Crowell Chapel

Vesper Service

In celebration and thanksgiving
for
Merrill Newman
and his family

December 14, 2013
Litany of Darkness and Light
We wait in darkness, expectantly, longingly, anxiously, thoughtfully. The darkness is a womb, from which we all have been nurtured and protected.

_In the darkness of the womb, each child born is made ready for the journey into light._

You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

It is only darkness that allow us to see the splendor of the universe – blankets of stars, the solitary glow of distant planets.

_It was the darkness that allowed Magi to find the Advent star that guided them to where the Babe lay._

You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

In the darkness of the night, desert people find relief from the cruel, relentless heat of the sun.

_In the blessed desert darkness, two parents, Mary and Joseph were able to flee with their infant to safety in Egypt._

You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

In the darkness of sleep, we are soothed and restored, healed and renewed.

_In the darkness of sleep, dreams rise up._

_God spoke to Jacob, Joseph and Prophets through dreams._

You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

In the solitude of night, we remember those in need – the sick, the unemployed, the bereaved, the persecuted, the homeless, those lost in cynicism and bitterness.

_In darkness, we remember our colleagues, partners, parents, children, neighbors, friends and all who are in need of the Holy Light this season._

You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.
Solo:  “How Can I Keep from Singing”

Psalm 40:  “praise and thanksgiving to our God”

THE LIGHTING OF VESPER CANDLES
Solo:  “How Far is It to Bethlehem?”

Vesper Prayer
Response: “as we dwell in the Vesper Light,
O God, hear our prayers”

O GRACIOUS LIGHT (Phos Hilaron)
O gracious Light, O Holy radiance,
O pure brightness of the everlasting God,
our God in Heaven.

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light;
We sing your praises, O God;
in all your manifestations,
and through the various names by which we call You.

You are worthy at all times to be praised
by happy voices,
O God, O Giver of Life,
and to be glorified throughout all the worlds.

HYMN:   “Abide with Me”

BENEDICTION
Response: “Break Forth O Beauteous Heavenly Light”

POST SERVICE MUSIC
Psalm 40

I waited patiently for the Lord;
my God inclined to me and heard my cry.

He drew me from the desolate pit,
out of the miry bog, and set my feet
once again upon rock,
making my steps secure.

God put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.

Many will see and fear, and
put their trust in the Lord.

Blessed is anyone who makes
the Lord God their trust,
who does not turn to the proud,
to those who go astray after false gods!

You have multiplied, O Lord my God,
Your wondrous deeds and
Your thoughts toward us;
none can compare with You!

Were I to proclaim and tell of Your deeds,
they would be more than I could number.

The Historic Manchester Trust wishes to thank Rev. John Hughes and the First Parish Church for composing this evening’s Vesper Service, as well as, Bonnie Anderson, a piano faculty member at Phillips Academy Andover, for her prelude, postlude and accompaniment; Rebecca Shrimpton, Assistant Professor of Voice, Berklee College of Music, and Jazz Vocal Instructor, New England Conservatory for her vocal arrangements; Peter Reid, liturgist, Caisi Calandra, acolyte, and Jill Benke for preparing the Chapel for Vesper.
Abide With Me

Henry F. Lyte, 1793-1847, alt.
William H. Monk, 1823-1889

EVENTIDE 10.10.10.10.

1 Abide with me; fast falls the eventide; The darkness deepens,
2 Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day; Earth's joys grow dim, its
3 I need thy presence ev'ry passing hour; What but thy grace can
4 I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless; Ills have no weight, and

Lord, with me abide; When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
glories pass away; Change and decay in all around I see;
foil the temp'ter's power? Who like thy self my guide and stay can be?
tears no bitterness; Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?

Help of the helpless, O abide with me.
O thou who changest not, abide with me.
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.
I triumph still if thou abide with me. Amen.
Music arrangements for Vesper

**Introit:**

"**How Can I Keep From Singing**" [*words: anonymous; music: Robert Lowry, 1869*]

Text: "My life flows on in endless song above Earth’s lamentation.
I hear the real ‘tho far off hymn that hails a new creation.
No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that rock I’m clingin’.
It sounds an echo in my soul. How can I keep from singin’?

What tho’ the tempest round me roars, I know the truth, it liveth.
What tho’ the darkness round me falls, songs in the night it giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that rock I’m clingin’.
Since Love is Lord of Heaven and Earth, how can I keep from singin’?

When tyrants tremble sick with fear and hear their death knells ringin’,
When friends rejoice both far and near, how can I keep from singin’?
In prison cells and dungeons vile, our thoughts to them are winging.
When friends by shame and undefiled, how can I keep from singin’?"

*This Quaker piece is Appalachian from Ms. Shrimpton’s childhood
and is offered in thanksgiving and celebration of Merrill Newman’s release from incarceration and being reunited with his family]*

**Anthem:**

"**How Far is It to Bethlehem?**"

*words: Frances Chesterton; music: Trad. English, arr. Stephen Paulus, 1986*

Text: "How far is it to Bethlehem? Not very far:
Shall we find the stable room lit by a star?
Can we see the little child, is he within?
If we lift the wooden latch, may we go in?

May we stroke the creatures there, ox, ass, or sheep?
May we peep like them and see Jesus asleep?
If we touch his tiny hand, will he awake?
Will he know we’ve come so far, just for his sake?

Great kings have precious gifts, and we have naught,
Little smiles and little tears are all we have brought.
For all weary children Mary must weep.
Here on his bed of straw sleep, children sleep.

God is in his mother’s arms, babes in the byre,
Sleep, as they sleep who find their heart’s desire."

*This childhood lullaby is offered for the anniversary
of the loss of life, 20 children and 6 adult staff of the Sandy Hook Elementary School, Newtown, CT*

**Benediction Response:**

"**Break Forth O Beauteous Heavenly Light**" [*Advent text ... hope for new life*

*words: Johann von Rist, 1641; music: Johann Schop; harm., J.S. Bach*

Text: "Break forth o beauteous heavenly light and usher in the morning.
Your shepherds shrink not with affright, but hear the angel’s warning.
This child, now weak in infancy, our confidence and joy shall be.
The power of Satan breaking, our peace eternal making."