

For Children

PRAY

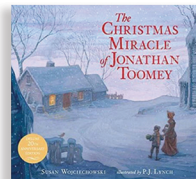
Dear Jesus, our friend and our Savior, every time we see a Christmas light or a candle flame, remind us that you are the warmest, brightest light of all. You light our way in the dark, and your light will triumph over the darkness when you return. We love you and thank you for being with us every day. AMEN.

WATCH WORDS

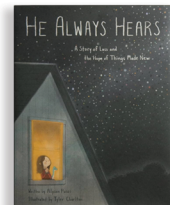
LIGHT
HOPE
DARKNESS

Tally how many times you hear these words in the worship service!

READ



The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey
Susan Wojciechowski



He Always Hears
Alyson Punzi

DISCUSS

- What makes you sad?
- What does it feel like when you are sad?
- Was Jesus ever sad?
- Will there be sadness when Jesus returns?

Advent Week 3 LAMENT

“Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD; O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.” Psalm 130:1-2



Artwork by Sojourner D. (Age 11)

PRAY

O Lord our Shepherd, in you is life, and that life is the light of men. Your light illuminates the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. Even so, as we wait for your return, our hearts are cloaked in grief. We feel and see darkness in so many places and circumstances. O Lord, we grieve the devastation that sin has wrought in your good creation. We mourn the fractured relationships, the loss of loved ones and of health, the desolation of war and material poverty. Jesus, you said of yourself, “I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.” O Lord, be near to us in the darkness, and remind our hearts that you will overcome it completely when you return. May that hope shape our lament this season as we eagerly await your coming. Amen. (adapted from John 1 and 12)

LOOK



“Mary Consoles Eve”
Sister Grace Remington
2005
Crayon and Pencil



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The drawing entitled “Mary Consoles Eve” beautifully portrays that, for God’s people, lament and hope are deeply intertwined. We see Eve and Mary, crucial companions of the first and second Adam; and Eve is distraught. She holds a piece of fruit, the sign of her failure and all the brokenness that will follow because of it, and her face is downcast. The serpent has wrapped his tail around her legs and feet, and her inevitable stumbling and sorrow will be with her all her days. Yet, Mary is also there. Eve carries the fruit, but Mary carries Jesus himself—her pregnant belly an undeniable sign that Emmanuel has already arrived. Mary’s face is full of love and care. Tenderly affectionate, she uses one hand to comfort Eve in her despair, and the other to invite Eve to feel, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that her Savior is here. Eve’s grief is real, but so is her redemption. Even as we see the serpent entangling Eve’s legs, so also we realize that his head lies crushed and inert beneath Mary’s foot. We grieve so many things in this life—and rightly so—but we do not grieve without hope.

READ

“Here on Earth”

Anne Porter

The old man living
In his rented room
Grows lonely as the night comes on
Especially in winter

And the boy shooting drugs
On the tenement roof
Is lonely whether or not
He has companions

Lovers lie sleeping
Side by side
A wilderness between them

And their unborn infant
Is already alone
So soon to be discarded
Even as he begins
Unfolding in the womb
Of his lonely mother

Because the scatterer
Has overtaken us
Betraying promises
Estranging lovers

Tearing us inwardly
And tearing us apart
One from another

And this is why
Those of us who are sated
Find it so easy to ignore
Those of us who are starving

And why we have been known
To torture one another
Why there are times
When we are far more cruel
Than the animals.

Nevertheless
Taken all together
Or taken one by one
We are the holiest
Of all earth’s creatures

For he who kindled
The fire of the sun
He who draws out the tender leaves
From the dark twigs of winter

He who has whittled
A cabin for the snail
Has also carved our names
In the palm of his hand

And he became a child
The better to be near us
Born in the wintertime
Born on a journey

He grew to be a man
And lived among us
To be our healing
When we were sick
Our bread
When we were hungry
To be the wine
At all our weddings

He suffered at our hands
And he forgave us
He sweat from head to foot
With human anguish
And shedding every drop of blood
To give us to each other

He gave himself to us
That we might live forever

He gave us even more
Than he has given the angels.

LISTEN



**“In a Land by Death
O’ershadowed”**
The Porter’s Gate



**“Psalm 88:1-7”
(ESV)**
The Corner Room



“Sweet Little Jesus Boy”
West Coast Mennonite
Chamber Choir