

## EVENING VESPERS

Wednesday, March 20, 2024 - 6:30 p.m.

*Teach me, O God, the way of your statutes. (Psalm 119)*

GATHERING MUSIC                      *Stay With Me*, Taize

*Once the music starts to play, we invite you to be in silence.*

WELCOME                                      Rev. Katherine A. Schofield

### CALL TO WORSHIP

One:    May the Almighty grant us a peaceful night  
          and a perfect rest.

**Many: Amen.**

One:    Our help is in the Name of the Lord;

**Many: The maker of heaven and earth.**

One:    Let us confess our sins to God.

### SILENT PRAYERS

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*unison*)

**Many:        Too often, Lord God,  
                  we are hesitant in our proclamation;  
                  seeking safe and suitable opportunities  
                  to speak of our faith.  
                  Too often, Lord God,  
                  we are half-hearted in our service;  
                  reluctant to stand out from the crowd  
                  or to attract criticism.  
                  Too often, Lord God,  
                  we live as if dependent wholly on our own resources;  
                  relying on our perceived skills and modest insights.  
                  Too often, Lord God,  
                  we look to the clouds for our inspiration,  
                  in the vain hope of finding you there.  
                  Forgive the poverty of our efforts  
                  and the frailty of our faith  
                  and open wide our hearts and minds  
                  to the immanent presence of our Savior Jesus Christ .**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

## SILENT MEDITATION

### PSALM SINGING

Psalm 119: 9-16, 33-40

#### ***Teach me, O God, the way of your statutes.***

How can young people keep their way pure?  
By guarding it according to your word.  
With my whole heart I seek you;  
Do not let me stray from your commandments.  
I treasure your word in my heart,  
So that I may not sin against you.  
Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes.

#### ***Teach me, O God, the way of your statutes.***

With my lips I declare all the ordinances of your mouth.  
I delight in the way of your decrees as much as in all riches.  
I will meditate on your precepts, and fix my eyes on your ways.  
I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

#### ***Teach me, O God, the way of your statutes.***

Teach me, O God, the way of your statutes,  
And I will observe it to the end.  
Give me understanding, that I may keep your law  
And observe it with my whole heart.  
Lead me in the path of your commandments,  
For I delight in your way.  
Turn my heart to your decrees and not to selfish gain.

#### ***Teach me, O God, the way of your statutes.***

Turn my eyes from looking at vanities;  
Give me life in your ways.  
Confirm to your servant your promise,  
Which is for those who fear you.  
Turn away the disgrace that I dread,  
For your ordinances are good.  
See, I have longed for your precepts;

In your righteousness give me life.

***Teach me, O God, the way of your statutes.***

SILENT MEDITATION

CONTEMPORARY READING      Tawnicia Ferguson Rowan

Why should I tremble or withdraw in shame  
When I am God's child, and I AM is my name?  
Why would I wrestle with sorrow or fear  
When God's love and protection are nearer than near?

Why would I wonder at time or at space  
Or marvel at wisdom, and beauty, and grace?  
Why would I long for more courage or power  
Or question my instincts from hour to hour?

Why would I feel insufficient or small  
Or believe that I'm unfit to answer God's call?  
Why, when I AM is creative and bold  
Would I shrink from Its light, instead of unfold?

Why, when I know that my God is my guide  
Would I pause to consider keeping It inside?  
Why would I think that I lack anything  
When the Lord is my God, and my Source, and my King?  
Why, when God's face is in all that I see  
Would I keep on forgetting, *It's all within me?!*

SILENT MEDITATION

CONGREGATIONAL SONG      *Stay With Me*, Taize

**Stay with me, remain here with me.  
Watch and pray; watch and pray.**

LIGHTING OF VESPER CANDLES

*You are invited to come forward and light a candle(s) for people or situations you want to hold in the Light of God's Love. When you light the candle feel free to whisper the name of the person(s)/situation(s) for whom you are praying.*

COLLECT

BENEDICTION

*We invite you to leave the worship service in silence. If you wish, you are invited to remain in the sanctuary after the benediction and listen to the music. Rev. Schofield will stay in the church for a time if you would like her to say a word of prayer with you following the service. Just let her know if you would like to pray.*