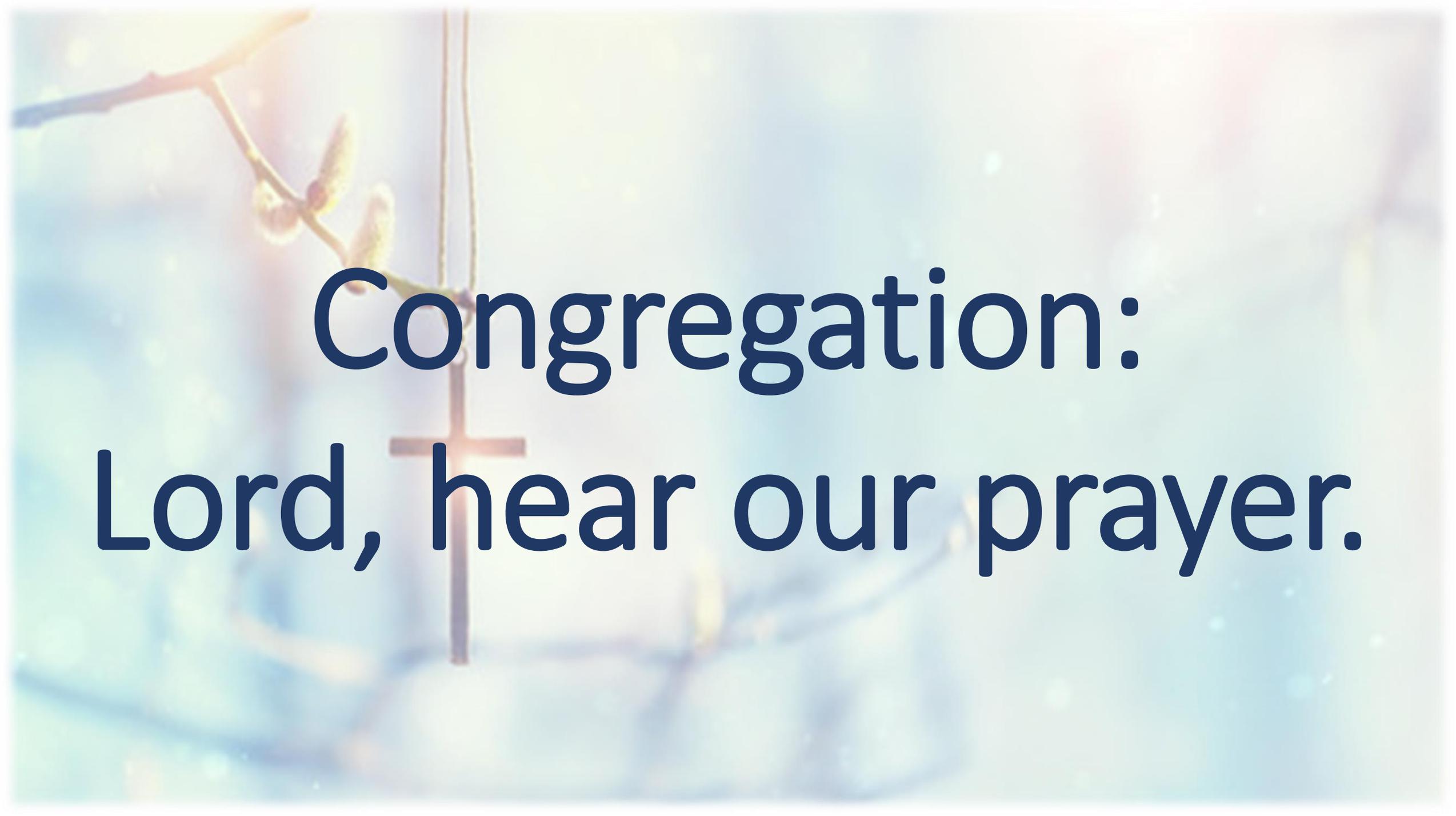
A wooden cross is suspended from a thin branch, set against a bright, sunlit background with a soft blue and white glow. The cross is the central focus, with its arms extending horizontally and vertically. The background is filled with light, creating a serene and spiritual atmosphere.

**Congregation:
Lord, hear our prayer.**

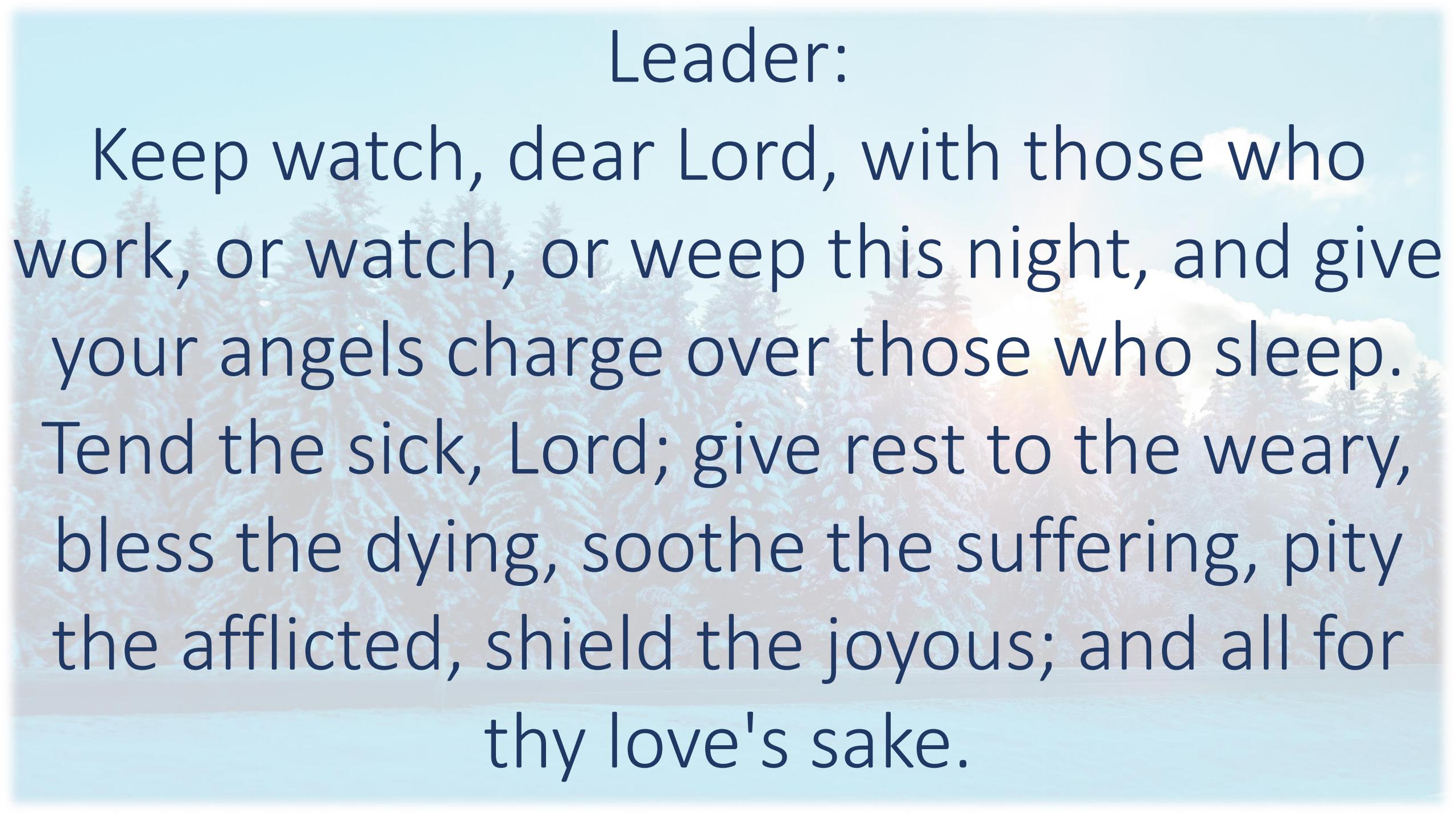
Leader:

God of love, in this Christmas Season we embrace and offer up to you all that used to be which is now lost to us, and cannot be again.

With celebration all around us, memories of what was, and fears of what may be, weigh heavy on our hearts. Please hold us close in your embrace, be near to us this night, until the light returns and morning comes.

A wooden cross is suspended from a thin branch, set against a bright, sunlit background with a soft blue and white glow. The cross is the central focus, with its arms extending horizontally and vertically. The background is filled with light, creating a serene and spiritual atmosphere.

**Congregation:
Lord, hear our prayer.**

A serene winter landscape with snow-covered evergreen trees and a bright sunburst in the sky. The scene is peaceful and evokes a sense of quiet reflection.

Leader:

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who
work, or watch, or weep this night, and give
your angels charge over those who sleep.
Tend the sick, Lord; give rest to the weary,
bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity
the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for
thy love's sake.

A wooden cross is suspended from a thin branch, set against a bright, sunlit background with a soft blue and yellow glow. The cross is the central focus, with its arms extending horizontally and vertically. The background is filled with light rays and a gentle bokeh effect, suggesting a peaceful, outdoor setting.

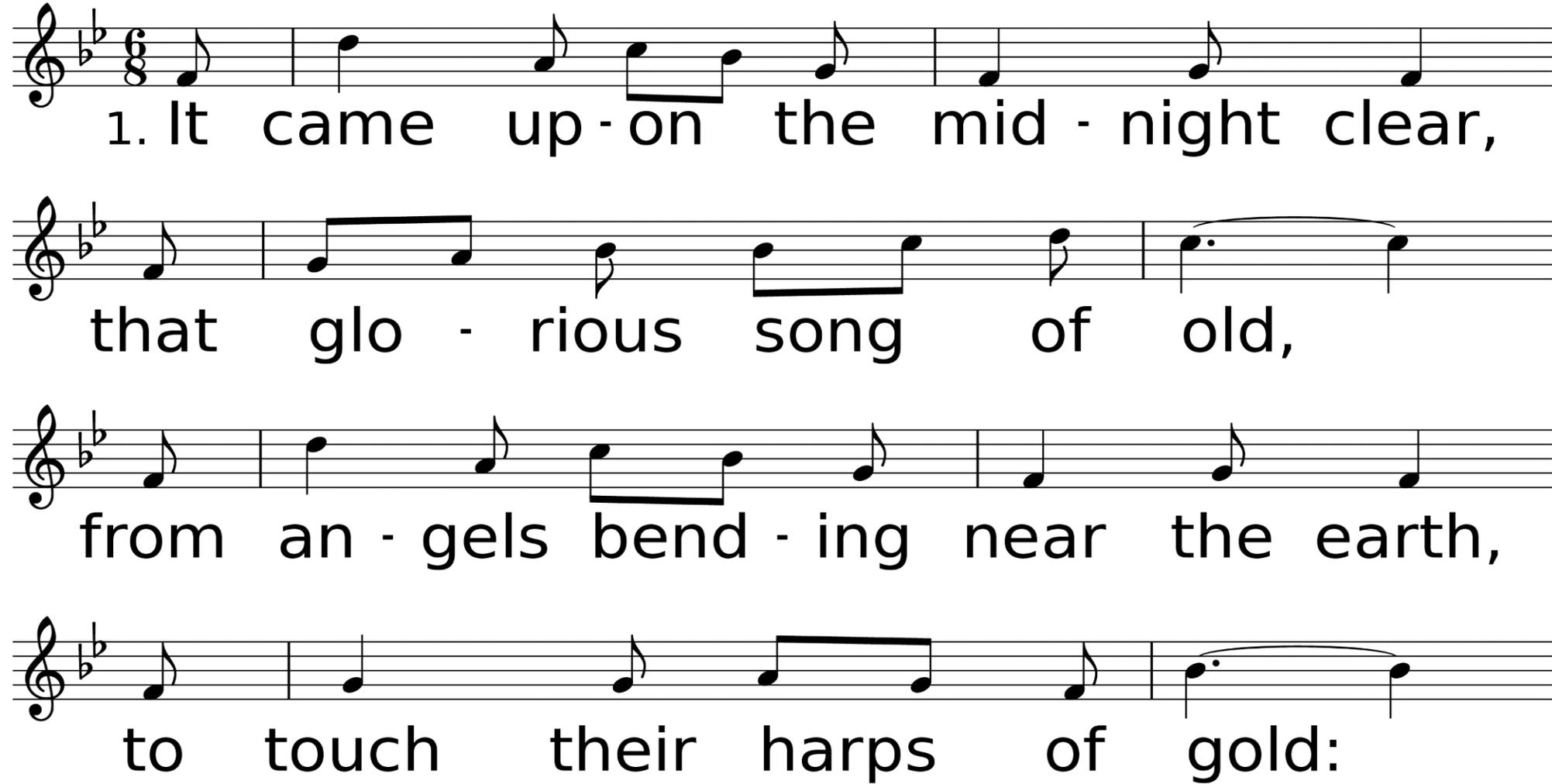
**Congregation:
Lord, hear our prayer.**



***Hymn**

*It Came Upon a
Midnight Clear*

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1. It came up - on the mid - night clear,
that glo - rious song of old,
from an - gels bend - ing near the earth,
to touch their harps of gold:



“Peace on the earth, good will to men,



from heaven’s all - gra - cious King.”



The world in sol - emn still - ness lay,



to hear the an - gels sing.



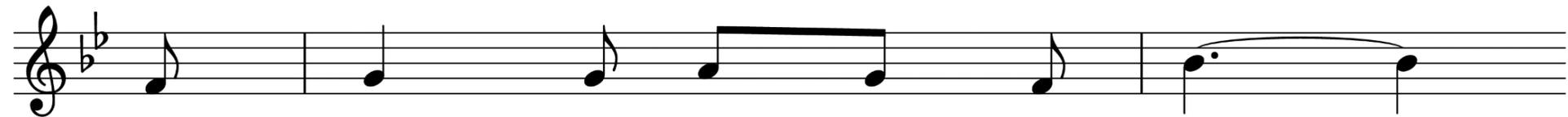
3. And ye, be-neath life's crush - ing load,



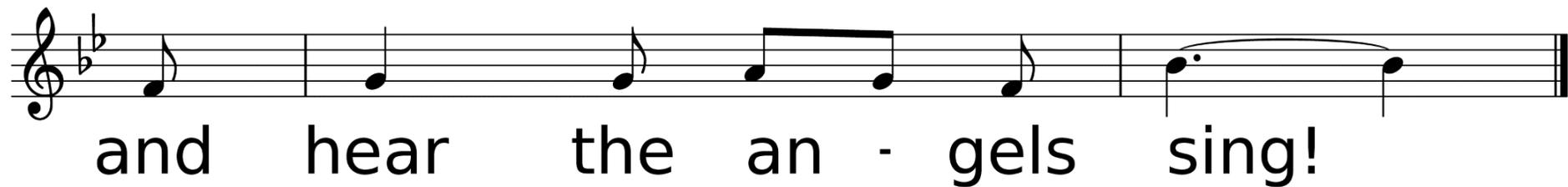
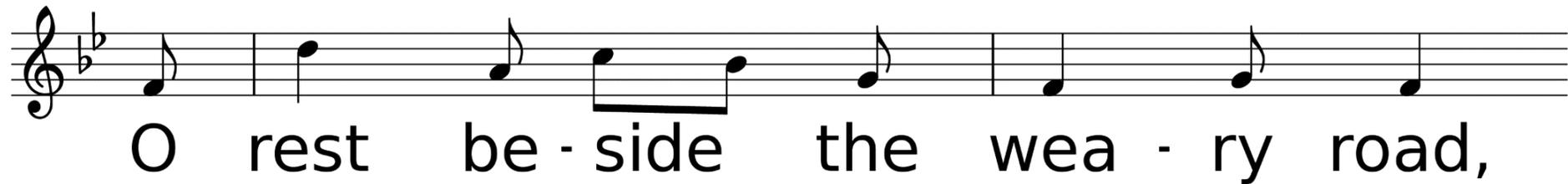
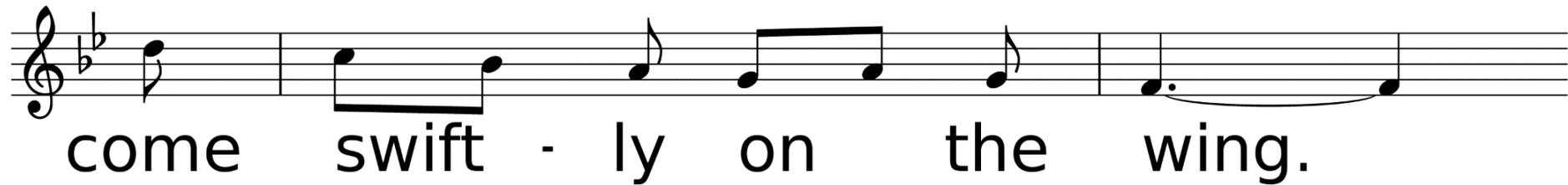
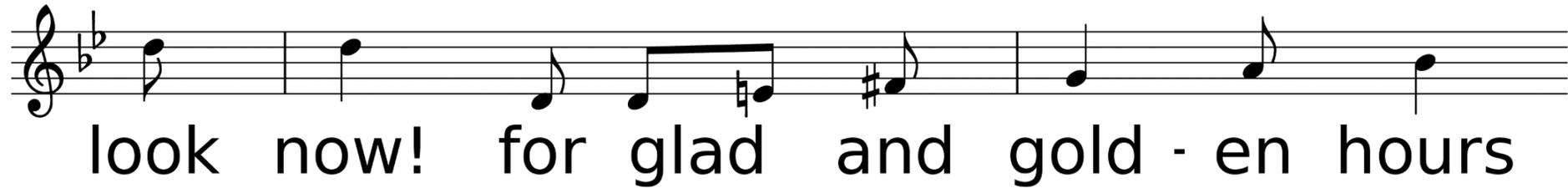
whose forms are bend - ing low,



who toil a - long the climb - ing way



with pain - ful steps and slow,





4. For lo! the days are has - tening on,



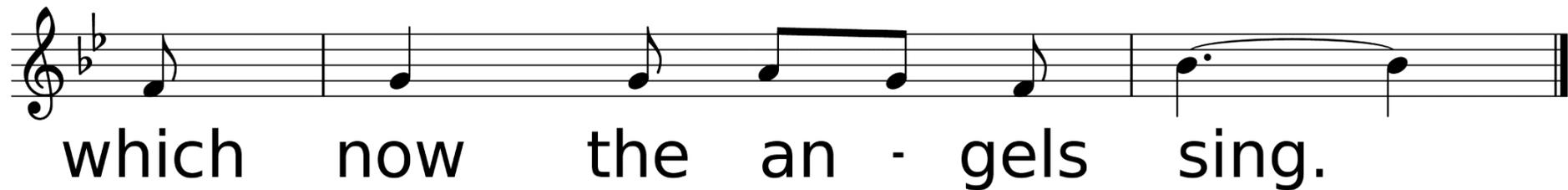
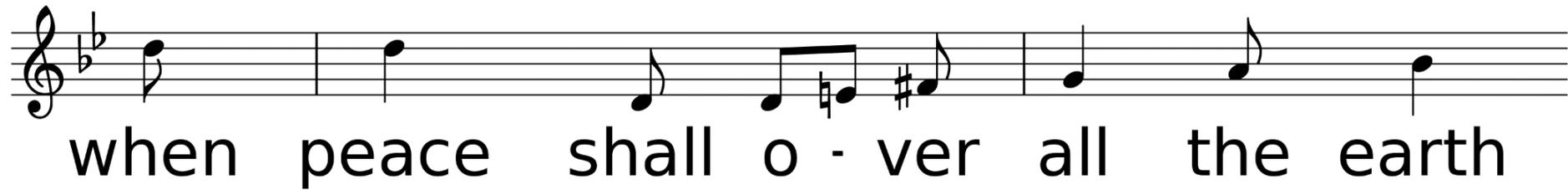
by proph - et seen of old,



when with the ev - er - cir - cling years



shall come the time fore - told



Fourth Reading
Luke 2:1-7
(Gayle Bailey)

Devotional



Psalm 121

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from where comes my help. My help comes from the Lord, who has made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; he that keeps us will not slumber; behold, the God that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is our keeper; the Lord is my shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not defeat me by day nor the moon at night. The Lord shall preserve me from all evil and shall sustain my soul. He shall preserve my going out and my coming in, from this time forth and forevermore.



***Hymn**
O Come, All Ye
Faithful

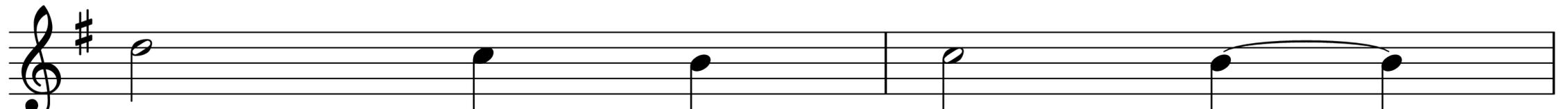
Used by Permission. CCLI License #1203752

1. O come, all ye faith - ful,

joy - ful and tri - um - phant,

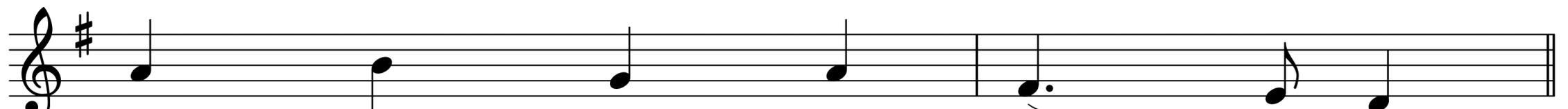
O come ye, O come ye, to

Beth - - - le - hem.



Come and be - hold him,

The first line of musical notation is on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains five measures. The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (half), and B4 (half). A slur is placed over the final two notes, C5 and B4.



born the King of an - gels;

The second line of musical notation is on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains six measures. The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), and A4 (quarter). A slur is placed over the final two notes, B4 and A4.

O come, let us a - dore him,

O come, let us a - dore him,

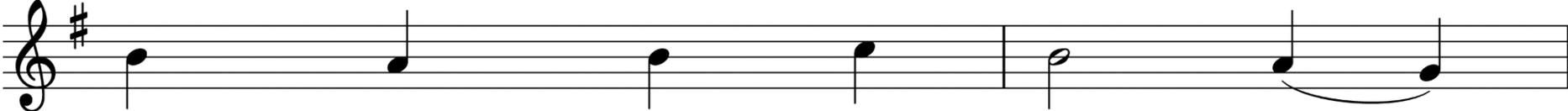
O come, let us a - dore him,

Christ the Lord.



2. True God of true God,

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of four measures: a quarter note on G4, a quarter note on A4, a quarter note on B4, and a quarter note on C5.



Light from Light E - ter - nal,

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of four measures: a quarter note on G4, a quarter note on A4, a quarter note on B4, and a quarter note on C5. The final two notes (B4 and C5) are beamed together.



lo, he shuns not the

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of four measures: a quarter note on G4, a quarter note on A4, a quarter note on B4, and a quarter note on C5. The first two notes (G4 and A4) are beamed together, and the last two notes (B4 and C5) are beamed together.

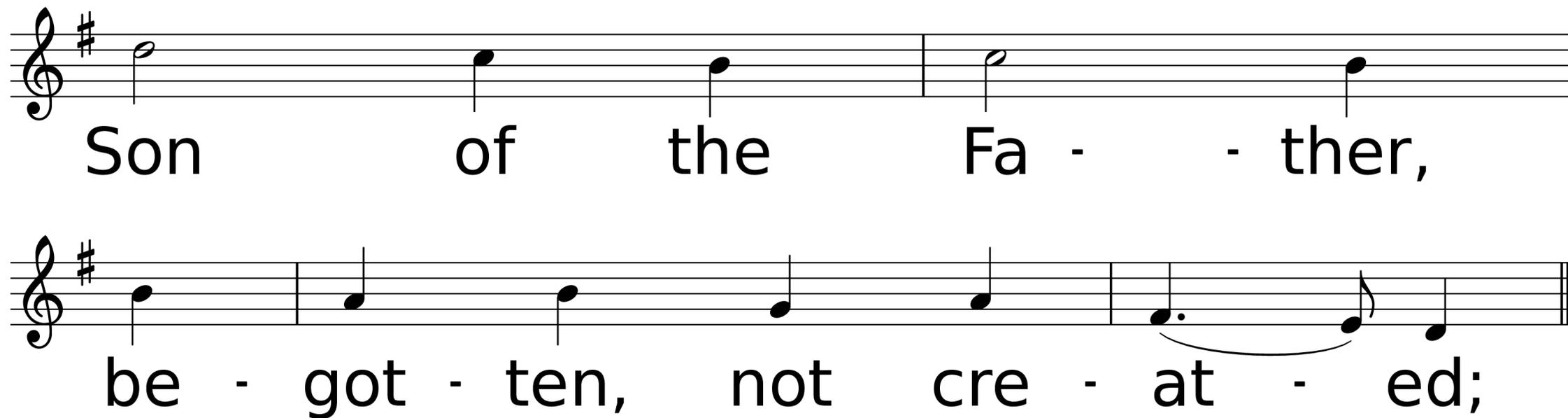


Vir - - - gin's womb;

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of four measures: a quarter note on G4, a quarter note on A4, a quarter note on B4, and a quarter note on C5. The first two notes (G4 and A4) are beamed together.

O Come, All Ye Faithful

United Methodist Hymnal #234



Son of the Fa - ther,
be - got - ten, not cre - at - ed;

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp). The first staff contains the notes for 'Son of the Fa - ther,' and the second staff contains the notes for 'be - got - ten, not cre - at - ed;'. The lyrics are printed below the notes. The melody is simple and consists of quarter and eighth notes. A slur is placed over the notes for 'at - ed;' in the second staff.



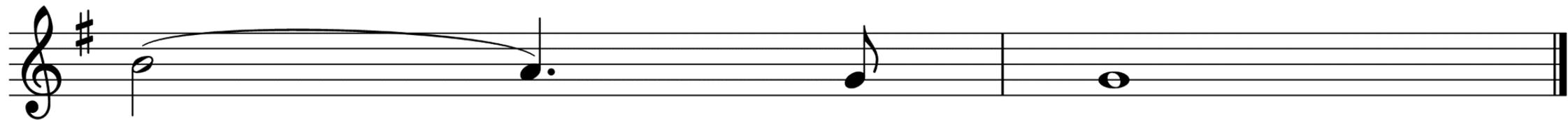
O come, let us a - dore him,



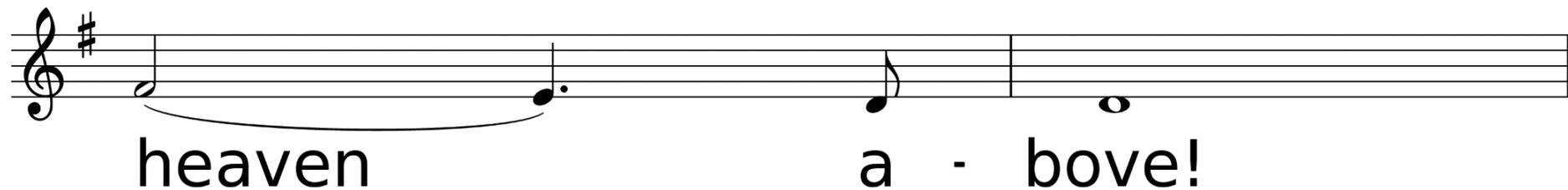
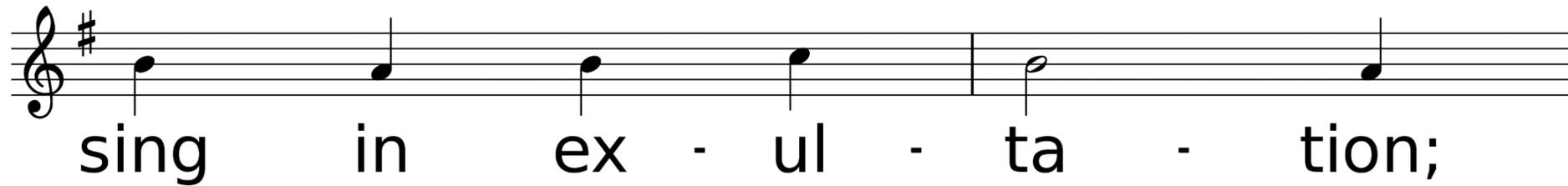
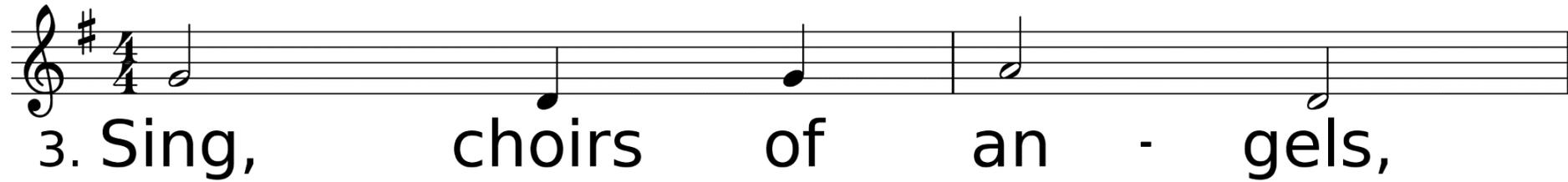
O come, let us a - dore him,



O come, let us a - dore him,



Christ the Lord.



Glo - ry to God, all

The first line of musical notation is on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains two measures. The first measure has three quarter notes: G4, A4, and B4. The second measure has a half note G4 and a quarter note A4, with a slur over both notes.

glo - ry in the high - est;

The second line of musical notation is on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains two measures. The first measure has four quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, and C5. The second measure has a dotted quarter note G4 and an eighth note A4, with a slur over both notes, followed by a quarter note B4. The staff ends with a double bar line.



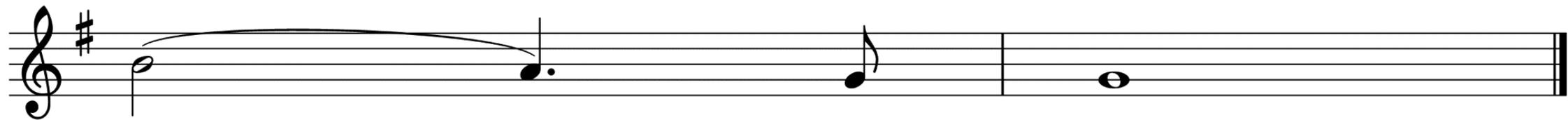
O come, let us a - dore him,



O come, let us a - dore him,



O come, let us a - dore him,



Christ the Lord.

*Prayer

Another day will come, O God. I know not what it may bring forth, but make me ready, God, for whatever it may be. If I am to stand up, help me to stand bravely. If I am to sit still, help me to sit quietly. If I am to lie low, help me to rest peacefully. And if I am to do nothing, help me do it gallantly. Make these words more than words, and give me the Spirit of thy Peace.

Amen.



***Blessing &
Dismissal**



Thank you for Joining us. We invite you to attend our other Special
Christmas Services this holiday season:

Lessons & Carols
Thursday, December 9th at 6:00 PM
Sanctuary & Online

Christmas Eve Candlelight & Communion Services
Friday, December 24th at 5:30 PM & 8:00 PM
Sanctuary & Online

(Hand Bell Choir will only play at the 5:30 PM Service)

Merry Christmas